Health and Safety Top Tips for Volunteers

Keeping yourself safe whilst out and about
When you are out and about volunteering for Guide Dogs it is important that you consider your safety at all times. To help you do this we recommend you read the guidance document called ‘A Guide to Your Personal Safety’.

Driving
There may be times that you use your vehicle in connection with your volunteering activities so we would recommend that you take time to read the ‘Top Tips for Drivers’ document that contains best practice guidance which may be of use to you.

What to do if you spot a hazard, something with the potential to cause harm
- Remove the hazard or rectify the situation if safe to do so
- Stop doing the activity, using the equipment or leave the area if applicable
- Talk to your volunteer line manager
- Tell other relevant people about the problem so they are aware of it.

Use of computers
There may be times when as part of your volunteering activities you use a computer (either in one of our offices or at home). If a user has not set up their equipment correctly this could result in them sustaining or aggravating an existing muscular skeletal problem. We would suggest that you read the guidance note ‘A Guide to Safe Computer Set Up and Use’.

Manual handling activities
As part of your volunteering role you may undertake a manual handling. Before you undertake any manual handling you should first think about the operation to make sure that you are physically capable and the load is suitable to be moved. Do not undertake any manual handling if you have an existing muscular-skeletal problem i.e. bad back, shoulder, arm etc. We would suggest that you read the guidance note ‘A Guide to Safer Manual Handling, Lifting, and Lowering (including lifting dogs)’.

Guide Dog stock at events
When a dog or puppy is at one of our fundraising, volunteering events, its welfare and that of others must be considered. Please ensure the following guidance is followed:
- Dogs are kept on a lead and under control by a responsible person at all times
- The person in control of the dog is aware of correct handling techniques
- The dog is taken to spend at regular intervals
- There is fresh drinking water for the dogs
- If a dog is excitable or showing signs of stress or discomfort it is removed from the area
- The location of the dog or its lead does not pose a tripping hazard and that the area provides shelter from weather conditions i.e. heat and rain
- All persons who have contact with Guide Dog stock are advised to wash their hands
- Any relief accident in the event area is cleared away appropriately.

There may be occasions when Guide Dog stock is involved in a dog attack or fight. Do not put yourself in danger by trying to get between the dogs. Try to get your dog away by pulling its lead whilst calling for help. We advise that you read the guidance note called ‘A Guide to Dealing with Dog Attacks and Fights’.

**Emergency situations**
Always think about where you are and what you would do and go in the in the event of a fire, incident and other emergency situation.

**Incident/accident investigation and first aid**
Guide Dogs investigate accidents/incidents to find out what happened in order to avoid reoccurrences. You must advise your volunteer line manager immediately if you have an accident/incident whilst on Guide Dogs business this includes motor vehicle incidents.

**Good Hygiene**
When you have contact with a dog or its faeces you should ensure that you follow basic hygiene procedures, this includes hand washing, preferably with soap and water though hand gel sanitizer is a good substitute, and disposal of faecal matter appropriately.

We ask that you also advise any other person who comes into contact with Guide Dog stock to clean their hands afterwards. Further detailed guidance can be found in the document called ‘A Guide to General Hygiene Measures’.

**Your health and safety training**
You will receive health and safety information and/or training specific to your volunteering role if appropriate. If you have any queries about your training speak to your main Guide Dogs contact.

**Who to contact regarding health and safety issues**
Your first point of contact regarding any health and safety issue or problem should be your main Guide Dogs contact. Fundraising volunteers must take all necessary steps to ensure their own and the public’s safety at any event they organise, seeking advice, if required, from the fundraising line manager.