# Event volunteer induction: a first-day briefing template

Give each volunteer a clear role, a way to reach their supervisor and the information needed to recognise and report a problem.

*Practical staff guidance; adapt the suggested workflow to your venue and current procedures.*

## Brief the place and the job

Start with the event map and the volunteer's assigned location. Explain permitted activities, restricted areas and how their role connects to event control. Cover arrival, breaks, handovers and the end of duty. HSE's event guidance emphasises relevant information, suitable competence and supervision; each person needs a briefing proportionate to their actual tasks.

## Make communications practical

Show how to use the agreed radio or contact method. Ask the volunteer to describe their location using the event's naming system. Demonstrate the channel for routine questions and the method for urgent concerns. Include a backup if the device fails. Keep sensitive personal information within the event's designated reporting arrangements.

## Explain the important routes

Point out emergency arrangements, welfare support, first aid, drinking water and facilities. Explain the local reporting process for crowd concerns, a separated child, suspicious activity or changing weather. Specialist decisions should reach the named responsible team promptly. Volunteers need to understand the limits of their task and how to obtain support.

## Check understanding before deployment

Ask three practical questions: where are you working, who is your supervisor and how will you report a concern here? Invite questions and arrange further support where needed. Record attendance and any follow-up. A late arrival needs the same relevant information as the main briefing group, even when opening time is close.

## Worked example

Fictional example: a volunteer assigned to an entrance can describe its map reference, reach the supervisor and explain how to report a blocked route. Their supervisor records that the radio demonstration was completed before deployment.

## Your next steps

- Confirm the role and boundaries.
- Show the location and routes.
- Test the communication method.
- Identify support and escalation contacts.
- Check understanding and record attendance.

## Brief the point of deployment

Give each volunteer the area name, supervisor, communication method, welfare facilities and task boundaries for their actual deployment. Explain how they obtain a break or replacement and what to do if their radio fails. Walk or show the routes they will use. A volunteer who changes roles needs the new information before taking over, including the location and reporting terms used by event control.

## Check understanding with a small scenario

Ask a volunteer to describe their location and report a fictional obstructed route. A useful report says where it is, what can be seen and whether anyone appears in difficulty. Ask another volunteer how they would find the welfare lead. These checks reveal unclear maps, missing contacts and unfamiliar words. Keep the exercise within the assigned role; volunteers should not be asked to invent crowd-management or medical decisions.

## Can returning volunteers skip induction?

They may know the event, but routes, contacts and responsibilities can change. Use their experience to make the briefing efficient while confirming the current arrangements and their assigned tasks.

## Make a one-page deployment card

Summarise the volunteer's role, zone, supervisor, reporting channel, emergency instructions, welfare point and end-of-shift handover. Use the same location names as the map and radio briefing. Add a version or event date so an old card is easy to identify. Keep sensitive information out of material that may be left in public areas. The card complements the briefing and should be tested with a simple question: can the person find help and describe where they are? Include a route for reporting unclear instructions. At shift end, collect observations about signs, queue points and communication problems so the next briefing can improve.

## Use a change briefing during the event

Temporary teams need a clear way to receive changes after induction. Decide who issues updates, how staff acknowledge them and how an absent or replacement volunteer catches up. A change to a gate, welfare location or radio channel should use consistent wording and an updated reference. Avoid relying solely on an informal group conversation that some shifts never see. At handover, ask what has changed since the previous deployment. A short versioned update can be more useful than asking everyone to reread an entire handbook.

## Run a realistic handover

Ask one volunteer to explain their area to a replacement: the normal task, current conditions, unresolved issues, supervisor and route to assistance. The replacement should repeat back the essential information and ask about anything unclear. Use a fictional example of a queue approaching a crossing route or a guest asking for welfare support. Check that both people use the same location names. The purpose is to test communication and role understanding, with operational decisions remaining with event control and the authorised leads.

## Capture learning at the end

Ask volunteers for observations that can improve the next deployment: confusing signs, repeated questions, inaccessible information or communication black spots. Record concrete examples and give the event team an owner for review. Keep personal incident details in the appropriate restricted process instead of a general feedback sheet. Confirm the end of deployment so the organiser knows who remains on site and which role has cover. A repeat event should use previous observations while still checking the current layout, programme and staffing arrangements.

## A relief volunteer arrives after the main event briefing

Doors are open and a volunteer is needed immediately at the side gate. They have a badge but missed the induction. What must the coordinator establish before assigning them?

### Compare your decision

Give a task-specific briefing covering location, boundaries of the role, who to call, emergency arrangements and what to do if unsure. Confirm understanding by asking the volunteer to show the contact route and explain one likely decision. Arrange supervision or a different task if needed.

Ask: “A guest wants to leave and return through this gate. Who makes that decision?” The answer reveals more than a tick beside “briefed”.

## Sources and editorial basis

- HSE — Managing an event

Guidance checked on 19 October 2026. Examples and worksheets are original suggested workflows; adapt them to your operation.

### Use this on shift

Resource page and fillable working record · Read the online guide · Course details