

# Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission

## Volunteer Host Guide



# Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission Volunteer Host Guide

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### Purposes of this Handbook

- To help hosts maintain the excellent level of service currently being provided for visitors.
- To assist in training new volunteers to be hosts.
- To serve as a handy reference for information on hosting.
- To help insure a safe, satisfying volunteer experience for hosts.
- To assist hosts in selecting the type of service and duty most appropriate for them.

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# Agency Information

## Introduction

Welcome to Washington State Parks! We hope you enjoy your volunteer experience with State Parks. Your contribution has and does provide park visitors with an extra measure of quality service.

This guide and the accompanying brochures are provided to help you fulfill your duties successfully. You will receive additional orientation information and materials that are park specific from your supervisor at the park. You will also receive any training necessary for you to safely perform the duties and tasks outlined in your Individual Volunteer Service Agreement.

## State Parks Mission

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission acquires, operates, enhances, and protects a diverse system of recreational, cultural, historical, and natural sites. The Commission fosters outdoor recreation and education statewide to provide enjoyment and enrichment for all, and a valued legacy to future generations.

## Centennial 2013 Vision

“In 2013, Washington’s state parks will be premier destinations of uncommon quality, including state and regionally significant natural, cultural, historical, and recreational resources that are outstanding for the experience, health, enjoyment, and learning of all people.”

## History of State Parks

Washington's first state park body was created in 1913. By 1922 the Parks Committee had gained seven major parks and 11 small parcels located throughout the state. Since then, the park system has grown through private donations, cooperative agreements with federal agencies, set-asides of state lands for park purposes, and financial grants. A number of state parks benefited from the activities of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in the 1930's, and many of the facilities constructed then still exist in parks today. Washington's park system also includes several military forts that became state parks after their useful military life ended.

Washington State Parks have not always had a smooth ride, however. In recent years, State Parks have suffered from the lack of dollars and many programs have been curtailed. The state is currently faced with finding other resources to acquire, develop and maintain its parks. Despite these setbacks, however, Washington's State Parks system enjoys continued growth and citizen support.

## State Parks Today

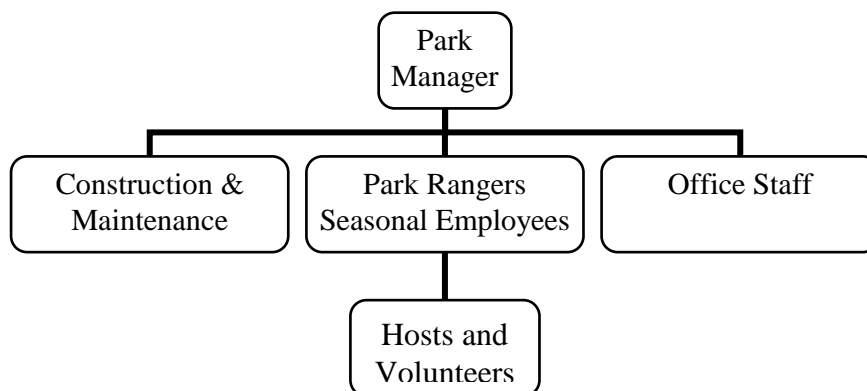
Today Washington has over 121 widely diverse state parks. Today's visitors to State Parks can select from a variety of lodging options ranging from primitive or full hook-up campsites to group camps, yurts and cabins, and even historic Victorian homes. Recreation opportunities include not only the traditional picnicking, hiking, and boating, but also windsurfing, scuba diving, and rock climbing!

## State Parks Volunteer Programs

The first formal efforts to recruit volunteers for State Parks in 1980 resulted in 31 volunteers providing 1,426 hours of service to parks. When a full-time volunteer coordinator was hired in 1990, the Volunteer Programs began to facilitate volunteer participation in state park programs, ensure appropriate training for volunteers, and maintain records of volunteers' contributions. In 2008, volunteers provided over 310,000 hours of service to the State Parks system!

## State Parks Organization

Washington State Parks and Recreation is governed by a Commission comprised of seven members selected by the Governor. The Commission is responsible for the administration of the Washington State Parks system and certain recreational and resource management programs. The Commission appoints the Director.



## Diversity in Washington State Parks

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission is committed to creating an equitable, hospitable, appreciative, safe, and inclusive park environment – one that embraces the full spectrum of all community members’ contributions. The Commission makes this commitment because:

- Diversity strengthens the workforce in competence and ability;
- Celebrating diversity appreciates and values individual differences;
- Diversity serves an increasingly heterogeneous society;
- Diversity helps ensure the relevance of a state park system, its mission, properties, and programs to the people of the state today and in the future; and
- Diversity is crucial to our ability to serve all citizens.

The Commission encourages and supports staff efforts to reach out to people of all races, national origins, abilities, religions, sexual orientations, veteran status, ages, and genders who use the parks and who live in communities nearby parks. This outreach is to focus on engaging in partnerships that expand programs and services in a way that is meaningful and of value to all visitors through a workforce and volunteer corps that reflects the diversity of Washington State.

Diversity encompasses who we are and what we think and how we behave. Not only ethnicity and national origin but family status, religion, communication style, ethics, values, educational level, etc. all combine to make us who we are. Parks & Recreation welcomes the diversity of its employees, volunteers and users of our parks system. To celebrate diversity is to appreciate and value individual differences. Diversity is one of the Commission’s top priorities. It is part of Director Derr’s contract and the agency’s balanced scorecard.

## Volunteers and the Ethics in Public Service Act

The State of Washington has a strong Ethics in Public Service Act (RCW 42.52) that governs state employees. As a volunteer, you also fall under this Act as you are exercising the functions of a state employee while performing duties as a volunteer for Parks.

The area of the law that is most relevant to volunteers is the use of state resources. State resources are things such as vehicles, offices, equipment (phones, computers, etc.), and money (park fees).

### **Key Points:**

- No volunteer may use any person, money, or property under his/her control or direction, or in his or her official custody, for the private benefit or gain of the volunteer or another.
- Volunteers have a duty to conserve public resources and funds against misuse and abuse.

- Personal use of the phones and the computer have established guidelines. Before having any personal use of the phone or computer (including using e-mail for personal use), please consult with your Park Rangers.
- Certain uses of any state resources are always prohibited. These uses include:
  - Personal use of the Internet for non-business related purposes.
  - Any use for the purpose of conducting an outside business, whether or not for profit.
  - Any use for the purpose of assisting the campaign of any candidate for election to any office, or to oppose or promote a ballot proposition;
  - Any use for commercial purposes such as advertising or selling;
  - Illegal activities or activities incompatible with a professional workplace, e.g., accessing adult-oriented sites or gambling on the Internet;
  - Lobbying activity unless authorized by law; and,
  - Any use to promote, support, or solicit for an outside organization or group unless the activity is approved by an agency head or his or her designee.

## Sexual Harassment

It is the policy of Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission that employees, visitors, and volunteers shall be provided an environment that is fair and provides equitable treatment, including freedom from sexual harassment and other inappropriate conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment is defined by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to the conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, or
- Submission to or rejection of the conduct by an individual is used as a basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or
- The conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature can be (but are not limited to):

- Written, graphic, or verbal communication, including demeaning or offensive comments, epithets, jokes, slurs, or negative stereotyping based on gender;
- Unwelcome requests for sexual favors or social contact;
- Non-verbal behavior which may include gestures, leering, pictures, or cartoons; or,
- Physical behavior such as unwelcome touching, standing too close, cornering, leaning over or brushing against a person's body.

If you feel like you are being subject to this behavior, please notify your volunteer representative or Park Ranger/Manager immediately.

# Getting Started

## Becoming a Volunteer

You may request an application packet through State Parks Headquarters in Olympia, or obtain the information online at [www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov). Once your application is received, reviewed, and a criminal background check is conducted, it is then forwarded on to the parks that you chose or parks that meet your specific criteria.

Although Washington State Parks is always needing new hosts, it may be easier to get a first time hosting position if you are willing to be flexible in your location choices. Even though the application form has space for five choices, you are welcome to add more parks or indicate that you are interested in any parks within a certain area (i.e., Any park in the Puget Sound area, lakes, mountains, etc).

After your application is received at the park, a member of the park staff will contact you. You may be interviewed over the phone and receive an explanation of your specific duties and responsibilities. You and the ranger will come to an arrangement on duties, location and dates. Once you arrive for your assignment, you will receive further training and orientation.

Field staff accept new applications year round and most begin making contacts for the next season's hosts in late fall, but some will wait until late winter or even early spring before making contact. Remember, you are always welcome to make contact with the parks or the Volunteer Programs Olympia staff to inquire about your host status.

Before you begin your volunteer service, you will be asked to fill out and sign a number of forms including the Volunteer Application and Volunteer Service Agreement. Each of the forms has a specific purpose, such as to ensure that you understand your job duties, that you are properly trained, or that you understand the rules and regulations under which you volunteer. Your supervisor will explain the purpose of each of the forms if you have any questions.

Timesheets must be completed and submitted to your supervisor at the end of each month to ensure that you are covered for medical industrial insurance and liability protection during the time you are volunteering.

## Criminal Background Checks

Volunteers are required to have federal background checks in accordance with RCW 79A.05.030(10). As a volunteer, you will be acting as an agent of State Parks. Host positions often have access to money or unsupervised access to children under sixteen years of age, developmentally disabled persons or vulnerable adults.

## Federal Form I-9 Employment Eligibility Verification

Federal regulations require employers to obtain the Federal Form I-9 (Employment Eligibility Verification) from those who receive remuneration from their organization. Remuneration is identified in the *Employer's Handbook for the Form I-9*, Q.5, p. 21, as: "Anything of value given in exchange for labor or services rendered by an employee, including food and lodging." Because State Parks offers camping at no charge to volunteer hosts, for services performed, the camping at no charge is considered remuneration.

## Appearance/Identification

As a Volunteer Host, you will be asked to wear a green vest (yours to keep) and a baseball cap or visor (also, yours to keep) with the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission logo, which will identify you as a Volunteer Host to park visitors. Please wear your vest and hat with pride and respect while you are on duty. If you wear your hat or visor when you are not on duty, please use your discretion where you wear it since people will recognize you as a representative of State Parks. Name tags (yours to keep) will also be provided to be worn on your vest.

## What You get in Return

With a 30 day commitment (28 hours per week per site) or two week commitment in a marine park, you will receive: free camping and hookups (where available); a "Host" sign for your campsite; and a baseball cap or visor, vest, and nametag.

## Insurance Coverage

**Medical:** State Parks provides medical industrial insurance for volunteers through the Department of Labor and Industries. By submitting your timesheet, you will receive the cost of medical treatment needed for a service-related injury or illness. You are NOT covered for loss of employment time due to the injury or illness, nor for a lasting disability or death. If you suffer an on-the-job injury, your supervisor will help you obtain and complete the proper forms to submit for processing.

**Tort Liability:** As a volunteer host, you are acting as an agent of State Parks. Therefore, when you are acting within *the accepted limits and scope of your assigned job responsibilities*, State Parks can choose to assume responsibility for tort liability claims on your behalf. All situations will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Of course, any tort claim resulting from criminal activity on a volunteer's part will not be covered by the agency or state.

**Personal Property:** A volunteer's personal belongings are not covered by State Parks. It is advisable that you carry your own insurance to cover damage to personal belongings which may occur as a result of natural disasters such as storms, ice, fire, flooding, high winds, etc.

**Vehicle Insurance:** You will be asked to show proof of vehicle insurance if you use your own vehicle on the job.

If special equipment or tools are required to perform your volunteer duties, you will be issued what you need and trained in their use. State Parks equipment is not to be used for your personal use. It also is not recommended that you use your personal equipment to perform your volunteer duties. If you do, State Parks is not responsible for damage, replacement or repair to such equipment.

## Being a Volunteer Host

### Expectations of Hosts

- All hosts are expected to maintain clean, orderly campsites.
- Hosts may sell only Washington State Parks approved items in the parks.
- You must check with the manager before adding any additional structures or storage containers at your site. All plants or gardens must be grown in portable containers
- Do not perform vehicle maintenance at your site.
- State equipment shall not be used for personal benefit.
- Only camping and recreational equipment may be in public view; all other equipment must be stored out of sight.
- It is not appropriate to consume alcohol or use tobacco while on active duty. Please confine use of either to your campsite during off-duty hours.
- Hosts are official representatives of the Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission, therefore:
  - Please dress appropriately
  - Avoid offensive language or conduct.
  - Avoid displaying signs, decals, bumper stickers, posters that express political or religious viewpoints. Please check with your manager.
- All dogs must be kept on a leash and have current rabies certificates.

### Tips for Hosts

- Spend some time getting oriented to the area. Stop by the local Chamber of Commerce for flyers and read the Washington State Parks Orientation Manual (provided at the park).
- If you can, arrive a day before the previous hosts leave to ask them questions and discuss any special considerations. Be sure to check with the manager ahead of time if you plan to stay at the campground, especially in the summer.
- During the orientation session with park staff, don't hesitate to ask questions, clarify responsibilities, or bring up concerns.
- Remember: **SAFETY FIRST**. Know your physical limitations and discuss any specific medical problems--allergies, surgeries, diabetes, etc.--with your park contact. It is most beneficial if you have a current CPR rating, especially in the more remote areas.

- Ask for feedback on your performance. You are entitled to receive an evaluation of your host experience by park staff and in turn, you will be given the opportunity to give your feedback.
- If you get asked a question by a member of the public and you don't know the answer, tell them you'll find the answer and get back to them.
- Never accept responsibility for supervising park visitors= children. Do not offer park visitors a ride in your personal vehicle. Taxi service and babysitting is not your volunteer job.

## Interacting with Visitors

The following tips will help you become an effective Volunteer Host when greeting and assisting park visitors:

### **DO**

- ☺ Be a good listener.
- ☺ Be polite and friendly, with a desire to be helpful.
- ☺ Be positive about the park, staff, and rules.
- ☺ Be a good neighbor. Set a good example by obeying the park rules yourself.
- ☺ Be familiar with park rules and regulations so you can explain them when asked or when you see a violation. Hand out an appropriate brochure if available. If the violation continues, report it to the park manager.
- ☺ Give out accurate information. If you can't answer a question, check with park staff or refer the visitor to the Information Center. (360-902-8844)
- ☺ Refer campers with complaints to the park manager or your supervisor.
- ☺ Wave as you walk by and SMILE!

### **DON'T**

- ; Don't try to enforce rules.
- ; Don't argue, scold or "chew out" the visitor.
- ; Don't be harsh, sharp, abrupt, hurried, or impatient.
- ; Don't act like a know-it-all or be self-righteous.
- ; Don't be a busybody. Respect campers' privacy and their right to "get away" from it all.
- ; Don't be the park bartender--use common sense and discretion when consuming alcohol.

## Providing Information

The more you know, the more confident you'll feel as you perform your host duties and the more helpful you can be to park visitors. Don't expect to know the answer to every question. Tell the visitor you'll try to find the answer and get back to them.

Upon the start of your hosting, be sure to ask your supervisor for the Camp Host Information binder. You will find the answers to many questions within this binder. The binder will have a copy of this guide, a state map, a fishing guide, and various brochures about the different programs, services, and facilities State Parks has to offer. If you

cannot find an answer in your host binder, check with your supervisor. Please remember to return this binder at the end of your hosting service so it is available for the next host.

Additional copies of brochures may be available for distribution at your park. Check with your supervisor for availability or you may obtain copies by calling the Information Center (360) 902-8844 or Volunteer Programs at (360) 902-8583.

If visitors would like additional information beyond what you can provide (such as campsite availability in other parks), you may refer them to the State Parks **Information Center** at **(360) 902-8844** (or Telephone Relay Service for the hearing impaired: 1-800-833-6388). The Information Center can provide current information about campsite availability, camping rates, or amenities of a specific park.

Your Supervisor or the local Chamber of Commerce or Visitor Information Bureau can provide you with additional information on local attractions and events.

## Natural Investment Permit

The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission requires a daily or annual fee (A Natural Investment) for watercraft launching and trailer dumping.

The commission sets the daily and annual fee which varies in different parks. Check with your supervisor for the fee in your park.

Annual permits are available for purchase at State Parks headquarters in Olympia, regional offices, [online](#) and in person at the parks. Daily permits are only available at the parks. Annual permits are valid for one year from date of purchase.

## Campsite Reservations

Reservations for campsites, cabins, yurts, platform tents, vacation houses as well as group sites and day use facilities can be booked by calling 888-CAMPOUT (888) 226-7688 (or TDD 1-800-833-6388) from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. every day except Christmas and New Years. Check availability and campsite reservations online at [www.parks.wa.gov](http://www.parks.wa.gov).

The following list clarifies when reservations are available at campsites and group facilities in parks served by the central reservation. See the table at the end of this section for a complete list of parks with reservable or first-come, first-served facilities. The table also indicates if you need to directly contact the park for reservations.

### **All camping parks on the central reservation system (except those listed below):**

Individual campsites are available for reservations May 15 through Sept. 15.

**Battle Ground Lake, Bay View, Cape Disappointment, Dosewallips, Grayland Beach, Kitsap Memorial, Lincoln Rock, Sequest, and Wallace Falls:** Cabins, yurts and other rustic shelters are reservable year round.

### **Cape Disappointment, Kitsap Memorial, Millersylvania, and Fort Columbia:**

Vacation houses are reservable year round.

**Cape Disappointment, Deception Pass, Dosewallips, Grayland Beach, Kitsap Memorial, Ocean City, Pacific Beach and Steamboat Rock:** Individual campsites are reservable year round.

**Pearrygin Lake:** Individual campsites are reservable April 15 through October 29.

**Alta Lake:** Individual campsites are reservable April 1 through October 31.

**Lake Sylvia and Wenatchee Confluence:** Individual campsites are reservable April 1 through September 30.

**Group camps and group day-use facilities:** Reservable year round except where individual parks or group facilities are closed for the winter.

We use customer comments to improve the service we provide. Refer any reservation comments or complaints to the reservation system manager at 360-902-8672 or email: [reservations@parks.wa.gov](mailto:reservations@parks.wa.gov).

## Business Enterprises

Conducting business, such as selling items/products or performing services for pay, within the park is not allowed except by separate contract with Washington State Parks.

## Selling Firewood

At some parks, concessionaires sell firewood to park visitors. Selling firewood *for a concessionaire* is not part of a volunteer's duties. You may, however, *with park manager approval*, choose to sell firewood for a concessionaire. In this case, you would work *for and under agreement with* the concessionaire. Time spent working for the concessionaire selling firewood must be separate from and in addition to your host services.

Remember that during the time when you are working for the concessionaire you will not be acting in your capacity as a volunteer host, and therefore will not be covered by the industrial insurance provided by State Parks. The concessionaire should provide similar coverage, but you should clarify this with the concessionaire.

## Evaluating Your Host Experience

As a volunteer host serving in Washington State Parks you will be asked to evaluate your hosting experience, park staff and facilities, plus comment on additional training or information needed to assist you in performance of your duties. We will appreciate your honest assessment of your experience as a way to help us identify needed improvements such as providing additional information or training. The park manager, or your supervisor, will complete the bottom section of the evaluation form.

After you have read through this guide and the brochures, if you have any questions or concerns about hosting in State Parks, please talk with your supervisor.

# Host Duties

Your application packet includes your Volunteer Duties and Job Description, which you will complete with your supervisor. Some of the duties may include:

- Greeting and assisting visitors, informing them of park and facility rules, answering questions and receiving comments about the park, facility and surrounding area.
- Distributing maps, brochures, and facility information.
- Replenishing restroom and facility supplies when park staff are not present. Hosts may be requested to help make sure restroom facilities have adequate toilet paper and paper towels in the dispensers, floors are picked up or swept, or light bulbs are functioning and replaced when needed. Some parks may have the Host assist in stocking the restroom storage areas.
- Promoting care of the park or facility by keeping a clean site and performing minor maintenance tasks such as picking up litter or light duties as outlined by the park manager.
- Being a visible representative of the park or facility with a sufficient and comfortable knowledge of park and facility rules and surrounding area activities.
- Being observant for activities within the park or facility requiring immediate attention. Contacting park personnel and/or law enforcement when emergencies occur. **Remember:** You are not responsible for enforcing park rules.

Size, location, facilities and use not only determine park staffing and operation, but also what duties the park manager will be requesting you to perform. A host in one park may be asked to pick up litter and weed areas, plus greet visitors, while another host may be asked to check restrooms, take meter readings, take down flags and close gates in the evenings.

Examples of general park and facility tasks:

- Picking up litter in and around campsites or facilities
- Cleaning garbage and ash out of firepits
- Stacking burnable wood next to the firepits
- Raking campsite areas
- Pulling nails from tables, posts, trees
- Removing strings and rope from trees, bushes
- Sweeping or brushing off picnic tables
- Clipping brush out of the way
- Reporting any damaged tables, trees, firepits, or posts to supervisor
- Turning on and off water system for park or facility

Examples of some possible minor tasks:

- Checking and moving sprinklers
- Checking traffic meters
- Opening and/or closing park gates or other facilities
- Putting up and/or taking down flags
- Moving or cleaning up around garbage cans
- Raking or sweeping gravel
- Sweeping cobwebs off buildings
- Straightening site posts
- Keeping bulletin board information up-to-date
- Hosing down buildings and signs
- Pruning shrubs and trees
- Trimming or weeding grass
- Minor repairs to picnic tables, buildings, ramps and docks
- Checking kitchen facilities; opening shelters; posting Group Reservation signs
- Fixing fences

## Camper Registration Duties

As Hosts you may be asked to help with the following camper registration duties that do not involve handling park funds:

- Keeping track of occupied and vacant campsites
- Directing campers to vacant sites
- Reminding campers to register at booth or self-registration stations
- Assisting park staff in redirecting traffic if camp area is full
- Posting "Camp Area Full" sign
- Letting registration personnel know who needs presto fuel
- Keeping track of campers and number of nights in park
- Filling out registration sheet
- Pulling old tags off campsite posts
- Under direct supervision, assisting park staff with camper reservations
- Informing incoming campers where family or friends are located
- Directing picnickers to day-use area
- Answering questions on registration procedures in your park that may include:
  - Where and when do campers pay?
  - Can campers pay for more than one night at a time?
  - Are travelers checks, Canadian money, or personal checks accepted?
  - Where and when can firewood be purchased?
  - Once registered, can a camper leave the park and return if the gate is closed?
  - How do you get a park pass?
  - Does the park give refunds?
  - Can I pay for my friend's site?
  - Do you charge a surcharge?

## Junior Ranger Program

As a Host, you may be able to facilitate the Junior Ranger Program in a park. The Junior Ranger Program is an activity designed for young park visitors. Its purpose is to promote awareness of the park environment through constructive activities. Participants explore the role of the park ranger and what a park is and how it can be enjoyed safely. The program encourages the use of parks in ways that can conserve the resources for others to enjoy.

Eager Beaver, the Junior Ranger mascot, instructs young people through the activity book, coloring book, and park specific lessons how to be a steward of the land. Eager Beaver stresses recycling, litter control, and campsite/trail maintenance. Participants are given rewards every time they engage themselves in an organized Junior Ranger activity. If you are interested in participating in this program, we encourage you to ask the park manager for more details.

## Handling Difficult Situations

Most visitors enjoy the use of our state parks without committing any serious violations or disturbances, and most people who do violate park rules will respond to a friendly greeting and education or information on the rules.

If you observe visitors breaking the rules after informing or presenting them with verbal information or brochures **DO NOT ATTEMPT TO** further resolve or correct the problem. Contact your supervisor and proceed in the following manner:

1. **KEEP CALM.** Assess the situation carefully to determine if enforcement is needed and notify park staff. Park rangers have police powers and are specially trained to handle such situations.
2. If park rangers are not available and a serious violation or disturbance is occurring, refer to your Emergency Plan (see Emergencies) for the nearest available police, or call 911.
3. Please do not ignore obvious rule violations. Minor or small violations can become serious problems. If in doubt, report activities to your supervisor.
4. Take good notes. Jot down time, date, descriptions, site and license plate numbers. Report clear, accurate and concise information to the park ranger. Only report the facts.

# Safety

Your safety is important! Washington State Parks provides Workers Compensation medical coverage for volunteers who receive job-related injuries. Washington State Parks staff hopes all volunteers will have pleasant and injury-free experiences. Here are a few tips to keep you "safe and sound" while volunteering in our parks:

- Know your physical limitations! Discuss with your supervisor any physical limitations you may have prior to starting your hosting duties. Remember the park variables (size, location, facilities, and use) determine duties, and because of these variables, some parks are much more demanding!
- Use your legs, not your back, when lifting objects!
- Don't operate unfamiliar tools or machinery without training.
- Let your supervisor know if you have any health conditions that staff should be aware of in case of an emergency, i.e., medications, allergies, existing medical conditions.
- Let your supervisor know if you are diabetic, epileptic, or have any other medical problem, plus where you keep your medication. It should be readily accessible.
- Ask your supervisor for gloves, eye protectors, or other protective equipment if needed. We have asked that parks not allow Hosts to use chemicals. State law requires that workers be trained in the use and hazards of various chemicals.
- Dress properly for your tasks. Wear sturdy shoes and proper clothing.
- Attend park safety meetings.

## Park and Visitor Safety

As Volunteer Hosts, be aware of potential safety hazards to park visitors and report them to your supervisor.

Examples of safety hazards include:

- Down or exposed wires or faulty electrical box
- Hanging limbs in trees
- Broken sprinkler heads
- Holes in trails or lawns
- Damaged tables or firepits with exposed sharp edges, nails, or re-bar
- Toxic plants--poison oak, ivy, or nightshade
- Burned out lights in restrooms
- Foot bridges, railings, docks with raised nail heads
- Bee or wasp nests
- Firearms

Natural safety hazards may include:

- Ocean, lake, and river beaches that have no lifeguards. Strong currents, tides or floating logs are all potential hazards.
- Cliffs or steep trails and terrain
- Wildlife in the parks should not be fed (WAC 352-32-01001). Rattlesnakes are common place in Eastern Washington including our state parks.
- Plants producing berries or mushrooms can be very inviting, but do not ingest anything you don't positively know. Refer questioning visitors to the park manager.

Ask your supervisor if the park has hand-outs available on existing hazards within your park to give visitors. Report all vandalism to your supervisor immediately!

## Additional Safety Information

### Dead Battery

If a camper asks for a battery "jump start" from the state's vehicle you may do so if trained on proper procedure and approved by the park manager. Some parks will assist in this area. To be sure, check with the park manager at the beginning of your stay. You are not obligated to "jump start" a visitor's vehicle using your personal vehicle – this is your decision and at your own risk.

### Tools and Equipment

Parks do not lend out tools or equipment to visitors. Park managers are responsible for all park property.

Some parks may allow Volunteer Hosts to operate park vehicles after completion of a defensive driving course. Be a defensive driver and obey all park speed limits and rules of the road.

## Emergencies

Fortunately, emergencies don't happen every day; but when you're faced with one, you need to know what to do. As a Volunteer Host, a visitor may contact you first because of your location and visibility. You should make every attempt to contact the park ranger first, or if life threatening, notify authorities and make sure the park ranger is then notified of the emergency!

The most common types of emergencies in a park are:

- Health or injury/accident
- Disturbance
- Fire (recreational vehicle, building or facility, or forest fire)
- Lost child

To help you determine who and what number to contact in the event of an emergency, blank **Emergency Plan** sheets have been added at the end of this booklet. Please fill out two sheets at each park you host. Keep one sheet near the outside door of your camping

rig and the other posted inside or in a place readily accessible. The park manager should provide you copies of the park's emergency plan.

## Helpful Tips Before an Emergency Occurs

- You may want to keep a quarter or two taped in a handy accessible place (next to your Emergency Plan for example) in case an emergency phone call is required. If you are first-aid certified, keep a first-aid kit on hand. You are not obligated to perform first aid or CPR, this is your decision. **Remember** - Do not administer any type of drugs or provide first-aid beyond the limits of your training or certification! Complete your Emergency Plan sheet and keep it posted in a conspicuous place!
- Ask your supervisor where fire extinguishers, fire caches and first-aid kits are located throughout the park. Staff may request your assistance in bringing these aides to an emergency scene.
- Become familiar with your park. Know where specific sites, facilities, and park staff residences are located. Know where pay telephones are located. Check with your supervisor on what type of communications will be maintained between the Host and park ranger, i.e., CBs, radios, cell phones, or regular check-in with park staff.
- If you have an opportunity between hosting commitments in the parks, you may want to enroll in a first-aid and CPR course. Check with your supervisor or the local fire department about class availability.
- Always keep a notepad and pen/pencil handy to jot down information.

***Remember - Your safety always comes first!***

## What to do in the Event of an Emergency

- **KEEP CALM** - Assess the situation quickly but rationally.
- **Contact the park manager, park ranger, or other park staff.** Send a bystander, if necessary, to get park personnel.
- Administer first-aid or CPR **ONLY** if you are trained and certified and you choose to do so.
- Never administer any medication to other people.

## If the Park Staff Is Not Available...

1. If you have any doubt as to the extent of injury or serious illness CALL 911 or an ambulance. Send a bystander, if necessary, to make the call if you cannot leave the scene. Make sure they know the PARK, SITE NUMBER OR AREA, and TYPE OF EMERGENCY.

EXAMPLE: AYou! Go call 911 (or an ambulance) to \_\_\_\_\_ State Park, site number 14, there is a possible heart attack...@

2. Contact State Patrol if vehicles are involved in an accident. Send a bystander if necessary to make a phone call. Make sure the bystander knows PARK, SITE NUMBER or AREA, and TYPE OF ACCIDENT (non-injury or injury). Assist with first-aid, if trained; if not, try to comfort the injured or direct traffic. DO NOT remove any vehicles or materials (even broken glass) if there has been an injury. Traffic accidents are considered crime scenes.
3. Contact the local Sheriff's Office in an event of a boating accident or boating related injury or death.

### Disturbances

1. Contact the Sheriff and Park Manager/Ranger if there is domestic fighting, thefts, assaults, minors drinking, evidence of drug use, or rowdy behavior. **DO NOT ATTEMPT** to solve the problem yourself! You are not responsible for settling disputes or getting involved with dangerous situations. DO GET license plate numbers and descriptions, if possible, WITHOUT endangering yourself. **REMEMBER - DOMESTIC FIGHTING IS POTENTIALLY THE MOST DANGEROUS SITUATION YOU CAN ENCOUNTER!**
2. Direct Sheriff to area. Advise the officer if you noticed drugs, alcohol, weapons, or dogs in the site.
3. Let the sheriff know if park staff have been notified.

### Fire (Follow all directions from fire officials)

1. Quickly (but calmly) assess the situation.
2. Contact the Fire Department for RV, facility, or brush/forest fires. The Department of Natural Resources should also be contacted in brush or forest fires. Give accurate location and type of fire.
3. Contact the Park Manager/Ranger.
4. Use caution around RV fires. Keep campers away from propane tanks that may explode.

### Lost Child

1. Get an accurate description of the child including name, sex, hair, eye and skin color, height, weight, age, color clothing, and unusual moles, freckles, etc.
2. Ask where and when last seen and if alone or with another person.
3. Contact park staff.

4. Offer searching parents and friends a map of the camp area. Suggest checking play areas, fishing docks, swim beaches, hiking trails and remind them to double check or leave a family member at their campsite in case the child returns.
5. If the child is still missing after a thorough search of the campsite and park (about 30-60 minutes), contact the local sheriff's office and report your information and location. You may want to contact sooner if the child is very young, last seen at nearby hazards (cliffs, beaches, lake), or darkness is approaching. (Discuss with your park supervisor your specific role before an incident occurs.)
6. Report any foul play at once to sheriff officials. Follow any instructions they may give to you.
7. Stay in contact with park staff.

## In All Situations

1. If outside assistance has been called MAKE SURE someone is at the front gate (and at key locations if in large area) to provide directions to the emergency site.
2. Send a bystander if you are unavailable. Remind them to give clear directions and site number. Ask for volunteers to maintain traffic flow or keep crowds back.
3. Get accurate information and notes to report back to your supervisor. Note names, addresses, phone numbers, identification, vehicle licenses, type of injuries, or damage. Your information will be needed to assist the park staff in filling out an accident report, incident report, or witness statement.
4. After the emergency, if possible, clean up debris or block off.

**Please remember to make every attempt to contact park staff, no matter how minor an injury/accident/incident may appear.**

## Critical Incident Stress Management

The agency has an intervention program which addresses the effects of emotional trauma experienced at the workplace. This policy applies to all employees of the agency, whether full-time, part-time, temporary, volunteer, or court referred. For complete details, ask your supervisor for a copy of Policy 70-28.

# Lost and Found

As Hosts, lost and found articles will be reported to you first because of your location. Park managers are required to comply with an agency Lost and Found Procedure and fill out a Lost and Found Report on turned-in items. Ask your supervisor what steps you are to take. Some parks prefer having the Host refer the visitor to the park manager, while others may ask the Host to take down pertinent information and report later. If you are asked to help the visitor, please get the following information:

## Lost

1. Who is reporting the lost item?  
*Get name, address, and telephone number*
2. What is missing?  
*Note color, size, make, design, unique features, value, etc.*
3. How did it turn up missing?  
*Was it left behind, stolen, loaned to another person*
4. When was it last used or seen?  
*In a restroom, campsite, vehicle, beach, etc.*
5. Is reward offered?  
*Let the camper post sign on the park bulletin board.*

## Found

1. Who is reporting an item found?  
*Get name, address, and telephone number*
2. Where was item found?  
*Note the exact location, facility, campsite*
3. What time was item found?
4. What type of item was found?  
*Record as much information and description as possible.*
5. Does finder want to claim item later?

Put a temporary tag with this information on the found item. Give the finder the park manager's name, park address, and park telephone number. The park manager may provide you with the appropriate forms to give to the "finder" to fill out. Ask your supervisor what you are expected to do.

# Park Rules and Regulations

The purpose of rules is to protect our park resources and visitors. As a host, you will be sharing information about rules with the public. It is important that as a representative of State Parks you provide a good example by following all the park rules yourself.

Generally, people want to know what the rules are and what behavior is acceptable, but they don't always understand why a rule is required or why compliance is important. Listed below are several rules which park visitors sometimes overlook. Following each rule is a brief explanation of why the rule is necessary, and what you as a Host can do to help inform visitors of the rules.

***REMINDER: ALWAYS make sure the verbal and written information you give visitors is up-to-date, accurate, and provided or approved by the park manager. This may prevent any misunderstandings if a situation or violation should occur. Don't ever be hesitant to let visitors know that you are not sure of a rule. Ask your supervisor. You will know the information next time.***

## Pets

In Washington State Parks pets are required to be on a leash no longer than eight feet and be under control at all times. Owners are responsible for cleaning up after their pets. Animal wastes are to be placed in a plastic or paper bag and deposited in garbage cans. Pets are not allowed to disturb the peace and tranquility of a park. Livestock animals (chickens, goats) are not permitted. Horses, llamas, sled dogs or similar animals for recreation are allowed only where designated and posted to specifically permit such activity. Some parks may have designated pet off-leash areas. Check with your park manager to see if one exists in your park.

***Why the rule?*** Basically we don't want pets soiling other campers' sites, chasing or killing wildlife, chasing cars, motorcycles, bicycles, or other pets. We must protect people from being unexpectedly startled, attacked or bitten as they walk by; many people are afraid of dogs. Leashing also keeps animals from getting lost or injured.

***What can you do?*** Set a good example. Explain the rules and hand out pet brochures as needed. Report violations to park staff.

## Reserving or "Holding" Campsites

Campers have to physically occupy a campsite. Friends and neighbors cannot "hold" a site for a camper who has not arrived in the park. Two exceptions are parks on the Reservation System and parks providing multiple sites. Reservation System information can be found in your host binder.

***Why the rule?*** Fairness; everyone has the same opportunity.

***What can you do?*** Know whether your park is on the reservation system or the first-come, first-served system. Provide campers appropriate information. Report campers who continue to save unoccupied sites.

## Extra Vehicles and Number of People per Site

Campsite sizes and parking pads vary from park to park. Regardless of site or pad size, only one CAMPING unit (one RV or travel trailer and vehicle) and a maximum of eight people are allowed per site, unless otherwise authorized by the park manager. Tents are limited to the number that will fit appropriately on the site pad. Park managers have the discretion to determine if one extra vehicle will fit appropriately in the site. All other vehicles must be parked in extra vehicle parking areas or parking lots. All extra vehicles are charged if not towed into the park.

***Why the rule?*** Overloading sites causes unnecessary wear and tear on the facilities and resources. In addition, overcrowding results in excess noise, congested roads, and crowded restrooms.

***What can you do?*** Inform visitors of the rules in your park (check with your supervisor), and report non-compliance.

## Collection of Firewood

Collecting firewood is prohibited within the park area. Occasional exceptions are designated beach and park areas with excessive down and dead tree materials. Park managers may issue firewood permits for a small fee so park users may use this excess debris.

***Why the rule?*** Generally, dead wood decomposes and enriches the soil. Beach logs are important to stabilize beach and dune areas. Also, once dead material is gone, visitors have a tendency to collect/cut living trees and shrubs, which can be unsightly and create dangerous hazards.

***What can you do?*** Know what the wood collection policy is in your park. Let visitors know where and when they can buy firewood if it appears they are "scrounging" for wood. Report violators to park staff.

## Quiet Hours

The quiet hours established for Washington State Parks are 10:00 p.m. to 6:30 a.m. Noise from stereos, TVs, radios, and loudspeakers are not to carry beyond the visitors' campsite or picnic site unless approved by the park manager. Generators can operate only between 8:00 a.m. and 9:00 p.m.

***Why the rule?*** To ensure peace and quiet for all visitors and park employees, and to assist in crowd control in some situations.

***What can you do?*** Remind arriving campers of quiet hours (some parks may have hand-outs available). Report any continuing or excessive loud disturbances to the

park staff, particularly if they continue after 10:00 p.m. Do not attempt to contact visitors, however, especially if suspected drinking or drug use is involved. Report generators operating after 9:00 p.m.

## Stay Limits

High-Use Season April 1 - September 30: Visitors may stay for 10 consecutive nights in one park and then must vacate the park for at least three consecutive nights. The park ranger has the discretion to extend the maximum stay to 14 consecutive nights if the campground is not fully occupied. Campers cannot exceed a total of 30 days in a 40-day period in one park.

Off-Season October 1 - March 31: Visitors may stay for 20 consecutive nights in one park, and then must vacate the park for three consecutive nights. Campers cannot exceed a total of 40 days in a 60-day period.

***Why the rule?*** Provides fair and equal use of parks. Prevents individuals or groups from "living" or attempting to establish residency in parks.

***What can you do?*** Be knowledgeable of date change from High-Use Season to Off-Season. Report campers exceeding the limit to park staff.

## Sewage and Gray Water (SinkWaste) Disposal

Visitors must use designated disposal areas or receptacles when dumping refuse and waste from vehicles and recreational vehicles; use only designated areas when cleaning fish or food, washing clothing or other personal or household articles, or when bathing pets; and use only designated areas when washing vehicle or recreational vehicle. Polluting, contaminating, or dumping any type of waste or refuse including human or animal bodily wastes is not allowed in any stream, river, lake, or other water body running through or adjacent to any park area.

***Why the rule?*** Dumping sewage and waste water can cause unsightly, smelly, unsanitary conditions which can spread disease.

***What can you do?*** Know where waste disposal and dump stations are located. If none are located within the park, find out where the nearest station is so you can inform visitors. Watch for sewage hoses or sink drain hoses lying on the ground, and report any discharge to park staff.

## Water

The taking of five gallons of water or more from state park areas for personal or commercial use outside state park boundaries is not permitted except for:

1. Those with signed agreements with state parks for water use;
2. Registered campers and overnight moorage visitors.
3. Those persons who have paid the trailer dump station or watercraft launch fees when filling fresh water holding tanks in RVs or vessels.

**Why the rule?** The taking of excessive amounts of domestic water is costly to the parks when metered and negatively affects water supply for park visitors when the park is on a well.

**What can you do?** You can educate people to the new rules, which became effective in February 2007. You can notify the park manager of repeat offenders and provide the park manager with a vehicle description, license number, and any pattern of abuse (day of week, time of day)

## Solicitation

Only concessionaires authorized and issued a permit through Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission are allowed to sell goods, food, or firewood within a state park area.

**Why the rule?** Prevents vendors or merchants from selling and peddling any type of goods within a park area, harassing visitors or leaving leaflets dispersed throughout a park area creating a litter problem.

**What can you do?** Report solicitors immediately to park staff (get vehicle license if possible). Remove posted advertisement materials from restrooms and bulletin boards and give materials to supervisor.

## Alcohol

Alcohol is allowed only in designated campgrounds, picnic areas, or licensed concessions. Kegs or containers larger than two gallons are not permitted without prior written park manager approval. All state laws regarding alcohol apply in Washington State Parks.

**Why the rule?** To prevent uncontrolled alcohol consumption that may result in dangerous situations and disruptive behavior associated with its abuse.

**What can you do?** Ask your supervisor where alcohol is allowed, and where it is not, and if alcohol is a prevalent problem in your park. Ask what you can do to help. Report the following to supervisor:

- Minors drinking. Do not attempt to take away liquor or ask minors to leave the park if they have been consuming.
- Unpermitted kegs or two or more gallon containers filled with beer or liquor. Liquor Board license is not acceptable.
- Rowdy behavior or large gatherings consuming alcohol.
- Drunk drivers. Get vehicle description and license number if possible.

Remember to set a good example yourself. Keep open containers in your campsite and please don't promote excessive alcohol consumption with neighbors.

## Metal Detectors

Use of metal detectors is allowed after self registration and under certain conditions. The use and operation of metal detectors, as well as the removal of small contemporary materials, is permitted within selected state parks. Use is only allowed in specified areas during daylight hours; recreational metal detectorists are requested to consult the park map indicating approved areas prior to detecting. These maps are located on the park bulletin boards; use may not interfere with the recreational activities of other park visitors; and metal detecting devices may not emit a sound audible to other park users. Destruction or disturbance of park facilities, natural features, or historical or archaeological resources is not permitted. Items of historical or archaeological significance (remaining from pioneer or Native American activities) cannot be removed. Such items found must be reported to park personnel, and the area should not be disturbed further. Users must properly dispose of found or recovered trash.

***Why the rule?*** Prevents removal or damage to archaeological or historical resources. Prevents disturbance of other recreating visitors.

***What can you do?*** Ask your supervisor if metal detectors are allowed in your park where the activity is permitted and what information to give visitors.

## Bicycles

Bicycles, tricycles, rollerblades, skateboards, or similar operator-propelled equipment are allowed in state parks, but are restricted to roads and trails. Riders are to obey all regulatory signs, and all devices must be operated in a safe manner.

***Why the rule?*** State park roadways are state highways and all rules of the road apply to both motorized and non-motorized vehicles. Unsafe practices create hazards and endanger both the operator and park visitors.

***What can you do?*** Ask the park manager if your park has any bicycle-use restrictions or if any trails or areas are closed to riding. If available, you may hand out "Bicycling in Washington State Parks" to visitors with bicycles/tricycles. The brochure has excellent bicycle operation safety tips. Report anyone operating any device in an unsafe manner.

## Off-Road Vehicles (ORVs) and All Terrain Vehicles (ATVs)

Some parks have a problem with ORVs and ATVs not properly licensed or equipped, and at times operated by unlicensed drivers. Ask your park manager if this is a problem at your park and what information or help you can provide to educate visitors.

# Emergency Plan

Park: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest PUBLIC telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRE EXTINGUISHER: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRST AID KIT: \_\_\_\_\_

**Park Telephone Numbers**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Cell</b>
Manager _____	_____	_____
Asst Manager _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____

**Emergency Telephone Numbers**

	<b>Emergency Only</b>	<b>Business</b>
Ambulance	_____	_____
Coast Guard	_____	_____
Fire Department	_____	_____
Fisheries	_____	_____
Hospital	_____	_____
Pharmacy	_____	_____
Poison Control	_____	_____
Police Local	_____	_____
County	_____	_____
State	_____	_____
National Marine Fisheries	_____	_____
Natural Resources (Forest Fire)	_____	_____
Towing or mechanical	_____	_____
Wildlife	_____	_____

# Emergency Plan

Park: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest PUBLIC telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRE EXTINGUISHER: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRE FIGHTING EQUIPMENT: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of nearest FIRST AID KIT: \_\_\_\_\_

## Park Telephone Numbers

Name	Number	Cell
Manager _____	_____	_____
Asst Manager _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____
Ranger _____	_____	_____

## Emergency Telephone Numbers

	Emergency Only	Business
Ambulance	_____	_____
Coast Guard	_____	_____
Fire Department	_____	_____
Fisheries	_____	_____
Hospital	_____	_____
Pharmacy	_____	_____
Poison Control	_____	_____
Police Local	_____	_____
County	_____	_____
State	_____	_____
National Marine Fisheries	_____	_____
Natural Resources (Forest Fire)	_____	_____
Towing or mechanical	_____	_____
Wildlife	_____	_____