

Volunteer Handbook 2024 - 2025

Volunteer Teams.

Front of House and Team

This team has a commitment of 3-5 hours a week.

This is a customer service position so providing our audiences with excellent, friendly assistance is expected and appreciated! It is however, not your job to deal with customer complaints or difficult customers. In these situations, please direct the customer to the Venue Manager.

On the day, this Team is managed by our **Venue Managers**. theatre.managers@viff.org

The scheduling is managed by Volunteer Team Lead, **Janice**.
scheduling@vancitytheatre.org

As a front of house customer service volunteer for our theatre, your duties include:

Door

Your duties include scanning hard tickets and tickets on smart phones; giving directions to the VIFF center or Studio theatre, balcony, concession and bathroom; and answering questions like "what is the running time of the film?" and "where is the closest bank machine?".

Line-ups and Crowd Control

For many shows, customers need to line-up in order to wait for the last show to end and the theatre to be cleaned. For busy shows, line-ups are outside. This role is the communicator to waiting customers, ensuring they have their tickets, their ID's

Ushering

This role assists customers in finding their seats when loading the house and during the screening. This includes support for folks requiring accessible seating or assistance with stairs. Ushers assist folks exiting and entering the theatre, using flashlights to illuminate the floor to the exit or their seat. This role also immediately reports any technical issues with the sound or picture, customer disruptions like cellphones and loud talking, and any recording devices being used.

VIFF center theatre is 170 seats, and the Studio Theatre is 41 seats so sellouts can happen quite easily. During busy shows, the Venue Manager may also require ushers to help count empty seats in order to fill the house.

Theatre and atrium clean up

While the shows are in, the team works together to ensure the atrium space is spic and span; cleared of popcorn spills, garbage and sticky tables. Between shows, team members sweep up popcorn spills and collect garbage and recycling in the theatre, including the balcony.

Special events

Our theatre gets rented out regularly and we often throw our own special events and parties. Shifts on these nights often require bussing glasses and dishes, running the dishwasher, drying and putting away glasses, setting up and tearing down tables and linens.

Down time

While the show is in, many times there is not much that needs to be done. This is a great time to talk film with other volunteers on your shift! You are also welcome to bring a book or schoolwork. If available, volunteers are welcome to use the Media Lab or Education Suite on the 2nd floor to have a break. Please make sure you clean up after yourself in these spaces! Just check in with the Venue Manager before leaving the floor. Break time is also a good time to grab a free volunteer popcorn or drink – we prefer for snacks to be consumed in break areas.

Watching Films on Shift

Please do not make plans to watch a film while on shift – even as an usher position. Ushers are on duty during the duration of the film and their watching experience may be interrupted to ensure the responsibilities are being taken care of. Always ask the Venue Manager if you can watch the show before going into the theatre.

Front of House Team Lead

This leadership team has a commitment of 1 shift a week.

The FOH Lead is there to support the Venue Manager on busier-than-normal nights that may require the Venue Manager to step away from the front desk. As such, the FOH Lead will come into play at the Venue Manager's discretion. The FOH Leads are to support the Front of House Team on shift to communicate team successes and challenges to the floor manager and most importantly they help create a fun working environment.

As a Front of House Team Lead, your key responsibilities are:

Assist the Venue Manager with:

- Identifying volunteers as they come in, explaining to them if the VM is busy and guiding them to the locker room
- Procuring the key to the locker room for volunteer's belongings; making sure the lights are off and the door is locked behind them
- Keeping track of what task each volunteer has chosen to do for the day for changes and relays
- Making sure that there is at least one volunteer on shift comfortable with assisting in concession, assigning a volunteer to concession if needed
- Supervising the scanning team in order to support them with technical difficulties that the scanners may provide.
- Handing out vouchers for new volunteers who are still collecting them at the end of the night.

Photography Team

This team works with the Marketing Department to cover special events and galas, introductions and Q&A's with special guests, and general film centre photography.

On the day, you will check in with the
Venue Manager on shift. theatre.managers@viff.org

Check the details in every shift for the event specific shot lists and a dropbox folder link. You can also send photos and video to photos@viff.org

As a Photography Team Volunteer for our year-round events, your duties include:

Photography

5-10 photos per event. No more than 10 photos so send your best 5-10. Typically, we are looking for a couple photos of the speakers, a photo of the crowd, a photo of people mingling in the atrium if that happens, and additional candid or posed photos of the special guest or guests if she/he mingles with anyone. Please note the photo needs for events – specific details will be listed in the shift information for the shift on Shiftboard.

Photos of Volunteers

If our volunteers are on, please send 1-2 photos per shift. Our volunteers will be scanning tickets, ushering and behind the bar – look out for folks with a VIFF Year-Round Volunteer name badge. Please also send these photos to volunteer@viff.org

Customer Service

Please be aware that some people may not like their photo taken. Please ensure that guests and customers are comfortable being photographed and be respectful of their needs.

Volunteering 101.

You are the ambassadors of VIFF

As a year-round Volunteer, you represent VIFF– this means that on shift or watching films, we expect all Volunteers to maintain a professional and friendly demeanor supporting the organization and its business.

Commitment

Volunteers on the Front of House Team commit to volunteer once a week on average. Photo and Video volunteers are on call and will be alerted when there are shifts available. Any Volunteer, who has not volunteered in three months without making arrangements with the volunteer department, will be removed from the team to allow space for waitlisted volunteers. Volunteers are expected to abide by the Volunteer Code of Ethics and Policies provided here in the Volunteer Handbook. All Volunteers should expect to work hard, have fun and make friends!

Confidentiality

Volunteers are not to disclose any information acquired while volunteering, whether written or verbal and including social media, to any persons, authorities or organizations, including the press unless specifically instructed to do so by their supervisor, or unless required by a legal order. This information includes but is not limited to funding sources and staff, Volunteer, client, and film contacts. We do encourage you, however, to share your favorite films playing at VIFF.

Volunteer Perks.

Ticket Vouchers

For those teams and volunteers who commit to once a week you will receive vouchers during your two month training period. For volunteers either unable to commit to once a week or whose team does not require this commitment, you will receive vouchers for your time. Volunteers receive one voucher per shift.

Passes

For weekly volunteers, after a training period of two months you will be issued a pass. This pass allows you and a friend to attend regular screenings at the VIFF center theatre and at the Cinematheque. Passes are created for six month blocks with the expiry dates of January 1st and July 1st. If you stop volunteering during this 6 month period, the pass is voided and not able to be used.

How to use Vouchers and Passes

Volunteer tickets are available one hour before showtime. 5 seats are reserved for volunteers for each of our regular screenings in the main theatre (the VIFF Cinema). These seats are reserved until showtime. This means that if the show is sold out, there will still be 5 reserved seats for volunteers. These seats are first come first served, so try to get to the theatre an hour before showtime for your best chance at getting a ticket. If the volunteer allotment is already gone and the show is sold out, you may join the Standby line – volunteer passes and vouchers are accepted in the standby line. Although we do our best to find space for volunteers in our regular screenings, it is not always possible – please be respectful and understanding of this.

Due to limited capacity, there is no volunteer allotment for the Lochmaddy Studio Theatre. Volunteers will be given access based on availability at the discretion of the Venue Manager. If a show is in Standby, volunteers may join the Standby line.

If a show is extremely busy or sold out, volunteers may only receive two tickets each. This means that even if you have four vouchers or your pass and two vouchers, we ask that you not claim all of your free tickets. This is to allow other volunteers a chance to see the busy screening and not have one or two volunteers take all of the volunteer allotment.

Your passes and vouchers are good for regular VIFF Centre screenings – Rental screenings are not available to volunteers unless otherwise articulated. When a festival or a filmmaker rent our theatre to show films, it is through tickets sales that they pay for their festival. Although they may have their own volunteers who can attend their films, you are volunteering for the theatre, not for their festival. If you are unsure if your pass works for a film, please email me or the floor managers and we can clarify – please always talk to us rather than discussing this with renters. I send out an email when the theatre calendar is published letting you know which films volunteers may use their passes and vouchers for.

An Important note

It is NEVER acceptable to get into a confrontation with a Team Lead or floor manager. On the day, it is the floor manager's responsibility to oversee ticketing – so volunteer entry is ultimately their call.

Double bills

For the VIFF Cinema, half of the tickets to the 2nd show will be available for double bills when volunteer tickets for the 1st show are available. If these tickets are all gone by the time you are picking up volunteer tickets for the 1st film, the other half of the tickets for the 2nd show will be available an hour before the screening. This means you will have to take your chances and wait until after the first film is over to check to see if there are volunteer tickets left at the box office. Again, these tickets are first come first served.

Concession

Once you have a volunteer pass, you receive free popcorn, pop, and brewed coffee when you come to see a film. You also receive 20% off each item you buy at the concession (not including booze). To receive these perks please present your pass before your order. Please do not come behind the counter to serve yourself – please wait in line and then present your pass.

Front of House, Photography, and the Office Teams receive free popcorn, pop, and brewed coffee at concession when on shift. Save the planet: Please ask for a reusable cup from the concession attendant or bring your own.

Department Lead Volunteer Perks

Leads receive access to book their free tickets to VIFF Centre regular screenings through viff.org. Lead volunteers can book two tickets to In-cinema screenings.

Lead volunteers also receive a Volunteer Pass to be able to access Concession perks and tickets at Cinematheque.

Volunteer Code of Conduct.

1. Volunteers will make every effort to present VIFF to the public in a positive way and to not do anything to intentionally embarrass or malign the organization.
2. Volunteers will treat other Volunteers, guests, staff, and the public with respect at all times. If a problem arises, resolution should be directed to management
3. There is no tolerance for use/consumption of illegal or controlled substances by any Volunteer while on duty.
4. Volunteers will make every effort to fulfill responsibilities of team membership including team duties and fulfillment of shifts.
5. Volunteers will not use any property or monies belonging to VIFF to their own advantage.

Appropriate and Inclusive Behavior.

VIFF cultivates a welcoming and inclusive atmosphere for our Volunteers, staff, and patrons. We have zero tolerance for abuse. If a volunteer's behavior is abusive – whether it be to another Volunteer, a staff member or customer – they will no longer be able to Volunteer for VIFF. This includes jokes, negative statements or attitudes regarding race, sexual orientation, gender or any other attribute that make us a part of this amazing diverse society.

Uninvited body contact, regardless of how well intended it may be, could be interpreted as a violation of personal space. Everyone deserves to be comfortable and feel safe.

As a volunteer, you are entitled to these same protections. If you feel uncomfortable with or threatened by any situation please talk to your supervisor or directly to the Volunteer Department.

Cinema Etiquette.

When watching films we want every audience member to have the best viewing experience. This means VIFF expects our Volunteers and staff to act as examples of best practices:

1. Do not save excessive amounts of seats for people who are not already in the cinema.
2. Do not stand over, or put a jacket on seats that have been reserved by the organization. Consider these seats taken.
3. Do not remove other people's belongings from seats. If you think something has been left behind, let venue volunteers or staff know.
4. Do not use a cell phone or any other electronic device while the lights are down in the auditorium.
5. Refrain from talking, whispering or creating excessive noise while the film or Q&A is in progress.
6. Respect our venue by using trash and recycling receptacles and by not putting feet up on seats.
7. Arrive at a screening on time.
8. Listen to directions given by Venue Managers, Volunteers and other Festival personnel.

Volunteer Shifts.

Punctuality

It is very important that Volunteers show up to their shifts on time. If you are going to be late, please email your supervisor to let them know.

No-Shows

While we appreciate the time you dedicate to VIFF and it is imperative you attend all of your shifts - we are counting on you! If you do not show up for a shift and fail to contact us, you are considered a NO-SHOW. Any NO-SHOWS are reported to the Volunteer Department and are recorded into your account. NO-SHOWS will affect your ability to participate in our Volunteer Program.

Breaks

We want you to have your breaks! Please be sure to check in with your supervisor before taking them. VIFF will not provide food for you while you are on shift – so please bring your own food or make appropriate plans for yourself. We do ask that you bring a snack with you in case of an emergency. Keep hydrated - bring a water bottle!

Emergencies + Sickness

If you are sick or have an emergency and cannot make your shift, please email your team contact as soon as possible. If you can, please post the shift up for trade. You will need to pick up a make-up shift. Please consider signing up for shifts where it is noted as “priority.” If you do not contact us and miss your shift, you will be considered a NO-SHOW.

Dress Code and Professional Appearance

We encourage Volunteers to dress comfortably while at the same time remaining professional. Volunteers must wear their Volunteer badge while on duty. You will receive this at your orientation.

Personal Belongings

Your team will provide a place to leave your belongings. Please do not bring excessive or expensive items with you. We will not be able to store large items and will not be responsible for anything lost or stolen, so plan appropriately.

Cell Phones

Unless your cellphone is required for your Volunteer position, please put it away on shift. You are welcome to use it while on break. If there is an emergency that requires you keep your cellphone active on shift, please let your supervisor know.

Work Place Safety

We are committed to providing a safe environment for our Volunteers. If you ever feel like your health or safety is at risk, please talk to your supervisor immediately. Emergency procedures will be covered at your orientation. If you require medication, please be sure to bring it with you and let your supervisor know if you have any complications or concerns.

Shiftboard

Shiftboard is our scheduling software that we use to organize, schedule and contact our teams of Volunteers. You will be added to your Year-Round Team(s) in Shiftboard after you have attended your orientation. You will have access to the schedule once you have been added to the team. If you have any questions or need help using Shiftboard, please contact your team manager.

Log in

You will receive an email with your log in info with a temporary password. You will be prompted to change your password.

Schedule View

To view the Calendar with your assigned shifts and the available shifts for your team:

- When you open Shiftboard it will automatically open to the **Calendar** view.
- To get to the calendar view, select **Calendar** at the top of the page and from the dropdown, **Schedules**.
- The default view is by the week. Use the arrows on the calendar to move back and forth through the days and weeks.
- In the body on the calendar any shift that is green with your name on it is your shift. Any shift that is red is an available shift.

Pick-up

To select a shift:

- Click on a red available shift with the date and time you are able to volunteer.
- A toolbox will come up on the right of the calendar with details about this shift.
- In this toolbox click on **take this shift**. • Double check the details on the next page and then select **yes, confirm this time**.

Trade

If you have been scheduled for or selected a shift that you are no longer available for, you need to post the shift on **Tradeboard**.

To **post** a shift for trade:

- From the **Calendar** view, click on the shift you want to trade.
- In the Toolbox on the right-hand side select **trade**, in red.
- A dialogue box will come up where you can write a note in hopes of filling this shift.
- Click **Add Trade Offer**

You will be emailed if someone takes your shift.

Please note: managers do not check Tradeboard. If no one has taken your shift, you are still listed as on it. **Make sure to contact your supervisor if you are unable to make your shift.**

To **take** a trade:

- You will receive emails regarding shifts that your fellow team members have put up for trade. Use the links in these emails to view the shifts on **Tradeboard**.
- Or under the **Calendar** menu, select **Tradeboard**
- Select **Take this Shift**

Availability

If you are going on vacation, need to take some time off, or your schedule has changed and will affect your volunteer position or shift please make sure to email your manager or scheduling supervisor. Please also add your ***unavailability*** to your account. It is best to enter in when you are unavailable as when you enter in when you are available, Shiftboard does not automatically change the other times to be unavailable.

- Select My Account from the dropdown menu on the top right with your name
- Click on the Availability tab
- Click on Add Entry
- There are two tabs - one for specific and one for General. Specific allows you to enter in dates.

Communication Newsletter

We email a monthly volunteer newsletter chalked full of info for all year-round volunteers – info about upcoming events, films, and festivals as well as team details and updates. Please read through these – the “Reminders. Tips. Updates.” section is particularly important. Archived newsletters are saved in Shiftboard under the dropdown "Opportunity" in the "News" section, if you would like to revisit past ones.

Contacts

Volunteer Department

volunteer@viff.org

Janice Walter

FOH Team Scheduling

scheduling@vancitytheatre.org

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Senior Operations Manager

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Joy McDerment & Ruth Barratt

Distribution Lead Volunteers

distro.volunteer@viff.org

Photo

photos@viff.org

Venue Managers

theatre.managers@viff.org

Photography Team

VIFF Social

social@viff.org

Thank you, thank you, thank you!

Without you, an amazingly diverse and talented group of Volunteers, VIFF would not exist. It is such a pleasure to welcome you to our year-round team!

Brie Koniczek

Senior Operations Manager