



Volunteer Construction FAQs

What is Habitat for Humanity?

Habitat for Humanity International is a nonprofit, ecumenical Christian housing ministry. HFHI seeks to eliminate poverty housing and homelessness from the world, and to make decent shelter a matter of conscience and action.

Habitat invites people of all backgrounds, races and religions to build houses together in partnership with families in need.

How does Habitat work?

Through volunteer labor and donations of money and materials, Habitat builds and rehabilitates simple, decent houses with the help of the homeowner (partner) families. Habitat houses are sold to partner families at no profit and financed with affordable loans. The homeowners' monthly mortgage payments are used to build still more Habitat houses.

Habitat is not a giveaway program. In addition to a down payment and the monthly mortgage payments, homeowners invest hundreds of hours of their own labor — sweat equity — into building their Habitat house and the houses of others.

What is a day like on the site?

We work from 8:45 am - 3 pm and take about an hour for lunch; promptness is expected. Everyone needs to be present at 8:45 so that the Habitat representative will be able to provide introductions, safety and construction instructions, an outline of the work to be done, and an opening prayer. Those present will then be divided up into smaller groups to work on specific jobs.

What tools will each crew and each individual crew member need?

We require that each volunteer to bring his or her own personal tools including a hammer, measuring tape, pencil, and a nail apron. Please label all tools before arriving. If you will have trouble finding tools before volunteering, please call our office. There are often tasks which do not require personal tools.

Each person should also bring a lunch, unless the volunteer coordinator informs your group of a volunteer lunch provider. We provide coffee and water on the site, but you should bring your own reusable cup.

What should each person wear?

In short, clothes that can be ruined with no regrets. Your clothes will serve you best if they are loose-fitting while not baggy. You should also wear sturdy footwear, ideally steel toed boots and by all means, shoes that leave no toes exposed. A rain jacket could be helpful as well, depending on the season.

Is there an age limitation?

No one under the age of 14 will be permitted on a building site while work is being done. Only people 16 years old can perform construction tasks. No one under the age of 18 will be allowed to use any power equipment, work on a ladder, the roof, or scaffolding, or participate in any hazardous activity. Volunteers under the age of 18 and their parent or legal guardian are required to complete and sign a special *Minor's Release and Waiver of Liability* form, available from our volunteer coordinator.

What skills does a person need?

We welcome volunteers of all skill levels. If you have any particular skills you would like to use, please let us know and we will do our best to schedule you accordingly.

What do I need to do before the build?

- 1) Read our safety instructions and sign our liability waiver. You may also want to watch our safety video available on the 'Volunteer' page of our website.
- 2) Sign up for a day through VolunteerUp or the volunteer coordinator.
- 3) Be sure to bring your liability waiver with you to the jobsite!

What if I want to continue volunteering after the initial workday?

You are welcome to come out as often as you wish. We would appreciate the help! Please be sure to schedule each day you volunteer either through VolunteerUp or the volunteer coordinator.

Who is responsible if someone gets hurt while working at Habitat?

Each Habitat volunteer must sign a *Release of Liability* form at the job site each time they work, agreeing to take personal responsibility for any accidents or injuries on the job. Your personal health insurance plan should cover the individual while engaged in volunteer work; however, Habitat maintains an insurance plan which can supplement needs not covered by an individual's insurance plan.

What about working with the future owner of the home?

The relationship you build with your partner family is just as important as the house you construct. Make sure that the homeowner is an integral part of the building process. There may also be a crew of future homeowners who are trying to earn hours so they can begin working on their own home, and we encourage groups to get to know these people as well.

Thanks for your interest in volunteering with us!