

Emergency Worker/Volunteer Code of Conduct

I. Introduction

In an effort to maintain the highest standards of conduct expected and deserved by the citizens of Kitsap County and to enable Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management (KCDEM) to continue to offer services required by those in need, volunteers registered as Emergency Workers will provide services under the following code of conduct:

II. Code of Conduct

No volunteer shall authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

Volunteers will not accept or seek on behalf of themselves or any other person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value that may be offered because of the volunteer's affiliation with the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

No volunteer shall publicly utilize any KCDEM affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official positions of the Department or volunteer group.

Volunteers shall not disclose any confidential information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's service to any person not authorized to receive such information, or use to the disadvantage of Kitsap County any such confidential information, without the express authorization of the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

No volunteer shall knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the Volunteer Group in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.

Volunteers should operate or act only in a manner that is in the best interests of the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

Possession or use of a firearm or other weapons while serving in a Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management volunteer role is prohibited by Kitsap County Resolution 143-1998. Possession of a valid concealed weapons permit is not an exception under this policy.

Volunteers should not operate any motor vehicle while on duty unless it is their personal vehicle or they are authorized to use a response vehicle.

Volunteers will not use alcohol or drugs of any kind while on assignment as a KCDEM volunteer, nor should any member report for duty if they are under the influence of such substances.

Volunteers will not engage in inappropriate behavior that would jeopardize the program effectiveness and sustainability to include using profane language, public criticism of a fellow team member and the program or purposely jeopardizing another team member's safety is prohibited.

Self responding to events such as fires, accidents, etc. is strictly prohibited. KCDEM training does not give a citizen the same rights or responsibilities as a firefighter, law enforcement officer or a medical professional and does not give a citizen the right or duty to respond as a first responder professional.

No volunteer member has a legal duty to act and is not required to respond to incidents in their immediate area nor to calls for team activation. However, once responded, volunteers must follow safe and effective practices at all times. Volunteers who abandon their duty assignment, act outside their training or responsibility, or otherwise violate policies or codes of conduct are subject to termination.

Many volunteers have skills beyond what is taught through a specific volunteer program (for example, medical and health professionals, operating heavy equipment, etc.) While these skills may be helpful during an emergency or disaster, and can be utilized in other programs, they may be outside of the scope of volunteering with KCDEM and are considered unauthorized activities. Volunteers must stay within the scope of the training they have received through the Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management. In most cases they have been trained under specific curriculum set forth by city, county, state or federal organizations.

Under WAC 118-04 governing State Emergency Workers, Volunteers (registered Emergency Workers), when called for a mission or conduct training or exercises in the performance of duty are subject to the liability legislation of the State of Washington. No liability protection exists for negligence or wanton disregard. Volunteers should always remain within their scope of training, assigned responsibilities, and act as any other reasonable person would act in similar circumstances.

Volunteers shall report all unsafe situations, activities or practices immediately and take appropriate protective action for themselves and bystanders.

Volunteers will bring or wear appropriate personal safety equipment: helmet, vest, dust mask, goggles, gloves (rubber/latex and leather), sturdy shoes, long pants, flashlight (with extra batteries), bottled water, non-perishable food, etc. **Absolutely no shorts, sandals or open-toed shoes are allowed when responding to an incident or during training events!!**

Volunteers will confine their actions to their physical and resource limitations. Such limitations may be determined by, but not limited to, equipment availability, physical abilities, knowledge, authority and hazards.

In the event that the volunteer's obligation to operate in the best interests of their volunteer group conflicts with the interests of any organization in which the individual has a financial interest of an affiliation, the individual shall disclose such conflict to the Volunteer Group's Coordinator or the Director, Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

III. Performance

Volunteers are expected to comply with the policies, procedures, and standards of their volunteer program as explained at the beginning of their assignment, during volunteer orientation and/or in a volunteer group handbook.

If a supervisor is dissatisfied with a volunteer's performance, the first course of action is to communicate that concern to the volunteer. If they are unable to reach an understanding, the director will resolve the matter. In most cases, a volunteer will be given sufficient time to respond affirmatively or request reassignment to a more suitable placement. In some cases, however, immediate action may be required depending upon the severity of the issue.

IV. Commitment to Diversity

Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management is committed to being a diverse organization. It seeks to recognize value and incorporate diversity in its services, policies and operations, service recipients, and paid and volunteer workforce. Diversity includes differences such as age, belief, citizenship, culture, economic level, ethnicity, gender, language, national origin, and philosophy of life, physical ability, physical appearance, race, religion, and sexual orientation. Volunteers will adhere to these same standards in the course of their duties.

V. Acknowledgement

I have reviewed and acknowledge by my signature the Code of Conduct established by Kitsap County Department of Emergency Management.

Signature

Date

Print Name

Reviewed (DEM Staff)

Signature

Date