

County Volunteer Protection

Frequently Asked Questions

What if I am sued for injuring someone or damaging their property while I am volunteering?

Authorized county volunteers are considered employees for purposes of defending them against third party lawsuits. If you are sued as a result of your volunteer duties, you must provide the county with copies of the lawsuit, along with a written request that the county defend you from the lawsuit within ten (10) days. The county will provide defense to you in the same manner defense is provided to a county employee under Utah law.

What if the lawsuit arises from an auto accident that happened while I was volunteering?

County volunteers are treated the same as county employees using personal vehicles while performing activities for the county. Utah law requires the insurer of the vehicle to respond first to any liability claim arising out of the use of the vehicle. You should notify your insurer of the accident. If your personal auto liability limits are not enough to cover the claim, the other party may bring a claim against the county for additional damages.

What if I am in an accident while driving a county vehicle on volunteer business?

If you were using a county owned vehicle at the time of an accident, notify your volunteer supervisor. The county will cover the claim for damage to the vehicle, and defend you any law suit that might arise as a result of the accident. Be sure to notify the county in writing within 10 days if you are sued.

What if my vehicle is damaged while I am using it for county volunteer services?

Whenever your personal vehicle is involved, your claim should be submitted to your personal auto insurer. Your insurer should provide coverage, and take action against any party they feel might be at fault for the damage. You should also provide the county information regarding the damage, as you are eligible for reimbursement of your deductible from the County's self-insurance fund, up to a maximum of \$500. If you carry no physical damage coverage on your vehicle, you are eligible for reimbursement from the County's self-insurance fund of the actual damage to your vehicle up to a maximum of \$500.

What if I damage my ATV or snowmobile while volunteering?

Damage to ATV's, snow machines and other similar off road vehicles are handled similarly to damage to personal vehicles. Submit the claim to your personal insurer, and copy information to the County as you will be eligible for reimbursement of your deductible (or actual damage if the machine is not insured) up to a maximum of \$500.

What if I get injured while performing volunteer duties for the county?

Under Utah state statute, county volunteers are covered under the Utah Workers Compensation Act for the medical expenses related to injuries arising out of their volunteer duties. If you are injured while performing your volunteer activities, notify your volunteer supervisor to fill out an injury report to submit to the County's workers compensation carrier. An adjuster will work with you to handle medical bills related to the injury.

What if I'm injured while performing volunteer duties and I am unable to work due to my injuries?

Utah law does not provide volunteers benefits for lost wages arising from volunteer activities, with one exception, which is Search and Rescue Volunteers who are injured as a result of their activities while they are on a search and rescue mission which the Sheriff requested them to participate in.

What if I just show up to help? What protection do I have then?

Utah law does not allow a person to perform volunteer services to a governmental agency without being duly authorized by the entity. If you volunteer without being authorized according to statute, you will receive no protection from law suits, injuries to yourself, or damage to your vehicle or property.

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not intended to create a contractual relationship between the volunteer and county, or to obligate the county to any benefit or liability to the volunteer which is not imposed by Utah State Statute.