



SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

In This Section:

A brief introduction to Co-op living, including "The International Principles of Co-Operation" and lists detailing Volunteers' Rights as well as their Responsibilities.



SHAMROCK CO-OPERATIVE HOMES INC.
MEMBER HANDBOOK - SECTION I - INTRODUCTION



INTRODUCTION

Welcome Home! We hope that this member handbook will give you the answers to some of the questions a new co-op member needs to ask. You may use it to store the Co-op and community information you receive from time to time. You must keep it up to date by adding new policies as they are developed and making changes as they are amended. This will make it a useful reference.

The Co-op is a special kind of neighbourhood. We hope that you will become a confident participant here. When you have settled in, you must participate and become involved. If you are not sure what you can do, just get in touch with someone on the Board of Directors. A list is provided in Section II. Or, just ask a neighbour.

A good member is a well-informed member, so read on...



THE INTERNATIONAL PRINCIPLES OF CO-OPERATION

1. Open and Voluntary Membership:

Membership of a co-operative should be voluntary and available without artificial restriction to any social, political or religious discrimination, to all persons who can make use of its services and are willing to accept the responsibilities of membership.

2. Democratic Control:

Co-operatives are democratic organization. Their affairs should be administered by persons elected or appointed in a manner agreed to by the members and accountable to them. Members should enjoy equal rights of voting (one member, one vote) and participation in decisions affecting their co-operative.

3. Limited Interest on Shares:

Share capital should only receive a strictly limited rate of interest, if any.

4. Return of Surplus to Members:

Surplus or savings, if any, arising out of the operations of a co-operative belong to the members of that co-operative and should be distributed in such a manner as would avoid one member gaining at the expense of others. (Non-profit housing co-operatives often use savings in one year to offset housing cost increases in the next year. Through this practice, the principle of return of surplus to members is realized.)

5. Co-operative Education:

All co-operatives should make provision for the education of their members, officers and employees and of the general public in the principles and techniques of co-operation, both economic and democratic.

6. Co-operation among Co-operatives:

All co-operative organizations, in order to best serve the interest of their members and their communities, should actively co-operate in every practical way with other co-operatives at local, national, and international levels.



VOLUNTEER RIGHTS

1. *The right to be treated as a co-worker -- not just unpaid labour.*
2. *The right to a suitable assignment -- with consideration for personal preference, temperament, life experience, education, and employment background.*
3. *The right to know as much as possible about the Co-op -- its policies, its finances, its people, its problems.*
4. *The right to training for the job -- training that is thoughtfully planned and effectively presented.*
5. *The right to continuing education on the job -- a follow-up to initial training, information about new developments and training for greater responsibility.*
6. *The right to sound guidance and direction -- by someone who is experienced, patient, well informed and thoughtful, and who has the time to invest in giving guidance.*
7. *The right to a place to work -- an orderly, designated place, conducive to work and worthy of the job to be done.*
8. *The right to promotion and a variety of experiences -- through advancement of assignments of more responsibility; through transfer from one activity to another; through special assignment.*
9. *The right to be heard -- to have a part in planning; to feel free to make suggestions; to have respect shown for an honest opinion.*
10. *The right to recognition -- in the form of promotion and awards; through day-by-day expressions of appreciation; and, most important, by being treated as a valued and bonafide worker.*



VOLUNTEER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. ***The responsibility to be dependable*** -- to do what you agreed to do; to keep the promises you make; to treat your work as your bond.
2. ***The responsibility to be committed*** -- to believe in the value of your work; to know that you really want to do it.
3. ***The responsibility to accept the guidelines*** -- to offer only constructive criticism; to understand that there may be reasons that are not always apparent; to ask for clarification.
4. ***The responsibility to learn and keep on learning*** -- to accept the training that is essential to any job; to learn all you can about the organization and your job.
5. ***The responsibility to welcome suggestions*** -- to recognize that you will do a better job and enjoy it more if you are doing what is expected of you.
6. ***The responsibility to speak up*** -- to deal with doubts and frustrations before they drive you away or burn you out.
7. ***The responsibility to be a team player*** -- to find your place on the team; to pull your share of the load.