Valley Free Radio Training Manual

As of: August 25th, 2018

Section 1: Basic Information

Section 2: Policies and Practices

Section 3: Organization of VFR

Section 4: Forms & Documents

Section 1: Basic Information

Mission Statement:
Valley Free Radio (VFR) reflects the rich diversity of the Pioneer Valley through community broadcasting.

Guiding Vision Statement:
The airwaves belong to the public. When commercial interests violated public trust, activists around the country began broadcasting without licenses, This grassroots movement led to the establishment of LPFM legislation, and local organizers in Northampton came together to form Valley Free Radio.

Valley Free Radio returns the airwaves to the public. We seek to provide a space for media access and education, placing equipment, skills and critical tools in the hands of the community. We aim to serve with particular regard for those overlooked and underrepresented by other media and to provide a forum for the exchange of cultural and intellectual ideas and music.

As an alternative to commercial media, VFR is committed to social and economic justice. VFR is a welcoming space that encourages social relationships by fostering dialogue and building knowledge and understanding between and within ethnic, racial, class, linguistic and other groups that have been silenced. VFR holds itself accountable to the community.

VFR ADDRESS:

Valley Free Radio
Florence Community Center
140 Pine St. Room B-9
Florence, MA 01062

STATION PHONE NUMBERS:

Studio line at (413) 585-1033
Business line at (413) 584-1160.

VFR WEB-SITE:
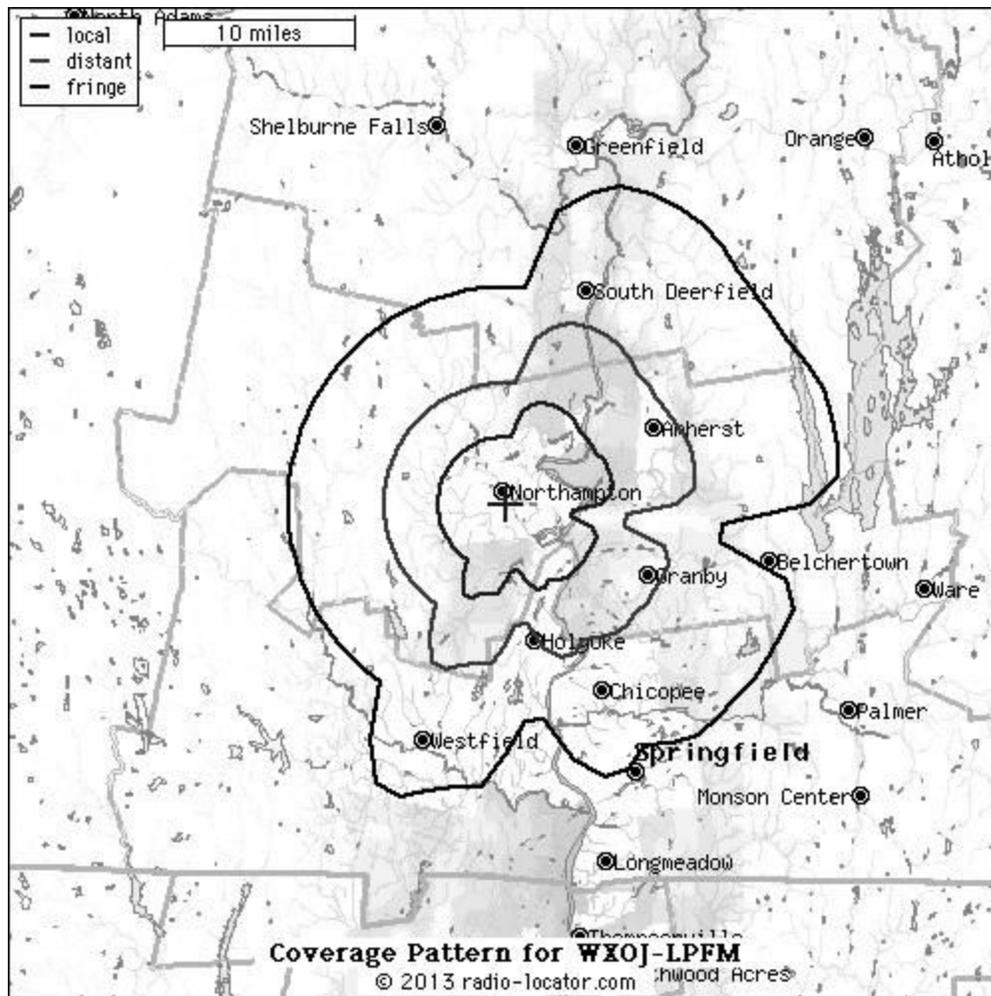
http://www.Valleyfreeradio.org

LEGAL STATION ID:

WE ARE WXOJ-LP, NORTHAMPTON, 103.3 FM.
The VFR studio is located at 140 Pine Street, Florence, MA.

Our transcription is located in Florence. We broadcast at 100 watts.

Coverage Pattern for WXOJ-LPFM
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Section 2 Policies and Practices:

In order to become a member of VFR and have a show, you must sign the membership contract. A copy of the contract is appended to this training manual.

Code of Conduct

Hate Speech

Hate speech is not allowed either on-air, in interactions between and among station members, or when you are communicating as a member of Valley Free Radio in public.

Hate speech is communication that vilifies a person or a group on the basis of one or more characteristics such as color, disability, gender, nationality, race, religion, and sexual orientation. This includes the use of slurs referring to member of a race, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, etc. in any context.

Anti-Discrimination Policy

Valley Free Radio commits itself to not discriminating against any community member, station member, volunteer, vendor, or others we have contact with, business with, or any other relationship on the basis of race, color, cultural heritage, national origin, religion, age, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or mental abilities.

In general, we believe all humans wish to be treated honorably and with respect. Please treat everyone you come in contact with in the same way you wish to be treated. When differences arise, attempt to respectfully disagree and work to peacefully resolve differences.

Legal Requirements: A portion of our station polices are legally necessary, as the consequences of non-adherence to these policies includes heavy fines that the station may not be able to pay and/or loss of our station license.

Anti-harassment Policy

Other policies: These aren't required by the FCC, but we do expect every member to abide by the following:

1) Act professionally
2) Act courteously
3) No alcohol, no pot, no tobacco, and no illegal drugs at the station.

FCC Policies

Per FCC regulations, VFR must broadcast a legal station ID at the beginning and end of each broadcast day, and as close as possible to the top (beginning) of each hour. Station IDs should be broadcast within 5 minutes of the top of each hour, or as close as possible if the programmer is unable to do so (for example when playing a piece of classical music that is more than 1 hour long - in these cases the ID may be given whenever the piece ends).

A legal ID consists of the station call letters, WXOJ-LP, and location, Northampton. The ONLY legal insertion between those words is the station's frequency. **The only two acceptable forms of legal station ID are:**

 "WXOJ-LP Northampton" or **"WXOJ-LP 103.3FM Northampton"**

Those phrases can be preceded or followed by anything as long as they are said together, so "Valley Free Radio, WXOJ-LP Northampton, broadcasting at 103.3 FM and streaming live at valleyfreeradio.org" includes a legal ID. "WXOJ-LP, Valley Free Radio, Northampton" is NOT a legal ID.

At other points during the hour, legal or non-legal station IDs may be broadcast in whatever order the programmer prefers. A variety of pre-recorded legal and non-legal station IDs (sometimes referred to as station imaging) are available for programmers to play, or programmers may say the ID live on the air. It is generally a good idea to frequently identify the station by name, call letters, and/or frequency so listeners know what they're listening to.

Obscenity

FCC regulations prohibit the broadcast of obscene material at any time. Broadcast obscenity is not covered by the First Amendment. Obscenity is defined as material which: 1. an average person, applying contemporary community standards, would find to appeal to the prurient interest 2. Depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable law 3. The material, taken as a whole, must lack serious literary, political, or scientific value.

Material that is considered merely "indecent" can be broadcast between 10pm and 6am, and at no other time. The FCC defines broadcast indecency as language or material that, in context, depicts or describes sexual or excretory activities but does not rise to the level of obscenity.

What this means for VFR is programmers must never use language on air that is obscene or profane (the "seven dirty words" and graphic content), nor play material including that language. Material that is indecent but not obscene must be kept within permitted times.

FCC penalties for obscenity include large fines and loss of broadcast license, any of which would mean the end of a small community station like VFR. The FCC can be very wide-ranging in its definition of obscenity, and any listener, at any time, can report obscene language to the FCC and trigger an investigation and/or penalty. Due to the seriousness of this possibility, **causing or allowing obscenity to be broadcast on air can be grounds for immediate loss of one's show.**

If you have any doubt as to whether material you intend to broadcast is indecent, profane, or obscene, consult with the VFR Board or refrain from playing the material.

Airing Phone Calls

It is a violation of FCC regulations to put any phone caller on the air without his/her prior consent.

When taking callers on your show, use good judgment. Be sure to obtain the caller's permission to put them on the air, and briefly advise them that they may not use obscenities. The programmer is considered responsible for anything a caller says which violates FCC regulations or VFR's hate speech policy. Under no circumstances is a programmer allowed to call a person and put them on the air without their prior approval.

Remember: The Host/DJ Is responsible for everything that is broadcast during their show, including any speech or content played by any guests or co-hosts. If an obscenity is aired do not call attention to it, shift focus as smoothly as possible, and note the time, date, and description of what happened. Email that information to Janra Roberts at Janra@valleyfreeradio.org.

Emergency Alert System

All radio stations are required by law to broadcast the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to alert the community of serious emergencies and for periodic system tests. EAS broadcasts are triggered and logged automatically at the transmitter and will pre-empt VFR programming temporarily when they play.

Transitioning Between Shows:

Live show to automation

Live show host must switch to automation NO LATER than 59:57.

Going over the hour cuts off things that are required to play at the top of the hour, which in some cases includes underwriting for the next show. This is required even if there is no automated show to follow the live show.

If there is a circumstance when staying on the air past one's show time is desired, prior approval of a member of the Programming Committee or the Board of Directors is needed. In an emergency, approval needs to be secured as soon as possible, via phone.

Automation to live show

Live show host should not switch off automation before 59:50, unless there are special circumstances, emergency announcements, or the like.

Don't forget to switch from "Automation" to "This Studio" when you start your show! This is a very common mistake that even seasoned programmers sometimes make. An easy way to transition is to bring up the automation feed on the board, switch off automation, and then use the sliders to transition to your show material. See technical manual for more details.

Live show to live show

1. Responsibilities of outgoing host
    ● Have music or other prerecorded material playing for the last five minutes of the show so incoming host can set up to go on the air. Have at least one CD player clear.
    ● have any materials and equipment cleared off the board and surrounding area
    ● have signed program log
    ● switch to automation at 59:57 (or 29:57) if incoming host is late, unless prior arrangements have been made with incoming host*
    ● Leave the broadcast studio promptly as soon as incoming host is on the air.
    ● be sure that phone line is open, or, if show has included telephone interview, monitor other station line for call from incoming host
    ● alert incoming host to any problems with equipment as succinctly
    ● if outgoing host is recording show, recording needs to end before 59:00 to allow a smooth exit

2. Responsibilities of incoming host
   ● allow the outgoing host to finish their show without interruption
   ● be ready to take over the board at five minutes before start of show
   ● enable outgoing host to retrieve anything playing for the last five minutes of show
   ● enable outgoing host to retrieve show recording
   ● let outgoing host know at least 30 minutes before end of show if the next show is in automation
   ● let outgoing host know as soon as possible if incoming host is late in getting to the
   ● Station or is unable to get to the station.
   ● allow outgoing host to leave promptly

Communication between programmers with adjacent shows is key. Make sure you have contact information for the programmers with shows before and after yours, and work together to devise systems for a smooth transition ensuring that everyone has access to what they need to record and broadcast their shows, and that you have a plan for what to do if a programmer will be late or miss a show.

The transition between shows is hectic and short, so it is not the time for addressing problems with the transition or asking for technical help. Communicate via phone or email outside of show times about these matters. If a transition problem arises and cannot be resolved through direct communication, e-mail a summary of the problem to the Programming Committee.

3. General DJ Responsibilities
Each programmer is in charge of security for the VFR facility whenever they are in the station and is responsible for what goes over the air during their show. In general and especially in the event of a random, unannounced FCC inspection, the programmer must be able to:

   ● Show the inspector the station license
   ● Show designation of Chief Operator
   ● Redirect any inquiries regarding the Emergency Alert System (EAS) to the transmitter site.
All necessary information for an FCC inspection is located in the station's Public File, which is a large white binder kept on the desk near the entrance of the station.

4. Other programmer responsibilities include:
   ● Showing up on time for your show, allowing adequate time for setup and transition from previous show.
   ● Filling out a Program Log (located on the ledge above the board)
   ● Playing or saying a legal Station ID at the beginning of every hour, and playing or saying one Public Service Announcement and one VFR show promo per hour.
   ● Arranging for an appropriate replacement or notifying the Programming Committee as soon as you know you will not be able to produce your show.
   ● Ensuring that you have a recorded show in automation in the event that you will not be able to make your show.

- Understanding the use of all equipment, operating that equipment with the appropriate amount of care, and promptly reporting any equipment problems to the Program Committee and post on the Facebook group page.
- Maintaining order and cleanliness in the broadcast and production studios.
- Only allowing drinking water in the broadcast and production studios (absolutely no other food or drinks allowed).
- Refraining from illegal drug or alcohol use while in the station, and ensuring that guests also follow this policy.
- Reading any and all email communications from the Programming Committee, the Board of Directors, and the VFR Members Email List.
- **Pay dues of $30 per year per programmer starting before the first show is aired, and each June thereafter.**

Views and Opinions

At least once during any show concerning news or the opinions of those on the air, you must say "The views and opinions on this program do not necessarily reflect those of Valley Free Radio or its volunteers" or play the pre-recorded disclaimer.

Station Notification

Remind listeners of the station ID at :00, :15, :30, and :45

Emergency Procedures

If there is a fire: If it is safe to do so, use fire extinguisher, there is one in every room. Alert authorities via 911, and leave building promptly. Contact Florence Towing (413-584-8713) to inform Bob Jr. (owner of the building) of the situation. If possible contact one of the Board of Directors through call or email.

If there is a flood: Contact Florence Towing (413-584-8713) to inform Bob Jr. (owner of the building) of the situation, notify Director of Operations.

If you have been threatened on the air: Discontinue contact. If you feel in danger, call 911. Write down any information about the call or message when it is safe to do so, and give that information to the authorities and the Director of Programming.

If there is a power failure: Contact Florence Towing (413-584-8713) to inform Bob Jr. (owner of the building) of the situation, notify Director of Operations.

If there is an injury or illness: Contact 911, administer any if you are trained first aid you are trained to do so.

Further policies are found on the VFR website. As a member it is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with all current policies

Section 3 Organization of VFR:

The first and most important group of people here at VFR are the members, who broadcast the shows that are what we offer the community.

Beyond that, VFR has a board of directors with five to nine people, who meet on the first Thursday of each month. They oversee all of the station's affairs, and are the final decision makers for the station. All directors are elected by the members at the annual meeting.

There are five committees that report to the directors on the essential operations. Committee members are all volunteers and need not be on the board of directors.

Programming
Members – Ed Malachowski (Director),Miasha Lee, Johanna Halbeisen, Ken Irwin, Rick Haggerty, Bob Gardner, Joel Saxe

- Automation
- Internal and external email communication
- upkeep of programmer email list
- Keeping online schedule up to date
- Conduct evaluations of programming and programmers
- Evaluates program proposals
- Maintaining and improving program schedule
- Community Advisory for the Board
- Reviews the programming goals established by the Board
- Disciplinary actions concerning programmers when warranted
- Creating policy as it relates to programmers and programming

Finance
Members - Stefan Ward-Wheten (Director), Rick Haggerty

- Creates station budgets
- Documents transactions
- Controls station bank accounts
- Managing monetary resources
-

Development (Dept. under Finance)
Rick Haggerty

- Underwriting
- Trades
- Fundraisers

Outreach
Members - Brianne Zulkiewicz (Director), Mark A. Bové

- Writing and sending out station newsletter
- Events
- Community Outreach
- Creating relationships with other organizations

Operations
Members – Mark A. Bové (Director), Mike Pfeiffer

- Maintaining the station's equipment
- Maintaining station network
- Improvements to equipment and technology
- Improvements to equipment and technology
- Office Management (getting mail, checking phone messages, keeping track of office supplies)
- Cleaning and Trash removal
- Contact with building manager

Section 4 FORMS:

Valley Free Radio New Trainee Checklist

Legal name: _____ DJ name: _____

Show name: _____

Before your show is approved:

1. Pay application fee ($30 payable by cash, check or PayPal)

   Date _____

2. Attend general training - held the first Sunday of every month from 1pm-3pm

   at the station. Date _____ Trainer Signature _____

3. One show sit-in. Date _____ Host Signature _____

   [a list of available shows is at the end of this packet.]

4. Board Test with trainer. Date _____ Trainer Signature _____

5. Contact volunteer coordinator to specify whether you would prefer to

   volunteer or pay to play, and arrange a regular volunteer task if applicable.

   Date _____ Assignment _____

Once previous tasks are done, for show approval by the Programming Committee:

1. Notify Programming Committee that you have completed your training and send them your proposed show name, a short description of your show, your planned start date, and request a time slot. Your time slot, if approved, will be held for 30 days. Date _____ Time slot _____ Planned Start Date _____

After Programming Committee approval, before going on the air:

1. Attend VFR Board Meeting to receive Board approval, sign programmer contract, and receive door code. Board meetings are held the first Thursday of every month from 6pm-8pm at Free Press, 40 Main St #301 in Florence. Date _____ Board member initials _____

2. Pay monthly pay to play fee or secure underwriting if applicable. Date paid _____

Within 30 days of starting your show:

❏ Sign up for email Announcements and (if you choose) become a member of the current programmer private Facebook group.

❏ Record a backup show and place it into automation.

❏ If you haven't already, email Johanna a short description of your show and a photo (300x300) for the website and online schedule.

❏ Begin performing your assigned volunteer duties, if applicable.

Contacts:

Training Coordinator: Ed Malachowski ed@valleyfreeradio.org - To schedule training, for general questions, to be connected with a mentor, and arranging show sit-ins and Board Tests.

Programming Committee: Johanna Halbeisen jh@newsonglibrary.org - To be added to the email list, and request a time slot.

Volunteer Coordinator: Mark A. Bové mark@valleyfreeradio.org - To arrange a volunteer assignment or to establish payment/underwriting arrangements, and to be added to the Facebook group.

Valley Free Radio Programmer/DJ/Show Host Agreement

I, the undersigned, agree:

1] To perform in a professional manner at all times when representing Valley Free Radio, WXOJ-LP. This includes my behavior on-air, on the telephone, and when interacting with the public as a representative of the station.

2] I will read and carry out all policies relative to programmers or hosts. These policies include, but not limited to, the following:

- Participate in all on-air pledge drives, meaning 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. During the show you must mention the pledge drive at least three times per hour, with the station phone number and our website as options to give.
- fill out the program log sheets, including:
    1. Station ID
    2. PSAs
    3. Show Promos
- have a back-up show that is less than a year old on file
- notify the programming committee or a board member 24 hours in advance if there is no backup show and no replacement can be found
- adhere to the FCC obscenity and indecency policies
- follow all the mandates of the mission statement, programming, racism, hate speech, and other enacted policies of the organization
- not engage in drinking, smoking, or illegal drugs in the station
- not go on the air under the influence of said substances
- Safeguard the resources of WXOJ-LP, and not remove without permission any of those resources, including equipment and music.
- Arrive to do my show on time, and not exceed the allotted hour(s) of my show.
- not broadcasting outside of my allotted time slot without prior permission from the Programming Committee, even if there is nothing scheduled during that period

3] I agree to stay in regular contact with the station. I will check the email I have provided at least once a week, and respond to station communication within 2-3 days of receipt. I understand that it is expected that I have kept up to date on all station correspondence for current station information and other requirements designated by decision of the organization.

4] I agree and understand that I am responsible for the actions of all guests I invite to WXOJ-LP.

5] I agree to give at least two weeks' notice to fellow members, the programming committee, and the listening public if I need to terminate my show.

6] I have notified the board, or will notify the board if a new situation arises, of any criminal charges or convictions that could impact the safety of children or underage programmers at the stations.

7] I will treat all equipment in the station with care, and I will not make unauthorized changes, adjustments, or repairs. I will log all equipment problems or report them to the board of directors if it is a pressing concern.

8] I understand that VFR is a volunteer run station, and agree to the following time or monetary requirements. This is in addition to the yearly $30 in dues that is expected every June.

9] Throughout the year, programmers will be required to pay to play or volunteer their time according to the following schedule. Please be aware that these all apply per SHOW, not per PROGRAMMER. If you have a show that has multiple programmers, the fees/work hours/underwriting requirements DO NOT CHANGE:

> A monthly fee of $30/month payable online through PayPal or check/money order. Programmers who sign up for automatic deductions via our PayPal system will pay a discounted fee of $20/month. If you are already paying a lower rate, that will not change. These pay to play rates are for those signing up this year.
>
> OR
>
> Volunteering your time in the form of volunteer work for the station. These duties would be assigned by the head of the Programming Committee. Programmers would report to the appropriate department head or directly to the board.
>
> OR
>
> Recruiting an underwriter - for every month they are signed up, your show will be paid for (with approval by the board).Please be aware that these all apply per SHOW, not per PROGRAMMER.

I understand that my failure to adhere to this agreement could result in the suspension or termination of my membership from WXOJ-LP.

Signature_____

Date _____

Email_____

Phone _____

Shows open for sit-in training (as of 8-3-16):

Kickin' It for Peace, Culture & Education (Sun 8-10 am, music/talk) Rick Haggerty

Morning Roll (Mon 6-9 am, music) Bob Balogh
Reggae Down   (Mon 6-8 pm, music) Paul Schweid

Roots & More (Tues 7-9 am, music) Bill Madden
Enviro Show (*alternate* Tuesdays 6-7 pm , talk) Glen Ayers
Adventure Rocketship (Tue 9-11 pm, music) Matt Hunter

Valley Tango (Wed 11-1 pm, music) Jacqueline Maidana
Out There (*alternate* Wednesdays 4-5 pm, talk) Ruthy Woodring
Warm Heart Of Africa (Wed 7-9 pm, music) Stefan Ward-Wheten

Evidence Based (Fri 6-7 pm, talk) Stacey Cooney
Civil Politics (Fri 7-8p, talk) Janra Roberts
Subculture (Fri 8-10 pm, music) Wendy Anderson-Spencer

Nine Volt Heart (Sat 5-7pm, music) Ed Malachowski
Drum & Bass (Sat 8-10 pm, music) Mike Pfeiffer