



BREAKING BOUNDARIES SINCE 1996



Volunteer Manual

Oregon Adaptive Sports
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About This Manual

This manual is designed to equip you with the knowledge and awareness necessary to help people with disabilities have a fun and safe adaptive recreation experience. Translating this information into action is a skill that requires time and experience to develop. Be sure to ask for help whenever you have any questions, and by all means, spend as much time assisting as you can!

Personal recreation experience is invaluable and will improve your competence as an assistant and instructor, and your competence is directly correlated to the comfort and confidence of all OAS participants. It's also about your well being, if you do not have the proper skills necessary to perform a task, accidents are more likely to occur and that's something none of us desire.

About Oregon Adaptive Sports

Twenty years ago OAS operations ran out of private garages and truck beds. Back then, providing life-changing experiences on the hill was a grass-roots effort managed by Jack Alexander a retired US Forest Service professional. He couldn't have done it without dedicated volunteers. Skis were stashed in people's trucks and garages. Resources and ski experiences were finally provided for people with disabilities. It was minimal and an occasional experience but the beginning of something beautiful. Together, we created OAS.

Catapult to today. No more garages and no more truck beds. The OAS warehouse is like Santa Claus's elf shop the week before Christmas. Recreation toys in every nook and cranny, elves prepping and fixing up gear before they go out and requests are coming in daily. Things are hustling and bustling in the life of OAS and volunteers made it happen.

Just last year alone OAS provided over 1,150 experiences for people with disabilities. The effect goes beyond physical activity, it's life changing. A Harris Pool Study released major findings related to sports, disability and employment. The study revealed that those with disabilities that were physically active are more likely to be employed. They also led healthier lifestyles, had a strong social support system, increased self-confidence and were more positive about their life prospects.

Together we can continue to provide life-changing experiences but frankly, it cannot be done without the support of volunteers in every spectrum from fundraising, outreach, administration and program volunteers.

Mission Statement:

Oregon Adaptive Sports provides life-changing outdoor recreation experiences to individuals with disabilities. Participants gain confidence, build self-esteem and strive for independence leading to an enhanced quality of life.

Vision Statement:

We envision a day when everyone has the benefits of outdoor recreation, regardless of ability. We see Central Oregon as a year-round destination for adaptive sports with OAS as the leader in providing state-of-the-art equipment, professional instructions, staff and dedicated volunteers, resulting in top quality experiences for our participants.

OAS Participants:

The individuals taking advantage of our services have a range of disabilities including amputations, cerebral palsy, Multiple Sclerosis, Muscular Dystrophy, spina bifida, cognitive and developmental disabilities, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and many more. We also have participants who are blind, deaf, or hard of hearing.

About Disabled Sports USA

OAS is a chapter of Disabled Sports USA. The mission of Disabled Sports USA is to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, recreation and educational programs. A national nonprofit, 501(c)(3), organization established in 1967 by disabled Vietnam veterans to serve the war injured, DSUSA now offers nationwide sports rehabilitation programs to anyone with a permanent disability. Visit the DSUSA website at www.dsusa.org

About U.S. Paralympics

OAS is a Paralympic Sport Club called Paralympic Sport Central Oregon. U.S. Paralympics, a division of the U.S. Olympic Committee, is dedicated to becoming the world leader in the Paralympic sports movement and to promoting excellence in the lives of persons with physical disabilities. Visit the U.S. Paralympics website at www.usparalympics.org

Welcome Volunteers

Becoming a volunteer with OAS is a wonderful opportunity to take on exciting challenges, learn new skills, contribute to your community and have fun! Volunteers assist with many functions at OAS and are an integral part of our organization. Although volunteers do not receive any employee benefits or monetary compensation for duties performed, they are valuable resources and are treated with respect and consideration. OAS will do its best to equip its volunteers with the skills and knowledge necessary to have a very rewarding experience. In return, we ask volunteers to take their commitment to OAS seriously.

Nothing in this Manual creates an employment relationship of any kind between OAS and any volunteer and OAS expressly disclaims any such relationship. By agreeing to assist OAS, OAS volunteers understand they have no expectation of any compensation or benefits of any kind from OAS. Either OAS or the volunteer can choose to discontinue the volunteer relationship at any time.

Contact Info

OAS operates primarily through email communication to arrange programs and schedule instructors and volunteers. Additionally, the operations phone is generally on from 8am to 5pm, seven days a week. The website generally has up-to-date information about the program, events, and paperwork.

Operations phone: 541-848-9390 or 541-30604774 ext 2

Office phone: 541-306-4774

Email: info@oregonadaptivesports.org

Website: oregonadaptivesports.org

General Policies and Guidelines

As a representative of OAS, you are responsible for following program policies. Disregard for policies may result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination. The following is a guideline and is not intended to be a complete list.

- Prior to assisting participants with OAS, you must: sign the OAS Volunteer Agreement and DSUSA Release of Liability forms; receive and read the Volunteer Manual; and attend one Volunteer Orientation or equivalent training opportunity with approval of the Program Director.
- You are responsible for informing OAS of any physical limitations you may have so that we may appropriately adjust the daily schedule to meet the needs of the student, the instructor, and yourself. OAS volunteers must be comfortable lifting a minimum of 50 lbs.; Volunteers may be asked to physically assist students (i.e. picking them up off the snow or transferring into a kayak) or physically assist with moving OAS equipment.
- As per DSUSA requirements, the use of a helmet for all staff, volunteers and participants is mandatory when participating in the following sports: Alpine skiing, cycling, equestrian, hockey, outdoor rock climbing, snowboarding, white water kayaking and white water river rafting.
- You may not assist with lessons while under the influence of alcohol or illicit drugs. Or show any evidence of recent use of alcohol or illicit drugs.

Professionalism

All representatives of OAS are expected to act in a professional and ethical manner while on official duty for OAS, as well as on personal time. Breaches in professional behavior may be considered reasons for discipline or termination of service.

Expected

- Always be actively positive, friendly, and courteous in your interactions with students, co-workers, and others.
- Comply with all safety procedures.
- Personal conduct, both on and off duty, which appropriately reflects the policies and standards of OAS.

Not Tolerated

- Unexcused absence or tardiness, failure to report without notice, excessive

- absenteeism or tardiness.
- Neglect of responsibilities.
- Any action toward a student or family member that would damage OAS' relationship or reputation with the public.
- Lending lift tickets or cutting lift lines.
- Skiing in closed areas.
- Use of alcoholic beverages, non-prescribed drugs, narcotics, or smoking while on duty.
- Reporting to volunteer, or volunteering, while under the influence of alcoholic beverages, narcotics or drugs, prescribed or non-prescribed, which could impair your ability to perform your job requirements.
- Unauthorized use of tools or equipment that belong to OAS, its participants, or another volunteer.
- Solicitation of money or fundraising activities unless authorized by the Executive Director.

Visitors

Your friends and relatives are welcomed guests—but they should realize that you are here to work and that you cannot visit while on duty. If you wish to have lunch or visit with friends or families, please use public areas.

Questions?

These policies and procedures are set forth by OAS to promote safe and efficient operation of its adaptive sports program. If you have any questions concerning these policies, please consult the Program Director or Executive Director.

Disability Etiquette

Through partnerships with local disability advocate organizations, OAS offers regular opportunities for education on working with individuals with disabilities. Also available on our website is a link to a guide on disability etiquette published by the United Spinal Association.

OAS works with a very wide range of abilities and individuals, so it is impossible to define each type of disability that you may encounter while volunteering with our program. Provided here however, are general tips sourced from United Cerebral Palsy. Always remember, when in doubt, ask rather than assume.

Interaction & Etiquette Tips

- Assistive devices (canes, wheelchairs, crutches, communication boards, etc.) should be respected as personal property.
- Always direct communication to the individual with the disability. If they are accompanied, do not direct your comments to the companion.
- Use the same level of formality with everyone present.
- Relax. Do not be embarrassed if you happen to use common expressions like “See you later” or “Got to be running along” that seem to relate to the

person's disability.

- It is appropriate to shake hands when introduced to a person with a disability. People who have limited use of their hand or who wear an artificial limb can usually shake hands. Shaking with the left hand is acceptable. For people who cannot shake hands, touch the person on the shoulder or arm to welcome and acknowledge their presence.
- Focus on the individual and the issue at hand, not the disability.
- People with disabilities are interested in the same topics of conversation in which people without disabilities are interested.
- If someone needs you to speak in a louder voice, they will ask.
- People with disabilities, like all people, are experts on themselves. They know what they like, what they do not like, and what they can and cannot do. If you are uncertain what to do, ask. Most people would rather answer a question about protocol than be in an uncomfortable situation.
- Offer assistance in a dignified manner with sensitivity and respect. Be prepared to have the offer declined. If the offer is accepted, listen to and accept instructions.
- When mistakes are made, apologize, correct the problem, learn from the mistake and move on.
- Let people provide information about their disability on their own initiative. They are not responsible for educating the public by sharing their story.

Physical Disabilities

- Do not make assumptions about what a person can and cannot do. A person with a physical disability is the best judge of his or her own capabilities.
- Do not push a person's wheelchair, or grab the arm of someone walking with difficulty, without asking if you can be of assistance. Personal space includes a person's wheelchair, crutches, or other mobility aid. Never move someone's crutches, walker, cane, or other mobility aid without permission.
- When speaking with someone using a wheelchair for more than a few minutes, try to find a seat for yourself so the two of you are at eye level.

Visual Disabilities

- Identify yourself when you approach a person who is blind. If a new person approaches, introduce him or her.
- Face the person and speak directly to him or her. Use a normal tone of voice.
- Don't leave without saying you are leaving.
- If you are offering directions, be as specific as possible, and point out obstacles in the path of travel. Use clock cues ("the door is at two o'clock.")
- Alert people who are blind or visually impaired to posted information.
- **NEVER** pet or otherwise distract a guide dog unless the owner has given you permission.
- You may offer assistance if it seems needed, but if your offer is declined, do not insist. If your offer is accepted, ask the person how you best can help.

Hearing Disabilities

- Ask the person how he or she prefers to communicate. (spoken language, gesturing, writing notes, lip reading, or sign language.)
- If you are speaking through an interpreter, remember that the interpreter may lag a few words behind- especially if there are names, numbers or technical terms that need to be finger spelled. Pause occasionally to allow him or her time to translate completely and accurately.
- Talk directly to the person who is deaf or hard of hearing and maintain eye contact to be polite.
- Before you start to speak, make sure you have the attention of the person you are addressing. A wave, light touch on the shoulder, or other visual or tactile signals are appropriate ways of getting the person's attention.
- Speak in a clear, expressive manner. Do not over-enunciate or exaggerate words.
- Unless you are specifically requested to do so, do not raise your voice. Speak in a normal tone; do not shout.
- To facilitate lip reading, face into the light, and keep your hands and other objects away from your mouth.
- If the person is lip reading, face the person directly and maintain eye contact. Don't turn your back or walk around while talking. If you look or move away, the person might assume the conversation is over.
- While you are writing a message for someone who is deaf or hard of hearing, don't talk, since the person cannot read your note and your lips at the same time.
- If you do not understand something that is said, ask the person to repeat it or write it down. The goal is communication; do not pretend to understand if you do not.
- If you know any sign language, try using it. It may help and it will at least demonstrate your interest in communicating and your willingness to try.

Speech Disabilities

- Talk to people with speech disabilities as you would talk to anyone else.
- Be friendly; start up a conversation
- Be patient; it may take the person a while to answer
- Give the person your undivided attention
- Speak in your regular tone of voice
- Tell the person if you do not understand what he or she is trying to say. Ask the person to repeat the message, spell it, tell you in a different way, or write it down.
- To obtain information quickly ask short questions that require brief answers or a head nod. However, try not to insult the person's intelligence with over-simplification.

Cognitive Disabilities

- Treat adults with cognitive disabilities as adults.
- When speaking to someone who has a cognitive disability, try to be alert to their responses so that you can adjust your method of communication if

- necessary.
- Use language that is concrete rather than abstract. Be specific; without being too simplistic.
 - People with brain injuries may have short-term memory deficits and may repeat themselves or require information to be repeated.
 - People with auditory perceptual problems may need to have directions repeated, and may take notes to help them remember directions or sequence of task.
 - People with perceptual or “sensory overload” problems may become disorientated or confused if there is too much to absorb at once. Provide information gradually and clearly. Reduce background noise if possible.
 - Repeat information using different wording or different communication approach. Allow time for the information to be fully understood.
 - Don’t pretend to understand if you don’t, ask the person to repeat what was said.
 - In conversation, people may respond slowly, so give them time. Be patient, flexible and supportive.
 - Some people who have a cognitive disability may be easily distracted. Try not to interpret distraction as rudeness. Instead, try to redirect politely.
 - Do not expect all people to be able to read well. Some people may not read at all.

Final Word

While the disability may be an integral part of oneself, it alone does not define them. Don’t make them into disability heroes or victims. Treat them as individuals and remember, when in doubt ask rather than assume!

Volunteer Working Agreement

Name: _____ Date of Orientation: _____

I have attended Oregon Adaptive Sport's orientation for volunteers and have received and reviewed OAS's Volunteer Handbook. I agree to abide by the procedures and protocols outlined in the handbook.

Signed _____ Date _____