
EMF Volunteer Handbook

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1 Purpose

This document aims to introduce volunteers to the Electromagnetic Field (EMF) organisation. It aims to describe the organisational structure and its ways of communication and working.

The document is for the consumption of those volunteering in the organisation of the event.

2 What is EMF and What Are We Aiming To Do

Electromagnetic Field is a non-profit UK camping festival for those with an inquisitive mind or an interest in making things: hackers, artists, geeks, crafters, scientists, and engineers.

To help matters along, we provide fast internet, power to the tent, good beer, and amazing installations, entirely organised by a dedicated team of volunteers. It is this team of volunteers that this document is aimed at. If you feel this isn't what you want Electromagnetic Field to be then perhaps volunteering to organise it is not such a good idea.

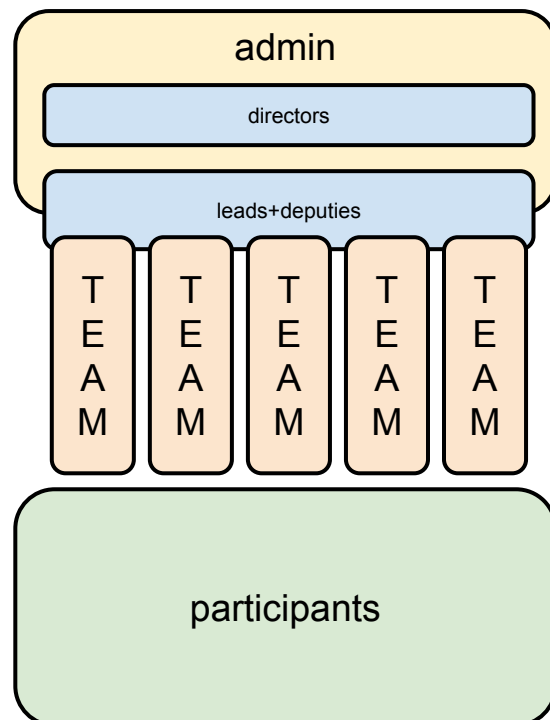
3 Organisational Structure

The Directors of Electromagnetic Field Ltd are Jonty Wareing and Russ Garrett. They are legally (and in some cases financially) liable for whatever may happen with EMF. Ultimately they take responsibility for each event and the organising of them. They hold a final veto over any major decision affecting the organisation or event.

The top level in the organisation is the admin group which consists of the Team Leads, their deputies, and 'certain selected others' the directors feel are of value to this group. Each person in this group has one or more responsibility, which are outlined below.

Each team contains one or more volunteers and have an area of responsibility to carry out.

Finally, there are the participants, those who come to the event without aiding in the organisation of it. A percentage of them will volunteer during the event to ensure the event runs smoothly, or provide activities via villages. In order to carry out these duties they may well need access to information or training from teams.



3.1 How We Operate

EMF operates in a mostly informal manner. It's split into teams which have responsibilities to carry out. Each volunteer in a team reports to a Lead and their Deputy, and they in turn report to the admin group.

Beyond that, there is little rigidity or formal communication; be prepared for overlap between teams; some Leads will have more say in the running of things simply because their area of responsibility commands it. A good example of this are responsibilities for Site Infrastructure; it's very likely whatever you do will involve the persons responsible for this, which will impact their work and what they can deliver, which in turn impacts the whole event.

Before the Event

Information is rarely guarded, and you should feel free to ask questions of others as long as it's not impacting their ability to complete their tasks. Some information is kept confidential within the admin team - mostly facts such as ticket sales and operational details. This is done to prevent external parties from making judgments about the potential success of the event without knowing the full context.

You will inevitably learn new skills during the course of your volunteering and this is a Good Thing™. It is not only useful to you, but useful to us since you may well volunteer at the next event, carrying over experience from the previous one.

There is a high propensity within this group for 'bikeshedding'¹, so please be mindful when making suggestions outside your area of expertise.

Do not be afraid to ask for help. It's ok to doubt yourself, it's ok to admit you don't think you're capable of completing a task or looking after a responsibility. As of writing, the experience of the last three events shows that people are more than willing to take time out and aid, assist and help in whatever way is possible.

The size of the organisation fluctuates massively over time and will be at its largest during an event. Some teams operate continuously, whilst others only awake from slumber mere months before the event. Some only operate at specific times during an event.

During the Event

EMF will operate along the lines that have been set out above and along the channels of responsibility laid out below. However, things can go wrong, suppliers can leave us in the lurch etc so there is a tendency to operating towards a 'structured chaos'. It appears messy, but things tend to work out and those in the admin group are very much on top of problems. By this point you should be familiar with who you are accountable to and be able to trust those in charge.

4 Communications and Tools

EMF has multiple communication channels, though IRC and email are the most common. However, physical meetings do have their place and are organised regularly in the run up to an event. Attendance is highly encouraged for those that can make them.

4.1 Admin

Type	Details	Comments
IRC	#emfcamp-admin on FreeNode	Strictly Invite Only
Mailing List	https://lists.emfcamp.org/listinfo/admin	Subscription is mandatory
Redmine	access given upon request	Project Management tool used by some but not all
Google Drive	access given upon request	Our central document store

All admin communication (including through the above means) is to be considered confidential unless otherwise agreed.

4.2 Teams

Each team often has its own methods and quirks for communication, so check with the Lead to understand how best to communicate. Some may have their own IRC channels and mailing list, whilst others make do with attempts at telepathy. Its best to check with your Lead.

¹Bikeshedding (or 'too many cooks') is the process of conversations getting bogged down in highly specific and/or inconsequential details see: Parkinson's Law of Triviality

4.3 Participants

Type	Details	Comments
Mailing List	https://lists.emfcamp.org/listinfo/general	sign up handled by main website
Announce Mailing List		
IRC	#emfcamp on FreeNode	
Wiki	https://wiki.emfcamp.org	

5 Conduct and Behaviour

By becoming a volunteer you agree to adhere to the Code of Conduct as extended and applied to the orga, before and after any event takes place.

Violation of the CoC can be reported here (xxxxxx) and will be dealt with by at least one director and others delegated with the responsibility. Violation of the CoC may result in you being asked to leave the organising group, and possibly being banned from attending an event.

If you are in charge of volunteers, remember: - they are not your work slaves. they've given up their time to help. be nice - be explicit and clear with what you want them to do and what you expect from them - give them room and authority to complete their task. a little bit of agency can bring a feeling of ownership and pride in work done, not to mention some enjoyment.

5.1 Self Care

Burnout is a common theme in large volunteer-organised events such as this. This usually happens because there is a lack of volunteers to help organise before the event, or a shortage of volunteers during events. A self imposed pressure to ensure the success of an event at all costs no doubt adds to this.

If you're experiencing a high workload, you are expected and encouraged to regularly communicate this upwards in the organisation. This is especially important if you're a Team Lead - there are others in the admin team who will either have the time to help you, or the ability to find others who can. Between us, we've had extensive experience running (and getting burned out at) these kind of events. It's a lot easier for us to help if we catch problems early.

Ultimately, we run these events because we enjoy doing it. If you're not enjoying your role, we want to fix it so you can.

5.2 On the Event Site

During an event is when stresses tend to run the highest. The instructions on self care apply doubly so during this time.

Being aggressive with either volunteers or participants is completely unacceptable. Getting anxious or edgy is a good sign you're becoming stressed, or doing too much and that it's time to take a break.

What does a break involve? - at least a 4 hour break from doing any work - give your radio/comms to a lead or deputy.

6 Team Leads

6.1 How to Become One

Due to our informal nature, and the varying nature of each event, we don't have a set of formal parameters you need to meet to become a team lead, so selection can be very subjective. Informally it can be best summarised by the following: - someone the admin group can trust and gets on well with - previous festival or volunteer-orga experience - experience of the responsibilities of that team

6.2 Responsibilities

- You are responsible for managing your own budget and reporting this to the Treasurer.
- You must coordinate with other teams about infrastructure requirements, deliveries and any time critical events in your plan
- Keep the build/site schedules populated and upto date.
- Document your area of responsibility on the wiki
 - if you're responsibilities change, or are added to, write them down. they will be used to update this handbook
 - this helps us when recruiting new people to the orga
 - make sure to put your and your deputies name down so people know who to contact

6.3 Deputies

Each team needs a lead and a deputy. It can help reduce the workload and removes the single-point-of-failure scenario. Pick someone you can work with and you think has competency in the task at hand. A director may pick someone on your behalf.

6.4 Resources

You will likely have a budget which has been agreed upon by the Treasurer. These budgets are frozen early so make sure you have a good idea of what's required and accurate quotes from suppliers for them.

You are able to request online infrastructure such as IRC channels, mailing lists, or space in the redmine instance.

Again, remember you need not suffer alone if you are struggling. Speak to the admin group, we're happy to help.

7 Organisational Volunteers

7.1 How to Become One

Again, due to our informal nature we can't give a set of formal parameters. Informally it can be covered by the following

- having non disruptive behaviour
- preferably some event experience, or experience in the area you wish to volunteer for
- recommendations by other admin group members

Look at the list of Roles and Responsibilities and talk to the Leads responsible for that area. You should be given clear instructions for the task at hand and authority to complete it.

8 Roles and Responsibilities

Below is a condensed list of the roles and responsibilities we think we need for an event. A full list can be found in the 'Roles and Responsibilities' document.

They have been grouped into categories, though this is not necessarily representative of how teams will be structured. Each event is different; different locations, improvements in infrastructure, providing more services for participants to use etc. Thus the teams might end up being structured differently for each event. People will want to rotate roles, or even sit out an event altogether. We also strive to improve and do more each time, not to mention learning from our past mistakes.

For the structure of the current event, please check the wiki for the event.

8.1 Admin

- General Administration
- Finance/Treasury
- Sponsorship

8.2 Site Infrastructure and Planning

- Plan build up of site and required plant machinery
- Design and deploy power grid
- Sanitation and Waste Management
- Design and deployment of network

8.3 Volunteer Management

- Managing volunteers for setup and teardown
- Arranging for volunteer amenities before (buildup), during and after (teardown) the event
- Collating and managing volunteer shift information
- Volunteer signup and registration during the event

8.4 Event Content

- Write and promote the CfP
- Review, organise and schedule CfP submissions for talks/workshops
- Speaker Ops during event
- Herald Training
- Shiny - review applications for installations and handle payments

8.5 First Aid

- Ordering supplies and equipment
- recruitment and vetting of personnel, arranging shifts and coverage
- Administration of patient records and any required RIDDOR forms or similar

8.6 Communications and Infodesk

- Communications?
- Collating a general guide for both internal and external use
- Running InfoDesk during the event

8.7 Staging and Video Streaming

- Arrange hire of stage and AV equipment
- Training of volunteers for AV work
- Design and run recording+streaming infra
- ensure talks are transcoded and uploaded within 4 weeks of event close

8.8 Amenities

- Lounge
 - Design decorative theme and build it. Recruit volunteers to decorate
- Bar
 - Ordering cool room, drinks, bar
 - Organising tills
- Catering
 - Organise and manage vendors to serve food
- Shuttle buses
 - Arranging shuttle bus hire
 - Setting a timetable
 - Signage at pickup locations
- Kids activities
 - handled by external childcare organisation

8.9 Miscellaneous

- Security
 - Man entrance gates to site for ticket inspection
 - Organise Car parking for intake
- Ticketing
- Badge
 - Full hardware development process (feature spec, design, manufacture)
 - Production and assembly
 - Software support
- Sysadmin of servers
- Village Management (tent orders, placement etc)
- Comfort
 - Accessibility support
 - Implementation and promotion of Code of Conduct
 - Handling of incidents and violations of CoC
- Logistics
- Furniture Orders, centralised for the event
- Tents Orders, centralised for the event
- Photography