

Staffing a FIRST Robotics Competition Regional

Overview

Staffing a FIRST Robotics Competition Regional event is a joint effort between the Regional Planning Committee, the Regional Director and FIRST headquarters. The growth in FIRST teams and events continues to far outpace the growth in FIRST staff. FIRST competitions rely on volunteers to execute successful events. Only a small number of FIRST staff is available to attend competitions, with priority given to new events.

The information below summarizes the positions required to run a FIRST Robotics Competition regional and the source of the personnel

Positions provided by FIRST Headquarters

- Event Manager (Contracted)
- Event Assistant (Contracted)
- AV Tech Productions (Contracted)
- Technical Support (Contracted)
- FIRST Technical Advisor (FTA)

Positions Approved and Assigned (once nominated) by FIRST Headquarters:

- Head Referee (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Judge Advisor (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Lead Robot Inspector (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Volunteer Coordinator

Regional Planning Committee Positions

- Committee Chairperson
- Finance/Budget Coordinator
- Judge Advisor Public Relations/Media Coordinator
- School/Team Recruitment Coordinator
- Sponsor Recruitment & Development Coordinator
- FIRST Alumni and Scholarships Coordinator
- Team Social Coordinator (optional)
- VIP Reception Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Local Kickoff Organizer
- FIRST LEGO League (FLL Coordinator)

Key Volunteer positions recruited locally by the Volunteer Coordinator

- Control System Advisor
- Field Supervisor
- FIRST Technical Advisor Assistant
- Game Announcer
- Lead Queuer (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Master of Ceremonies
- Pit Administration Supervisor
- Referee (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Robot Inspector (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Safety Manager (Requires FIRST HQ Certification)
- Scorekeeper
- Webcast Operator*

General Event Volunteers recruited locally by the Volunteer Coordinator, unless otherwise noted.

- Event Photographer*
- Field Assembly and Disassembly
- Field Reset
- Inspection Manager
- Judges (Refer to [Judges - Section 7](#))
- Judge Advisor Assistant
- Machine Shop Staff
- Pit Administration Support
- Pit Announcer
- Practice Field Attendants
- Quiet Room Attendant (Refer to [Quiet Rooms – Section 22](#))
- Safety Attendants
- Spare Parts Attendants
- Student Ambassadors*
- Student Ambassador Coordinators*
- Team Load-In/Out Attendants
- Team Queuers
- Volunteer Lounge Monitor*
- Volunteer Registration Assistant*
- Welcome & Alumni Attendant*

* = These positions may not be required at all events. Volunteer Coordinators should work with members of their Regional Planning Committee to identify if these volunteers are needed for the event.

Key Volunteers

Key Volunteer Positions require *FIRST* experience, specialized skills, training, and sometimes the ability to pass a test to become certified. Recruit at least one, if not two trainee/alternate volunteers for each key position to ensure position coverage and event sustainability; the trainee/alternate will work with the key volunteer in an apprentice role.

In some cases, it may be necessary to recruit a Key Volunteer who is not local to the event. This is only feasible when a volunteer can cover his/her own travel and accommodation expenses, or the Regional Event is able to underwrite their expenses.

Key Volunteers should be confirmed by the deadline provided by the *FIRST* HQ Volunteer Resources Coordinator. Volunteer Coordinators should work with members of their Regional Planning Committee to identify and recruit these volunteers. The *FIRST* Volunteer Resources Coordinators can assist with recruitment of key volunteers. Beginning in November, Volunteer Coordinators will be expected to report to *FIRST* on the status of Key Volunteer recruitment for their event. **Key Volunteers should sign up in Volunteer Registration and be assigned in the VMS as soon as they are recruited and no later than January 31st.**

Event Volunteer Position Description Summaries and Schedules

Volunteer Position Descriptions are an essential tool for recruiting event volunteers; they:

- Provide volunteers an accurate overview of responsibilities, commitment and skills required
- Illustrate relationship between position and the success of the event
- Contribute to volunteer satisfaction by effectively matching volunteers with desired positions
- Contribute to a successful event through recruitment of qualified and informed volunteers

Please refer to the [FIRST Robotics Competition Event Volunteer Positions](#) page for complete descriptions of each position.

FIRST Volunteer Registration and FIRST Volunteer Management System (VMS)

Volunteer Registration is the system volunteers use to apply to volunteer at an event. Individuals interested in volunteering are directed to Volunteer Registration via the *FIRST* website, <http://my.firstinspires.org/Dashboard/>. They create a personal profile that includes their contact information and interest in specific event positions.

The Volunteer Coordinator, *FIRST* Regional Director, and *FIRST* headquarter staff have access to information about volunteers that have applied to their event through the Volunteer Management System (VMS). Access to VMS is granted by *FIRST* Headquarters. The Volunteer Coordinator contacts the individuals that applied to the event to review opportunities and determine position assignment based on event needs, volunteer preferences, and volunteer experience.

Volunteer Training and Resources

FIRST Website for Volunteer Resources

The *FIRST* website includes a wealth of information regarding *FIRST* programs. The “Volunteer” section under “Ways to Help” describes the various ways an individual can become involved as a *FIRST* volunteer and has these specific sections:

- New to Volunteering
- Event Volunteer
- Mentors and Coaches
- General Volunteer Resources
- Volunteer Recognition

There are direct links to:

- [FIRST Volunteer Registration](#)
- [FIRST Robotics Competition Volunteer Role Descriptions](#)
- [General Volunteer Resources](#)

Volunteer Training

Training is essential for volunteers to perform their responsibilities, which contributes to the success of an event. The Volunteer Coordinator, with support from the Regional Planning Committee, Regional Director and event Key Volunteers, has primary responsibility for planning and conducting training for General Event Volunteers.

FIRST headquarters provides training for Key Volunteers and also for judges. Training information for these volunteers will be sent directly to the volunteers and also shared with the Volunteer Coordinators when available.

Volunteer Orientation

Some Regional Events may choose to hold a Volunteer Orientation the night prior to the start of the event but many choose to send out information via email. Volunteer Coordinators have access to a template they can use and edit for their event that has basic info about *FIRST* and the event. If they host an in-person meeting, it will provide volunteers an event orientation and general event volunteer training may be conducted. Various volunteer forms can be completed and collected during the meeting. The Volunteer Coordinator in collaboration with the Event Manager and members of the Regional Planning Committee will plan and conduct this meeting.

Volunteer Guidelines and Requirements

Volunteer Screening

FIRST is committed to ensuring the safety of all young people who participate in its volunteer led programs. To that end, *FIRST* has adopted policies aimed at eliminating opportunities for abuse within *FIRST* programs. This policy focuses on training, volunteer selection, and background screening.

Screening volunteers working with youth serving organizations programs is an accepted industry standard. *FIRST* screens event volunteers who register in Volunteer Registration with home addresses in the United States and Canada.

International events (other than Canada) have separate agreements with *FIRST*; therefore, event volunteers who reside in countries other than the U.S. or Canada will adhere to the applicable agreement.

There will be no cost to volunteers for the screening processes, though volunteers in the United States may elect to donate the cost of their screening when they place their background screening order. If you have any questions about our screening process, please email safetyfirst@firstinspires.org

Volunteer Minimum Age Requirement and Child Supervision

The minimum age requirement of a *FIRST* volunteer is **13 years old**. The Event Manager can accept volunteers who are under 13 years old as long as there is direct adult supervision of that volunteer by an adult who has responsibility for the child. 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 for any volunteer under age 18.

Volunteer Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Statement

Volunteers in certain positions must sign the [Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Statement](#). By signing this document, the volunteer is agreeing to disclose any direct relationship they may have with a *FIRST* Robotics Competition team. They are also pledging that if they do have a relationship with a competing *FIRST* Robotics Competition team, they will disqualify themselves from any discussions, judging, inspecting or refereeing which involves the team they are affiliated with. Volunteer Coordinators should destroy signed Conflict of Interest Forms at the end of the event. These forms do not need to get turned into *FIRST*.

Dress Code

FIRST provides each event volunteer with a free volunteer t-shirt and a volunteer name badge. These identify individuals as volunteers and permit them to access the volunteer lounge and venue areas restricted to the general public. Wearing the shirt and badge is often a security requirement for access to the venue. Volunteer Coordinators should only distribute the volunteer t-shirt and name badge after the volunteer registration process is complete and the walk-on policy has been explained and has been accepted by the walk-on volunteer. Volunteers must always wear both their volunteer t-shirt and their name badge while volunteering. Do not distribute volunteer t-shirts to anyone who is not volunteering at the event (i.e., sponsors, team mentors, VIPs, etc.).

FIRST recommends that all volunteers wear comfortable closed toed shoes (e.g., sneakers) while performing their volunteer duties. Volunteer shifts often require long hours of standing or moving about the facility and comfortable shoes are a must! Also, open-toed shoes are not permitted in the Pit and field areas at *FIRST* Robotics Competition events for safety reasons.