



Checklist for volunteering remotely

In times of crisis, many people step up to help out. You may be an existing volunteer whose role can no longer be conducted face-to-face, or a new volunteer who wants to find a way to help. Either way, you are now facing a new challenge of volunteering through alternative channels!

The following hints and tips have been put together to help you navigate this new experience.

Refresh and Reorient

If you have moved from an existing volunteering role to an online role, you will likely have had some changes to your activities and tasks. Before you begin, ask yourself: is your current position description clear to you? Do you understand the role and what you are being asked to do? Do you know who to contact in the organisation and how to contact them?

If your answer is no to any of the above questions, it is important that you get in touch with your organisation to clarify these things. It is better to ask the question before you start working.

Find your space

Prepare a comfortable, suitable workspace for your volunteer work. Make sure that you have access to a good chair and desk. If you are able to, find a quiet space where you can avoid being distracted.

Have the right technology

Make sure you have the necessary technology. This includes having a reliable internet connection and other tools needed to perform your job. If you are not aware of or familiar with the necessary technological tools, ask for guidance or assistance from your supervisor.

If you experience technical difficulties during your volunteer work, let your supervisor know and ask how to obtain technical support.

Maintain boundaries

When volunteering from home, you may feel there is no clear boundary between volunteering and daily life. Setting a clear framework, such as specific dates, times and locations in the house for volunteering, can help maintain those boundaries.

Act professionally

It is important to continue to adhere to all of the professional, ethical and behavioural guidelines of your organisation. In any activity that you perform, even from your home, you are representing your organisation.

Your organisation will likely request that you inform them of the specific hours you are volunteering each day you volunteer, so that they know what you are doing and can continue to comply with any legislative requirements or reporting requirements.

Maintain social connections

It is easy to feel isolated and lonely when you volunteer from home. During your volunteer work, you may be alone in front of your computer screen, but you are probably working in parallel with many other volunteers and staff. You are still part of a team!

Ask your supervisor if it's possible to join or set up a shared online space where volunteers can share their experiences, consult with each other and continue the immensely valuable social connections that come with volunteering.

Know your impact

It is easy to feel that work being done online is invisible or lacks importance. However, the role you perform online is just as important and meaningful for your organisation. If you're unsure about your online impact, ask your supervisor for information about how your work is adding value to the organisation and its beneficiaries.

If in doubt, ask!

If you have questions or issues about anything relating to your role – your tasks, the technology or what the organisation is doing more generally – ask your supervisor! They are there to support you and the important contribution you are making.