



FURVANA 2021

Staff Handbook

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REVISION

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1.0 Welcome to Furvana

So you heard about Furvana and you want to be a part of it? Great! Welcome, we'd love to have you! This is YOUR convention!

1.1 Purpose

This document is an outline of the code of conduct, duties, responsibilities, and expectations of all staff members volunteering for Furvana. By agreeing to be a Furvana staff member, you are also agreeing to adhere to the guidelines outlined in this document to the best of your abilities.

1.2 Audience

The audience of this document is any person interested in volunteering for Furvana, any person currently on staff, or any person who is simply interested in how the convention operates.

1.3 Secondary Positions

It is encouraged that almost every staff position with any kind of lead role has a secondary position, and for executive positions it is highly recommended. A staff member assigned to the second position shares all of the same duties and responsibilities as the position lead. The responsibility of final decision making will still fall to the lead, but efforts for discussion and collaboration should be made between leads and seconds whenever possible. Two heads and always better than one.

1.4 Exempt Staff vs Non-Exempt Staff

Staff positions fall into one of two categories; the category of your position only affects how your staff benefits and incentives are awarded. For more information about these benefits, see section [7.0 Benefits and Incentives](#).

“Exempt” simply means that the position is exempt from tracking hours. Exempt staff positions typically have a large amount of pre-convention work to do, which is very difficult to accurately track and in all likelihood these staffers will have far exceeded the hours required to earn their benefits by the time the convention is over.

“Non-exempt” means that in order to earn your staff benefits, the hours you work will need to be tracked. Typically, this only applies to at-con only positions, such as a cashier working in registration, a volunteer checking badges, or an attendee support staffer roaming the halls.

To find out if your position is exempt or non-exempt simply ask your lead.

2.0 Mission Statement

A mission statement is a simple, clear, formal summary of the intent of our organization. Quite simply, this is what we're here to do. Note that this mission statement was updated in June 2020 with an added emphasis on diversity inclusion. Furvana's mission statement is as follows:

Furvana is an organization¹ dedicated to providing a venue² and events for the world wide community of enthusiasts of anthropomorphic arts to gather together, showcasing diversity³, allowing people of all ages and differences to feel safe and respected as they engage in community activities⁴ that bring anthropomorphism to life.

Intent of Mission Statement Notes:

1. "Organization" [alternatively: 'organized convention']. The intent of Furvana is to be a convention as defined by the above mission statement.

Note: Not to be confused with a Board which is a different organization serving a different purpose in the community.

2. "Venue" [alternatively: 'convention center and hotel']. It is not always guaranteed to be the same venue.

3. "Showcasing Diversity", including but not limited to active involvement of persons of color, transgender, and any other under-represented communities.

4. "Community activities". Including but not limited to costuming, visual art, literature, music, dancing, and discussions.

2.1 Values

Furvana's values define why we want to create this event in the first place. Every staff member and volunteer working with Furvana does so because they want to help create something bigger than themselves.

- We want to make the community heard, ensuring that all staff and attendees have a voice in the convention built by and for them.
- We want to strengthen community ties and make every community member feel included.
- We want to embrace weirdness, the spirit of eccentricity that makes our community unique.

- We want to embrace diversity, because we are stronger when we understand each other.
- We want to give community members a place to meet new friends and share interests and learn from each other.
- We want attendees to feel safe expressing their interests and do it in a positive way.

2.2 Tenets

Furvana's tenets are the set of guidelines that all staff and volunteers are expected to follow in order to make Furvana the best event that it can be. These are the rules that help us accomplish our mission and fulfill our values.

- Don't just say "no". All ideas should have a discussion before being accepted or denied. Evaluate possibilities and communicate your thought process to others.
- There are always more than two answers to a problem; find the third option.
- Make volunteering fun and rewarding.
- Make attendees feel safe, comfortable, and respected.
- Train the leads to become leaders.
- Enable visibility and transparency. All staff should have visibility into leadership discussions and decision making, unless there is a specific security reason the information must be kept private.
- Always assume good intentions during discussions with other staff and attendees.
- Follow the "We'll make it right" principle of customer service.
- Consider how you are using your position to enable representation of diversity in the fandom. Commit yourself to inclusion.
- Consider how your role in staff affects other staff roles. Map your connections.
- Precedent, precedent, precedent! Study other conventions and events to see how they manage and solve problems.
- Keep the mission in mind!

3.0 Duties & Responsibilities

It is ultimately the goal of all staff members, regardless of their specific positions, to create the best convention possible for our attendees and community. All staff should lead by example and be the kind of attendee we want to have at Furvana. All staff and volunteers are required to agree to the same Code of Conduct as Furvana attendees, and as a volunteer you should strive to be a paragon of what that Code of Conduct represents.

All staff should be trained and prepared on how to handle and escalate emergency situations, as well as the basics of customer service to make our attendees feel welcome and respected. If you're identified as staff, you may be approached at any time by any attendee about anything, so you should be prepared to respond with a positive attitude and help the attendee answer their question or re-direct them to another staff member who can. When in doubt, you can always re-direct attendees to convention operations.

3.1 Media

Staff members may not speak to media representatives on behalf of Furvana in their capacity as a staff member or volunteer unless they have been specifically approved for such a role.

4.0 Non-Discrimination

The anthropomorphic arts community and friends of the community is, has been, and always will be a wonderfully diverse and expressive group of people. That's a spirit we will always embrace. Both Furvana as an organization and individual Furvana staff members in all of their duties should never discriminate any decisions, particularly regarding recruitment, promotion, assignment, training, termination, and treatment of fellow staff and attendees on the basis of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, age, pregnancy, disability, veteran status, political ideology, marital status, or any other factor that may constitute unjust discrimination.

5.0 Confidentiality

As stated in our tenets, visibility and transparency are at the cornerstone of Furvana. Confidentiality should only be applied to a select few cases in our conventions dealings. This includes but is not limited to:

- Personal information regarding staff or attendees.
- Account passwords.
- Legal confidentiality requirements.
- Contract negotiations, particularly surrounding venue and hotel.

All other information, including meeting notes, planning and process documentation, and staff policies are to be shared freely with anyone who requests it, staff or otherwise.

Common sense is best applied, but assume that all information about Furvana is **not** confidential unless specifically stated otherwise.

6.0 Check-In and Time Tracking

Volunteer hours worked are only tracked for volunteers in non-exempt positions. For more information about the difference between exempt staff and non-exempt staff, see section [1.4 Exempt Staff vs Non-Exempt Staff](#). It is important that these hours are tracked accurately to ensure that volunteers are properly awarded with the benefits and incentives that they have earned. Department leads are responsible for ensuring that all non-exempt volunteers in their department are being properly tracked.

If you are a non-exempt staff member:

1. If you have not yet received your staff uniform or you do not know exactly where it is you need to go, check in with Con Ops before the beginning of your shift. They will provide you with your staff uniform and direct you where to go. For more information about the staff uniform policy, see section [8.1 Staff Uniform Policy](#).
2. Once you arrive at your shift, report to your department lead. They will record when you clock in for your shift.
3. If your shift is longer than 5 hours, you are entitled to a 1-hour meal break. Coordinate your meal break time with your department lead. You will need to clock out before your meal break begins and clock back in afterwards. Your meal break does not count toward your earned volunteer time.
4. At the end of your shift, report to your department lead to clock out.

If you are a department lead or time tracker:

1. Before your shift begins, check in with Con Ops to receive a volunteer hour tracking form.
2. When your non-exempt staffers arrive for their shift, be sure their name, information, and start times are accurately tracked on the volunteer hour tracking form.
3. Be sure the form is accurately updated when volunteers clock out and in for meal breaks, or when their shift ends.
4. If you are taking a break or ending your shift while you still have non-exempt staffers working in your department, you must assign time tracking responsibilities to another department lead or second.

7.0 Benefits and Incentives

So, what do you get out of all of this? Well, you get the satisfaction of helping build the Pacific Northwest's newest anthropomorphic arts convention and contributing to your friends and community. What, that's not enough?

Just kidding!! We really do want to show you that we appreciate the time, effort, and skills that you bring to the table. Volunteers are what make a convention, they're what define it, and without you Furvana simply couldn't exist. We want to say "thank you" with a little more than words, so here's the incentives that we're offering to staff who volunteer and help make this convention amazing.

Staff benefits are awarded differently whether or not your position is considered exempt or non-exempt from hours tracking. For more information about what this means, refer to section [1.4 Exempt Staff vs Non-Exempt Staff](#).

Time	Non-Exempt	Exempt
4 Hours	Special staff badge insert.	Includes all non-exempt benefits except for the sponsor level membership. Also includes a special year-specific staff gift.
8 Hours	Special staff T-shirt.	
12 Hours	Attendee level membership for following year.	
20 Hours	Special artwork print from artist guest of honor.	
24 Hours	Sponsor level membership for following year.	
		N/A

7.1 The Lotus Award

In addition to the above rewards, staffers who show exceptional initiative and accomplishment will be eligible for a special award for going above and beyond. To show our appreciation, this award includes a patron level membership for the following year and a special thank-you gift.

There is no limit to the number of these awards that can be given out, but they will be given out only at the discretion and review of the executive team. Any staff member can nominate another staff member for this award, just let one of the execs know what exceptional thing you saw another staff member do and how great it was for Furvana.

Any staff member or volunteer in any position except for the executive team is eligible to receive the award. Executive leads are not eligible to receive the award, but executive seconds may still be nominated.

8.0 Dress Code

All staff members are of course required to adhere to the same dress code as all of our attendees, but as representatives of the convention we're asking a little more of you. We have deliberately chosen not to create a specific set of rules for the staff dress code, but ask that you avoid clothing that others may consider offensive and use common sense when choosing your wardrobe. As a staff member, what you wear and how you present yourself directly affects how attendees view Furvana as a whole.

8.1 Staff Uniform Policy

The Furvana staff uniform consists of a Furvana Staff branded T-shirt. This staff T-shirt will be provided to you before your first shift at the convention. You may keep this staff T-shirt for the duration of the convention period. If you volunteer for at least 8 volunteer hours throughout the weekend of the convention, you are entitled to keep your staff T-shirt permanently. If you work less than 8 hours, you must return your staff T-shirt to Furvana at the end of the convention period.

Please keep your staff T-shirt clean and free of stains or modifications. All staff T-shirts that are returned to Furvana will be washed before being issued out to any other volunteers.

Please do not wear anything over the top of your staff T-shirt that obscures the "Furvana" or "Staff" branding. Accessories are acceptable, but it is important that your staff T-shirt remains easily identifiable to anyone at the convention.

It is acceptable to wear your staff T-shirt when you are off the clock, but in doing so you are still representing Furvana and are still inviting other attendees to ask you questions. If you choose to wear your staff T-shirt off the clock, you still need to be prepared to answer questions from an approaching attendee.

Staff members absolutely cannot wear their staff T-shirts if they will be drinking alcohol, so please be sure to remove your staff T-shirt before switching into party mode.

9.0 Breaks

Depending on how many hours at a time you spend volunteering at the convention, you are entitled to periodic breaks from your shift. Furvana policy for breaks is in accordance with and in excess of the requirements set forth by the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

- How often do I receive a break?
 - You receive one 15-minute break for every 4 hours worked.
 - You receive one 1-hour meal break if your shift is longer than 5 hours.
- Do I still get a break if my shift is less than 4 hours?
 - No. You must volunteer for at least 4 hours before being entitled to a break.
- Do my breaks count toward my earned volunteer hours?
 - Your 15-minute breaks **do count** toward your earned volunteer hours.
 - Your 1-hour meal break **does not count** toward your earned volunteer hours.
- What am I allowed to do during my break?
 - Breaks can be used any way you choose. We recommend checking out the hospitality suite!
- When do I take my breaks?
 - You should coordinate with your department lead for your break times. **Please do not simply walk off your post to take a break without telling anyone.** If your department lead is not available, ensure that someone in your department or an executive staff member is aware of where you have gone.
 - If you are a department lead, you may take breaks at your discretion, and you are responsible for ensuring that all volunteers working on your team receive the breaks to which they are entitled.
- Do I need to find someone to cover for me during my break?
 - That depends on your department. Some areas will require coverage during breaks and some will not. Coordinate with your department lead to ensure that you have coverage during your break times if needed.

10.0 Training

As stated in our tenets, training our leads to become leaders is very important to us, and important to ensuring Furvana has a future. However this philosophy isn't strictly limited to leads. Remember that the staff of today will be the leads of tomorrow. Furvana has a plan to implement several specific training courses throughout the year to help prepare and educate our staff. Some of these courses will be required for specific positions. These training courses may include:

- **Registration Software** - How to use our registration system software and process attendee payments.
- **PCI Compliance and Money Handling** - How to process and handle credit card and cash payments safely and legally. Required for any registration or other money handling staff.
- **Attendee Support** - How to help and handle attendees, provide proper escalation and de-escalation.
- **Social Media** - How to react (or not) on social media.
- **Badge Checking** - How to properly check convention badges and IDs.
- **Discord & OneNote** - How to use our communication and collaboration tools.
- **Events Handling** - How to help panelists and event hosts run their events and ensure they are properly equipped.

11.0 Use of Convention Resources

All volunteers of the convention are responsible for protecting and taking reasonable steps to prevent the theft or misuse of, or damage to Furvana's assets, including all kinds of physical assets, movable, immovable and tangible property, information and intellectual property used in carrying out their responsibilities.

All volunteers must use all equipment, tools, materials, supplies, and volunteer time only for Furvana's legitimate business interests.

Furvana's property must not be borrowed, loaned, or disposed of, except in accordance with appropriate Furvana policies.

All volunteers must use and maintain the convention's property and resources efficiently and with due care and diligence.

12.0 Personal or Sexual Harassment

Furvana is dedicated to providing a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of race, color, national origin, ancestry, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, religion, age, pregnancy, disability, veteran status, political ideology, marital status, or any other factor that may constitute unjust discrimination. We do not tolerate harassment of conference participants in any form. Participants violating these rules may be sanctioned or expelled from the convention at the discretion of the conference organizers.

12.1 What is Harassment?

Harassment includes, but is not limited to:

- Verbal comments that reinforce social structures of domination related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, religion, etc.
- Sexual images outside of designated spaces.
- Deliberate intimidation, stalking, or following.
- Harassing photography or recording.
- Sustained disruption of talks or other events.
- Inappropriate physical contact.
- Unwelcome sexual attention.
- Advocating for, or encouraging, any of the above behavior.

12.2 Enforcement

Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.

If a participant engages in harassing behavior, event organizers retain the right to take any actions to maintain a welcoming environment for all participants. This includes warning the offender or expulsion from the convention.

Event organizers may take action to redress anything designed to, or with the clear impact of, disrupting the event or making the environment hostile for any participants.

We expect participants to follow these rules at all event venues and event-related social activities.

12.3 Reporting

When taking a report from someone experiencing harassment you should record what they say and reassure them they are being taken seriously, but avoid making specific promises about what actions the organizers will take. Ask for any other information if the reporter has not volunteered it (such as time, place, persons involved) but do not pressure them to provide it if they are reluctant. Even if the report lacks important details such as the identity of the person taking the harassing actions, it should still be recorded and passed along to the appropriate staff member(s). If the reporter desires it, arrange for an escort by conference staff or a trusted person, contact a friend, and contact local law enforcement. Do not pressure the reporter to take any action if they do not want to do it. Respect the reporter's privacy by not sharing unnecessary details with others, especially individuals who were not involved with the situation or non-staff members.

12.4 Public Statements

As a general rule, conference staff should not make any public statements about the behavior of individual people during or after the conference.

In general, consult with other staff members when possible but act when necessary.

13.0 Accountability and Implementation

Volunteers and staff of the Furvana community are expected to exercise responsibility appropriate to their position and delegated authorities. They are responsible to each other, Furvana, and the convention's investors both for their actions and their decisions. Each individual is expected to conduct the business of Furvana in accordance with the tenets, values, and the staff handbook, exercising sound judgment and serving the best interests of the convention and the community.

14.0 Photo Use Policy

Furvana may take photographs or video of volunteers while at meetings or events. These photographs or video may be used for promotional purposes. Furvana will make a reasonable effort to inform anyone before any material is published that uses their photo or likeness.

If you would like to specifically opt out of this policy and deny Furvana from using your photo or likeness, you may do so by emailing staffsupport@furvana.org

If you do not specifically inform the staff support team that you wish to opt out, it is assumed that you have given Furvana permission to use your photo or likeness for promotional purposes.

15.0 Code of Conduct Acknowledgement

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the Furvana 2021 Staff Handbook.

I further acknowledge that I have read and understand all of my obligations, duties, and responsibilities under each principle and provision of the Furvana Staff Handbook.

I understand that my work with Furvana is on a purely volunteer basis, and I am not entitled to any monetary compensation for my time or services rendered.

I understand that violations of the policies and procedures may lead to disciplinary action.

Volunteer Signature

Date