



2025 – Volunteer Manual

Dear Volunteer:

Thank you for becoming an Airdrie Festival of Lights volunteer! We welcome your enthusiasm and are delighted you chose the Festival for volunteer service.

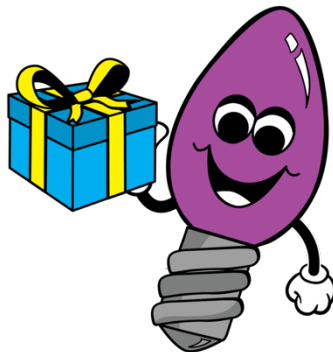
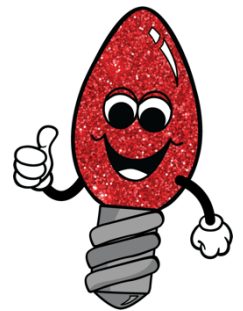
The Airdrie Festival of Lights is a vibrant and spectacular event that attracts thousands of visitors to Airdrie every holiday season. Without the participation of volunteers like you, this event would not be possible. We appreciate your commitment of time and energy, and will strive to find a volunteer opportunity that matches your goals.

Please review this Volunteer Handbook so you can begin your journey as an Airdrie Festival of Lights volunteer. If you have any concerns or suggestions about your volunteer involvement, please contact a member of our Volunteer Management Team.

Again, welcome and thank you for choosing the Airdrie Festival of Lights. We look forward to having you on our Volunteer Team!

Sincerely,

The Board of Directors,
Airdrie Festival of Lights Society



The Airdrie Festival of Lights began in 1996, and is now Western Canada's most spectacular interactive walk-through light display. The light displays are illuminated by hundreds of thousands of bulbs, and covers nearly 6 acres. Visitors to the park can stroll through the Festival's unique Winter Wonderland of lights, soak up the atmosphere of families laughing while riding the train, grab a hot chocolate and warm up by the bonfires, while listening to holiday music. On average, 75,000 visitors a year come from all over the world and have the time of their lives!

The Festival is operated by a non-profit group, the Airdrie Festival of Lights Society (AFOLS), a provincially registered organization, that is solely responsible for funding and operating the Festival. The Airdrie Festival of Lights is 100% volunteer-driven. Each year, more than 3,000 volunteer hours are contributed to the Festival. The Festival does not receive direct funding from the City of Airdrie. Our funding comes from advertisers, sponsors, donations, train ticket, and hot chocolate sales. A portion of our revenues also goes to other non-profit organizations and fundraising groups that provide group volunteer hours.

The Airdrie Festival of Lights provides an opportunity for the people of Airdrie to take part in a community event that is fun for the whole family, promotes social and economic well-being, and fosters civic pride, while remaining affordable to all.

The Airdrie Festival of Lights runs every night in December
Starting on December 1st to December 31st from 6 PM – 9 PM.

We would appreciate your participation as a volunteer between 5:45 PM and 9:15 PM

Setting up of the lights begins the third Saturday & Sunday in November, and continues until opening on December 1st. Weekend hours are from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM.

Help is appreciated any time during those hours

The lights will be taken down the first Saturday and Sunday in January 2026,
from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM



Volunteer Roles – An Overview

Nightly through December

Night Leader – Responsible for overseeing the events of the evening.

Volunteer Manager – Assigns volunteer duties and supervises volunteers.

Concession Sales – Responsible for preparing and selling of various beverages and/or food items.

Santa's Giftshop * – Responsible for selling gift items, and assisting children shop independently from their parents/guardians in the Kid's Only Section.

Train Station Sales – Responsible for the sales of train tickets.

Train Drivers – Responsible for the safe operation of The Festival Express (electric train), Santa's Express and Polar Express (motorized trackless trains).

Train Assistants – responsible for the collection of tickets, train lines, helping guests on and off the trains, and general safety.

Donations/Mascots * – Responsible for offering entertainment to visitors to the Airdrie Festival of Lights. Assists in seeking donations from guests.

Floater – Assists the volunteer management team by greeting buses, providing breaks to other volunteers, replenishing supplies, pathway maintenance, etc.

Small Fire Pit Attendants * – ensures the safety and maintenance of the fire pit area.

Parking Gate Attendant – responsible for organizing vehicle traffic in the parking lot and ensuring pedestrian safety.

Survey Taker – Assists with communicating with guests and collecting statistical data.

* These duties would be appropriate for Family Volunteering



Canadian Code for Volunteer Involvement

The Code has three important elements:

1. Values for Volunteer Involvement

- Volunteer involvement is vital to a just and democratic society.
- It fosters civic responsibility, participation and interaction.
- Volunteer involvement strengthens communities.
- It promotes change and development by identifying and responding to community needs.
- Volunteer involvement mutually benefits both the volunteer and the organization.
- It increases the capacity of organizations to accomplish their goals, and provides volunteers with opportunities to develop and contribute.
- Volunteer involvement is based on relationships.
- Volunteers are expected to act with integrity and be respectful and responsive to others with whom they interact.

2. Guiding Principles for Volunteer Involvement

- Voluntary organizations recognize that volunteers are a vital human resource and will commit to the appropriate infrastructure to support volunteers.
- The organization's practices ensure effective volunteer involvement. The organization commits to providing a safe and supportive environment for volunteers.
- Volunteers make a commitment and are accountable to the organization.
- Volunteers will act with respect for beneficiaries and community. Volunteers will act responsibly and with integrity.

3. Organization Standards for Volunteer Involvement

- The board of directors and senior management acknowledge and support the vital role of volunteers in achieving the organization's purpose or mission.
- Policies and procedures are adopted by the organization to provide a framework that defines and support the involvement of volunteers.
- A qualified person is designated to be responsible for the volunteer program.
- A clearly communicated screening process is consistently applied.
- Volunteer assignments address the purpose of the organization and involve volunteers in meaningful ways, reflecting their various abilities, needs and backgrounds.
- Volunteer recruitment and selection reaches out to diverse sources of volunteers.
- Volunteers receive an orientation to the organization, its policies and procedures and receive training for their volunteer assignment.
- Volunteers receive appropriate levels of supervision according to their task and are given regular opportunities to receive and give feedback.
- Volunteers are welcomed and treated as valuable and integral members of the organization's human resources.
- The contributions of volunteers are regularly acknowledged with formal and informal recognition methods.

(Volunteer Canada)

Volunteer Program Policies

Purpose

The purpose of the following policies is to provide overall guidance and direction to Airdrie Festival of Lights (AFOL) volunteers. The Airdrie Festival of Lights Society (AFOLS) reserves the right to change any of these policies at any time and to expect adherence to the changed policy. The Volunteer Management Team (VMT) shall determine areas not specifically covered by these policies.

Policies

Policy #1 – Attendance

It is the policy of the AFOL Volunteer program that volunteers perform their duties and shifts as assigned. It is requested that volunteers commit to a schedule of 3 (three) or more shifts.

Procedure:

- The Volunteer Coordinator will assign the volunteer appropriate shifts, taking into account the time commitment offered by the volunteer. Volunteers should arrive 15 minutes prior to their shift in order to obtain last minute instructions.
- The volunteer is expected to contact the Volunteer Coordinator if changes occur.

Policy # 2 – Absenteeism

Volunteers are expected to provide a minimum of 24 hours' notice if they are unable to volunteer for their assigned shift.

Procedure:

- Volunteers should inform the Volunteer Coordinator by email <volunteer.afols@gmail.com> if they are expected to be absent from their assigned job.
- Continual absenteeism will result in a review of the volunteer's work assignment.

Policy # 3 – Tardiness

Volunteers who are late for their shift may have their shift reassigned.

Procedure:

- The Volunteer Coordinator will address continual tardiness with the volunteer with a view to solving the problem or by reassigning the volunteer to a more appropriate shift.
- Only two (2) warnings will be issued, after which the Volunteer Coordinator may terminate the volunteer's involvement in the program.

Policy # 4 – Reference Letters

The Airdrie Festival of Lights is under no obligation to provide Reference Letters unless the Volunteer Coordinator is satisfied with the service of the Volunteer. If satisfied, the Volunteer Coordinator will provide a reference provided that fifteen (15) hours of service has been provided.

Procedure:

- Volunteers are requested to contact the Volunteer Coordinator by email, at least 24 hours in advance with a written request.
- Volunteers should allow (1) week for a WRITTEN reference to be drawn up.

Policy # 5 – Community Service

Individuals requiring community service will not be accepted unless a "community service hours confirmation form" is completed. It is up to the discretion of the Volunteer Coordinator whether a community service volunteer will be accepted. The AFOL reserves the right to refuse a Community Service volunteer if deemed not suitable.

Procedure:

- The Volunteer Coordinator will discuss with the Community Service volunteer, their hours, assignments and expectations.
- All forms that should be returned to a Probation Officer are the responsibility of the volunteer.

Policy # 6 – Non-Discrimination

It is the policy of the AFOLS that there will be no discrimination or harassment in its programs, activities or volunteer hiring practices based on race, gender, sexual preference, marital status, religious convictions, age, mental or physical disabilities.

Procedure:

- In the interview, the Volunteer Coordinator is expected to determine the volunteer's suitability by assessing their ability to perform tasks as outlined in the volunteer job descriptions. The Coordinator is given the discretion to refuse a volunteer if they deem that the job applied for is beyond the capabilities of the person applying. However, where possible, another job will be assigned to better serve the capabilities of that person.
- When prospective volunteers who have mental/physical disabilities have an aide assigned to them, the aide should be present in the interview. The Volunteer Coordinator is NOT expected to provide other volunteers to assist the person with disabilities.

Policy # 7 – Dress Code

Volunteers shall dress appropriately for the conditions in the performance of their duties. No responsibility is accepted by the Festival of Lights from injuries sustained by negligence of the volunteer who is dressed inappropriately.

Procedure:

- If the VMT notices a volunteer that is inappropriately dressed, they will request that the volunteer return to the Volunteer Trailer for extra clothing.
- When contacting volunteers to confirm their shifts, the Volunteer Coordinator will also include a reminder that shifts are subject to change, and that the volunteer should always dress appropriately to work outside for the evening, even if they have been assigned an inside position.

Policy # 8 – Confidentiality

All Festival of Lights volunteers, including Board of Directors and Members of Committees, will be required to sign a; STATEMENT OF CONFIDENTIALITY. Volunteers will regard all information they have access to or are given as a result of their volunteering as being confidential. No information should be released to a third party without due authorization.

Procedure:

- The Confidentiality Statement should be attached to the Volunteer Application and placed in the volunteer's file.
- All information pertaining to a volunteer, i.e., application form, community service, volunteer information should be placed in a locked filing cabinet or office.
- If information is breached, the Volunteer Coordinator is authorized to investigate and report all findings to the Board.
- Termination may result if a breach of confidentiality is proven.

Policy # 9 – Expense Reimbursement

Volunteers will only receive reimbursement for expenses that have been duly authorized by the AFOLS Treasurer.

Procedure:

- All expense claims, along with any relevant receipts, must be submitted to the Coordinator within 30 days. Any claims not submitted in the appropriate time period will be subject to approval by the AFOLS Board of Directors.

Policy # 10 – Record Keeping

A system of records will be maintained for each volunteer with the AFOL. These shall include, hours worked, dates of service, positions held, duties performed, evaluation of work, awards received. Records shall remain confidential.

Procedure:

- The volunteer will be required to sign in prior to the commencement of their shift each night, and to sign out at the end of each shift. The information required on the sign in/out sheet includes: NAME; GROUP; TIME IN and TIME OUT. It is the volunteer's responsibility to ensure all information is entered for each shift. Failure to do so could result in a volunteer not being credited for their time.
- Volunteers will be required to complete a Volunteer Application Form and a Statement of Confidentiality prior

- to volunteer placement.
- Volunteers will be required to participate in regular evaluations, and communications with the Volunteer Coordinator.
- Volunteers will have the opportunity to use a Communication Binder, found in the Volunteer Trailer to write down suggestions to the Volunteer Coordinator; These comments will be reviewed on an ongoing basis by the Volunteer Coordinator and if applicable changes to the process will be implemented.
- A Volunteer Hour's Log and/or database will be maintained.

Policy # 11 – Volunteer Management

The Airdrie Festival of Lights will support the principles of the Volunteer Management Cycle by structuring the processes of recruiting, screening, interviewing, orientating, training, placing, supervising and conducting performance evaluations for volunteers.

Procedure:

- Recruitment: Volunteers shall be recruited by the AFOLS on a proactive basis with the intent of broadening and expanding the volunteer involvement of the community.
- Screening: The screening process for the AFOL Volunteer Program will include risk management, clear job descriptions, reference checks, Criminal Record Check and a Vulnerable Sector Check, orientation and training, supervision and follow up.
- Orientation and Training: The Volunteer Coordinator will contact volunteers, and set a date and time for adequate orientation and training.
- Supervision: The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that all volunteers are adequately supervised during their volunteer work.
- Performance Evaluations: Ongoing performance reviews will be the responsibility of the Volunteer Coordinator. Phone calls to congratulate or thank volunteers should be ongoing.

Policy # 12 – Use of Equipment and Offsite Activities

Volunteers will receive training in operation of specialized equipment prior to placement. The AFOLS will not be responsible for injuries/situations arising, if volunteers disregard this policy.

Procedure:

- The Volunteer Coordinator will either train the volunteers, or delegate a person who has done the position previously to train the volunteers.
- Training sessions will be ongoing as new procedures occur. The Volunteer Coordinator will communicate instructions in advance of shifts where possible as well as have instructions regarding the operation of equipment on the site where the equipment is used.
- All volunteers will be notified that they are to notify a Board or family member if they are going alone to the Airdrie offsite location.

Policy # 13 – Minimum Age Requirement

The minimum age for volunteering with the AFOL is 14 years old if volunteer is unaccompanied by a parent. Volunteers under the age of 14 may volunteer with the AFOL if they are directly supervised by a parent/guardian at all times.

Procedure:

- All youth volunteers, ages 14 – 17 must fill out a Volunteer Registration Form, along with parental/guardian consent, giving permission for the youth to volunteer.
- Volunteers under the age of 14 years are not required to complete a Volunteer Registration Form, but rather will be added to their parent/guardian's form.
- Groups/families must have a minimum of 6 (six) adults on duty per evening, or a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 6 children for youth ages 14 – 17 and a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 1 child for children under the age of 14; This policy applies to set-up and take down as well. The Volunteer Coordinator should inform the Leaders of groups or parents who have volunteers under the age of 14 that supervision of that volunteer is their responsibility.
- If improper supervision of a volunteer under the age of 14 has occurred, the Volunteer Coordinator has the authority to dismiss the group/family who was responsible for the volunteer's supervision.
- Family volunteers will be assigned positions that are suitable for families.

Policy # 14 – Parking

The AFOL will provide adequate parking for Volunteers.

Procedure:

- Parking is available to volunteers in designated areas; the Volunteer Coordinator at the Volunteer Orientation will give Volunteers information regarding parking.
- Following their shift, another volunteer, or security guard may escort volunteers to the parking lot.

Policy # 15 – Termination of Volunteers

The Airdrie Festival of Lights reserves the right to terminate a volunteer for the following reasons: breached confidentiality; continued tardiness; impairment; theft of property or funds, lies or falsification of records, illegal, violent or unsafe acts, mistreatment of others; failure to meet standards of performance; unwillingness to support the mission of the organization.

Procedure:

- Prior to termination of a volunteer, the volunteer will have the opportunity to meet with the Volunteer Coordinator so each can communicate their concerns. The Volunteer Coordinator, may, at any time suggest a re-assignment that better suits the volunteer's talents.
- If an amicable resolution cannot be found a verbal warning will ensue. If the behavior continues, the Volunteer Coordinator will issue one written warning.
- If the behavior continues, a written letter, signed by the Volunteer Coordinator and the President will be issued to the volunteer notifying of termination.

Policy # 16 – Appeal of Termination

The Airdrie Festival of Lights welcomes appeals from volunteers who have been terminated. However, the appeal from the volunteer must be in writing within 48 hours of termination stating the objection, concern or problem(s). The AFOLS reserves the right to have final authority on the matter of volunteer termination and appeals.

Procedure:

- A meeting should be called to include the Board President and Volunteer Coordinator, to discuss the concerns raised in the written communication. All notes will be kept of the meeting, and will remain confidential.
- All efforts should be made to resolve the dispute, either by offering the volunteer another assignment or referring the volunteer to other agencies that best suit the talent and skills of the volunteer. If this fails, the volunteer should be asked how they would like to resolve the matter to a satisfactory conclusion. If the problem cannot be resolved, a formal letter of Termination should be mailed to the volunteer within 48 hours. All decisions reached by the Board President are final.

Policy # 17 – Risk Management

While performing volunteer activities on behalf of the AFOL volunteers are prohibited from being impaired. The AFOLS Board of Directors shall ensure that adequate insurance coverage is available for AFOL volunteers.

Procedure:

- If the VMT suspects that a volunteer is in breach of this policy, they will discuss the problem with the volunteer, and a warning will be issued.
- If illegal activities are evident, the VMT should immediately call the police.
- When an incident involving impairment occurs with a volunteer, the VMT prior to the end of shift must record the incident. An INCIDENT REPORT FORM will be found in the Volunteer Trailer. Volunteer Night Leaders will be requested to sign the incident report.
- If a volunteer shows visible signs of impairment, they will be requested to leave the park.
- A formal letter of termination should be mailed to the volunteer within 48 hours.
- The AFOLS should inform the Volunteer Coordinator of the insurance coverage that is in place for volunteers.

Policy # 18 – Handling of Cash

Only approved AFOLS personnel will be responsible for the distributing and collecting of cash during the evening.

Procedure:

- A cash box will be given to the volunteers who are in sales positions for the evening.
- The Volunteer Coordinator should ensure that friends who are unknown to the AFOL be split up and given alternate duties.
- The float should be counted and verified at the start and end of each shift.

- Only approved AFOLS personnel should empty cash boxes, and donation receptacles during the evening and at the end of each shift.
- Monies collected should be immediately deposited in the night boxes of the AFOLS bank by a minimum of two people.

Policy # 19 – Emergency Evacuation Policy

Medical emergencies that occur at the Festival of Lights Site will be handled immediately and an Incident Report will be completed. An Emergency Response Contact (ERC) will be assigned each night. The Volunteer Orientation will include evacuation procedures from Nose Creek Park in case of fire, natural disasters or any other circumstances that could be classified as an emergency.

Procedure:

- The ERC should be issued with instructions on how to evacuate volunteers safely from the park in case of an emergency.
- The VMT should immediately phone the correct authorities and follow the EVACUATION PLAN if the ERC declares an emergency at the AFOL site.
- Emergency instructions should be posted in the Volunteer Trailer. A follow-up meeting should take place to update volunteers.

Policy # 20 – Media Relations Policy

All enquiries and/or requests from the media will be referred, without editorial comment to the Coordinator. Access to information: Information pertaining to the AFOL will only be released if authorized by the President.

Procedure:

- When the media requests an interview from a volunteer, the volunteer will immediately refer such requests to the Coordinator.
- Volunteers will explain to the person making the request that in order to present a cohesive, current and precise interview, it is best that all comments come from the Coordinator.

***If you have any questions or concerns regarding these policies, please contact
the Airdrie Festival of Lights
Volunteer Management Team by email at volunteer.afols@gmail.com***

EMERGENCY PLAN

For Injuries Only

REMAIN CALM

- IF NECESSARY, CALL 911.
- ADVISE NIGHT LEADER OF SITUATION
- IF TRAINED IN FIRST AID OBTAIN FIRST AID KIT AVAILABLE IN VOLUNTEER TRAILER OR CONCESSION
- STAY WITH INJURED PERSON UNTIL HELP ARRIVES.

Emergencies don't happen often, but it is important to act calmly and quickly.

It is also important when calling 911 to give your name (Airdrie Festival of Lights, Nose Creek Park) and location (i.e.: firepit, pond, parking lot) and nature of emergency.

Know the location of the First Aid Kit, two-way radios and telephones.

Night Leader will complete the incident report form after emergency has been attended to and reporting party will be asked to sign.