

THE BURNING MAN VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

Welcome to Black Rock City and THANK YOU for volunteering! Our city would not exist without people like you. We hope that through volunteering and participating you will have a more gratifying and personally valuable experience to take off the Playa with you; one that will keep you warm through the winter months! This little guide is not comprehensive, but it provides a few helpful hints and some valuable information that you may not know about volunteering at Burning Man. We hope using it will help make things a whole lot more fun! Be sure to read it and pass it on to your fellow volunteers!

THE TEN PRINCIPLES

Burning Man founder Larry Harvey wrote the Ten Principles as a reflection of the community's ethos and culture as it had organically developed since the event's inception. These principles describe the way Burners like to live in Black Rock City and in the world at large.

RADICAL INCLUSION

Anyone may be a part of Burning Man. We welcome and respect the stranger.
No prerequisites exist for participation in our community.

GIFTING

Burning Man is devoted to acts of gift giving. The value of a gift is unconditional.
Gifting does not contemplate a return or an exchange for something of equal value.

DECOMMODIFICATION

In order to preserve the spirit of gifting, our community seeks to create social environments that are unmediated by commercial sponsorships, transactions, or advertising. We stand ready to protect our culture from such exploitation. We resist the substitution of consumption for participatory experience.

RADICAL SELF-RELIANCE

Burning Man encourages the individual to discover, exercise and rely on his or her inner resources.

RADICAL SELF-EXPRESSION

Radical self-expression arises from the unique gifts of the individual. No one other than the individual or a collaborating group can determine its content. It is offered as a gift to others.
In this spirit, the giver should respect the rights and liberties of the recipient.

COMMUNAL EFFORT

Our community values creative cooperation and collaboration. We strive to produce, promote and protect social networks, public spaces, works of art, and methods of communication that support such interaction.

CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

We value civil society. Community members who organize events should assume responsibility for public welfare and endeavor to communicate civic responsibilities to participants. They must also assume responsibility for conducting events in accordance with local, state and federal laws.

LEAVING NO TRACE

Our community respects the environment. We are committed to leaving no physical trace of our activities wherever we gather. We clean up after ourselves and endeavor, whenever possible, to leave such places in a better state than when we found them.

PARTICIPATION

Our community is committed to a radically participatory ethic. We believe that transformative change, whether in the individual or in society, can occur only through the medium of deeply personal participation. We achieve being through doing. Everyone is invited to work. Everyone is invited to play. We make the world real through actions that open the heart.

IMMEDIACY

Immediate experience is, in many ways, the most important touchstone of value in our culture. We seek to overcome barriers that stand between us and a recognition of our inner selves, the reality of those around us, participation in society, and contact with a natural world exceeding human powers.
No idea can substitute for this experience.

Working & Volunteering for Burning Man

Volunteering at Burning Man is not like volunteering anywhere else. When it all sounds fun and exciting and you're tempted to volunteer for EVERYTHING, please remember to ask yourself if you might be stretching yourself too thin? Not only will the environment take its toll, but other commitments can too. That said, if you do commit to volunteering certain shifts, know that you are being counted on to show up. Remember that for every shift you sign up for but can't or don't make it to, the responsibilities get piled onto someone else.

If you can't decide what you'd like to commit to before you hit the playa, you can still volunteer! Visit the V-spot located in Center Camp where the Volunteer Resource Team (VRT) is happy to serve as your volunteer wrangler on playa. This is the "go to" spot for participants who are looking for a way to lend a helping hand during the event. They list all the volunteer opportunities available for the day, based on daily requests from different teams.

Other things to think about:

Drink lots of water before, during, and after your shifts ... why?

Because you're going to need it ... trust us. Always be prepared for changes in environment by having goggles and a dust mask; you never know when a dust storm will kick up. Not feeling great?

Don't be afraid to LET SOMEONE KNOW! Your physical well-being comes first. Go slow and acclimatize the first few days; remember we are at 4000 feet above sea level!

Get some rest before and after your shifts!

Are you a Returning Volunteer?

Take a moment to check in with yourself when deciding if you want to and how much you want to volunteer for this year. New baby in the family? New art project you're working on?

Maybe consider volunteering light this year. It's ok to step back sometimes; doing so allows opportunities for others to step forward.

Volunteering is seasonal and sometimes team dynamics or staffing needs change throughout the year.

Working a role one year does not automatically mean you will do the same thing the following year.

Returning volunteers should check in with Volunteer Coordinators in the Spring to see what roles are available. Most teams ask that you work with them for a few years before getting into the rock star role you've been hoping for.

Be Radically Self-Reliant!

Each department or team is different; different in the commitment we need from you and different in what is available in return. Some departments do not provide anything but hugs and smiles.

Some may provide more... but that can mean many long and intense shifts.

Lucky for us, Black Rock City will serve up all the reward you need.

Whether or not your group has resources, remember radical self-reliance! Bring your own food, water, lights, bike, and shade so you can volunteer happily and stay healthy. Also Bring Your Own Cup (BYOC)!

You never know when a party barge will go by with snow cones or coconut water! Bring a headlamp and light yourself if you are volunteering at night. Your work area may not be well lit and it will also help participants to see you! It also gets cold at night so dress warmly.

On the job - remember you are representing Burning Man - and yourself.
Don't do anything that you wouldn't want to come back to you later.

For Yourself

- Respect your fellow volunteers and participants
- Keep your cool
- Represent yourself and Burning Man appropriately
- Don't mess with things that aren't yours
- Be sober
- Don't know? ASK!! The one thing people at Burning Man love to do more than getting dusty is to HELP!



For Shift Leads, Volunteer Coordinators, Wranglers, Captains, and Others...

- We were all the new guy once.
- Offer advice or help on "The way things are around here"...some folks are new and don't know what's going on.
- Try no to get impatient; they want to help, they may just not know how!
- Introduce yourself, get to know your teams, and help the new folks learn the ropes.
- If you have an ID or uniform, and are wearing it, then you are still in your role and representing your department. If you want to play, take it off or change and go participate on the playa ... (and have fun!).

Tickets

Volunteering is a reward in itself, one that makes you an integral part of the Burning Man community and key to the success of the event!
Do not expect a free ticket for any volunteer work you do. There are hundreds upon thousands of volunteers who help Black Rock City go.

"You're volunteering because you enjoy doing so. An appreciation ticket is a gift and is not something to be expected. And while a volunteer may receive a ticket, the amount of hours, sweat, and actual work required towards a tickets most likely does not reflect the printed value on the ticket. In the end it may easier and cheaper to buy a ticket. But that's not why we volunteer in the first place."

- Ranger Flint

We are here because we Leave No Trace!

With respect to our environment, it is the principle of Leaving No Trace that allows us to build and burn, whether on the Black Rock Desert or at your local Regional Burn Event. Leaving No Trace is a test of our integrity. Black Rock City never fails Leave No Trace and we're not starting now. We are proud of being the largest practicing Leave No Trace event in the world.

And this is our great disappearing city trick.

MOOP

An acronym for Matter Out Of Place, meaning any thing or condition that is not natural to the immediate environment and should not be there, especially as it applies to the Burning Man community's founding principle of Leaving No Trace.

Examples of MOOP:

Wood, trash, bottles, bottle caps, cans, cigarette butts, wood, plastic debris, metal debris, fireworks, wood, glow sticks, but can also be in the form of debris from camp fires, firewood, splinters, wood chips, sawdust, glass, plants, wood, burn scars, grey water spills, fuel spills, decomposed granite, and dunes.

Wood is the #1 MOOP Issue on the Playa.

How to handle MOOP:

Clean as you go! Wherever you are, it's a great idea to carry a bag or containers with you to pick up stray MOOP. If you are cleaning up your camp or volunteer area, try the line sweep technique. It's a quick, efficient, and fun way for picking up MOOP across stretches of land.

HOW TO LINE SWEEP:

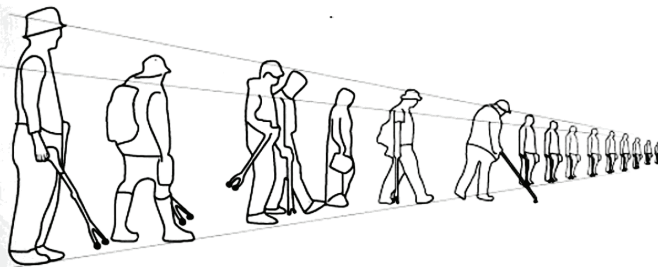


Fig. 7.77

Line Sweeps:

- the best way to MOOP a large area

Line Boss:

- Organizes the line
- Fixes gaps between people
- Keeps the pace in check

Bonus TIP - if you are working in a bar - ask for MOOP in exchange for a drink - this is a really easy way of getting folks involved in helping you out in your camp!

Support the Artists' Visions ~ Protect the Art:

Please help spread the word: if you didn't make it, don't break it! Help stop mindless vandalism to artwork on the playa. Whether you're on a volunteer shift or not, please share in watching out for the artwork in our city. Tagging, breaking, burning, taking a "souvenir" or any kind of willful destruction is an act of disrespect, not creativity. If you see this happening, ask the person if it's their art, and if it's not then kindly ask them to stop, or find a ranger. Like they say.. if you see something, say something!

Reminders:

- Get your Volunteer Coordinator's or Manager's name before leaving for the Playa.
- Remember your driver's license or bring a photocopy of it if your role requires you to drive on playa. Just because you aren't on pavement doesn't mean you don't need a license to drive. And PLEASE do not drive while you aren't working; BRC is a bike city!
 - Help us Leave No Trace and minimize the impact on the Playa.
 - BRING: Goggles, dust mask, and water!
 - Might be helpful to bring - work gloves, sunscreen, and WATER!
- Volunteering at night? Lights! (head lamp - keeps your hands free) Camera! Fur Coat!
 - Go slow; acclimatize!

Helpful Links:

Volunteer's Keys to Success: <https://burningman.org/event/volunteering/keys-to-success/>
Volunteer FAQ: <https://burningman.org/event/volunteering/faq/>

Radio Information:

If you need to use a Burning Man radio as part of your role, there are some helpful links below to ramp you up (it's not 100% simple). You'll likely have already received this information from your VC or Manager.

√ Check your equipment. Check your volume and power.
Are the accessories connected properly?

↑ Increase Antenna height. Account for line of sight.
If you cannot see the other radio, you may not be able to transmit either.

Change your location to find reception. You may be traveling through a dead zone.
Change your location by a few hundred feet and try again.

TIP: Keep an ear out for what's on the radio, someone standing near you may need information they can't hear!

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