

HOW TO FIRE A VOLUNTEER

PREVENTATIVE MEASURES:

1. Expectations must be developed and clearly communicated. Clearly defined job descriptions or a checklist might help. You must provide the support once you define your expectations.
2. Contingency management: Leader anticipates everything that can go wrong and designs methods to accomplish tasks which include contingencies to eliminate problems before they occur. Example: set deadlines so if they are missed, there's still time to salvage.
3. Ongoing communication and feedback: This is very necessary ingredient. Make use of information gathered in interview as well as membership questionnaires to learn why volunteers chose to get involved and design tasks and experiences which are rewarding.

QUESTIONS A LEADER SHOULD ASK:

3. Have I given clear assignments to the volunteer?
4. Have I given the volunteer the necessary resources to complete the assignment?
5. Have I given a job which is too big?
6. Did I monitor the job and give realistic deadlines?
7. Did the task match the volunteer's interests?

CORRECTIVE METHODS:

1. Give honest feedback which objectively describes problem to the volunteer (feedback should be given privately to individual).
2. Give a clear expectation of behavior change expected. Encourage them to give feedback to ensure they've heard you correctly and to get their input into possible solutions.
3. Remain direct and firm—don't couch corrective comments with compliments—may miss the corrective comments altogether.
4. Devise a method of monitoring expected change: meet after the meeting, give them periodic notes, pair them with a positive model.
5. Make use of the behavioral contract.

TERMINATION:

If you've done everything you can think of and it fails, you may have no other choice but to fire a volunteer.

3. Carefully develop a case for termination in writing, listing what steps have been taken and what actions resulted.
4. Think about and plan entire process. You may even want to rehearse with an advisor or trusted friend to be sure you have covered all of your bases.
5. Recognizing the process will be painful—for both of you. The volunteer may be angry or sad.
6. Often there is a delayed reaction and the volunteer might come back to you for an explanation. You may have to calmly repeat the process. Answer all questions directly and calmly, but stick to your decision.

Source: Boatman, Sara, "How to Fire a Volunteer," *Student Activities Programming*, March, 1981, pp42-47.