## Orientating volunteers

It can be an often overlooked step, yet orientation is a highly important process for clubs and their volunteers.

New members should be welcomed and given details about their position, policies and procedures, the values, behaviours and operations of the club, and introduced to co-workers and other key people.

Taking up a new position is a critical period for new volunteers and for a club. Volunteers are making a transition from being an outsider to an insider and cannot be expected to understand the requirements of their new position or how the club functions on a day-to-day basis. A well-designed orientation process reduces stress on new volunteers, makes them feel welcome, and may reduce the likelihood of turnover.

Some clubs run formal orientation programs as a prelude to more detailed training and development programs. In many sport and recreation organisations, the orientation process is less formal, but no less important if volunteers are going to perform their new roles successfully.

After orientation, volunteers should:

* Be familiar with the club; its purpose, values, behaviours.
* Understand their role in the club, including their obligations to key policies and procedures.
* Be aware of their rights and responsibilities.
* Be made to feel welcome, respected and needed.

**Orientation Checklist**

When organising orientation events or welcoming new volunteers to your club, consider the following:

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| Provide an orientation guidebook containing relevant information including: key contact details, copies of the current newsletter, annual report and relevant policies and guidelines. |  |
| Provide a copy of the constitution. |  |
| Enter the name, address and contact details of each volunteer into the club database. |  |
| Gather and file copies of qualifications and accreditation certificates from each volunteer. |  |
| Where a positional requirement, ensure insurance coverage is adequate and up to date. |  |
| Introduce key volunteers and/or staff. If possible, appoint a volunteer coordinator or allocate volunteers to a committee member under a ‘buddy’ system. |  |
| Outline the roles and responsibilities of key volunteers and staff. |  |
| Provide a list of the roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of the volunteer in their new position. |  |
| Discuss training needs of the volunteers and identify the level of ongoing support to be provided.  |  |
| Familiarise volunteers with facilities, equipment and resources. |  |
| Explain and ‘walk through’ emergency and evacuation procedures. |  |
| Familiarise volunteers with the organisation’s day-to-day operations (safety and risk management, telephone, photocopier, keys, filing system, tea/coffee making, office processes and procedures, authorising expenditure). |  |