

TRHA Volunteer Policy

As a community museum in the Province of Ontario, the Toronto Railway Museum (the Museum) is committed to the preservation, presentation and sustainability of the material culture of Ontario. The Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport has published “standards” to guide Ontario community museums in serving their communities and fulfilling their mandate. The Toronto Railway Historical Association (TRHA) has developed a suite of policies which will guide the Museum. This Volunteer Policy is an important component of that suite of policies.

Definitions:

“Volunteers” are unpaid workers at the Toronto Railway Museum and/or the Toronto Railway Historical Association. Depending on their assigned tasks they may conduct their work at the Museum, at their home office, or at other remote locations. For purposes of this policy, “student interns” are not considered volunteers.

“Museum staff”, as covered in this policy, are the full-time employees of TRHA. (The Museum also employs part-time staff during the summer.)

Identification and Development of Volunteer Opportunities:

The TRHA Operations Committee meets regularly to review (among other things) new and proposed activities at the Museum. The Volunteer Coordinator is a member of the Operations Committee. When new opportunities for volunteers are identified by the Operations Committee the Volunteer Coordinator will document the requirements in a standardized Task Description. Task Descriptions are required for all new volunteer opportunities and include the following sections:

- Responsibilities
- Requirements
 - List the technical and other requirements; specify what skills, knowledge and aptitudes are required. Specify if training will be provided.
 - Indicate whether the position is appropriate for students wanting to complete their 40 hours
- Reporting structure (indicate to what staff or other volunteer position will the volunteer be reporting)
- Number required (How many volunteers will be occupying this position?)
- Timing:
 - What hours/days will the volunteer(s) be working? How many hours per month will (typically) be required?
 - Permanent or seasonal work?
 - When does the position start?
- Special Requirements of this Task (legal, medical, compliance, licenses, certifications), For example, police security checks? Lifting heavy objects? Standing for long periods, Welding certification? Bilingualism?

Procedures for Recruiting Volunteers:

The Task Description is the starting point of the recruitment process. The Volunteer Coordinator publishes the Task Description for the vacant volunteer position through a variety of targeted emails and through posting on the TRM website and social media.

Interested candidates are asked to contact the Volunteer Coordinator, to complete an on-line Application Form, and to provide additional information about their interest in the vacant

position. The Volunteer Coordinator conducts an initial screening. Qualified candidates are referred to the Museum staff person or the volunteer who makes the final determination. The Volunteer Coordinator thanks candidates who were not selected for applying.

Matching the Needs and Interests of Volunteers to Those of the Museum:

TRHA understands that volunteers bring valuable insights and experiences to the Toronto Railway Museum. We strive to learn from them. To foster a positive work environment and promote long-term volunteerism we are conscientious about maintaining open communications with the volunteers. We encourage volunteers to meet other volunteers, to support each other, to ask questions, and to become knowledgeable about different phases of Museum operations. The Museum has a common dining area where volunteers can mingle over lunch or refreshments.

We host several “town hall” style meetings each year, giving volunteers a chance to collaborate and share views on Museum activities and issues.

We publish a monthly newsletter to all volunteers and staff to inform them of recent events and plans for the future.

We conduct annual surveys of volunteers to determine their views and what is working well in their volunteer assignments and what opportunities there might be for improvement. Results of the survey and recommendations are presented to the Museum’s Operations Committee. Survey results and Operations Committee reaction are shared with all volunteers through newsletters and periodic Town Hall sessions.

Provision of Appropriate Training and Supervision for Volunteers:

Many volunteers are recruited on the basis of the specialized training they have already acquired: marketing, finance, IS/IT, fund-raising, etc.

Training is provided to other volunteers according to the functions they will be performing.

- Special events
- Mechanical shop
- Operations
- Historical Interpreters (Docents), and others

TRHA provides orientation for most new volunteers through a walk-about introduction to the Museum and Roundhouse Park, introducing volunteers to the Museum staff and to other volunteers.

All volunteers are supervised. The supervisors may be members of the Museum staff or may be other volunteers who are responsible for the activities and projects that the volunteers are working on. (For example, the Museum Manager & Curator supervises the volunteer docents. The volunteer Chair of the Marketing Committee is the supervisor of the volunteers on the Marketing Committee.) Some volunteers will assist Museum staff in scheduling and training other volunteers.

The volunteers on the Museum’s restoration team work in a less structured environment. The team itself is responsible for its own operations. The restoration team reports to the Chairman of the Board of Directors.

Provision of a Safe and Secure Working Environment for Volunteers:

TRHA expects that Volunteers will maintain a courteous and respectful demeanor at all times. This applies to relations with the visitors, the Museum staff, and other volunteers. TRHA will not tolerate harassment by any employee, volunteer, vendor, supplier, agent or customer. Any form of harassment related to an individual’s race, colour, sex, religion, national origin, sexual

orientation, disability, gender, or any other category protected by law, is a violation of this policy and will not be tolerated.

Volunteers are responsible for following safe work practices and Museum rules, and for preventing accidents and injuries. Volunteers are expected to comply with all applicable federal, provincial, local, and TRHA policies and procedures.

TRHA requires volunteers working in the Work Shop area to wear steel-toed safety shoes.

Volunteers are encouraged to report any unsafe work practices or safety hazards encountered on the job. All accidents/incidents (no matter how slight) are to be immediately reported to the supervisor or team leader on duty.

TRHA is covered for Third Party liability risks by the City of Toronto Insurance Program. In addition, TRHA maintains a second layer of Excess Liability insurance paid for by the TRHA for Third Party liability which includes coverage regarding any negligence claim made against a volunteer. As Workplace Safety Insurance Board coverage is not available for volunteers, the TRHA excess policy includes a provision for medical payments for any injury suffered by a volunteer while volunteering at TRHA. (Limits apply.)

Volunteer Evaluation:

TRHA understands that both the Museum and the volunteers benefit when feedback is provided on what practices are working well and where improvements can be made. Supervisors of volunteers are encouraged to provide feedback to volunteers.

Public and Private Recognition of Volunteers' Contributions:

TRHA celebrates volunteer accomplishments in frequent newsletters addressed to our followers on social media.

Volunteer accomplishments are shared with the public on the TRM website and other social media. The continuing contribution of volunteers is also shared with Museum visitors via a video slide show.

Private recognition of our volunteers' contributions is primarily through a Staff and Volunteer Dinner. Volunteer accomplishments are also noted at "Town Hall" meetings during the year.

Supporting Documentation

TRHA has developed two supporting documents to assist current and future volunteers in understanding this Volunteer Policy. The TRHA *Volunteer Handbook* provides new volunteers with a common understanding of the history and culture the Toronto Railway Historical Association and their roles in fulfilling the Museum's objectives. The TRHA *Volunteer Operating Agreement* describes the reciprocal responsibilities of the volunteers and TRHA in more detail.