

# Valley Free Radio Station Policies

*As of May, 2016*



## Membership

Membership at Valley Free Radio is open to any individual over the age of 18, or under the age of 18 with parental approval. Programmers under 18 are required to have adult supervision while at the station and during their show.

### *Membership levels*

Valley Free Radio membership consists of three categories:

1. Programmers. Programmers have paid annual dues, fulfilled monthly work and/or pay to play requirements, and have undergone training. Programmers are authorized to host radio shows, operate station equipment and have full access to the station. Programmers have voting rights at annual and special meetings.
2. Member Volunteers. Member volunteers pay annual dues but do not complete on-air training. Non-programmer members may be granted full station access for volunteer purposes and have voting rights at annual and special meetings.
3. Regular Guests. Regular guests would like to be a secondary talent on a program, but who has no interest in running a show of their own or being a full member. This person will be considered a Regular Guest if they are on the show three weeks or more out of each month. Regular guests do not have full access to the station, meaning they cannot know the door code, and cannot be left alone in the station for an extended amount of time. Regular guests do not pay dues and do not have voting rights. Regular guests are sponsored by a programmer and their actions relating to the station are the sponsoring programmer's responsibility.

## *Becoming a Member*

To become a programmer at Valley Free Radio, one must:

1. Submit a new program proposal
2. Pay the \$30 application fee
3. Attend a training session
4. Sit in on at least one existing VFR show
5. Pass an equipment skills test
6. Sign a programmer contract
7. Attend a VFR Board or Annual meeting

To become a member volunteer at Valley Free Radio, one must:

1. Pay a \$30 application fee
2. Provide contact information
3. Sign a member volunteer contract
4. Volunteer regularly at the station

## *Membership fees*

All programmers and member volunteers must pay an initial application fee their first year, then a \$30 per member reapplication fee, due along with a reapplication form on July 1 every subsequent year.

All programmers must additionally provide ONE of the following:

- A \$30 per month pay to play fee, discounted to \$20 per month if arrangements are made for recurring payments. The pay to play fee does not increase for the duration of a programmer's membership.
- Regular satisfactory performance of a volunteer task assigned by the Programming committee.
- Arrangements for \$35 more in underwriting each month for their program.

All member volunteers must additionally regularly perform a volunteer task or tasks assigned by the Programming committee.

Application, reapplication, and pay to play fees are not refundable.

### *Programmer conduct policies*

You MUST:

- 1) Participate in all pledge drives (held twice a year) with a live show so you can take listener calls. If you cannot air a live show, you must alert the Programming Committee, pre-record a fundraising show and arrange for someone to be in the station to answer the phone.
- 2) Keep informed about and follow VFR guidelines and policies.
- 3) Treat station equipment with respect and care.
- 4) Follow all FCC rules and regulations.
- 5) Treat other members with respect.

You must NEVER:

- 1) Give the door code to a non-member, or to another member who forgot theirs. Only the board or someone designated by the board can give out the keycode.
- 2) Promote commercial interests on air (this is different from underwriting, which follows strict guidelines to get on air).
- 3) Consume alcohol or illegal drugs in the station.
- 4) Smoke, vape, or wear strong scents (such as perfumes or aftershaves) while in the station or at official VFR meetings. We have a small space with little ventilation. Please be considerate and ask your guests to do the same.
- 5) Consume any substance containing THC on the Florence Community Center property. While Valley Free Radio supports the use of medical marijuana, we would like to be good neighbors and avoid any issues with other tenants.

### *Ethical Conduct Agreement*

As a volunteer of Valley Free Radio, I make the following commitments regarding my interaction with other members, my use of station resources, and my representation of the organization in public:

I will support the Mission Statement and Guiding Vision of the station.

I will work towards making the organization more inclusive and accessible.

I will contribute to a safe and welcoming environment at the station and in meetings.

I will communicate verbally, in writing, and electronically with respect for others; when disagreeing, I will do it in ways that are respectful.

I will leave the station in better condition than I found it

I will take responsibility for the behavior of visitors I bring into the studio.

I will support new members in their training, and try to help them in learning to be better programmers.

I will listen to and consider criticism that is respectfully offered.

*Behavior that is valued at VFR includes:*

- \* Respectfully expressing myself in station meetings and correspondence
- \* Helping to maintain the smooth running of the station by participating in fundraising efforts
- \* Keeping the station clean, and caring for its equipment
- \* Thanking others for their contributions to the station
- \* Encouraging new members to join

*Behavior that will not be tolerated at VFR includes:*

- \* consuming illegal drugs or alcohol in the station or going on air while under the influence (this will result in immediate dismissal)
- \* mistreating others verbally or physically
- \* engaging in actions that undermine the reputation and health of the station

## **FCC & VFR On Air policies**

### *Age of Previously Recorded Shows*

Any shows aired on VFR must be at most one year old at time of broadcast. This is to prevent shows that might be referring to out of date information, or contain PSAs or underwriting spots that are no longer relevant. We want to make sure that if a listener only tunes in for a short part of your show, they will not hear any information that may have changed over the years.

If you must air a previous show, inform the programming committee and make sure that you remove any and all PSAs, underwriting that is no longer contracted, and other speech that notifies the listener of a specific date/time of year (ie "merry christmas!" or a weather report)

### *Speech Policy*

The FCC has mandated that any broadcast between the hours of 6am and 10pm must be free of profanity, which is meant to protect children who might be listening during those times.

However, after 10pm, that rule does not apply. As of this year we are no longer enforcing the profanity rules after 10pm with the following restrictions:

- You may play music with the "7 dirty words" and their derivatives.
- Profane speech cannot be SPOKEN on air.
- Hate speech continues to be forbidden by station policy.
- Profanity can not be used in a sexual or excretory context.
- You must notify your listeners at the top of the hour before any profanity is played and at the top of each subsequent hour that you will be playing content that some might find objectionable.

## **DMCA Online Stream Regulations**

1. Sound Recording Performance Complement. A Programmer must comply with the "sound recording performance complement," which prohibits a Programmer from transmitting within any given three hour period: (A) more than three different songs from the same album if more than two such songs are transmitted consecutively or (B) four different songs by the same artist (or four different songs from the same compilation) if more than three such songs are transmitted consecutively.

2. No Prior Announcements. A Programmer must not publish an advance program schedule that discloses: (i) the titles of specific songs, (ii) the names of albums or (iii) the names of artists to be transmitted (with exception).

## **Facility Use and Access Policy**

Only programmers and member volunteer in good standing have access to the key code to enter the station (and the building after hours). The code can only be distributed by a board member - members asking for the code from another member should be directed to the board.

Each year after the reapplication deadline, the door code is changed and distributed to all approved programmers and member volunteers. The door code may also be changed in the event of a cancelled show or membership. In that case, the new code will be distributed to members in good standing as soon as possible and a notice will be posted on the station door.

Station broadcasting equipment may only be used by trained programmers in good standing.

Members are expected to clean up after themselves each time they use the equipment or facilities. There is no food or drink besides water allowed in the live studio or production room.

Members are responsible for notifying the staff of any problems with equipment. Members must not attempt equipment repairs on their own and may not change any wiring, connections, accessories, or software configurations or settings.

Equipment may not be removed from the Radio Studio, nor may other materials be taken from the building, including station-owned CDs, LPs, turntables, CD players, tape decks, microphones, etc. without permission from the Board of Directors.

## **Ownership**

VFR programmers retain all rights to and may keep copies of their shows, and may rebroadcast their shows or make them available for download or streaming in any venue they choose. Programmers are solely responsible for ensuring that copyright laws are followed when doing this.

If VFR programs are made available in a for-profit context such as a podcast with advertising, acknowledgement must be provided for the use of Valley Free Radio's studio to create the recording. (ex. "This program was originally recorded at Valley Free Radio, WXOJ-LP, in Northampton. Find out more at [valleyfreeradio.org](http://valleyfreeradio.org)!")

## **Promotion**

Radio program promotion is the responsibility of the programmer. Programmers may write and send their own press releases to local newspapers, radio stations, blogs, etc.

Valley Free Radio maintains a Facebook page and programmers may submit promotional posts to be posted on the page by sending them to Sienna (hilltownfamilies@gmail.com) with the subject line "VFR FB post," Janra (Janra@valleyfreeradio.org), or Brianne (Brianne@valleyfreeradio.org)

Programmers may submit audio promotional materials (promos) to Valley Free Radio to highlight their programs. VFR makes promos available for play during live shows and promos are also played in between automated programs.

## **Use of Station Computers**

In general, no programs can be installed on any station computer without the permission of the Operations Committee. Files created by programmers may be deleted at any time.

### *Automation*

Only those designated by the Programming Committee and trained in their use are allowed access to the Automation Computer.

### *Public*

All members of the station are allowed to use the public computer and scanner/printer at any time except during the hours of 3:30p - 7p every wednesday. Use of the printer should be within reason; remember the station pays for ink and paper.

### *Production*

All programmers are allowed to use the recording studio and its networked folder. Programmers who need to record their show have priority over any other use.

### *Studio*

All Programmers are allowed use of the Studio Computer.

## **Choosing New Show Time Slots**

When determining where a new program will be placed, the programming committee will use the following hierarchy when looking for an open time slot:

1. New programmers will be asked to look for time slots where there is no scheduled programming
2. If none of those time slots can be used or are appropriate, then we will look at slots occupied by repeats of any program.
3. If those won't work as well, we will consider moving or cancelling a syndicated show, as determined by the programming committee

## **Purchasing policies**

Valley Free Radio supports local, independent and minority-owned businesses whenever possible given cost considerations. Purchases should be as green as possible, also given cost considerations.

All station purchases shall be made by the finance committee - VFR will not reimburse purchases made by members.

Purchasers should not pay sales tax on purchases; a sales tax exemption certificate for VFR is available upon request from the Board Clerk.

## **Finance policies**

Paypal balance is transferred to the VFR checking account weekly.

## **Use of show recordings**

Recordings of shows are owned by the programmer, and can be used as they see fit. Programmers are asked to tell people where the show was recorded.

## **Use of the Recording Studio**

Any member of the community may use the recording studio, with the following restrictions:

1. A member of the station must be present to open the door and remain present during the recording session
2. Recordings cannot contain hate speech, or disparaging remarks about any minority group
3. We ask that you acknowledge where you made the recording in some way. Please refer to it as the "David S. Dow Recording studio at Valley Free Radio."

## **Disciplinary Actions**

Disciplinary Action may be taken by the programming committee if a VFR member has violated any of the stated policies or rules laid out in the station by-laws. The action could include but is not limited to:

- required retraining
- a probationary period
- required signing of additional documents or agreements in addition to those that every member must complete.
- Full cancellation of the individual's show and membership

The determination of the appropriate discipline is made by the programming committee and carried out by the director of programming.

If a member would like to appeal the disciplinary actions taken, they may attend a Board meeting and ask that the action is reversed or commuted. The Board's decision on the matter is considered final.