



# Minimizing Risk as a Society Volunteer

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society's volunteers support our mission in various capacities. Regardless of the role, every volunteer has a responsibility to help minimize risk when serving members of the community. This document outlines key measures volunteers can take to minimize risk while representing the Society.

## Community Gatherings:

The Society requires that all gatherings be held in public locations that meet Americans with Disabilities Act accessibility standards. Use this [Accessibility Report](#) when reviewing the accessibility of your chosen gathering location. For assistance in meeting these standards, please consult your staff partner.

## Disclaimers:

Volunteers can minimize risk to themselves and the Society by using the appropriate disclaimer. Available disclaimers include:

- [Community Disclaimer for Peer Connections Participation](#)
- [Community Disclaimer for In Person Self Help Group Meetings](#)
- [MS Ambassador Slide Deck](#) – (See slide 3 for disclaimer language)
- Appropriate disclaimer as provided by your staff partner.

Disclaimer use is particularly appropriate for peer connection work and community meetings in which the topic focuses on medical information, treatment, or therapy. Disclaimers can be communicated as a slide within presentation slide decks, as a handout for in-person gathering opportunities, or as a chat box post within virtual connection opportunities.

## Meeting Agenda & Presentations:

Meeting agendas and presentations should not conflict with the Society's [mission](#), policies or [Code of Conduct](#). In accordance with the Society's Code of Conduct, no staff person or volunteer may utilize a MS Society gathering for personal gain.

Note: If the agendas of a particular self-help group or volunteer lead gathering regularly and persistently conflict with the mission and/or policies of the Society, and attempts at resolution have failed, the Society may dissolve the formal relationship with the volunteer and/or group. This disassociation in no way affects the rights of individual community members to access other Society activities or services.

### **Social Media Guidelines:**

If you must use social media to perform your volunteer role for the Society, please review and be mindful of the Society's [Social Media Guidelines](#). These guidelines must be followed.

### **Transportation:**

Society volunteers are not permitted to provide transportation to community members. Both volunteers and the Society may be liable when a community member rides in a vehicle driven by a volunteer. If an accident occurs, the driver's insurance is primary, therefore a volunteer could be held personally liable for an injury sustained by a passenger. The Society would also have secondary liability when the driver is acting on behalf of the Society. When transportation is an issue for a community member, volunteers should recommend the individual contact an MS Navigator to provide community transit alternatives.

### **Use of Third-Party Property/Liability Insurance Requirements:**

Meetings should be held in public facilities/locations that carry general liability insurance with standard provisions for use of third-party properties. To ensure that facilities meet the Society's insurance requirements, submit **all** facility use contracts to the [legal@nmss.org](mailto:legal@nmss.org) mailbox for review. Due to risk and accessibility limitations, volunteers may not hold Society gatherings at private homes.

### **Waivers:**

When planning and implementing a community gathering, volunteers must:

- Obtain approval from their staff partner before planning a community gathering.
- Share the Society's disclaimer language before all community gatherings.
- Require participants to sign waivers for meetings that involve physical activities (e.g., yoga wellness exercises).

The staff partner will provide the required waivers and disclaimer language.

Every staff member and volunteer play an intricate role in supporting the Society's Risk Management program. We thank you in advance for your adherence to our defined policies, procedures, and guidelines designed to protect the Society's assets – our people, our property, and our reputation. Please remember to always "Think Safe!"

