

# The Oak Park Conservatory Volunteer Handbook

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The Oak Park Conservatory is a historic  
property of the Park District of Oak Park



## Welcome

We are pleased that you have chosen the Oak Park Conservatory as a place to volunteer your valuable time. We hope you will find your experience fun, interesting, and rewarding. Perhaps the greatest rewards many of us have found are the relationships we have developed with one another and the knowledge that we are an essential part of supporting such a beautiful and historic community asset—the Oak Park Conservatory.

The purpose of the Volunteer handbook is to provide you with information about the Conservatory facilities, the Park District of Oak Park, and the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON). We have also included policies and procedures and other information that may be useful to you in your volunteer service.

Please let us know what we can do to make your volunteer experience more rewarding. Your suggestions and comments are always welcome!

## Who We Are

The Oak Park Conservatory is a historic property of the Park District of Oak Park, listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Conservatory showrooms, growing houses, grounds, and plant collections are maintained by three full-time Park District staff plus part-time and seasonal staff, with the support of volunteers. Park District staff is responsible for responding to any onsite emergencies, including medical issues.

Contact information for the Park District of Oak Park:

Patti Staley	Director of Horticulture	Patti.staley@pdop.org
Jennifer Suszek	Horticulture Supervisor	jennifer.suszek@pdop.org
Dusan Lepojevic	Greenhouse Supervisor	Dusan.Lepojevic@pdop.org

The Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is to promote interest in the Oak Park Conservatory, offer educational and recreational opportunities, and support projects that benefit the Oak Park Conservatory. One way the Friends supports the Conservatory is by managing the volunteer program under policies established by the Park District of Oak Park. The work of the Friends is carried out by three part-time staff, a volunteer Board of Directors, and many other dedicated volunteers.

Judy Klem	Executive Director	director@fopcon.org
Amy Lavery	Program & Volunteer Coordinator	coordinator@fopcon.org
Andrea Lofgren	Bookkeeper	bookkeeper@fopcon.org
Karen Avila	Operations Coordinator	operations@fopcon.org



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## Becoming a Volunteer

To become a volunteer, individuals must participate in an interview with the Volunteer and Program Coordinator and complete the following paperwork:

- An application
- A waiver and release form
- An emergency contact form
- A criminal background check
- Handbook acknowledgment form

## Your Responsibilities as a Volunteer

- Sign in each time you work at the Conservatory.
- Wear your volunteer name tag at each shift.
- Record your total hours, rounded to the nearest hour, for the appropriate service area. If you volunteer off-site (not at the conservatory), record your hours online by entering <http://tinyurl.com/FOPCONVolunteersHours> into your browser.
- Come in at your scheduled time unless you have received prior approval. Notify the volunteer coordinator at [coordinator@fopcon.org](mailto:coordinator@fopcon.org) (one day in advance, if possible) in the event you are unable to be here at your assigned time.
- Respond to visitors in a friendly, courteous manner as a representative of the Conservatory.
- Wear comfortable attire as appropriate for your duties.
- Treat as confidential all records, files, and personal information.
- Feel free to ask questions. Your thoughts and ideas are important to us!

## Volunteer Benefits

The most important benefit of being a volunteer is the opportunity to learn and grow as an individual. Volunteers also receive:

- A voucher to be used toward a Free FOPCON membership awarded each January to volunteers who have served more than 60 hours in the previous calendar year.
- A yearly invitation to the FOPCON Volunteer Committee's fall Appreciation Event for all volunteers
- An opportunity to be recognized by the Volunteer Committee, based on recommendations from Conservatory staff, event chairs, and other volunteers.
- Special training for interested and qualified volunteers in education and horticulture programs.



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## Facility Information

### Parking

Parking is available on Garfield Street, East Avenue, and on Clarence Avenue with some restrictions. Be sure to note the signs for parking limits. Volunteers may also park in the Rehm parking lot located on Garfield Street, east of the Conservatory and the Fire Station.

### Securing Your Personal Belongings

We recommend securing your personal belongings before coming into the Conservatory for your shift. Smaller personal belongings (purses, car keys, fanny packs) may be placed in a locker, when available. The Park District of Oak Park, Oak Park Conservatory, is not responsible for lost or stolen belongings. Please keep track of your belongings while visiting the Conservatory.

### Work Areas

The Operations Area and the growing houses are restricted to authorized personnel staff only. Volunteers are authorized in the growing houses and operations area as part of their specific role under staff supervision. Visitors are not permitted in these areas.

### Safety Rules

Safety is the responsibility of every volunteer. Accordingly, all volunteers shall adhere to the following rules:

- Smoking is prohibited on Park District property.
- Horseplay and fighting will not be tolerated in the workplace.
- Possession of unauthorized firearms, alcoholic beverages, illegal drugs, or unauthorized medically prescribed drugs will not be tolerated.
- Your supervisor must be notified of any permanent or temporary impairment that reduces your ability to perform safely or prevent or hinder your performance of the essential functions of your position.
- Personal protective equipment must be used when potential hazards cannot be eliminated. Equipment is to be operated only by trained and authorized personnel.
- Periodic inspections of workstations may be conducted to identify potential hazards and to ensure that equipment is in safe operating condition.
- Any potentially unsafe conditions or acts are to be reported immediately to your supervisor.
- If there is any doubt about the safety of a work method, your supervisor should be consulted before beginning a task.
- All accidents, near misses, injuries, and property damage must be reported to your supervisor, regardless of the severity of the injury or damage. An accident report will be filled out by Park District staff.
- All tools and equipment must be stored in their designated place. Scrap and waste material are to be discarded in designated refuse containers.
- Any smoke, fire, or unusual odors must be reported promptly to your immediate supervisor.



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**Safety Rules (continued)**

- If you create a potential slip or trip hazard, correct the hazard immediately or mark the area clearly before leaving it unattended.
- Volunteers are encouraged to remain hydrated and in areas of shade whenever possible.

**Emergency Procedures**

While we do not anticipate that you will be required to respond to an emergency situation, we want to make sure that you are reasonably prepared to do so. We will periodically provide you with updates as new procedures or information becomes available. Please familiarize yourself with the emergency exits and locations of telephones. Review the information provided below and don't hesitate to ask Conservatory or FOPCON staff if you have any questions. Emergency procedures are also posted on the bulletin boards in the break room.

<b>Type of Emergency:</b>	<b>What to do:</b>
Visitor Injury or Illness	Contact Park District staff.
Blood Borne Pathogens	In the event of an accident or injury that causes bleeding, volunteers should exercise care to avoid exposure to blood-borne pathogens like HIV or Hepatitis. Contact Park district Staff to provide first aid.
Fire	Evacuate, call 911, meet at Garfield and Clarence streets. or north/south alley behind conservatory. Do not Leave.
Suspicious activity	Contact Park District staff and/or dial 708-386-3800 to request officer assistance. Do not attempt to intervene.
Threatening or Violent Behavior	Contact Park District staff and/or Dial 911 to request officer assistance. Do not attempt to intervene.
Severe Hail	Evacuate the showrooms and growing houses. Remain in the entrance hallway, office areas, Rubinstein Room or Operations area.
Tornado	Evacuate the showrooms and growing houses. Take shelter away from windows in men's restroom, ladies' restroom, and volunteers' restroom in the operations area. Tours should be escorted to designated restroom areas without regard to gender. Wait until sirens stop.



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## Policies

### Code of Conduct

Those acting on behalf of FOPCON have a general duty to conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of FOPCON and take no actions incompatible with their obligations to FOPCON. With regard to proper conduct, those acting on behalf of FOPCON should practice:

- Integrity by maintaining an ongoing dedication to honesty and responsibility;
- Trustworthiness by acting in a reliable and dependable manner;
- Respect by treating others with civility and decency;
- Stewardship by exercising custodial responsibility for FOPCON property and resources;
- Compliance by following State and Federal laws and regulations and FOPCON policies related to their duties and responsibilities;
- Confidentiality by protecting the integrity and security of FOPCON information such as financial records and employee files.

Consequences for violating the Code of Conduct may result in a verbal or written warning, a suspension from FOPCON or dismissal (either as an employee or volunteer). Violations of the Code of Conduct shall be determined by the FOPCON Board.

### Nondiscrimination and Harassment

The Park District of Oak Park and The Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory are committed to a work environment in which all individuals are treated with respect and dignity. We expect that all relationships will be businesslike and free of bias, prejudice, and harassment. It is the responsibility of each and every employee, officer, official, park commissioner, agent, volunteer, and vendor, as well as anyone using this facility, to refrain from sexual and other harassment. Actions, words, jokes, or comments (whether directed at you or another individual) which have the effect of creating a hostile or intimidating environment, should be immediately reported to the Director of the Conservatory or to FOPCON's Executive Director.

### Personal Use of PDOP or FOPCON Property

Equipment, such as tillers, snow blowers, telephones, postage, facsimile, and copier machines, is intended for business purposes. No employee, contractor, elected official, volunteer, or member of the public may use Park District or FOPCON property for personal use.

### Electronic Communication Policy

Communication systems (telephone, voicemail, and internet) are provided by the Park District of Oak Park and the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory for business activities and may not be used for personal, political, commercial, inappropriate, or illegal purposes. Any electronic communication may be considered a "public record" and thus may be subject to inspection and copying pursuant to the Illinois Freedom of Information Act. Every communication also may be subject to disclosure in a lawsuit involving the Park District. Downloading data, information, e-mail attachments, and the like from an outside source increases the risks of viruses and other damaging agents to computers. You should not retrieve material from outside sources, particularly from sources not known to you.



FRIENDS  
OF THE  
OAK PARK  
CONSERVATORY

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OAK PARK  
CONSERVATORY

## Fertilizers and Pesticides

Fertilizers and pesticides may be used periodically. OBEY THE SIGNS. When pesticides are used, dates and times are listed for acceptable re-entry times. Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) for chemicals used on site (and the protocol for handling spills) are available for review.

## Statement of Admission

All volunteers are expected to act and conduct themselves at all times in the best interest of the Oak Park Conservatory. When an accident occurs, no matter how insignificant it may seem to be, it is of the utmost importance never to presume or admit guilt or fault of any kind. Volunteers should never cause(s) of the accident or injury or discuss any facts of the accident. Volunteers should cooperate with investigating authorities and with any investigation conducted by or on behalf of the Oak Park Conservatory. Any and all questions relating to an accident involving Park District property and/or personnel should be promptly directed to a department head or agency spokesperson.

## FOPCON Code of Conduct (Approved: Personnel Committee 6/11/24)

This Code of Conduct establishes guidelines for proper conduct by those acting on behalf of the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory (FOPCON) including its staff, board members and volunteers.

This is not an attempt to define specifically what one should and should not do, but to communicate FOPCON's expectation of proper conduct and what conduct FOPCON values. It is an expectation that the Code of Conduct serves as the basis, on which, staff should make decisions related to the best interests of themselves, their co-workers and FOPCON.

## THE CODE

Those acting on behalf of FOPCON have a general duty to conduct themselves in a manner that will maintain and strengthen the public's trust and confidence in the integrity of FOPCON and take no actions incompatible with their obligations to FOPCON.

With regard to proper conduct, those acting on behalf of FOPCON should practice:

- Integrity by maintaining an ongoing dedication to honesty and responsibility;
- Trustworthiness by acting in a reliable and dependable manner;
- Evenhandedness by treating others with impartiality;
- Respect by treating others with civility and decency;
- Stewardship by exercising custodial responsibility for FOPCON property and resources;
- Compliance by following State and Federal laws and regulations and FOPCON policies related to their duties and responsibilities;
- Confidentiality by protecting the integrity and security of FOPCON information such as financial records and employee files.

Consequences for violating the Code of Conduct may result in a verbal or written warning, a suspension from FOPCON or dismissal (either as an employee or volunteer). Violations of the Code of Conduct shall be determined by the Board.



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### Receipt and Acknowledgement of the Oak Park Conservatory Volunteer Handbook

This Volunteer Handbook is an important document intended to help you become acquainted with the Park District of Oak Park, the Oak Park Conservatory, and the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory. This handbook will serve as a guide; it is not the final word in all cases.

Please read the following statements and sign below to indicate your receipt and acknowledgment of the Oak Park Conservatory Volunteer Handbook.

- I understand that the policies, rules, and benefits described in this handbook are subject to change at the discretion of the Park District of Oak Park at any time.
- I further understand that my volunteering is terminable at will, either by the Park District of Oak Park, the Conservatory, the Friends of the Oak Park Conservatory or myself regardless of the length of my volunteering.
- Checking the box on the Volunteer Application indicates that I have received and read this copy of the handbook.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Volunteer's name (PLEASE PRINT)



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