



2026 VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

MISSION

Connecting people with communities and communities with memorable experiences.

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WELCOME LETTER

Welcome to Seafair Charitable Foundation!

By choosing to volunteer, you are helping bring to life the moments that define Seafair for our community. The 2026 season is an important one as we continue to evolve from a summer-only festival into a year-round organization that creates connection, celebration, and civic pride across all seasons.

Seafair is powered by more than 1,000 dedicated volunteers who support events, programs, and community appearances throughout the year. From long-standing summer traditions to new experiences like Winter by the Water, your time and energy make it possible for Seafair to show up for our region in bigger and bolder ways.

This volunteer handbook is designed to support you along the way. Inside, you will find key information about our policies, expectations, and the resources available to you as a volunteer. Our goal is to ensure you feel informed, prepared, and valued.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, our staff, and the entire Seafair community, thank you for stepping forward. We are grateful for your commitment and excited to work alongside you in the year ahead.

Here's to Seafair's 77th season and to everything we will accomplish together.

Emily Kang Cantrell
President & CEO

HISTORY

It all began as a plan to celebrate Seattle's centennial in 1951. Prominent Seattle business leaders recruited St. Paul, Minnesota's Winter Carnival director Walter Van Camp to help produce a similar summertime event in the Emerald City. That first Seafair featured parades, boat races on Green Lake, amateur athletic events, royalty, and a number of community festivals. Seafair was deemed a success, and the festival would grow the next summer with the addition of unlimited hydroplane racing's Gold Cup race on Lake Washington.

As it enters its 75th year, Seafair is now a multi-week festival featuring over 30 community events that reach more than two-million people. It's about building community, creating memories, and providing affordable fun. The festival remains the fabric of our community and is made possible with the help of nearly 1,000 volunteers.

ORGANIZATION

Seafair has (7) current full-time staff members that are guided by a Board of Directors. The BOD directory is on page 12 of this handbook. During the festival season, Seafair may also hire temporary staff or contractors to help onsite with the events.

- Emily K Cantrell, President & CEO - (emily@seafair.org)
- Brett Gorrell, Director of Sales and Sponsorships - (brett@seafair.org)
- Barrett Park, Director of Finance & Administration - (barrett@seafair.org)
- Josh Wilkens, Director of Operations - (josh@seafair.org)
- Tim Seidler, Marketing Manager - (tim@seafair.org)
- Molly Petz, Community Engagement Manager (molly@seafair.org)
- Emily Alvendia, Event Production Manager (alvendia@seafair.org)

In addition, Seafair has (6) family groups that volunteer at Seafair events but also work within the community at other local events. Although heavily associated with Seafair, they are their own non-profit organizations and run by their respective leadership.

- [Seafair Boat Club](#)
- [Seafair Clowns](#)
- [Seafair Commodores](#)
- [Seafair EMG \(Emergency Management Group\)](#)

- [Seafair Parade Marshals](#)
- [Seafair Pirates](#)

2026 SEAFAIR EVENTS (Open to the Public)

February 21: Seafair Winter by the Water

June 1: Seafair Kickoff Celebration Presented by Bank of America

July 4: Seafair 4th of July

July 19: Seafair Triathlon (Seward Park)

July 25 - Kaiser Permanente Seafair Torchlight Run (Seattle Waterfront)

July 25 - Alaska Airlines Seafair Torchlight Parade (Seattle Waterfront)

July 31 - Aug 2: Seafair Weekend Festival (Genesee Park)

VOLUNTEER EXPECTATIONS

Why Volunteer?

Joining the volunteer team at Seafair, you will be a part of a Pacific Northwest tradition. You will have a front-row seat at the most entertaining and exciting events of the summer. You will be a big part of our goal to connect and celebrate our diverse communities and contribute to the positive impact this festival has on our city.

As a Seafair volunteer, you will be provided with consistent communication, a positive working environment, and awesome event experiences. Volunteers are recognized for their efforts through incentives, awards, and celebratory events. We hope your time is enjoyable. Along the way, we think you'll gain a sense of satisfaction from playing a role in our success and becoming part of our Seafair volunteer community.

Certain positions have age requirements or may require waivers, licenses, insurance, background checks, etc. Some positions are more physically demanding than others. It's important to identify your strengths and limitations when you complete your volunteer registration form.

Get Ready for Your Shift

Event days can be long and the summer weather very warm, so be prepared!

- Get plenty of rest the night before.
- Make sure to take breaks and eat/snack throughout the shift.
- Hydrate, hydrate, hydrate! Water bottles are encouraged.
- Don't forget to wear sunscreen; hats are also recommended.
- Dress appropriately - wear your assigned attire if it has been issued to you.
- Wear the Seafair distributed Volunteer T-shirt - it helps identify you as part of the team.
- Comfortable layered clothing with good walking (closed toe) shoes is highly recommended.
- A portable charger for your cell phone will keep you connected all day.

Represent Seafair Well

Every volunteer represents Seafair. Your actions, words, and body language determine whether the customer experience is positive or negative. Seafair is proud of its reputation in the community for producing a first-class, high-quality festival, and volunteers play a strong role in sustaining this. We ask our volunteers to:

- Understand the Seafair vision and goals.
- Maintain a professional, respectful appearance and in conversation. Avoid garments that are lewd or contain offensive language or symbols. If your conduct, attire, hygiene or odor creates a reasonable risk of offense or annoyance to other volunteers or attendees, you may be asked to leave.
- Reach out to a staff member or volunteer leader if problems occur.
- Treat all festival equipment and supplies as you would your own valuable property.
- Limit unnecessary expenses.
- Ask questions when unsure.

Seafair Event Attendees

Depending on the event and where you are assigned, you may have guests asking you questions, (i.e., is there an ATM on site or where are the restrooms?) It is a good idea to familiarize yourself with the layout of the event site. Specifically note the locations of the Guest Services tents. These areas are staffed by experienced volunteers who can provide more in-depth knowledge and assistance for our guests.

- Stay positive and smile - even if you don't have an answer.
- Be friendly, greet people, and ask if you can help them.
- Make sure to be respectful and courteous to guests of all types.
- Seafair has an amazing group of veteran volunteers representing years of experience who can assist you at any time.

Be Mindful of Your Surroundings

Seafair attracts a variety of guests, from families and business to media and sponsors. You never know who you're interacting with or who they might know, so bring a high level of service and professionalism to every guest interaction. Also, be sure to watch what you say or the language that you use. You never know who may overhear.

Conflict Resolution

For most incidents, a sincere apology and explanation will satisfy the guest. But for those with extenuating circumstances, contact your supervisor who can reach out to our Guest Service Team. The following are good customer service tips to follow when working with an upset attendee:

- Stay calm.
- Listen, sympathize, empathize, and apologize.
- Repeat their concerns so they know they have been heard.
- Offer a solution.

SIGNING UP FOR A VOLUNTEER SHIFT

Registering for your volunteer shift through VolunteerLocal provides us with your contact information, area of expertise, desired event, and work limitations. Once you select an event/shift online, we will contact you. We will send you information about your on-site contact, work location, parking, transportation, and scheduled hours of work.

Pre-Event Communication

Volunteer information will be distributed regularly to keep you in touch with meetings, training sessions, event promotions, personnel, and anything new at Seafair. You can always check out seafair.org to see the latest news.

Volunteer Registration

The online volunteer registration system presently being used by Seafair is titled VolunteerLocal. This system is utilized to coordinate volunteer registration for all our signature events. Each event posted will have a sign-up deadline. It is important to sign up by the deadline so that volunteer leadership has all the information necessary. If you have any questions on how to complete your Volunteerlocal registration, you can email volunteer@seafair.org for assistance.

Volunteer Waiver

All Seafair volunteers must agree to the waiver of liability prior to participating as a volunteer in any Seafair event. For volunteers under 18 years of age, a parent or guardian must agree to the terms of the waiver. This waiver is a part of the annual registration process via VolunteerLocal.

Volunteer Check-In / Check-Out

This procedure varies from event to event but is very important and is required of Seafair by its insurance providers. This information is provided to EMG (Emergency Management Group) for their use in case of an emergency. If you are uncertain how or where to check in, you contact your committee chair, a Seafair staff member, or another volunteer for more information. It may be as simple as a printed list and making sure that your name is checked off, a scan on a phone or calling into a provided phone number.

Currently, volunteer checkout is not mandatory. However, it is a good idea to check out with your committee chair if you have finished with your volunteer shift and are departing the event. This is also true if you are leaving the site but returning later the same day.

EMERGENCIES

Safety is Priority

The safety of visitors and volunteers is our highest priority. Every effort should be made to ensure public safety at all Seafair events and report all incidents to your supervisor immediately. At our major Seafair events you can call or text 206-934-1075 or call on the radio.

See Something, Say Something™

Report all unusual persons, objects, and activities to the Seafair Emergency Operations Center (206-934-1075, voice only) for evaluation and possible response. Do not endanger yourself or others by attempting to investigate or intervene unless there is an immediate threat to human life. If there is a suspicious package, move away from it before using your cell phone or radio.

Event Cancellations

The festival will implement an Emergency Information System should the decision be made to cancel or change an event if there is a crisis or emergency that warrants such a decision. Authority to place the System into effect is delegated and limited to the Seafair CEO in conjunction with Emergency Management Authorities.

In the unlikely event of a major emergency, we want to emphasize that your personal safety is our number one concern. Multiple Rally Points have been established by the EM Team. These Rally Points are where volunteers will be accounted for, and missing volunteers identified. If a disaster should occur proceed to the Rally Point, if possible, that has been communicated to you by your committee chair as your primary point. At the start of your volunteer shift, try to familiarize yourself with the locations of multiple Rally Points. If you are not able to get to a Rally Point, try to contact (via text or email) your committee chair so they know that you are safe. The Seattle Fire Department will be responsible for the handling of any emergency with the assistance of the volunteer EM personnel.

Observed - Accident or Emergency

If you see a guest, another volunteer or anyone else have any type of accident, depending on the severity of the accident, be prepared to call the emergency number 206-934-1075 or 911,

if necessary. If you have a radio, switch to Channel 14 and report the incident, including your complete location and incident details.

Stay with the injured person until help arrives.

When you need help on-site

Even with the best of preparation, accidents and illnesses happen. If you find that yourself or a fellow volunteer is injured, flushed, dizzy or not feeling well, alert your supervisor so our Medic Team can be dispatched immediately.

Lost Children

If you find a child who is lost, do not put that information out over the radio. If a child cannot be reunited with their party within fifteen (15) minutes, that child is to be taken to the Guest Services booth or given into the care of an EMG volunteer. If a guest says that the child is with them, make sure to verify this by asking for identification and making sure that the child knows them. Try to keep the child calm so that they can provide you with necessary information to allow us to reunite them with family or friends.

Media

As a volunteer and in the case of an emergency or boat accident, you may find yourself in the position of having a media representative asking you about the incident. No volunteer is authorized to speak to the media on behalf of Seafair, only the Seafair CEO and our Seafair Public Information Officer have the authority to do this. If asked, be respectful, do not say 'no comment,' but firmly tell the person that you do not have the authority to speak for Seafair and direct them or, if possible, escort them to CEO or our Public Information Officer.

CODE OF CONDUCT AND POLICIES

It is crucial that the volunteers operate under specific policies and regulations designed to safeguard the people we work with and around. To keep everyone safe, we ask that all volunteers adhere to the following Seafair Policies.

Note: Retaliation of any kind or discrimination against a volunteer who reports a suspected incident or who cooperates in an investigation is prohibited. A volunteer who violates these policies or retaliates in any way will be subject to disciplinary action up to and including immediate termination.

Drug Free Environment Policy

Alcohol and drug use can cause potential health, safety, and security problems. It is expected that all volunteers will maintain an environment free from the effects of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicating substances. Compliance with this substance abuse policy is a condition of volunteering with Seafair.

Volunteers are prohibited from the following when reporting for their shift, while on-site at the event, or surrounding areas, or in any vehicle used for Company business:

- The unlawful use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of an illegal or controlled substance or drug paraphernalia;
- The unauthorized use, possession, transportation, manufacture, sale, dispensation or other distribution of alcohol;
- Being under the influence of alcohol or having a detectable amount of an illegal or controlled substance in the blood or urine (“controlled substance” means a drug or other substance as defined in applicable federal laws on drug abuse prevention).

We recognize that volunteers suffering from alcohol or drug dependence can be treated. We encourage any volunteer to seek professional care and counseling prior to any violation of this policy.

Anti-Harassment and Discrimination Policy

Seafair’s policy is to provide a volunteer environment that is free from harassment and discrimination. Therefore, Seafair will not tolerate harassment based on age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, covered veteran status, sexual orientation, status with respect to public assistance, and other characteristics protected under state, federal, or local law. This policy applies to all Seafair staff, volunteers, employees, interns, independent contractors, sponsors, customers, guests, vendors, and people doing business with Seafair.

Sexual harassment, one type of prohibited harassment, warrants special mention. Sexual harassment has been defined according to Seafair guidelines as:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:
- Submission to such conduct is made a term or condition, either explicitly or implicitly, of an individual’s employment or volunteer status;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as a factor in decisions affecting that individual’s employment or volunteer status; or
- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment.

Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

- Unwelcome sexual flirtation, advances, or propositions;
- Verbal comments related to an individual’s age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation;
- Explicit or degrading verbal comments about another individual or his/her appearance;
- The display of sexually suggestive pictures or objects in any workplace location including transmission or display via computer;
- Displaying cartoons or telling jokes which relate to an individual’s age, race, gender, color, religion, national origin, disability, or sexual orientation.

If a volunteer believes that they are being subjected to harassment or discrimination, they should report the incident immediately to a volunteer leader, staff member or the President & CEO.

Creating a Safe (Violence Free) Environment

It is Seafair's policy to provide an environment that is safe and free from all threatening and intimidating conduct. Therefore, Seafair will not tolerate violence or threats of violence of any form. This policy applies to Seafair volunteers, employees, interns, sponsors, customers, guests, vendors, and persons doing business with Seafair.

It will be a violation of this policy for any individual to engage in any conduct, verbal or physical, which intimidates, endangers, or creates the perception of intent to harm persons or property. Examples include but are not limited to:

- Physical assaults or threats of physical assault, whether made in person or by other means (i.e., in writing, by phone, text, or e-mail)
- Verbal conduct that is intimidating and has the purpose or effect of threatening the health or safety of a volunteer.
- Possession of firearms or any other lethal weapon on Seafair property, in a vehicle being used on Seafair business, in any Seafair owned or leased parking facility, or at a Seafair function
- Any other conduct or acts which Seafair believes represents an imminent or potential danger to safety/security

Any reported incident will be investigated immediately and thoroughly. Appropriate actions will be taken by Seafair to stop and remedy all such conduct.

Smoking Policy

Seattle's public parks are smoke-free. Under current Seattle law, smoking cigarettes, cigars, vaping, and marijuana are not permitted anywhere within city parks. This includes all the areas that host Seafair. Smoke-free parks further Seafair's mission by creating a safe, welcoming environment for all event attendees, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reducing litter.

Drone Policy

Under current Seattle law, use of aerial drones is not permitted anywhere within city parks. This includes all the areas that host Seafair.

Social Media Policy

Social media is a powerful brand-building tool and a great way to shine a light on the amazing things happening at Seafair. It's wonderful that volunteers, staff, vendors, and others connect using social media, because it ultimately creates a stronger network and community that supports the Seafair mission. You can help strengthen our brand and expand our reach by reposting content from the Seafair accounts listed below.

It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for Seafair, and that social media is never private. This policy aims to protect individuals volunteering with us in any role and to encourage you to take responsibility for what you write, exercise good judgment and common sense.

Seafair Social Media Channels

- [Facebook](#) - Official
- [Facebook](#) - All Volunteer Page
- [X/ Twitter](#): @SeafairFestival
- [TikTok](#): @SeafairFestival
- [YouTube](#): <https://www.youtube.com/@SeafairFestival>
- [LinkedIn](#): www.linkedin.com/company/Seafair

When posting on your own social media, please:

- Respect the privacy and confidentiality of those we serve.
- Make it clear that the views you expressed are yours alone.
- Use your common sense.
- Remember that all communication remains in cyberspace even if you delete it.
- Respect the privacy of offline conversations and don't write anything you can't say in public.
- Be respectful and civil to fellow volunteers.

When commenting on a Seafair post:

- Tag people or organizations whenever possible
- Use appropriate hashtags
- Don't cite or reference clients, partners, volunteers, or vendors without their approval.
- Commercial or solicitation postings are not allowed.
- Do not post any religious, political, sexist, ethnically or racially offensive, or obscene messages.
- Stay positive!
- Messages or postings that do not meet these etiquette standards may be removed.

Do you have social media questions, concerns, or an interesting story idea? Contact Seafair's Marketing team at info@seafair.org.

Expense Policy

There are some situations where Seafair will reimburse you when purchasing items for an event. These reimbursement costs must be pre-approved by the finance director or CEO - via the Seafair approvals system to be eligible. Please reach out to your volunteer team leader and or the volunteer manager for more information on how to submit a request.

Driving Policy

Any Seafair loaned or rented vehicle whether it is a bike, car, van, truck, boat, or golf cart must be licensed and insured. If you will be driving any type of Seafair vehicle, you must have completed a Seafair Driver Form, and it needs to have been approved by Seafair. Seafair is not responsible for any driving citations or parking tickets. If you receive one, you are responsible for paying it. You must have a valid driver's license to drive a Seafair vehicle. Any type of damage incurred to the vehicle must be reported to Seafair immediately. *For any accident while driving any Seafair loaned or rented vehicle, a claim will be filed with your insurance company first, and Seafair's insurance will be secondary.*

Golf carts, as defined in this policy, are used by the event team to transport passengers and equipment. This policy is meant to help ensure the safe operation of carts by event staff and volunteers. This policy also covers non-passenger carts, also known as utility carts and gators.

- All drivers must have a valid driver's license. A photocopy of their driver's license and proof of insurance must be submitted to Seafair prior to operating the golf cart.
- Seafair Management will review and approve individual golf cart drivers.
- Drivers must not be under the influence of alcohol or drugs. No smoking of any substance is permitted while operating a golf cart.
- Golf carts are not allowed to be driven on a public street.
- Golf carts shall observe all vehicle traffic laws (e.g., stopping at stop signs, yielding to pedestrians, etc.)
- Report all golf cart related incidents or near miss incidents to Seafair Emergency Operations Center (EMG) immediately. If involved in any incident involving injury or property damage, do not leave the location.
- Any mechanical defects are to be reported to Seafair Transportation Chair immediately. The golf cart may not be operated until inspected and returned to service.

Grievances

If you have an issue with an event situation, a safety issue, a staff member, a customer, or another volunteer, please report these verbally to your immediate Team Leader. If the behavior or situation persists, you may be asked to complete a written description of the action or problem by filling out an "Incident Report" form.

Failure to Perform

Volunteers who do not adhere to the policies and procedures provided above will be asked to leave the job site. It is important to avoid violations that affect our festival operations, customer service goals and the positive working relationship we promote in our volunteer groups.

FROM ALL OF US TO ALL OF YOU

We cannot thank you enough for all that you do to make Seafair a world-class series of events that it is. It is only through your hard work and dedication that we can deliver on our core values of Community Engagement, Affordable Fun, and Creating Memories. We are honored that you choose to spend your time as a member of the Seafair Volunteer community, and we look forward to a fantastic 2026.

Receipt of Volunteer Handbook

By signing below, you acknowledge that you have received a copy of Seafair’s Volunteer Handbook and understand that it is your responsibility to read and comply with the policies contained therein and any revisions made to it. In addition, if you are a Team Leader, you agree to advise volunteers under your supervision of all policies contained herein.

Please print your full name: _____

Volunteer Department/Event Affiliation: _____

Signature: _____

Date / Year: _____

Please sign and date this notice and return it to: volunteer@seafair.org

Seafair Charitable Foundation 2026 Board of Directors

Executive Committee

Chair	Mark Gleason	Travelers
Chair-Elect	Nicole Saint Clair	Regence Blue Shield
Immediate Past Chair	Keith Taylor	US Coast Guard (ret.)
Treasurer	Eric Parker	Medosweet Farms
Secretary	Natalie Swistak	Paula's Choice Skincare
Member-At-Large	Michelle Rudd	Summit Trail Advisors
Member-At-Large	Phontel Shami	
Member-At-Large	Robin Braun	Naval Aviation Museum Foundation
Member-At-Large	Mark Jupiter	The Boeing Company

Board Members

Board Member	Pam Anderson	Perkins Coie LLP
Board Member	Lance Ball	The Boeing Company
Board Member	Jaymelina Esmele	
Board Member	Michela Hundrup	B&A Litigation Services
Board Member	David Crump	Crump Law Firm, PLLC
Board Member	Maria Tringali	Avalara
Board Member	Steve Sposari	Premium Brands Holdings Corp
Board Member	Kevin Keyes	Expedia Group
Board Member	Corinda Savojni	UW Medical Center
Board Member	Tiffany Nguyen	Gates Foundation
Board Member	Michael Woody	Visit Seattle
Board Member	Kent Park	U.S. Public Service Foundation
Board Member	Shawn Bice	Microsoft
Board Member	Kaylee Petersen	Frontier Nursing University
Board Member	Carmen Best	
Board Member	Glenn Fernandez	Port of Seattle

UW Board Fellows

Board Fellow	Anabel Roza
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Glossary of Terms

Hydroplane Racing - [H1 Unlimited Glossary](#)

SFW - Seafair Festival Weekend