Volunteer event checklist for clubs and non-profits

Charity run, club fair or flea market: when volunteers carry an event, you need to settle who is liable, how the volunteers are insured and how you thank them. The eight sections of the checklist cover everything that differs from working with paid staff.

Requirements and permits differ by state, municipality and event size. The checklist is not legal advice. Always confirm details with the responsible authority.

01 Responsibility and scope

- ☐ Decide who organises: the club, several clubs together or an initiative. Liability, insurance and permits depend on it.
- ☐ Involve the board early and record the decision to hold the event.
- ☐ Form a small organising team with an overall lead and a person in charge of each area.
- ☐ Match goal and scope realistically to the number of volunteers available.
- ☐ Pick a date that leaves volunteers time alongside work, family and other commitments.

02 Insurance, law and data protection

- ☐ Check the organiser's liability insurance and whether it covers volunteers and guests.
- ☐ Clarify accident cover for volunteers: club insurance, statutory accident insurance or a regional group policy for volunteers.
- ☐ For volunteers under 18, match tasks and hours to their age and get parental consent.
- ☐ For tasks involving children and young people, check whether a criminal record certificate is required.
- ☐ Collect only the volunteer data needed for the event and decide who may see it and when it is deleted.
- ☐ Ask in advance for consent to photos in which volunteers can be recognised.

03 Recruiting volunteers

- ☐ Estimate demand per area and shift and plan a reserve for no-shows.
- ☐ Advertise concrete tasks with their time commitment instead of a general call.
- ☐ Reach out through members, partner clubs, schools, neighbours and volunteer centres.
- ☐ Offer short slots of two to three hours too, so newcomers can join easily.
- ☐ Offer a simple sign-up and confirm every sign-up promptly.

04 Tasks and shifts

- ☐ Describe briefly for each task what needs doing and what skills it takes.
- ☐ Plan shifts with breaks so the same people are not working throughout.

- [ ] Pair new volunteers with experienced ones.
- [ ] Take wishes and limits into account, such as time windows, physical strain or a lift.
- [ ] Name a contact person for each area who can be reached during the event.

05 Information and briefing

- [ ] Send all details a few days ahead: meeting point, time, contact person, clothing and travel.
- [ ] Give a short briefing on site, including emergency routes, first aid and handling cash.
- [ ] Make volunteers recognisable, for example with a shirt, vest or name badge.
- [ ] Set up a fixed base for questions, breaks and lost property.
- [ ] Share last-minute changes through one channel that reaches every volunteer.

06 Care and appreciation

- [ ] Plan drinks and meals for every volunteer, including vegetarian, vegan and allergy needs.
- [ ] Provide a quiet place for breaks.
- [ ] Watch for strain and relieve people early in heat, cold or long shifts.
- [ ] Say thank you during the event, not only at the end.
- [ ] Plan a small thank-you, such as a volunteer party, a shirt or a voucher.

07 Money, donations and tax

- [ ] Draw up a budget and decide who may approve spending.
- [ ] Set out which expenses volunteers get back and how they hand in receipts.
- [ ] Before paying an allowance, check that the club statutes permit it and note the current tax-free limits for volunteers.
- [ ] Organise the cash desk with change, a two-person rule and a cash log.
- [ ] Record sales income and donations separately and clarify their tax treatment with the treasurer or a tax adviser.

08 After the event

- [ ] Thank every volunteer personally or publicly, for example in the club newsletter or on social media.
- [ ] Ask volunteers for feedback: what went well, what was too much?
- [ ] Close the accounts and report to the board.
- [ ] With consent, keep volunteer contacts for next time and delete the remaining data.

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