



Volunteer Code of Conduct

Connecting People to Nature by Footpath

The Superior Hiking Trail Association is dedicated to the construction, maintenance, management, and promotion of the Superior Hiking Trail. In managing the Trail, the SHTA links people to nature by footpath along Lake Superior's North Shore. We do this for one reason – to protect our natural landscape and preserve it for generations to come. Volunteers are at the core of the SHTA's mission because you provide much of the work needed to maintain the Trail, and you are a significant part of the Trail community.

Why a Code of Conduct?

It is important to our SHTA community that staff and volunteers alike are aware of and aligned to the same set of principles and values. We have a shared responsibility to create a safe and welcoming environment. A volunteer code of conduct builds a common understanding and sets clear expectations for what that means.

Code of Conduct

Volunteers have the right to:

- be treated with respect;
- participate in a safe, welcoming, and rewarding environment;
- have qualified supervision and receive training and necessary support; and to ask for and receive help if a task is challenging or unclear;
- speak up if they feel unsafe at any time before, during, or after a SHTA event - this includes communicating concerns to SHTA leadership if necessary;
- have fun!

Volunteers have the responsibility to:

- treat others with respect;
- support a safe and welcoming environment;
- work to meet the expectations of their assignment, and seek and accept guidance;
- adhere to safety guidelines and follow direction provided by staff and volunteer leaders;
- follow SHTA trail management policies and guidelines.

Volunteers are expected to acknowledge and abide by the values and responsibilities described above. Failure to do so may result in temporary probation, suspension of leadership status, or being prohibited from attending future SHTA events

SHTA's code of conduct is a set of shared commitments and guiding principles for how we interact with each other and create our community. It is the shared responsibility of staff and volunteers to uphold and model these values.

The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of forms of behavior that are encouraged when attending SHTA events:

- Keep safety at the forefront of your actions and words.
- Treat all fellow volunteers and staff with dignity and respect, avoiding disparaging comments.
- Take time to get to know each other and value each other's contributions.
- Listen actively and value what others say.
- Think about the potential impact of what you say and do before you say or do it. Be open to hearing if the impact of your words or actions are different than what you intended.
- Allow everyone a chance to participate - whether in a conversation or a trail maintenance project. Step back if you notice that others have not had the same opportunity to participate in something fun.
- Be open to learning from staff and other volunteers regardless of your or their experience level.
- Bring your best self to the trail - take care of yourself.
- Be open to giving and receiving feedback.
- Remember that we all love the Trail. Find ways to celebrate our shared passion for the SHT.
- Celebrate differences. There are many ways to contribute, many ways to show our passion. Value each and every one.

Misconduct

The following is not an exhaustive list, but provides examples of forms of behavior that are considered unacceptable while volunteering:

- Failure to follow instructions including safe use of tools and equipment.
- Theft or inappropriate use, removal or possession of property .
- Working under the influence of alcohol, cannabis or illegal drugs. Excessive consumption of alcohol in SHTA-provided camping areas.
- Fighting or threatening violence.
- Disrespectful conduct.
- Sexual, racist or other harassment.
- Inappropriate discussions of a volunteer or staff member.
- Possession of dangerous or unauthorized materials, such as explosives or firearms, in the workplace.
- Any conduct that violates any government law or regulation.
- Any conduct that jeopardizes the safety of SHTA staff, volunteers, community members or the general public.
- Disregard for the rules and regulations of the land manager.

Reporting Misconduct

As a volunteer, you are encouraged to seek out SHTA staff members and/or volunteer leadership to share concerns, seek information, provide input, and resolve problems you encounter. Incidents can be reported to volunteer@superiorhiking.org or via the [Accident and Issue Report Form](#). Discretion is always taken to protect the identity of each individual involved in any investigation.

Investigation and resolution

Upon receipt of a formal complaint, the information collected will be reviewed by SHTA staff who will decide on an appropriate resolution.

Scope of the Code of Conduct

This Code of Conduct applies to individuals volunteering for the SHTA.

The code of conduct applies to:

- Physical locations, such as the Trail, office buildings, shelters, trailheads, campsites, etc.
- Activities and events such as hikes, programming, training, and internal and external meetings.
- Activities such as written communication, including online and social media.
- Other instances or locations where people operating within the code may be representing the organization.

Overall, the code of conduct applies to interactions that occur across our organization's operations.

National Park Service Professionalism in the Workplace

As a partner of the National Park Service (NPS) in this work, volunteers are encouraged to sign up with the Volunteer in Parks (VIP) program and are subject to the NPS policy for [Professionalism in the Workplace](#).

The NPS respects and values all volunteers as equal partners in accomplishing the mission of the Trail. The commitment to volunteers is to maximize the quantity and quality of training opportunities, make all efforts to provide for a safe and productive work environment, and to maintain standards of conduct for the benefit of everyone. The volunteers' commitment to the SHTA is to demonstrate good faith effort in adhering to NPS policies, standards, and procedures, and conduct themselves in manners befitting the NPS Volunteers-In-Parks Program.

Anti-Discrimination

Our organization strives to maintain an environment free from discrimination, harassment, or bullying on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, race, national origin, or religion, among others. The organization requires all volunteers to ensure their conduct is aligned with this policy and reserves the right to take disciplinary action against any volunteer who is found to be in violation.

In addition, the NPS along with land management partners such as the US Forest Service or our state and local agency partners often have anti-harassment policies and offer avenues for grievance.

[NPS Director's Order 16E: Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

[USFS Anti-Harassment Policy](#)

Limitations and Modifications

The SHTA and its members, volunteers, and leaders acknowledge that the Code of Conduct will not cover every possible circumstance. This code of conduct will be reviewed annually for revisions by SHTA staff and the Trails Committee of the SHTA Board of Directors.

Adopted on March 15, 2025.