



AbilityPLUS at Mount Snow Volunteer Policies/Procedures Handbook

Welcome to the AbilityPLUS family! You are a member of a supportive group of compassionate, enthusiastic, adaptive sports instructors devoted to providing athletic and recreational opportunities for people with disabilities. AbilityPLUS volunteers' lives are enriched along with the lives of our participants and their families and friends.

This handbook is intended to:

- Help you understand the policies and procedures necessary for our programs to run as safely, smoothly and consistently as possible
- Describe our organization and the relationship between you and AbilityPLUS
- Provide a clear and easily accessible resource for your reference while you are a volunteer with AbilityPLUS

AbilityPLUS is a Paralympic Sport Club and a chapter of Disabled Sports/USA, with adaptive sports partnerships throughout New England. We provide opportunities for individuals with any type of disability to participate in athletic and recreational activities that many typically-abled people take for granted. For a person with a disability, the opportunity to experience the thrill and sense of accomplishment that results from sports participation is life affirming. We are committed to including families and friends of our participants, volunteers, partners, and the community at large in our efforts to make sports and recreation available to all who wish to participate.

The AbilityPLUS Mission

To offer increased access to life affirming athletic and recreational opportunities for persons with physical and intellectual disabilities that will create freedom, promote independence, support inclusion and help those individuals and their families discover their full social, mental and athletic potential.

GENERAL INFORMATION

AbilityPLUS, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit charitable organization
TIN #04-3367707.

AbilityPLUS administrative office:

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AbilityPLUS at Mount Snow:

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Facebook: [facebook.com/abilityPLUSadaptive](https://www.facebook.com/abilityPLUSadaptive)
Twitter: [@adaptivesports](https://twitter.com/adaptivesports)

Hours of Operation

Winter student programs take place between the hours of 8:30AM and 3:00PM. Special events, races, fundraisers, etc., will have differing hours. Warm weather program times vary depending on the program/activity.

Volunteers are required to report to the activity site **at least 30 minutes** before the start of a lesson, in proper gear, to meet their student, review student information, set up any equipment needed, and check weather and other pertinent conditions.

The importance of instructor punctuality cannot be overstated. Many of our students rely on routine to successfully navigate their day, as do their families and friends. Please be respectful to our participants by being on time and prepared. Your day, as well, will run more smoothly when you are on time and prepared.

Services and Operations

All AbilityPLUS at Mount Snow ski/ride programs are provided by reservation only in order to ensure that appropriate volunteers and all needed adaptive equipment are available. Space for participants in our programs is limited to the qualified volunteer staff available on any given day; a reservation request does not guarantee availability. We may try to accommodate same-day requests at the discretion of the Program Director. Please refer interested participants or their families/guardians to the Program Director.

- It is the intention of AbilityPLUS to provide any person with a disability the opportunity to participate in the adaptive programs we provide. If there is a hardship, we have the capability to arrange a reduced fee, including no fee at all, so we can provide this opportunity to all. Participants should request an application from the Program Director to apply for financial assistance.

Venues

Basing our current operations in the New England Region gives us multiple opportunities for outdoor adventures with access to a wide variety of venues from nearby lakes, streams, roadways and the trails of the Green and White Mountain National Forests, to the tennis courts, pools and slopes of area resorts.

Our current Alpine venues are at Mount Snow Resort in VT and Attitash Resort and Wildcat Mountain Resorts in NH. Our Nordic and snowshoe venues are Timber Creek Cross Country Ski Area and Jackson Ski Touring. There are many area lakes, hiking and biking trails that we use for our summer programs, and we offer various special programs in conjunction with adaptive sports partnerships throughout New England.

Transportation

- Equipment
Adaptive ski/snowboard equipment is located on-site at each Alpine venue. Our summer adaptive equipment is stored in locked storage sites. Volunteers may be asked to help load and or transport equipment if needed.
- Participants
AbilityPLUS does not provide transportation for participants or volunteers to any of our venues or off-site programs.

SAFETY FIRST

Safety First, Then Fun, Then Learning!

The safety of our participants, volunteers and other guests is the #1 priority during all adaptive lessons and events. Even though there is extensive training of volunteer instructors and evaluation of students, accidents may occur.

How to Assure Safety

Each volunteer must act responsibly for his/her safety and that of fellow instructors, guests and our students. All accidents, injuries or damage to equipment or materials must be reported to the Program Director immediately, and documented on an AbilityPLUS incident report. Each volunteer must follow the safety regulations, rules and policies of host venues at all times.

Your judgment will affect a student's safety. Please only embark within yours and the participant's ability. Be alert to continually changing weather, visibility and surface conditions. Be prepared to stop at all times and most importantly, use good judgment and common sense.

Go With The Flow!

- Please be aware and respectful of others as you lead or assist a participant in an activity.
- Respect Slow Zones - Slow down at orange signs and trail junctions.
- Follow The Pace - Faster than those around you is too fast.

As a Ski/Snowboard Instructor, you must know and follow the Skiers/Riders

Responsibility Code:

1. Always stay in control and be able to stop or avoid other people or objects.
2. People ahead of you have the right of way. It is your responsibility to avoid them.
3. You must not stop where you might obstruct a trail or are not visible to other skiers.
4. Whenever starting downhill or merging on to a trail, look uphill and yield to others.
5. Always use devices to prevent runaway equipment
6. Observe all posted signs and warnings. Keep off closed trails and out of closed areas.
7. Prior to using any lift, you must have the knowledge and ability to load, ride and unload safely.

This is a partial list. Be safety conscious.

KNOW THE CODE!

First Aid

- A Basic First Aid Kit is available in the Program Room
- AbilityPLUS Staff and Volunteers are not medics; all medical emergencies must be referred to Base First Aid

Helmet Policy/PFD Policy

All volunteers and participants are required to wear a properly fitted helmet during their AbilityPLUS ski/snowboard sessions. If a volunteer or participant does not have a helmet, they may borrow one from AbilityPLUS. In the event that a student is unable or unwilling to wear a helmet due to their disability, please notify the Program Director immediately. DO NOT take a student out without a helmet without first discussing with the Program Director. Helmet exceptions may be made in the case of certain disabilities, but only at the discretion of the Program Director.

All participants and volunteers must wear PFDs when participating in an AbilityPLUS waterskiing or paddling event. There are no exceptions to this requirement. If a student is unable or unwilling to wear a PFD they will not be permitted to participate in an AbilityPLUS water event.

ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES

Zero-Tolerance Policies are in place for very good reasons, and breaking any of these policies just once will result in dismissal from the AbilityPLUS volunteer staff and revocation of all passes and earned vouchers.

If any of these policies are unclear to you, contact the Program Director.

Uniform & Jacket Policy

AbilityPLUS volunteer instructors must wear an AbilityPLUS jacket and nametag while working with a lesson. Volunteers are asked to wear self-provided BLACK ski pants.

The AbilityPLUS jacket policy mirrors the uniform policy of our host ski resorts. Volunteers may wear an AbilityPLUS instructor jacket on the hill only during scheduled lessons. If you would like to free-ski between and/or after your scheduled lessons, you must change out of your AbilityPLUS jacket. You may wear an AbilityPLUS jacket during pre-lesson terrain checks. Please speak to the Program Director should you need clarification, or to request an exception, which may be granted on an individual basis at the Program Director's discretion.

Lift-line Policy

AbilityPLUS volunteers and staff are permitted to use the service entrance only during scheduled lesson sessions with a student. You must be wearing your AbilityPLUS uniform with your nametag visible. Do not use the service entrance if you are not with a student, unless it is a student related EMERGENCY. In the event that you have an emergency and do use the service entrance without a student present, you must notify the Program Director, and detail the circumstances.

Any AbilityPLUS volunteer found to be using the service entrance outside of the above circumstances will be dismissed from the program, and passes/vouchers will be revoked. If this is unclear, speak to the Program Director.

During holiday periods, please refrain from using the "Privates" entrance at Discovery Shuttle unless it is absolutely necessary for your student to not wait in the standard Service Entrance. Should you find it necessary to use the Privates entrance at Discovery, please notify the Program Director prior to using the Privates Entrance.

Zero Tolerance, continued

Season Pass and Food Pass Discount Policy

Winter sports instructors who volunteer 6 - 20 days during the ski season receive a food discount pass, those who volunteer 21 or more days receive a season pass that provides a food and retail discount (restrictions apply).

The discounts are for your use only, and only on days you are working with AbilityPLUS. Anyone found to be sharing or otherwise misusing the discount pass will be dismissed from the program, and all passes/vouchers revoked.

Earned Vouchers Policy

Winter sports volunteers who work 6-20 days earn one voucher per full day of volunteering. Voucher numbers are recorded and assigned by the Program Director at the time a volunteer is given their voucher(s). Vouchers are intended for your use, or the use of close family/friends. They may not be sold for any currency value at any time. Anyone found to have violated the host venue voucher terms and conditions, as detailed on the voucher, will be dismissed from the program, and all passes/vouchers revoked.

Mount Snow Rental Equipment Policy

As a volunteer, you are required to have your own ski/snowboard equipment. NO ONE is entitled to complimentary rentals from the rental shop at Mount Snow.

- If you have an equipment problem and need to borrow from the Mount Snow rental shop, you MUST speak with the Program Director
- Any volunteer in AbilityPLUS uniform, or otherwise suggesting he/she is working as an AbilityPLUS volunteer, found to be requesting complimentary equipment from the Mount Snow rental shop for themselves, family members, or participants not eligible for rental equipment, without approval from the Program Director, will be dismissed from the program, and all passes/vouchers will be revoked

Physical Abuse & Harassment; Interactions with Staff and Guests

AbilityPLUS has zero tolerance for physical abuse or harassment, or otherwise inappropriate behavior by its members, volunteers or participants toward anyone. Assaultive or harassing behavior will result in removal from the organization, and revocation of passes/vouchers.

Zero Tolerance, continued

Interactions with Guests at Host Venues

As a volunteer with AbilityPLUS, you are expected to interact positively with all staff and guests at our host venues under all circumstances. If you should encounter a guest you feel is behaving irresponsibly or unsafely, kindly ask their name if possible, and always report the incident to the Program Director.

Keep the mission in mind: it is our role to focus the safety and enjoyment of our students and ourselves; it is not our role to police guests of our host venues.

Altercations and/or otherwise negative interactions with host venue guests, regardless of circumstances, will result in permanent dismissal from AbilityPLUS.

General Procedures/Policies

Scheduling, Absences and Cancellation

Winter Volunteers are asked to submit a season-long commitment schedule at day two of orientation so that the Program Director may take pre-season reservations knowing what volunteer staff is available. To the extent possible, all volunteers are asked to honor their pre-season commitment, but we are aware that there will be changes as the season progresses.

If you are unable to work on your scheduled day, you must contact the Program Director at least 24 hours in advance, except in the case of sudden illness or emergency. If you are unable to teach on a date that you committed to, please call or email as soon as possible.

Inclement weather DOES NOT mean that your student will cancel. We may cancel a lesson if we determine the conditions to be dangerous for a particular student, but we do not generally cancel lessons unless Mount Snow closes their operations. Please show up for your assigned lesson unless we inform you otherwise. If you feel the weather is too hazardous for you to travel, please be sure to contact us as soon as possible so we may attempt to substitute another instructor.

If your student cancels or does not show up for a lesson, we will make every effort to assign you to another lesson that is appropriate to your ability and interests. If we are unable to assign you to another lesson, you will be asked to attend a training clinic if available. If there is no appropriate reassignment available, you will still receive credit for your commitment for that day.

Instructor assignments are made by the Program Director; should another staff member or volunteer attempt to change your assignment and/or assign additional volunteers and/or students to your group, do not accept the change without consulting the Program Director. *(Exception: Alpine Race Team/Special Olympics training assignments may be made and/or changed by the Special Programs & Training Coordinator ONLY, on days of training.)*

Instructors are assigned to students by the Program Director based upon the instructor's qualifications and abilities in relation to the student. If you have any questions, concerns or requests for your assignment at any time, contact the Program Director to discuss.

Equipment

AbilityPLUS Equipment

AbilityPLUS adaptive equipment must be used properly to ensure the safety of our participants. Volunteers must take appropriate training to learn how to check and use each piece of adaptive equipment before using it with a participant.

- As a professional, you should keep your personal equipment in good condition. It should be suitable for the activity, checked regularly, and maintained in top operating condition.
- If you will be skiing, you are encouraged to have your bindings inspected prior to any on snow activities at the start of the season

Mount Snow Rental Equipment

- Typical ski/snowboard rental equipment is included in our Daily Adaptive Packages and our Mid-Week School Programs for participants ONLY
- Typical ski/snowboard rental equipment IS NOT INCLUDED in our Seasonal Programs or adaptive clinics
- Should you need an exception, you must speak with the Program Director, not rental shop staff (see above Zero Tolerance policies)

Pet Policy

Pets are not permitted at the ski resorts we work with. For events located off-site, with advance permission from the Program Director, in many cases well-behaved pets are welcome. When considering whether or not to request permission to bring your pet, be aware that:

- Many venues have a 'no pet' policy, a leash law, traffic hazards, crowded trails, fragile ecosystems, etc. Please determine if the venue allows pets and if it is a suitable environment for your pet.
- Any person at the outing - volunteer, staff, family, or passerby - has the right to ask you, the owner, to leash your pet. Such a request will require automatic compliance on your part - no questions asked. If this is not acceptable to you, the pet may not come.

As caretaker of your pet, you must be prepared and available to handle pet emergencies that may happen during the adaptive event, which will affect your ability to fulfill volunteer requirements.

- Anyone who is critical to the successful outcome of the event must not bring his/her pet. This applies to family, caregivers, volunteers, and staff.

- When AbilityPLUS is planning an event, and considering volunteer coverage, a volunteer who brings a pet will not be counted as 'coverage' since that person may need to leave at any time.

Working Service and Therapy Dogs are exempt from the Pet Policy.

General Appearance

All volunteers must wear appropriate clothing while participating in an AbilityPLUS program. We expect volunteers to maintain a neat and clean appearance. All clothing and accessory equipment must be of current standards and in good repair. It is imperative that you dress appropriately for the weather and act as a model for participants.

Confidentiality

Participant Records and Information

Participant medical information confidentiality is legally protected. Be sensitive and discreet when discussing a participant's medical information or disability. If you have trouble with the terminology in a participant's file, consult with the Program Director, the participant, the participant's family or guardian, another volunteer with a medical background or seek the medical directory. Treat the AbilityPLUS participant's file as a medical record, and protect its confidentiality by returning it to the office filing location, or Program Director, when you have completed reviewing or making notes. Do NOT discuss, at any time, the medical information of your participant with any person unrelated to AbilityPLUS.

All participant paperwork related to any program run under the auspices of AbilityPLUS is the property of AbilityPLUS and may not be duplicated or removed from AbilityPLUS office for any reason without the explicit permission of the Program Director.

AbilityPLUS Business

Please do not discuss any incidents, program-related issues, or operational events with anyone not related to the incident, issue or event. If you have questions or concerns about private AbilityPLUS matters, please speak to the Program Director, Special Programs & Training Coordinator, or a member of the AbilityPLUS Board of Directors.

AbilityPLUS encourages the submission of concerns regarding questionable or unethical behavior by staff, board members or volunteers. If you have a concern about the behavior of a staff or board member, or other AbilityPLUS volunteers that you are unable to resolve directly, please contact two

AbilityPLUS staff and/or board members. Your concerns deserve attention, and will remain confidential and protected. Contact information for staff and board members is available on our website, www.abilityplus.org.

General Conduct

All volunteers must adhere to the conduct policies of AbilityPLUS and our host venue. You are a role model for our participants, members, and the guests of the venues at which our activities take place.

Your behavior has a great impact on the way in which our participants perform and behave. When you are in the National Forest, please “leave no trace.” When on a ski slope, you must adhere stringently to the Skiers Responsibility Code and to all posted signs.

When leading or assisting your participant in an activity, help him/her by sharing your love for the activity. We are all ambassadors of good will. Take the opportunity to promote our organization and programs to the public.

The organizations that run the venues we use are our hosts. While we are operating our programs at our host venues, we represent their organization as well as ours. Venue staff, management, and guests will undoubtedly associate your actions with AbilityPLUS and the venue as a whole. Anyone found to be behaving irresponsibly or not adhering to our host venues policies will be dismissed as a volunteer.

Communicating Important Information

The Program Director manages a tremendous amount of information each day, and the office is often chaotic. If you need to communicate an important piece of information, please be sure to do it in writing (email is best), and do not assume your information was received unless you receive a reply from the Program Director.

Fundraising

Sports and recreation for everyone is our philosophy at AbilityPLUS. Creating and sustaining accessible, meaningful and fun recreational opportunities is critical. One challenge associated with offering our programming is funding. AbilityPLUS is a non-profit organization. Our Board of Directors, volunteers and members work with individuals, foundations, and corporations to raise funds. The Board of Directors is always seeking to develop new sources of revenue via planned giving, matching gift programs and our special events.

Giving your time as a volunteer is greatly appreciated! Because of your commitment to AbilityPLUS, you can be a tremendous asset in assisting our fundraising efforts by identifying people, including yourself, your employees, co-

workers or other organizations that may wish to support our program. We request that each volunteer participate in a fundraising event annually. Please contact the Program Director to volunteer for a fundraising role.

Equipment Maintenance

AbilityPLUS's adaptive equipment must be kept in top working condition. Maintenance must be performed regularly. Please check the equipment you plan to use both before and after each use. Should you find any sub-standards conditions, please alert the Program Director.

Parking

Please follow the parking regulations of the venue for the AbilityPLUS activity.

General Procedures & Guidelines

- The Acknowledgement and Receipt of the Volunteer Handbook form and the Release of Liability Form must be signed each year. If there is any part of this handbook, or any aspect of the program a volunteer does not understand, he/she may schedule time with the Program Director to further review its contents. A volunteer will not be permitted to participate in any AbilityPLUS functions until the handbook release and waiver have been fully executed and signed.
- All volunteers are required to complete an Activity Evaluation form for each participant activity session. Volunteers who assist in an activity may provide input to the lead volunteer, or produce the report under his/her guidance. It is important that this is done in a timely manner, so that subsequent activity volunteers have the benefit of this information as they plan for the next activity session with the participant. Please be specific and thorough when filling out your reports. Use who, what, when, where, why and how when writing your reports.
- When your training is complete, you may wish a short informal interview with the Program Director or trainer. This is a time to determine where you can best perform the functions necessary to volunteer.
- During your first few volunteer opportunities, you will assist an experienced AbilityPLUS volunteer.
- It is imperative that you review the participant's file BEFORE the activity and familiarize yourself with any pertinent or potentially dangerous symptoms or previous injury the participant may have. If there is any medical or other terminology in the participant's file that you do not understand or would like clarification on, please consult the participant, their caregiver or the Program Director.
- If a volunteer has any issue/problem with the staff at one of our venues, the AbilityPLUS volunteer should contact the Program Director.
- Know AbilityPLUS's policies, and if you do not, refer to someone who does.
- Be on time, helpful and respectful.
- Have Fun!

Discrimination

AbilityPLUS will not tolerate discrimination of any kind toward any participant or fellow volunteer by any volunteer.

Training

AbilityPLUS Training Requirements

Specific training requirements for activity volunteers and office volunteers will be described at the orientation session for each season. Materials about requirements will be made available at that time or during the season for volunteers unable to attend the formal orientation events.

Opportunities

There will be frequent opportunities for training before and during the season. Areas covered include sessions focused on understanding various types of disabilities, methods of working with and teaching people with different disabilities, and developing proficiency in a variety of disciplines.

Professional Certifications & Teaching Methods

All volunteers are encouraged to attend workshops or certification exams to increase their level of knowledge and qualifications for instructing and leading the sports and recreation activities we offer to our participants. Consider building your skills and obtaining the following certifications:

- Red Cross: Water Safety Instructor, Lifeguard, CPR, & First Aid
- American Canoe Association: Kayak Teaching Instructor
- Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA): Adaptive, Alpine & Nordic
- American Association of Snowboard Instructors (AASI): Alpine, Adaptive
- Wilderness First Responder
- Wilderness First Aid

We strive to provide training throughout the year; volunteers are encouraged to attend as many training sessions as possible. Additional training opportunities maybe conveyed to you via email at various times throughout the year

If you have any questions about the process or your qualifications, please contact the Program Director

PSIA

The Professional Ski Instructors of America (PSIA) is the system of teaching used throughout the United States at most all ski schools. The Adaptive techniques are all based on this system of teaching. PSIA holds workshop clinics, specialty clinics and certification exams during the winter in alpine, adaptive, Nordic and snowboard disciplines.

All volunteer instructors are encouraged to attend any PSIA workshops or certification exams to increase their level of knowledge and qualifications. Applications and schedule of events are available at the office. If you have any questions about the process or your qualifications, please see the Program Director.

Please be sure that the office knows your status within PSIA and if you intend to further your level of certification. There should be a photocopy of your current year's membership card kept on file in the AbilityPLUS office for verification.

We provide training during the season; volunteer instructors are encouraged to attend as many training sessions as possible. There are special clinics for those planning to go for PSIA certification.

Volunteer Instructors

Some funding is available for volunteer instructors interested in upgrading and refining their teaching skills at PSIA clinics and certifications. To qualify for a scholarship, a volunteer instructor must meet the following criteria:

1. He/she must have completed at least one full season as an AbilityPLUS Volunteer Instructor.
2. The volunteer must have the recommendation of the Program Director.
3. The volunteer must fill out an appropriate form four weeks prior to the event he/she wishes to attend, stating the name of the clinic or exam.

The scholarships will cover the event fees only. The volunteer instructor pays travel, lodging and other costs associated with the event. Volunteers are limited to apply for one educational event a season.

Governance

Please refer to our website www.AbilityPLUS.org for more details.

- Board of Directors
- Fundraising
 - General

We obtain funding through a variety of approaches including an annual appeal, solicitation of corporate donations and sponsorships, grants, bequests, and special fundraising events.
 - Volunteer Participation

It is important for all volunteers to participate in at least one fundraising event annually.

Waivers & Releases

- General
 - Volunteers Are Not Employees

As a volunteer of AbilityPLUS, you are not eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits or insurance protection under the AbilityPLUS umbrella while participating in any way in any AbilityPLUS activity or any activity that is associated in any way with the AbilityPLUS organization. It is your sole responsibility to procure medical and liability insurance coverage while participating in any AbilityPLUS activity or function.

Furthermore any perks extended or made available to you by AbilityPLUS in no way constitute or imply an employment arrangement.

Volunteers are invited to participate with AbilityPLUS at the discretion of the Program Director and Board of Directors, and may be rejected or dismissed from the organization without warning at any time for any or no reason.
- Required Waivers & Releases
 - Insurance Waiver, Release of Liability and Media Release
 - Handbook Acknowledgement & Receipt and At Will Letter of Understanding – Form # V008
 - Volunteer's Insurance Responsibility – Form # V010

Acceptance

I _____ acknowledge that I have read, understand and agree to follow the guidelines as set forth in the AbilityPLUS at Mount Snow Volunteer Policies/Procedures Handbook.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature
if under 18 years of age

Date

Volunteer Insurance Responsibility

I, _____, understand that as a volunteer of AbilityPLUS, I am not eligible for Worker's Compensation benefits or insurance protection under the AbilityPLUS umbrella while participating in any way in any AbilityPLUS activity or any activity that is associated in any way with the AbilityPLUS organization. I understand that by applying to become an AbilityPLUS volunteer that it is my sole responsibility to procure medical and liability insurance coverage while participating in any AbilityPLUS activity or function. I understand that this form is a part of my permanent record at the AbilityPLUS office and does not expire as long as I am an active participant in AbilityPLUS programs.

I further understand and agree that any stipends and/or perquisites extended or made available to me by AbilityPLUS are incidental and/or gratuities, and said stipends and/or perquisites in no way constitute or imply an employment arrangement, or alter the aforementioned benefits and insurance responsibilities and agreements.

Volunteer Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature
if under 18 years of age

Date