



WTA Volunteer

Code of Conduct

2024

Inspiring Hikers, to Create Trails for Everyone, Forever

Volunteers are key to Washington Trails Association's mission to empower hikers and everyone who loves the outdoors to explore, steward, and champion trails and public lands. Our volunteers are part of WTA's statewide community that shares values of stewardship, cooperation and partnership, community and inclusion, and a community that likes to have fun! Together we can ensure there are trails for everyone, forever.

Why a Code of Conduct?

It is important to our WTA community that staff and volunteers alike are aware of and aligned to the same set of principles and values. We have a shared responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment. A volunteer code of conduct builds a common understanding and sets clear expectations for what that means.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers have the right to:

- Be treated with respect
- Participate in a safe and welcoming and rewarding environment
- Speak up if they feel unsafe at any time before, during or after a WTA event. This includes communicating concerns to WTA leadership if necessary
- Receive quality supervision, training and necessary support for their role. Ask for and receive help if a task is challenging or unclear
- Have fun!

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- Show respect for one another, staff and members of the general public
- Support a safe and welcoming environment that aligns with [WTA's mission](#) and commitment to [diversity, equity and inclusion](#)
- Work to meet expectations of their assignment. Adhere to safety guidelines and follow direction provided by volunteer leadership and staff leaders.



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Organizational Norms

WTA's organizational norms are a set of shared commitments and guiding principles for how we interact with each other and create our community. It is the shared responsibility of our staff and volunteers to uphold and model these values. These norms work in partnership with the code of conduct, but provide a more detailed overview of the principles and what they look like in practice.

Guiding Principles	What do those principles mean?	What do they look like in practice for a volunteer?
Put Relationships First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We bring respect and care to our relationships and work. We work to build and maintain trust with volunteers, regional teams, support staff and agency partners. We value authenticity and are willing to be honest and vulnerable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treat all fellow volunteers and staff with dignity and respect: avoid personal attacks or disparaging language. Take time to get to know each other: There is value in time spent connecting with your fellow volunteers and staff.
Seek to Understand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We know we can all learn from one another and from each conversation. We know that intent differs from impact and we actively work to understand each other. We work to avoid jumping to conclusions and are open to hearing new perspectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Value what others have to say regardless of how it is said or their experience level. Think about the potential impact of what you are going to say before you say it: Be open to hearing if the impact is different than intended.
Recognize Power Dynamics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We seek to be aware of and acknowledge the different ways power shows up. We practice examining systems for bias and offer solutions when it appears. We recognize that some topics are more emotionally expensive for BIPOC and other communities and we respect their right not to educate others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor individual participation in conversations: Lean in when needed or step back to create space for others. Think about accessibility and power before convening a space: think about ways to reduce power imbalance, particularly if you have the most power in the situation.
Be Open to Learning & Discomfort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We seek to be open to hearing about the impact of our words/actions. We recognize that some topics are difficult and may not lead to "closure". We pay attention to our needs and step back when we need to. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invest in yourself: In order for us to bring our best selves on trail we need to take care of ourselves. Be open to giving and receiving feedback: Take feedback as an opportunity to learn.
Stay Focused on Our Common Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We ground our relationships in a shared commitment to doing good work that serves our community and mission. We allow space for messiness, creativity, fun and curiosity! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remember that we all care - Find ways to celebrate our shared love of the outdoors. Celebrate differences- we show our passion in different ways, there are many ways to do it!



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Adherence to Code of Conduct

Volunteers are expected to acknowledge and adhere to the values and responsibilities described in this document. Failure to do so may result in temporary probation, suspension of leadership status or being prohibited from attending future WTA events.

The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable while volunteering:

- Failure to follow specific appropriate instructions including safe use of tools and equipment
- Theft or inappropriate use, removal or possession of property
- Working under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs
- Fighting or threatening violence
- Disrespectful conduct
- Sexual, racist or other harassment
- Inappropriate discussions of a volunteer or staff member
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace
- Any conduct that violates any other company policy, or any government law or regulation
- Any conduct that jeopardizes the safety of WTA staff, volunteers, community members or the general public

Open Door Policy:

Volunteers are encouraged to share their concerns, seek information, provide input, and resolve problems/issues with WTA staff and/or any member of the volunteer leadership team. WTA leadership, staff members and the volunteer leadership team are expected to listen to concerns, to encourage their input and to work towards solutions to the presented problems/issues. Additionally incidents can be reported to volunteer@wta.org or via the anonymous incident report form.

In all cases of reporting, discretion is taken to protect the identity of each individual involved during the course of the investigation and any subsequent determination and resolution.



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Code of Conduct (Appendix)

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Appendix

WTA Handbook: Discrimination, Harassment and Retaliation

WTA is committed to providing a workplace that is free of all forms of harassment on the basis of any status or characteristic protected by law. Any comments or conduct relating to a person's age, caste, color, creed, gender identity, marital status, honorably discharged veteran or military status, national origin, citizenship or immigration status, political ideology, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, genetic information, the presence of any sensory, mental or physical disability, status as a victim of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking, the use of a trained service animal by a person with a disability, or any other status or characteristic protected by federal, state or local law which fail to respect the dignity and feelings of the individual are prohibited and unacceptable.

WTA does not tolerate harassment, based upon any protected status, by or toward anyone in the workplace, be they supervisors, coworkers, or non-employees such as volunteers, vendors, or contractors. Employees who violate this policy are subject to discipline, up to and including termination.

Examples of prohibited discriminatory harassment include, but are not limited to:

- use of ethnic slurs or derogatory terms relating to an individual's gender or sexual orientation;
- distribution of racially or sexually offensive e-mail or other electronic communications; and/or
- threatening, intimidating, or hostile acts directed at a sex or religious group or directed at an individual because of their sexual orientation, color or ethnicity.

Harassment does not require intent to offend. Thus, inappropriate conduct or language meant as a joke, a prank, or even a compliment can lead to or contribute to harassment. Sexual or other harassing conduct, even if not unlawful, will not be tolerated. For example, a stray comment that degrades an employee's gender may not be unlawful harassment, but it is an example of prohibited conduct under this policy.

This policy prohibits unacceptable harassment or conduct in the workplace and at company sponsored business and social events, or events with coworkers entirely unrelated to the workplace. Additionally, harassment via social media, email and text messages are within the scope of prohibited conduct; for example, a harassing post on an employee's private Facebook page violates this policy if it is about a coworker or other member of WTA's broader community.

This policy specifically extends to comments or conduct of a sexual nature, where such behavior tends to threaten or offend an employee. Any behavior toward any employee by a director, supervisor, or coworker that constitutes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or the display of derogatory posters, cartoons, or drawings and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature may be prohibited harassment under this policy when:

- Submission to such conduct is made a condition of an individual's employment.
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual.
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual's work performance or creating an unfriendly or offensive work environment.

Examples of harassment can include, but are not limited to:

- Sexual harassment includes harassment based on another person's gender or harassment based upon pregnancy, childbirth, or related medical conditions. It also includes harassment of another employee of the same gender as the harasser. Sexual harassment is generally defined as unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, or other visual, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature.

- Excessive, unwelcome, one-sided, romantic attention in the form of requests for dates, love letters, telephone calls, emails or gifts;
- Visual or physical conduct, like leering, making sexual gestures, or displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, cartoons, calendars or posters in the workplace;
- Graphic verbal or written comments (including emails or other electronic documents) about an individual's sex life or body.
- Sexually degrading words used to describe an individual;
- Unwelcome physical contact, including pats, hugs, brushes, touches, shoulder rubs, assaults, or impeding or blocking movements.

WTA is committed to taking reasonable steps to prevent harassment from occurring and will take prompt and appropriate action when informed that harassment has occurred.

Each employee is responsible for supporting and adhering to this policy. Employees should never tolerate inappropriate behavior. They may make their feelings known to the offending employee. However, even if an employee is comfortable saying something to the offending employee, all employees must promptly report any offending behavior, whether such behavior is directed towards them personally or toward other employees at WTA. Reports of offending behavior may be made to the Senior HR Manager. If the Senior HR Manager is the cause of the problem or if they seem unwilling to resolve the issue, then contact the Chief Operating Officer or the CEO. Employees are strongly encouraged to report concerns about discrimination or harassment before behaviors become severe or pervasive.

Directors and supervisors who know about or receive reports or complaints of offending behavior must promptly notify the Senior HR Manager so that appropriate action can be taken. Any director or supervisor who witnesses an act or indicator of harassment or who receives a complaint of harassment and fails to take appropriate action, which includes reporting the act or complaint to Human Resources, may be subject to disciplinary action. WTA will promptly and thoroughly investigate all claims of harassment. Every complaint will be kept confidential to the maximum extent possible. All employees have an obligation to cooperate in an investigation of harassment complaints. The results of any investigation will be communicated to the complaining employee(s). Prompt and appropriate corrective action will be taken if the company concludes that an employee or non-employee has engaged in harassing conduct, even if the conduct is not unlawful. Corrective action may include discipline up to and including termination of employment or the relationship with the non-employee. Complaining employee(s), witnesses to an investigation, and employees associated with a complaining employee or witness, such as a spouse, will be afforded protection from retaliation. Examples of prohibited retaliation include discharge, material changes to terms and conditions of employment, and ostracism or disparagement of an individual. Retaliation is prohibited even in the case where an underlying complaint has no merit. No employee may be subject to retaliation for bringing a complaint of harassment, for filing a Charge of Discrimination or lawsuit, or for participating as a witness in an investigation, Charge or lawsuit. Employees who believe they have been subject to retaliation must immediately bring it to the attention of the Chief Operating Officer or CEO. Complaints of retaliation will be investigated and addressed according to this policy.