



## **Volunteer Construction Group 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?**

While we provide the tools that you will need for any given work day, it would be helpful for 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.

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 it would be great if you could bring a reusable cup.

**What should each person wear?**

First and foremost, 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 is the typical size of a volunteer construction group?**

A Habitat Construction Crew usually consists of 5 to 20 individuals from the same church, civic group, or business organization who volunteer at Habitat. We try to limit the size of groups in order to provide the best quality and safest possible volunteer experience where everyone has a chance for meaningful work. If your group is larger than 20 people, however, we will make every effort to make building together possible.

**What skills does a group need?**

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

**What does our group need to do before the build?**

Once your contact person has set a date with our volunteer coordinator:

- 1) Distribute/read our safety instructions and sign our liability waiver. You may also want to watch our safety video available on the 'Volunteers' page of our website.
- 2) Be sure to bring your liability waiver with you to the jobsite!

**What if our group wants to continue volunteering after our initial workday?**

If your group wishes to continue volunteering with Habitat regularly, please notify the Volunteer Coordinator so you can be added to our *Regular Habitat Crew* roster. Regular crews are usually scheduled to work once, twice, or three times a quarter (more if space allows). Once your group has made this commitment, you will be scheduled in our next quarterly plan and your workday, task, and site assignment will be emailed to your Group Leader. Being a Regular Crew ensures that your group will have a spot in the next quarter's schedule.

**What about youth or school groups?**

In order to ensure proper supervision for a safe and effective work site, there must be a 1 adult to 6 youth ratio. In addition, an adult must be designated as the leader or co-leader of the group.

**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 and your group's 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 the group's insurance plan.

**What other things can groups do besides construction?**

Occasionally there is a need for groups to help in non-construction tasks, such as becoming financial counselors or helping with special events. Your group may also want to consider providing all the funds and labor to build a home or joining with other organizations to accomplish this exciting project. Our Builders Bargains store often needs new volunteers, as well.

**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.

**What if our group would like more information?**

Someone from the Habitat staff will be glad to meet with your group to provide information about our programs. Our web site can also provide useful information about Habitat for Humanity of Kitsap County. Visit us at [www.kitsaphabitat.org](http://www.kitsaphabitat.org). Any other questions can be answered by our Volunteer Coordinator at 360-479-3853.

*Thanks for your interest in volunteering with us!*