

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue Conflict of Interest Policy

Purpose:

Snohomish County Volunteer Search and Rescue (SCVSAR), as a nonprofit, tax-exempt organization, depends on charitable contributions from the public. Maintenance of its tax-exempt status is important both for its continued financial stability and for the receipt of contributions and public support. Therefore, the operations of SCVSAR first must fulfill all legal requirements. SCVSAR also depends on the public trust and thus are subject to scrutiny by and accountability to both governmental authorities and members of the public.

Consequently, there exists between SCVSAR and its Board, officers, and members a fiduciary duty that carries with it a broad and unbending duty of loyalty and fidelity. The Board, officers, and members have the responsibility of administering the affairs of SCVSAR honestly and prudently, and of exercising their best care, skill, and judgment for the sole benefit of SCVSAR. Those persons shall exercise the utmost good faith in all transactions involved in their duties, and they shall not use their positions with SCVSAR or knowledge gained there from for their personal benefit. The interests of the organization must have the first priority in all decisions and actions.

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide general direction so that Board members and members can seek further clarification on issues related to the subject of acceptable standards of operation.

Key Areas in Which Conflict May Arise

Conflicts of interest may arise in the relations of Directors, officers, and members with any of the following third parties:

- Persons and firms supplying goods and services to SCVSAR
- Persons and firms from whom SCVSAR leases property and equipment
- Persons and firms with whom SCVSAR is dealing or planning to deal in connection with the gift, purchase or sale of real estate, securities, or other property
- Competing or similar organizations
- Donors and others supporting SCVSAR
- Agencies, organizations, and associations that affect the operations of SCVSAR
- Family members, friends, and other members

Procedures:

Board members and members have an obligation to conduct business within guidelines that prohibit actual or potential conflicts of interest. This policy establishes only the framework within which SCVSAR wishes its business to operate.

An actual or potential conflict of interest occurs when a Board member, SCVSAR member or an employee is in a position to influence a decision that may result in personal gain or gain for a relative as a result of SCVSAR's business dealings. For the purpose of this policy, a relative is any person who is related by blood or marriage, or whose relationship with the member is similar to that of persons who are related by blood or marriage.

Personal gain may result not only in cases where a member, or a relative has a significant ownership in a firm with which SCVSAR does business, but also when a member, or a relative receives any kickback, bribe, substantial gift or special consideration as a result of any transaction or business dealings involving SCVSAR.

No presumption of a conflict is created by the mere existence of a relationship with outside firms. However, if a member has any influence on any material business transactions, it is imperative that he or she discloses to an officer of the organization as soon as possible the existence of any actual or potential conflict of interest so that safeguards can be established at a Board meeting and recorded in the minutes to protect all parties.