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2023-2024 *FIRST*® Tech Challenge

Volunteer Coordinator Manual

Sponsor Thank You

Thank you to our generous sponsor for your continued support of the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge!



Volunteer Thank You

Thank you for taking the time to volunteer for a *FIRST*® Tech Challenge event. *FIRST*® and *FIRST*® Tech Challenge rely heavily on volunteers to ensure events run smoothly and are a fun experience for teams and their families, which could not happen without people like you. With over 6,500 teams competing yearly, your dedication and commitment are essential to the success of each event and the *FIRST* Tech Challenge program. Thank you for your time and effort in supporting the mission of *FIRST*!

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Contents

Contents 3
Introduction 5
What is FIRST® Tech Challenge? *5*
Gracious Professionalism® 5
FIRST Privacy Policy 5
Volunteer General Information 6
Volunteer Training and Certification *6*
Volunteer Minimum Age Requirement *6*
Key Volunteer Role Minimum Age Requirement *6*
Bring a Friend! *6*
Helping Teams Succeed *6*
Job Description 7
Tournament Structure 8
Role Responsibilities 9
Example Timeline *9*
Pre-Event Day Responsibilities 9
Volunteer Roles *9*
Lead Volunteers *9*
FIRST Technical Advisor (FTA) 10
Head Referee 10
Field Supervisor 10
Judge Advisor 10
Pit Administrator 10
Lead Robot Inspector 10
Lead Field Inspector 10
Lead Queuer 10
Lead Scorekeeper 10
Additional Volunteer Roles *11*
Referee 11
Judge 11
Field Inspector 11
Robot Inspector 11

Queuer 11
Emcee and Game Announcer 11
Control System Advisor 12
Scorekeeper 12
Wi-Fi Technical Advisor 12
Dean's List Award – Interviewer and Reviewer Roles 12
Dean's List Interviewer 12
Dean's List Reviewer 13
Required System Access 13
Recruiting Volunteers 13
Sponsors 13
LinkedIn® 13
Volunteer Job Shadow 13
Additional Recruitment Opportunities *14*
Conflict of Interest *14*
Parent, Relative or Alumni of a Team 15
Volunteer Training 15
Volunteer Registration System *16*
The FIRST Volunteer Management System (VMS) *16*
Assigning Volunteers 17
Volunteer Time Commitments *17*
Communication 17
Frequency *18*
Initial Communication *18*
Attire *18*
Volunteer Staffing Plan *18*
Event Public Agenda *18*
Safety *18*
Event Day Responsibilities 18
The Event: Preparation and Overview *18*
End of Day 19
Follow up *19*
Appendix A – Resources 20
Game Forum Q&A *20*
Volunteer Forum *20*
FIRST Tech Challenge Game Manuals *20*

FIRST Headquarters Pre-Event Support *20*
FIRST Tech Challenge Event On-Call Support *20*
FIRST Websites *20*
FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media *20*
Feedback *20*
Appendix B: Staffing Suggestion 21
Appendix C: Suggested *FIRST* Tech Challenge Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities 22
Appendix D: Walk-On Event Volunteer Policy 26

Introduction

What is FIRST® Tech Challenge?

FIRST® Tech Challenge is a student-centered program that focuses on giving students a unique and stimulating experience. Each year, teams engage in a new game where they design, build, test, and program autonomous and driver operated robots that must perform a series of tasks. Participants and alumni of *FIRST* programs gain access to education and career discovery opportunities, connections to exclusive scholarships and employers, and a place in the *FIRST* community for life. To learn more about *FIRST*® Tech Challenge and other *FIRST*® Programs, visit www.firstinspires.org.

Gracious Professionalism®

FIRST® uses this term to describe our programs' intent.

Gracious Professionalism® is a way of doing things that encourages high-quality work, emphasizes the value of others, and respects individuals and the community.

Watch Dr. Woodie Flowers explain *Gracious Professionalism* in this short video.

FIRST Privacy Policy

FIRST takes the privacy of our community seriously. As a nonprofit and a mission-driven youth-serving organization, we are compelled to understand who we are serving, how our programs are performing, and make improvements so that we can achieve our goals of making *FIRST* accessible to any youth who wants to be part of the fun, exciting and life-changing experience. Thus, we need to collect certain personal data from participants and volunteers to ensure we are meeting our goals and responsibilities as a youth-serving nonprofit organization.

As a volunteer, you may be asked to handle the personal data, or personally identifiable information (PII), of coaches, team members, and even other volunteers. It is critical that you understand and follow the *FIRST* Privacy Policy and complete any data protection and privacy training required by your role. If you have any questions regarding data protection and privacy, please reach out to the *FIRST* Data Governance Team at privacy@firstinspires.org.

Volunteer General Information

Our *FIRST* Volunteer Handbook is a comprehensive guide to the different ways people can volunteer with *FIRST*. It includes expectations, descriptions of training, policies, and more.

Learn more about the roles of volunteers on our Volunteer Resources page, "Volunteer Role Descriptions

Volunteer Training and Certification

Volunteers must create an account on www.firstinspires.org and apply to the role. Upon application, training can be accessed from within the dashboard. Please follow these instructions to access training through the dashboard.

If you have applied for a role but do not see the link to training in your dashboard, or you have other training related questions please email FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org.

Volunteer Minimum Age Requirement

The minimum age requirement of a *FIRST* volunteer is **13 years old**.

A minor must have a parent or guardian give written permission to volunteer. In addition, the *FIRST* Consent and Release Forms will need to be signed by a parent or guardian in the Volunteer Registration system for any volunteer under age 18.

Key Volunteer Role Minimum Age Requirement

Volunteers MUST be at least 21 years old before they can serve in a key volunteer role for the *FIRST* Tech Challenge. Key volunteer positions include: volunteer coordinator, head referee, judge advisor, field supervisor, *FIRST* technical advisor, lead robot inspector, lead field inspector, and lead scorekeeper. Local program delivery partners can make case by case exceptions to these guidelines by contacting *FIRST* for approval.

Bring a Friend!

Volunteers are a huge part of the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Program and continuing to inspire students to seek out careers in science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). *FIRST* Tech Challenge needs your help in recruiting new volunteers to keep our programs thriving for future generations! If you have a friend or co-worker you think would be interested in volunteering at an event, there are just a few easy steps to help get them involved!

1. Check out our full list of volunteer opportunities online!
2. Have them apply for the Event in the Volunteer Registration System. Volunteers must be screened before volunteering.
3. Have them contact Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org with any questions they may have.

If they are concerned about jumping in head first, no worries! Job shadowing at a *FIRST* Tech Challenge Event is a great way to get a taste of what a full day's worth of competition looks like. New volunteers can discover ways they can fit their personal skills into a volunteer position!

Helping Teams Succeed

A volunteers role is about helping a team succeed so they can compete. Teams spend countless hours, weeks and sometimes months working and reworking their robot design and strategies. After all this effort, some teams will still need a friendly volunteer to help create a positive event experience for the students.

Job Description

The volunteer coordinator is responsible for recruiting and communicating with all event volunteers. The volunteer coordinator should also plan and complete activities for volunteer recruitment, selection, registration, support, and recognition.

The volunteer coordinator must ensure that an event is properly staffed with key and general volunteers to help with the entire event, and act as the main contact for all volunteers. It is important the volunteer coordinator manages and inspires all their volunteers. *FIRST* relies heavily on dedicated volunteers to help staff and deliver successful events and it is important that all volunteers have a positive experience.

The volunteer coordinator acts as a liaison, and ensures that all volunteers have proper training, event schedules, and clear expectations for the day of the event. The volunteer coordinator must work with and be a partner to the program delivery partner and tournament director during the event. Most importantly, as representatives of *FIRST*, volunteer coordinators are visible leaders in the community and must understand and display *Gracious Professionalism*, one of *FIRST's* core values.

Physical/Technical Requirements:

- Technical – Low
- Physical – Medium – Can be performed seated
- Administrative – High
- Communication – High

Time commitment: Volunteer coordinators should read this manual before the event. They should speak to the tournament director or program delivery partner to check for additional requirements, such as meetings before the event or run-throughs of the queuing path before the event. The estimated training time is one hour.

Time commitments can vary depending on experience, working arrangements with the program delivery partner, and the size of the event. Below is an estimated amount of time you may spend on staffing for an event:

- 3 to 6 months before the event – About 6 hours a week.
- 2 to 3 months before the event – About 10 hours a week.
- 1 month before and up to the event – Up to 20 hours a week.

Sometimes, the role of volunteer coordinator can be time-consuming for one person. Consider a team approach to help divide the work. One person can be responsible for communications, while the other may want to focus on recruiting.

- **Proper Dress:**
  - Wear comfortable shoes, most of the day will be spent standing and walking between the pit area and the competition fields.
  - ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses are required in the competition area.

Tournament Structure

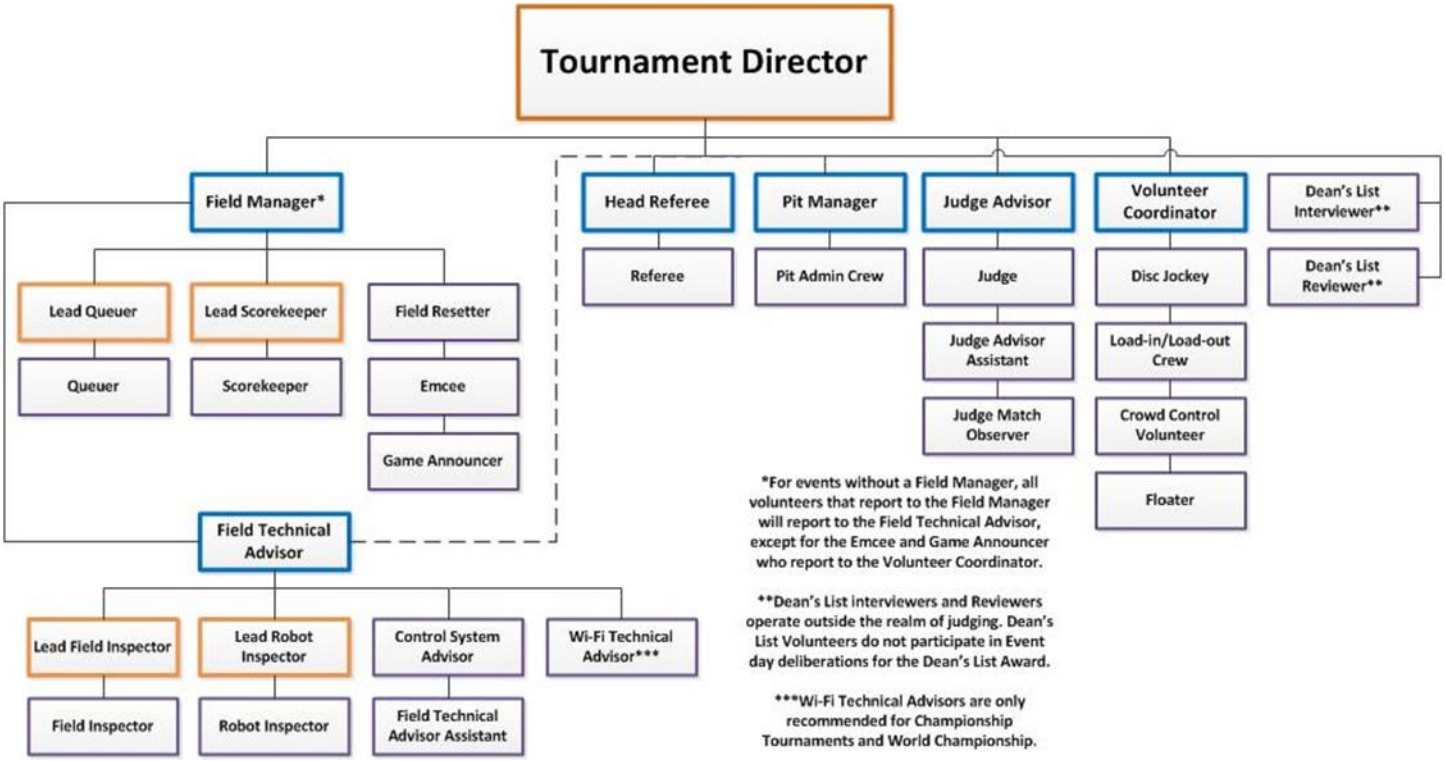


Figure 1 - League Tournament, Qualifying Tournament, Championship Tournament Organization

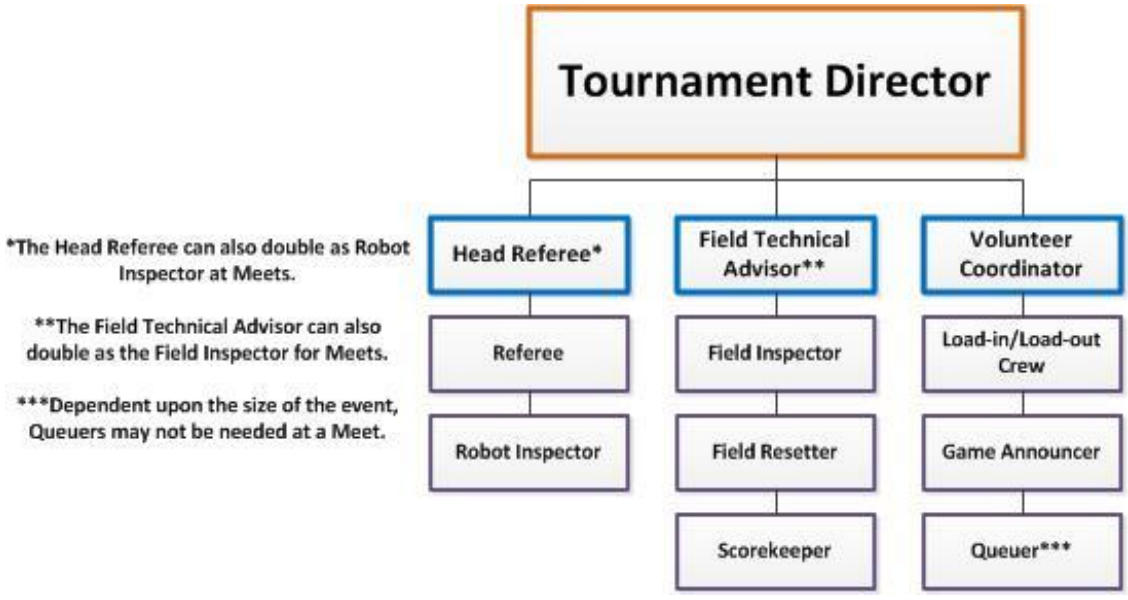


Figure 2 - League Meet Organization

Learn more about the roles of volunteers on our Volunteer Resources page, "Volunteer Role Descriptions."

Role Responsibilities

The volunteer coordinator's main responsibility is to recruit all necessary volunteers for an event, or for multiple events. This is an important role, as *FIRST* Tech Challenge relies heavily on volunteers to run a successful event. Occasionally, there may be more than one volunteer coordinator, depending on the size of the event and the number of events to plan for. The volunteer coordinator is the main contact for volunteers; communicating the dates, times, and sending out necessary training information.

The volunteer coordinator works closely with the tournament director or program delivery partner to ensure that all positions are filled on time. In some regions, the volunteer coordinator might work with a tournament planning committee; a group of people who each have separate responsibilities in helping to plan and deliver a successful event.

The volunteer coordinator must assign volunteers to a specific role after they are recruited. Many volunteers may already know which roles they would like to fill based on their skills and experiences, but some do not. The volunteer coordinator will discuss choices with those volunteers to best match their skills with a volunteer role.It can be helpful to consult early with key volunteers, including head referees, lead FTAs, judge advisors, etc, for help with volunteer recruitment and to discuss training planning.

Example Timeline

The following timeline outlines some of the key tasks for volunteer coordinators and the ideal timeframe the event the task should be planned and completed.

Task	7-8 Months Before	4 - 6 Months Before	2 - 3 Months Before	1 - 2 Months Before	After
Identify volunteer coordinator					
Begin inviting key volunteers					
Begin recruiting all general volunteers					
Ensure key volunteers have access to training materials and certification tests					
Ensure key volunteers have been trained					
Ensure non-certified volunteers have been trained (if applicable)					
Send follow-up email with event details					
Order volunteer t-shirts, thank you gifts (if applicable)					
Assemble volunteer registration packets					
Confirm volunteer attendance					
Send volunteer thank you's					

Pre-Event Day Responsibilities

Volunteer Roles

Every volunteer coordinator must understand the volunteer roles and what is needed to run an event before they begin to recruit. Below you will find a list of the volunteer positions that are necessary to staff an event.

Lead Volunteers

Lead volunteers are the volunteer positions that have other volunteers reporting directly to them. They are often referred to as key volunteers. Lead volunteers should have some ability to effectively manage and

communicate with others. Make sure to assign your lead volunteers as early on as possible. These positions require training and, in many cases, certification. The earlier these roles are assigned, the sooner the trainings can be completed. Lead volunteers may also be able to help with recruiting volunteers for other roles at the event.

FIRST Technical Advisor (FTA)
This should be one of the first roles filled for an event. The FTA is a volunteer who concentrates on technical issues (such as the scoring system, robot control system issues, etc.) and making sure the event runs smoothly from a technical perspective.

Head Referee
The head referees play a critical role in ensuring smooth flow of match play and keeping the pace of the event. Referees work under the direction of the head referee and may be required to take part in deliberations about contested referee calls by teams.

Field Supervisor
The field supervisor takes part in field set-up and maintenance, directs activity on the field to ensure smooth execution of the matches. The field supervisor plays a critical role in ensuring smooth flow of match play and keeping the pace of the event.

Judge Advisor
The judge advisor coordinates the judging process, including training judges, scheduling the judging interviews, facilitating group deliberation sessions, ensuring the award decisions are made, and the awards script is written. The judges, judge assistant, and judge match observers look to the judge advisor for training materials, schedules, and other general questions.

Pit Administrator
This role is necessary to assist teams, spectators, or any other visitor to the event and answer all questions. Stationed in the pit area, this person fields many questions throughout the day, from where the competition is happening, to timing of the event. This volunteer will collect necessary forms from teams, distribute information, and make important announcements to the teams throughout the day.

Lead Robot Inspector
Robot inspectors perform mandatory robot inspections to ensure compliance with robot construction rules. Lead robot inspectors supervise the robot inspectors and act as a resource to the robot inspectors performing the inspections.

Lead Field Inspector
Field inspectors perform mandatory field inspections to ensure that every robot can successfully connect and compete in a match. Lead field inspectors supervise the field inspectors and act as a resource to the field inspectors performing the inspections.

Lead Queuer
Lead queuers manage the flow of teams to and from the competition area. Lead queuers will work with the tournament director and the field tech advisor (FTA) to create unrestricted paths to and from the pit area to the competition area. Lead queuers serve as guides to help the queueing staff ensure proper team flow to and from the competition area.

Lead Scorekeeper
The lead scorekeeper is the person responsible for making sure that the scoring system is set up correctly and that match scores are entered accurately. They serve as a guide/resource to the scorekeeper who runs the scoring system during the event which provides the teams and audience scores of each match.

Additional Volunteer Roles

The following volunteer roles, although they are not lead roles, are all critical to ensure a successful event.

Referee

Referees have two main role distinctions; watching matches to call penalties and tracking the status of the match. Four referees will be assigned to each field. There will be two referees responsible for tracking and calling penalties as they occur during the match. The other two referees track the score for either the red or the blue alliance. After completion of the match, the referees will work together to finalize the score and account for any penalties assessed during the match.

Penalties

Watches team matches, identifies rule violations, and "calls" them. Referees help the competitors to avoid breaking the rules of the game. Referees take part in deliberations about contested calls, working directly through the head referee.

Scoring

Referees record the status of the game and scoring elements during match play. There will be one referee assigned to the blue alliance side of the field, and the other to the red alliance side of the field. Most tournaments will use live scoring where the referee will use an electronic device (tablet or laptop) to enter scoring activity. Some tournaments will keep track of scoring activity using a paper score sheet.

Judge

Panels of judges are responsible for interviewing teams, visiting teams in the pits to gather more information, and watching matches. Some tournaments may use “virtual” judging where judges interview teams and conduct deliberations from their home (or other location) using a computer and video conferencing software available from *FIRST*.

Most importantly they are responsible for deliberating on teams as a group to decide which teams deserve which award. The judges report to the judge advisor.

Field Inspector

The field inspection process is in place to ensure that every robot can successfully connect and compete in a match. The field inspector must also go through the field inspection checklist which includes verifying settings on the team’s Android device and/or robot controller to reminding the teams to stay on time for each match.

Robot Inspector

Robot inspectors are responsible to ensure every robot follows the guidelines outlined in *FIRST* Tech Challenge Game Manual Part 1 and are ready to compete on the field. The inspection process involves filling out a checklist for every robot and placing a label or other unique tag on the robot after it passes inspection. Some regions will use the scoring system to track inspection status and completion.

Queuer

Queuers are responsible for managing team traffic to and from the playing field and staging and positioning teams in preparation for the start of matches. They play a critical role in ensuring smooth flow of match play and keeping the pace of the event.

Emcee and Game Announcer

Although these are two separate positions, sometimes they are combined into one. The emcee is responsible for setting the tone of the competition, creating a fun and exciting atmosphere throughout the event. The game announcer introduces teams, provides play-by-play commentary, and reports scores to the audience.

Control System Advisor
The control system advisor (CSA) role is to assist teams with robot control system related issues. The CSA works in collaboration with the *FIRST* technical advisor (FTA) and/or robot inspectors, who may direct teams experiencing issues on the field or in the pits to the CSA for assistance.

Scorekeeper
Scorekeepers manage and operate the scoring system. Many events use live scoring software with referees entering scoring as it occurs on the field. In this case, the scorekeeper assists the head referee with readiness of the field to start a match, controlling the match timer and other available displays. At some events, the scorekeeper enters match scores into the scoring system once paper scoresheets are received from the referees. Scorekeepers play a critical role in ensuring smooth flow of match play and maintaining the pace of the event.

Wi-Fi Technical Advisor
The Wi-Fi technical advisor (WTA) is also responsible for monitoring the wireless spectrum and troubleshooting wireless issues at large and/or critical *FIRST* Tech Challenge events. Not every *FIRST* Tech Challenge event will require a WTA. Most smaller events (less than 40 robots) do not require the skills of a WTA.

There are many more volunteer roles that are necessary to a successful event.

Additional Volunteer Positions**		
Crowd Control	Disc Jockey	Field Reset
Floater	FTA Assistant	Judge Advisor Assistant
Judge Match Observer	Load in/Load out Crew	Pit Announcer
Photographer/Video Crew	Practice Field Monitor	Team & Volunteer Registration

**For a full list with descriptions please see the Volunteer Role Descriptions document on *FIRST*'s website.

Manuals for most volunteer roles can also be found on the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Volunteer Resource page.

Dean's List Award – Interviewer and Reviewer Roles

There are two volunteer roles related to the Dean's List Award, the Dean's List interviewer and the Dean's List reviewer, that vary slightly from other event volunteer roles. Their main responsibility is to evaluate candidates for the Dean's List Award, which recognizes the most outstanding *FIRST* Tech Challenge students.

Dean's List Interviewer
Dean's List interviewers' main responsibility is to interview semi-finalists, which are the students nominated for the Dean's List award by their coach or mentor. However, there are other responsibilities the interviewer must take on before and after the event. These responsibilities include:

- Review nominations before the event.
    - Please note that some interviews will be done at an event, while others will be done remotely. Please check with the local PDP or tournament director to determine which format will be used.
    - Interview the semi-finalist during the event OR remotely.
- Write a narrative about the interview after the event. The notes from the interviewer are a vital piece of information when students are reviewed to potentially move to the next level.

These notes are used by the Dean's List reviewers to help them decide which students move to the next round as finalists.

Dean's List Reviewer
The Dean's List reviewers are responsible for deciding the Dean's List Award finalists within a region. There will be at least two reviewers in a state or region that work together to decide on who will be the finalists for that area. The reviewers must access the Dean's List Award System to view the original nomination as well as the notes from the Dean's List interviewers. Once all the nominations and notes have been considered, the reviewers choose the finalists for the region. Finalists are announced at the Regional Championship. Dean's List reviewers do not need to be present at the event; rather they review each semi-finalist and enter the finalists in the Dean's List Award System. This information will feed up to the State/Regional Championship tournament director.

Required System Access
Both of the Dean's List roles need access to a system called the Dean's List Award System. This system is where they will be able to access the nominations, type in interview notes, and select finalists. To allow a volunteer access to the system, they must first apply to the role of Dean's List interviewer or Dean's List reviewer in the volunteer registration system. Once they have applied, they must be assigned by the program delivery partner or volunteer coordinator to the role in the volunteer management system (VMS). The assignment in the VMS is what gives the volunteer access to the award system. Without this assignment, these volunteers will not have the information they need to prepare for an interview, or to review the candidates and make the finalist selections.

If a volunteer coordinator has questions or needs help with making an assignment, they should email FTCDeansList@firstinspires.org. Please make sure to copy the program delivery partner or tournament director, as this will speed up the process of making the assignment.

Recruiting Volunteers

There are many ways that you can recruit volunteers. There is not a right or wrong answer on how to do this, feel free to be creative! Here are just a few examples of ways that a volunteer coordinator can recruit volunteers.

Sponsors
Most events will have a sponsor or multiple sponsors supporting the event with donations. Asking a sponsor for volunteers to help staff the event is a great way to get them more involved with the program. Some companies even offer their employees volunteer hours which they can use to volunteer at the event.

LinkedIn®
LinkedIn® is a great resource that can be used to your advantage when recruiting volunteers. Like any other organization posting a job opening, the volunteer coordinator can work with the planning committee or program delivery partner to post volunteer positions that need to be filled. These postings can include the job descriptions and the skills needed to fill the role.

Volunteer Job Shadow
Some of the great feedback received over the years is that a volunteer who spends a day shadowing another volunteer feels more prepared and more successful to fill a role at a later event. Talk with the volunteers you have already recruited. See if they know someone who might be interested in tagging along for the day. This is a great way to expose the person not only to the position, but also to the excitement of the event.

Additional Recruitment Opportunities

The below lists are some other ways that a volunteer coordinator can recruit volunteers for an event.

- *FIRST* Tech Challenge or *FIRST* Robotics competition team members.
- Parents of team members.
- Word of mouth.
- Your planning committee.
- *FIRST* Senior Mentors (http://firstinspires.org/senior-mentors).
- Speakers' Bureau – Consider forming one for your event. Include planning committee members, volunteers, mentors, and students. Students are very enthusiastic and effective *FIRST* Tech Challenge ambassadors.
- Community bulletin boards.
- Open house or robot demonstration.
- Teachers or administrators from the event-hosting school.

There are multiple organizations that you can contact to gauge interest and recruit volunteers:

- Local or regional chapters of professional and technical organizations.
- The American Society of Mechanical Engineers (ASME).
- Society of Women Engineers (SWE).
- National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE).
- Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SPHE).
- Entrepreneurial Associations and Economic Development Groups.
- Information Technology Associations.
- Area computing groups.
- K-12 education associations.
- School Districts.
- Parent-Teacher Organizations.
- Senior Centers and Senior Citizen Organizations.
- Military organizations, recruiters, college ROTC instructors
- Civic and Service Organizations – Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions, Elks, Chambers of Commerce, etc.

You can also reach out to corporations you may feel would have an interest in the program and that align with *FIRST*'s mission. You may also be able to recruit volunteers from current or prospective sponsors. You can find a list of *FIRST* sponsors on our website, https://www.firstinspires.org/about/our-supporters. A few groups that align with *FIRST*'s mission include:

- Youth Service Organizations – Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, 4-H, Boys and Girls Club.
- Colleges and Universities – both faculty and students.

Conflict of Interest

Please ask all volunteers to disclose any potential conflicts of interest, and to complete the conflict of interest and disclosure form. Some scenarios of conflict of interests include:

- A coach or mentor is volunteering in a role that could impact the result of the event;
- A parent or relative of a team member is volunteering in a role that could impact the result of the event;
- Alumni (student or adult) of a team competing at the event is volunteering in a role that could impact the result of the event;

- A sponsor of a team that is competing at the event is volunteering in a role that could impact the result of the event;
- An individual who interacts with many teams within a region is volunteering in a role that could impact the result of the event;

Having a conflict of interest, or even the perception of a conflict of interest can impact a team's experience, even if decisions that were made throughout the day were not biased in any way. The perception of potential favoritism is enough to discourage a team, coach, or mentor, and take away from their overall experience. Knowing what conflict of interest is, and how to avoid being in a position that could be viewed as a conflict will ensure all teams feel they have been treated fairly.

Conflict of interest can sometimes be very black and white. In other cases, it may be a gray area, and it may be difficult to determine what makes up a true conflict of interest. Sometimes, the bias may be obvious, while other times a conflict of interest may be perceived by a team or a coach. It is best to keep the following in mind when volunteering:

- Encourage volunteers to be open and forthcoming about conflicts they may have with a team competing at the event.
- If there is a known conflict of interest, avoid assigning that volunteer in a role where their decisions about a team that could change the result of the day, for example:
    - Assigning a judge to a panel where they would interview a team in which they currently or have had an existing relationship
    - Assigning a referee at an event where multiple teams they coach are competing.
- Avoid assigning volunteers in any situation that could be perceived as a conflict of interest.

Parent, Relative or Alumni of a Team

If a parent or a relative of a team member is volunteering at an event, this volunteer must abstain from making any decisions that could impact the results of the tournament. Whether volunteering as a judge or as field personnel (referee, field technical advisor, etc.) it is important to have that volunteer remove themselves from making any decisions related to that team. For example:

- If the volunteer is a judge, they must recuse themselves from any conversations about that team during deliberations.
- If the volunteer is a referee, they should not be involved in any decisions around penalties, match replays, etc.

Keep in mind there are many ways conflict of interest can be present, from parents to sponsors. Make sure to remove any seeming conflicts of interest, but also keep in mind any perceptions of conflicts.

Volunteer Training

Many volunteer positions need training and certification before volunteering at the event. The chart below outlines the roles that have training manuals, training videos, or required certifications.

Training and Certification by Role			
Role	**Training Manual**	**Training Video**	**Certification Test**
FIRST Technical Advisor (FTA)	X	X	X
Head Referee	X	X	X
Referee	X	X	X
Judge Advisor	X	X	X

Judge	X	X	X
Lead Scorekeeper	X	X	X
Robot Inspector	X	X	X
Field Inspector	X		
Queuer	X	X	
Emcee and Game Announcer	X	X	
Volunteer Coordinator	X	X	
Dean's List Interviewer	X		X
Dean's List Reviewer	X		X
Field Supervisor	X		
Pit Administrator	X		

Volunteer Registration System

The volunteer registration system is where volunteers can apply to the role they are interested in. To apply for a volunteer role, the volunteer must visit www.firstinspires.org, and either sign up or log into the website. After signing in, they will need to click "Volunteer Registration." The volunteer can then search for the event they would like to apply for, and the role they would like to serve. Volunteers will also need to successfully complete their Youth Protection screening to complete their initial volunteer application and before volunteering at the event. Volunteers that do not complete Youth Protection and background screening before the event will be treated as "walk-on" volunteers with limited role assignment on the day of the event.

The volunteer can then provide added information such as:

- *FIRST* volunteer experience
- Any team affiliations
- Physical limitations
- Food allergies
- T-shirt size

This is a great tool that can provide you with better insight on how to match the volunteer to a position at the event that best fits their interests and experience.

The FIRST Volunteer Management System (VMS)

The *FIRST* Volunteer Management System (VMS) is designed to help in management of event volunteers. Our Volunteer Resources department has created an online video VMS training.We also have a VMS User Guide if you need more information.

- VMS is for managing volunteers.
- Program delivery partners or volunteer coordinators can use the VMS to check a volunteers' screening status.
- Program delivery partners or volunteer coordinators will use the VMS to assign volunteers that have registered and applied for events via their accounts on www.firstinspires.org.
- VMS can be used to view volunteers that have applied to events, including their role preferences, and other information, such as dietary restrictions and physical limitations.

Note: Volunteer coordinators may be any designated individuals the partner feels should have access to the information stored in the volunteer management system. This includes, but is not limited to league committee members, qualifier directors, key volunteers, etc.

Example: Field inspectors are typically only utilized in the morning, prior to the start of the competition. Consider other opportunities for this volunteer to assist with other areas of the event.

Assigning Volunteers

An important part of staffing your event is assigning a volunteer to the most fitting position. Some events require:

- Long periods of standing on concrete floors.
- Certain skills/previous knowledge of *FIRST* Tech Challenge, *FIRST,* or the event.
- Two or more days commitments.
- A high degree of movement, energy, and stamina.

Other factors to keep in mind when assigning volunteers:

- The volunteer's interest.
- The volunteer's skills.
- The volunteer's experience.
- The volunteer's availability.
- The volunteer's nearness to the venue.
- Any indication the volunteer may have physical limitations.

Just as important as it is to match the right volunteer with the right role, it is equally important to make sure that we align the volunteer as close to their interests as possible. Keeping a volunteer enthusiastic and engaged only improves their experience and increases the chances the volunteer will participate in another event. Many volunteers already have an idea of their preferences, as many have volunteered before. Let them know that you will do your best to fit them into the role they have requested. If the role they have requested has already been filled, make sure to communicate with that volunteer. Have recommendations ready for other positions that you need to fill, keeping in mind the volunteer's experience, skills, and interests.

Volunteer Time Commitments

Make sure that when you are speaking with a volunteer about what position would be best for them, that you also discuss how much time they can give. Ideally, you should communicate that an event is a full day, however, do not turn away a volunteer who can only give a few hours. This might be a great introduction to the excitement of an event and may entice them to volunteer for additional events throughout the season.

When discussing time commitments with your volunteers, remember that some volunteer positions do not require a full day's work. In these instances, you can use these volunteers to help with other non-technical tasks throughout the day, such as giving other volunteers a break.

Communication

Communication is an important part of ensuring that your volunteers are kept informed and up to date. Making sure that you are communicating with your volunteers will ensure they feel that they are part of the process and that they are valued. Communicating regularly, whether by phone or email, also keeps the event in the forefront of the volunteer's mind. In addition, always make sure that when you send regular communications that you thank them for their commitment.

Frequency
The volunteer coordinator should plan to communicate with their recruited volunteers regularly leading up to the event. Communication should happen at least monthly, depending on how far in advance the volunteers are recruited. In the month before the event, there should be communication at least bi-weekly, if not weekly, to keep the volunteers in the loop about any updates or last-minute changes.

Initial Communication
Once a volunteer is assigned, they should receive communication from the volunteer coordinator outlining the date and time of the event, the address, the time commitments for the day, and any necessary training needed before volunteering.

Attire
Make sure that you and your volunteers have the appropriate attire for the event. Volunteers should wear comfortable, close-toed shoes, as they will be on their feet for much of the event.

Volunteer Staffing Plan
This is optional, however a great way to let your volunteers know who they will be working with throughout the day of the event. Creating a staffing plan will allow you to communicate to all your volunteers the names and roles of the other volunteers they will be working alongside throughout the day. This can usually bring comfort to a volunteer as far as what to expect, and who they can reach out to if they need help.

Event Public Agenda
The event public agenda includes more specific start and stop times for activities such as inspections, opening ceremonies, etc. The agenda will be sent out by your program delivery partner and will affect some of the times and shifts for volunteers. Be sure not to communicate firm start and stop times for volunteers until the public agenda has been created. This will be about one month before the event.

Safety
To prevent injury, all individuals in the pit area, the practice field area and the competition area must wear safety glasses or protective eyewear that is ANSI-approved, UL Listed, CE EN166 rated, AS/NZS certified or CSA rated. If glasses are tinted, only lightly tinted yellow, rose, blue, and amber tints are *FIRST* approved. Reflective lenses are prohibited; the wearers eyes must be clearly visible to others. If you wear prescription glasses that do not have a marked safety rating, you must wear rated safety goggles over them to achieve adequate protection. If you wear marked safety rated glasses, you may use ANSI-approved, UL Listed, CE EN166 rated, AS/NZS certified or CSA rated side shields. Safety rated glasses, side shields, and frames can be identified by markings stating the standard that they are rated to.

Event Day Responsibilities

The Event: Preparation and Overview
If allowed by the facility where the event is being held, you should plan to be on site the day before. This will allow you to direct the flow of the set-up volunteers. It also gives you an opportunity ahead of time to familiarize yourself with the layout of the event, and where you will be directing your volunteers on event day. Remember that volunteers appreciate communication and direction. The better the instructions they receive the more confident they will be in their role.

Checklist for the day of the event:

- ANSI Z87.1 certified safety glasses.

- Walk-on Volunteer Application forms.
- Consent and release forms.
- Conflict of Interest forms.

End of Day

Follow up

It is always best practice to ensure that you follow up with a “Thank you” after the event. You can write out a personal note thanking the volunteer if time allows. However even a general “thank you” will go a long way in the eyes of the volunteer. Depending on the size of your event and the resources that you have available, you could also follow up with a photo from the event, showing the volunteer that they were an important part of making that event successful and special.

Appendix A – Resources

Game Forum Q&A

https://ftc-qa.firstinspires.org/

Anyone may view questions and answers within the *FIRST*® Tech Challenge game Q&A forum without a password. To submit a new question, you must have a unique Q&A system user name and password for your team.

Volunteer Forum

Volunteers can request access to role specific volunteer forums by emailing FTCTrainingSupport@firstinspires.org. You will receive access to the forum thread specific to your role.

FIRST Tech Challenge Game Manuals

Part 1 and 2 - https://www.firstinspires.org/resource-library/ftc/game-and-season-info

FIRST Headquarters Pre-Event Support

Phone: 603-666-3906
Mon – Fri
8:30am – 5:00pm
Email: Firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org

FIRST Tech Challenge Event On-Call Support

The on call event support number is available for event personnel only. Please **do not** call these numbers if you are a team looking for a ruling, a decision, or assistance. We trust that you will not misuse this resource.

- Technical Support: Scoring System and Robot Control System on call event support: 603-206-2450
- Non-Technical Support: All other day of event support: 603-206-2412

FIRST Websites

FIRST homepage – www.firstinspires.org

FIRST Tech Challenge Page – For everything *FIRST* Tech Challenge.

FIRST Tech Challenge Volunteer Resources – To access public volunteer manuals.

FIRST Tech Challenge Event Schedule – Find *FIRST* Tech Challenge events in your area.

FIRST Tech Challenge Social Media

FIRST Tech Challenge Twitter Feed - If you are on Twitter, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge Twitter feed for news updates.

FIRST Tech Challenge Facebook page - If you are on Facebook, follow the *FIRST* Tech Challenge page for news updates.

FIRST Tech Challenge YouTube Channel – Contains training videos, game animations, news clips, and more.

FIRST Tech Challenge Blog – Weekly articles for the *FIRST* Tech Challenge community, including outstanding volunteer recognition!

FIRST Tech Challenge Team Email Blasts – contain the most recent *FIRST* Tech Challenge news for teams.

Feedback

We strive to create support materials that are the best they can be. If you have feedback about this manual, please email firsttechchallenge@firstinspires.org. Thank you!

Appendix B: Staffing Suggestion

This staffing suggestion chart is for a 30 team, 2 field event. Keep in mind that some positions can fill multiple roles over the course of the event.

Competition Area Volunteers Field Supervisor (1) *FIRST* Tech Advisor (1) *FIRST* Tech Advisor Assistant (1) Scorekeeper (2) Field Reset (4) Head Referee (1) Referees (8) Technical Crew (2)	**Pit Volunteers** Pit Manager (1) Pit Announcer (1) - (optional) Pit Runner (4) Practice Field Manager (1) Robot Inspector (4) Field Inspector (4)
Judging/Awards Volunteers Judge Advisor (1) Judge (12) Judge Assistant (2) Emcee (1) Game Announcer (1) Disc Jockey (1)	**Miscellaneous Volunteers** Load in/Load out Crew (10) Registration (3) Traffic Control/Security (1)

Appendix C: Suggested *FIRST* Tech Challenge Planning Committee Roles and Responsibilities

Event Manager

- Pre-event responsibilities:
  - Setting up load in/load out schedules and staffing
  - Setting up the schedule for the event and all competition and judging schedules
  - Tournament staffing
  - Serves as the principal liaison with the facility manager
- Key Success Factors
  - Attention to detail
  - Calm under pressure
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Flexible
  - Professional attitude
  - Comfortable with high level of responsibility
  - Ability to make decisions quickly and calmly

Volunteer Coordinator

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Recruit individuals to assist on the day of the event
  - Organize a volunteer workforce from various sectors: parents, community, teachers, etc.
  - Hold volunteer meetings prior to the tournament to explain *FIRST* Tech Challenge, train volunteers on their roles, generate enthusiasm, and foster a sense of teamwork
  - Supervise all volunteers on tournament day
- Key Success Factors
  - Excellent attention to detail
  - Good communication skills
  - Must be able to assess a person's skills and match them to the appropriate position

FIRST Tech Advisor

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Recruit and train assistant field tech advisors
  - Recruit and train scorekeepers
  - Spec and order field electronics
  - Confirm computer requirements are met
- Key Success Factors
  - Calm under pressure
  - Has a general comfort level with *FIRST* Tech Challenge technology and troubleshooting techniques
  - Must be knowledgeable of the game to understand time and flow needs
  - Excellent communication skills
  - Ability to troubleshoot field and robot issues

Judge Advisor

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Help recruit, train, and oversee all tournament judges
  - With event manager, develop judging schedule
  - Ensure that judge shirts, clipboards, score sheets, and pens/pencils are prepared for judges the morning of the tournament
  - Provide additional support as necessary
- Key Success Factors
  - Attention to detail
  - Calm under pressure
  - Presentation skills
  - Professional attitude
  - Problem-solving skills
  - Facilitation skills
  - Conflict resolution skills
  - Time management skills
  - Organizational skills
  - Diplomacy

Head Referee

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Help recruit, train, and oversee all tournament referees
  - Perform quality assurance on *FIRST* Tech Challenge competition field set up the night before the event
  - Ensure that referee shirt, clipboards, score sheets and pens/pencils are prepared for referees the morning of the tournament
  - Perform other functions as necessary
- Key Success Factors
  - Detailed knowledge of the current *FIRST* Tech Challenge game manual and referee manual
  - Ability to share that knowledge with other referees
  - Ability to remain calm under pressure
  - Conflict management skills
  - Professional attitude
  - Ability to explain referee rulings clearly and calmly to the teams
  - Sense of humor

Technical Director

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Work closely with the event manager on the site assessment, technical budget, and site plan during the pre-tournament period
  - Ensure that All the technical systems are functional, safe, and meet event needs
  - Hire, and/or act as a liaison with, persons responsible for providing A/V equipment for the site
- Key Success Factors
  - Familiarity with staging concerts/theater/events
  - Experience with the various computer, audio, and visual requirements of event and venue
  - Communication skills

Sponsor Development Manager*

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Raise needed funds
  - Communicate with sponsors
  - Ensure that sponsors receive appropriate recognition
  - May handle VIP coordination on the day of the event
- Key Success Factors
  - Knowledge and experience with fundraising
  - Excellent verbal and written communication skills
  - Amiable personality
  - People skills

Public Relations Manager*

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Identify and recruit dignitaries and other potential sponsors from private industry and/or from local, city, and provincial or state government officials
  - Serve as contact person for VIPs and medial pre-tournament, as well as at the event
  - Contact local TV, radio, newspapers, etc. about the tournament and the different ways the community is involved. Provide information about sponsors, teams, provincial or state VIPs.
- Key Success Factors
  - High level of professionalism
  - Excellent communication skills, both verbal and written
  - Attention to details

Team and Materials Coordinator*

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Manage team registration prior to the event and on the day of the event
  - Order event merchandise such as awards, banners, and plaques, and the reproduction and collation of team materials
  - Produce the content of the information packet, registration packet, team information sheets, and judges' and referees' scoring sheets
  - Produce all event signage, including signs for each team in the pit
  - Procure all event supplies and obtain name badges for all the volunteers
  - Procure flash drives, paper and supplies for the judges' room and registration table
- Key Success Factors
  - Organizational skills
  - Attention to detail
  - Knowledge of marketing materials

Administrator*

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Reports on *FIRST* Tech Challenge's regional activities and needs to *FIRST*
  - Ensure that all members of the committee have the information and documents they need
  - Set the schedule
- Key Success Factors
  - Attention to detail
  - Organizational skills
  - Professional attitude
  - Excellent verbal and written communication skills

Team Liaison*

- Pre-event Responsibilities
  - Communicate with teams during the year, including periodic updates and upcoming deadlines
- Key Success Factors
  - Excellent verbal and written communication skills

*These are optional roles and not required to run an event. Roles such as these would be a part of your State or region's planning committee.

Appendix D: Walk-On Event Volunteer Policy

FIRST® "Walk-On Volunteers" are individuals who offer to volunteer at a *FIRST* event without having registered in Volunteer Registration and completed the screening requirements for the season. If the individual's screening status can be verified as "passed" for the season, then this process is not necessary.

For a person to be accepted as a Walk-On Volunteer, the following conditions must be satisfied:

• The Walk-On Volunteer must complete, sign, and submit the following:

- The *FIRST* Walk-On Event Volunteer Application Form,
- The *FIRST* Consent and Release form, and
- Any other FIRST form applicable to their specific volunteer role (i.e., conflict of interest form, etc.).
    - Note: If the individual is under 18 years of age, his/her parent or legal guardian must also sign the forms.

• The Walk-On Volunteer must produce a photo ID so identity can be verified.

• The assigning individual (Volunteer Coordinator, Tournament Director, Regional Director, Event Manager, etc.) must pair the Walk-On Volunteer with a pre-registered volunteer who has successfully completed *FIRST* screening.

- The Walk-On Volunteer is to physically stay partnered with the screened volunteer, always, throughout the entirety of their volunteer duty. Under no circumstances, should the Walk-On Volunteer be working alone with minors.
- The screened volunteer must agree to be responsible to stay with the Walk-On Volunteer during the entirety of the volunteer shift.
- If the screened volunteer loses contact with the Walk-On Volunteer, the screened volunteer shall immediately notify the assigning individual (Volunteer Coordinator, Tournament Director, Regional Director, Event Manager, etc.).

The Walk-On Volunteer should then receive the same credentials, such as name badge and/or volunteer t-shirt, as other volunteers of the event. It is not necessary for the Walk-On Volunteer to have something that identifies them as a "Walk-On" volunteer specifically.

FIRST recommends the Walk-On Volunteer turn in their identifying credentials, such as name badge and volunteer t-shirt as soon as their shift is over. This is to prevent an unscreened volunteer gaining physical access to minors (i.e., volunteers are often allowed entry into non-public places at the event). Note: This is a recommendation and not a requirement. Event management are encouraged to use their discretion in this area.

All completed forms shall be sent to *FIRST*® Headquarters per instruction from the designated *FIRST* program. It is the responsibility of the Planning Committee, Tournament Director, Regional Director, etc. to decide who will collect these forms and return them to *FIRST*. If needed, forms can be mailed to:

FIRST®
Attn: Volunteer Resources Department
200 Bedford Street
Manchester, NH 03101

If anyone has questions on the *FIRST*® Volunteer "Walk-On" process or policy, please send an email to volunteer@firstinspires.org.

FIRST Walk-On Event Volunteer Application Form