

**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
RECOGNITION FOR STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEERS**

**1. REASON FOR ISSUE.** This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook sets forth how the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) recognizes volunteers in State Veterans Homes (SVH). **AUTHORITY: Title 38 United States Code § 513.**

**2. SUMMARY OF MAJOR CHANGES.** This revision of VHA Handbook 1620.03 is a recertification of the existing Handbook. No major policy revisions were necessary. Only minor updates were necessary.

a. Incorporates the VAVS Voluntary Service mail code change from 10C2 to 10B2A throughout the Handbook.

b. Incorporated updated assignment codes for SVH volunteers in the Voluntary Service System (VSS) to subparagraph 5b.

c. Added volunteer's emergency contact information to subparagraph 8d.

**3. RELATED ISSUES.** VHA Directive 1620 (to be published), and VHA Handbook 1620.01, Voluntary Service Procedures.

**4. RESPONSIBLE OFFICE.** The Voluntary Service Office (10B2A) is responsible for the contents of this Handbook. Questions may be directed to 202-461-7300.

**5. RECISSIONS.** VHA Handbook 1620.03, VAVS Recognition for State Veterans Home Volunteers, dated November 19, 2007, is rescinded.

**6. RECERTIFICATION.** This VHA Handbook is scheduled for recertification on or before the last working day of November 2017.

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**DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE  
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**1. PURPOSE**

This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Handbook provides procedures for Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Offices at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) facilities to recognize volunteers for their service to Veterans receiving care at State Veterans Homes (SVH). **AUTHORITY: Title 38 United States Code § 513.**

**2. BACKGROUND**

In May 2001, the Executive Committee to the VAVS National Advisory Committee concurred with the recommendation of a VAVS ad hoc committee to develop procedures to formally recognize volunteers who provide service in a SVH. Although volunteers at SVH are not VAVS volunteers because they are not assigned or supervised by a VA employee, SVH volunteers are allowed to receive VAVS recognition. The SVH is responsible for the management and legal liability of the SVH volunteers. All SVH administrators, VA Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN), and VA facilities of jurisdiction for a SVH are to be notified of the recognition opportunity for SVH volunteers.

**3. AUTHORITY**

The Secretary of Veterans Affairs has given VAVS the authority for SVH volunteers to be recognized for their service to Veterans.

**4. DEFINITIONS**

a. **SVH Volunteer.** A SVH Volunteer is an individual who volunteers at a SVH under the management and supervision of SVH personnel.

b. **VAVS Volunteer.** A VAVS volunteer is an individual who volunteers in the VAVS Program on a regularly scheduled assignment under the management and supervision of VA personnel, and who is appointed as a without compensation employee.

c. **Dual-Appointment (SVH-VA) Volunteer.** A dual-appointment volunteer is an individual who volunteers both at a SVH and at a VHA facility.

d. **VA Volunteer Assigned to SVH.** An individual in the VAVS program whose VA assignment is located at a SVH and who is considered to be covered under the purview of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA) and injury compensation laws (see Title 5 United States Code (U.S.C.) Chapter 81).

e. **Recognition.** Recognition consists of the following: *NOTE: Equally important is the intangible recognition given daily, such as verbal acknowledgment and the sense of belonging to the health care team.*

(1) **Certificates.** Certificates used to recognize SVH volunteer hours for the current award year.

(2) **VAVS Awards.** Dual-appointment volunteers will be recognized for the cumulative hours served at both the SVH and VA.

*NOTE: Credit toward Certificates and VAVS Awards will not be awarded for service prior to the date of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the SVH and the VA medical facility.*

## **5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE FACILITY DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

It is the responsibility of the facility VAVS to:

- a. Establish a local MOU between the SVH and the VA medical facility of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see Appendix A).
- b. Utilize the appropriate assignment code(s) for volunteers in SVH found in the Voluntary Service System (VSS); use 270, 270A, 270B, 270C, 270D, or 270E.
- c. Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into VSS.
- d. Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.
- e. Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS awards system, combining these SVH hours with VAVS hours.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE STATE VETERANS HOME STAFF**

It is the responsibility of the SVH staff to:

- a. Establish a local MOU between the VA facility of jurisdiction, outlining the terms of volunteer recognition (see Appendix A).
- b. Inform SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by VA. If they are interested, obtain volunteers' request to participate and the required information (see Appendix B).
- c. Forward a copy of required information to the facility VAVS program manager.
- d. Provide timekeeping data to the facility VAVS by the first work day of each month, i.e., name, date the volunteer worked, number of hours on each date, and affiliated organization.
- e. Develop a mutually-agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

## **7. STATE VETERANS HOME VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES**

a. Dual-appointment volunteers must make a request to participate in this program, provide necessary information, and authorize SVH to share this with VAVS.

b. SVH volunteers must make the request to participate in the VAVS program and authorize SVH management to share all necessary information with the facility VAVS program of jurisdiction.

## **8. TIMEKEEPING**

The timekeeping process for tracking the service of both SVH volunteers and dual-appointment volunteers will be established between the SVH and the VA medical facility. VA will, however, enter both SVH and dual-volunteers into its timekeeping system using the appropriate codes for SVH volunteers or dual-appointment volunteers respectively (see Appendix B). This requires, at a minimum, the following information:

- a. The volunteer's name;
- b. The volunteer's address;
- c. The volunteer's organizational affiliation, if any; and
- d. The volunteer's emergency contact information.

**SAMPLE OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN A STATE  
VETERANS HOME AND A DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS FACILITY**

**1. Purpose.** This Memorandum of Understanding is to establish the responsibilities of the \_\_\_\_\_(Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Facility)\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_ (Name)\_\_\_\_ State Veterans Home, for recognition of State Veterans Home (SVH) volunteers who provide volunteer service to Veterans receiving care in SVH.

**2. Responsibilities of SVH Staff.** The SVH staff is responsible for:

a. Informing SVH volunteers of the opportunity for recognition by the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS). If they are interested, obtaining volunteers' request to participate and the required information.

b. Forwarding a copy of this information to the facility VAVS program manager.

c. Providing timekeeping data to the facility VAVS by the first work day of each month, i.e., dates the volunteer worked and the number of hours on each date.

d. Developing a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

**3. Responsibilities of VAVS Staff.** It is the responsibility of the facility VAVS staff to:

a. Utilize the appropriate assignment code(s) for volunteers in SVH found in the Voluntary Service System (VSS); use 270A, 270B, 270C, 270D, or 270E.

b. Process monthly hours of SVH volunteers into VSS.

c. Develop a mutually agreeable process for presenting recognition certificates to SVH volunteers.

d. Incorporate dual-appointment volunteers into the VAVS awards system, crediting these SVH hours with other VAVS hours.

