20.1 Thrift Store

2016

POLICY & PROCEDURE MANUAL



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* + 1. Goals & Philosophy of Service

Department: Thrift Store

Approved By: Planning Team

Issue Date: February 2010

Updated: June 2016

Policy

The Salvation Army Aldergrove Thrift Store has three primary goals for its operation:

* + - 1. To provide a source of low cost goods and clothing to the community, particularly those who live on a low or fixed income. This includes acting as a source for family services clients and emergency services.
      2. To act as a revenue source for the funding of other Salvation Army programs of The Gateway of Hope.
      3. To provide a community based recycle outlet contributing toward the environment and community well- being.

Philosophy of Service

1. The thrift store will maintain a caring and understanding approach to its customers who are often presenting a wide variety of needs and backgrounds.
2. The thrift store will maintain a clean, comfortable and secure environment.
3. The thrift store and its staff are central to recognizing and promoting in the community the needs of people.
   * 1. Store Environment

Department: Thrift Store

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Policy

The Thrift Store and its work areas will be a clean, secure, and positive environment for both staff and customers. This will encourage customers to use our Thrift Store, and will promote a good working atmosphere for staff.

Procedure Maintenance

* Floors and washrooms will be cleaned on a daily basis by the designated staff person.

Health & Safety

* There will always be a minimum of two staff on the floor during all hours of business. In the event that an individual needs to leave the floor to go on break, another person will be called in to replace before leaving.
* Whenever possible, at least one of the two staff persons on the floor will be circulating in the store. This helps in prevention of shop-lifting as well as assisting with customer service needs or questions.
* In the event of an abusive or potentially dangerous customer, the Store Manager or other additional staff will be called to assist.
* In the event of an imminent or proven threat to safety of staff or other customers, the staff are instructed to yell out loudly “Code Red”. The other staff will proceed immediately to where the person that had called out the “code red” is standing. This is a small store and they should be heard through the store.
* Volunteer tags must be worn by anyone in non-store areas who may reasonably expected to not be known to staff, but who is approved to be there. Staff should question anyone who they do not know in these areas who does not have a tag.
* In the event of an incident which leads to contacting of the Police, or an injury to staff or customers, then an Incident Report form must be completed and kept on file.

Lighting and Music

* All customer areas will be well lit at a comfortable viewing level.
* If music is played in the store, if will be kept at a moderate listening level, and will be appropriate in nature. Christian music is preferred

Displays

* Displays will be carefully maintained and rotated on a regular basis.
  + 1. Customer Rights & Responsibilities

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Policy

Customer Rights

* Customers have the right to be treated with dignity and respect.
* Customers of the Salvation Army Thrift Stores have the right to prompt courteous service.
* Customers have the right to a safe and supportive environment when accessing the Thrift Store.
* Customers have the right to have their information kept private.
* Customers have the right to have their questions and concerns addressed in a prompt respectful manner.
* Customers have the right to receive an explanation of the reasons that we do not accept certain donations.
* Customers have the right to a complaint or grievance process.
* Customers have the right to request and receive information on Gateway of Hope programs and services.

Customer Responsibilities

* Customers have the responsibility to treat each other and staff with dignity and respect.
* Customers should not take actions that could cause harm to their persons, each other or staff.
* Customers are not to smoke in front of store.
* Customers have the responsibility to adhere to the store policies regarding the purchase and return of store products.
* Customers have the responsibility to fully pay for all items before they leave the store.
  + 1. Interacting with Customers

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Policy

All employees and volunteers will treat customers and the public in general with respect and dignity, and will have a clear understanding as to how to deal with issues that may arise in dealing with customers.

Procedure Return Policy

From time to time, Thrift Store staff may be requested to accept goods for return by customers. It is our usual policy that all sales are final and therefore returns are not allowed. (However we do offer a 10 day warranty for small appliances and a 30 day warranty for large appliances – exchanges or in-store credit only) If in the opinion of store staff the circumstances are such that the request should be considered, and the customer has proof of purchase from our store, an exchange or in-store credit may be considered at the Store Managers discretion. An exchange (our preferred option) or cash refund must be approved by the Store Manager.

Washroom Access

At the Aldergrove Thrift Store there is 1 public washroom which is always open.

Price Dispute

From time to time customers may question or raise issues around the pricing of particular items, or our pricing in general. While it is important that we remain sensitive and professional in dealing with these issues, it is important to give the message to customers that Thrift Store staff do not have the authority to change prices. If in the opinion of the staff a customer has a legitimate issue regarding the pricing of a particular item, the floor staff should request the assistance of the Store Manager.

Shoplifting

In the event of proven or suspected shoplifting, our usual policy is to direct the customer to leave, and to prohibit them from returning to the store. It is usually not in our best interests to pursue legal charges. On occasion, suspected shoplifting may be evidence of a much greater problem, and may be an opportunity to refer an individual to the Family Services staff.

Telephone Access

Due to the limited number of phone lines available, and the need for the telephone to be kept available for staff, the public is only permitted to make short calls that are regarding the Thrift Store. (e.g. arranging someone to pick-up furniture they have purchased)

Suggestion Box

A suggestion box is placed near the check-out area for possible use by customers.

Customer Service (General)

In the event that the store becomes busy, and existing floor staff are unable to deal with the customer volume effectively, a call should be made for additional staff to come to the floor to provide assistance.

Vouchers for merchandise will be issued to individuals by Family Services Workers and presented to the Thrift Store staff by the client. The following guidelines should be applied to voucher use:

* Customers may only take goods as described on the voucher. (e.g. if the voucher says to be used for the purchase of linens, the client may not take shoes)
* Vouchers are only valid for 7 days from the date of issue.
* In the event that an approved and requested item is not in stock, the orange part of the voucher should be given back to the client in order that they may return (within the 7 days) to try and fill the requested item.
* Should a customer have a concern about the items approved on their voucher or request consideration of a change, they must be referred back to their Family Services Worker. Thrift Store staff do not have the ability to change a voucher.
  + 1. General Conduct

Department: Thrift Store

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Policy

The Aldergrove Thrift Store is an extension of the Gateway of Hope ministry to the communities of the Langley’s. All staff and volunteers shall conduct themselves in a polite and professional manner at all times.

Procedure

In addition to the General Policies related to staff and volunteer conduct and ethics, the following shall apply;

* All staff and volunteers are required to report for work promptly at their scheduled time and breaks are to be taken on time.
* Eating, drinking and gum chewing are not permitted on the sales floor
* Smoking is not permitted in front of the store. Smokers are required to use the back lot, well away from the customer donations area on their designated breaks only.
* Staff and volunteers may not bring into the store any goods from home they wish to give to another staff member; these exchanges may not take place in the store.
* All staff and volunteers will clean their eating area after breaks and wash their own dishes and utensils.
* All staff and volunteers must exit the store at the end of their shift by the front doors.
* Personal phone calls, if necessary, are to be on your breaks only, unless it is an emergency
* All paid employees are to fill in their time sheets on a daily basis
* Theft will not be tolerated and is immediate grounds for dismissal
  + 1. Donations / Handling of Goods

Department: Thrift Store

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Policy

The Salvation Army in Aldergrove will have a clearly understood system in place for the development of a donation base and the acceptance and handling of donations.

Donation of materials to the Thrift Store is often the only point of contact between the public and the Salvation Army. It is therefore important to have a system in place which considers good public relations, security of material donated, and encourages a regular donation stream to meet the needs of the Thrift Store and Family Services.

Procedure

Donations delivered by the public to the Thrift Stores

The majority of donations received are "dropped off" by the public directly at our Thrift Stores, sometimes during closed hours. The designated point to receive these donations should be the loading bay at the back of the store whenever possible. The procedure for handling these donations is as follows:

* Staff have the discretion to refuse to accept items which are unsaleable.
* All clothing items are taken from the dock to the clothing/sorting area.
* Any non-clothing items are pre-sorted on the dock and then divided up between ‘Bric-Brac section and other areas.. Any non-clothing items which are unsaleable (and cannot be recycled) are put into a dumpster to be taken to the dump at a later time.
* Large furniture items are taken to the furniture sorting area to be cleaned and priced.
* Appliance and electrical items are also put aside in a designated area for testing and pricing separately.

Donations through the pick-up service

The Salvation Army provides a local Aldergrove phone number which the public may use to request pick-up of items for donation.

* Calls are received at the Pick-up line by any staff member who is in the vicinity and who will establish the following information:
* Name, address and phone number of the caller.
* The nature of the items to be picked up. The employee has the ability to do an initial screening at this point to ensure that we are not sending the truck out to pick up unsaleable items. Examples of items not accepted would also include carpets, tires, waterbeds, green or yellow appliances, large organs etc. except under special circumstances established by the Thrift Store Manager. In the event that a receipt for a "Donation in Kind" is requested, the Thrift Store Manager will establish the estimated value of the item(s) within Salvation Army guidelines.
* An appropriate pick-up time will be given to the caller, and a pick-up slip/log written up for the driver.
* At the scheduled pick-up day/time: (Regular pick-up days are Monday-Wednesday & Friday.
* The driver will then arrive at the callers location to pick-up the described items.
* Upon inspection, if in the driver's opinion the items being donated are unsaleable, the driver may tactfully decline the donation.
* All items picked up (except as outlined above), must be returned to the Thrift Store loading dock for unloading and storage.

Special Appeals

From time to time, the Thrift Store may develop "shortages" in donated goods.

* It is the responsibility of the Store Manager to make the Manager of Business Administration aware of these shortages.
* Special appeals to the public through the media may be made from time to time at the discretion of the Manager of Business Administration, and may often be made in conjunction with other special campaigns or Family Services requirements.

Other Sources

The Store Manager may elect, after consultation with the Manager of Business Administration to make specially discounted purchases in specific product lines for re-sale in the Thrift Store. Examples of this may include furniture, mattresses, personal care products, soaps, etc. These decisions are made with the intention of expanding the product line with complementary items or encouraging shopping at the Thrift Store.

Monetary Donations

Members of the public will sometimes come directly to the Thrift Store to make monetary donations. They are referred to the Store Manager who will issue a temporary receipt. The donation will then be taken to the Gateway of Hope where the Accountant will ensure they are recorded in our donor base, and send a thank you letter. In the event that this is a memoriam donation, the name and address of the individual who has passed away should also be obtained.

* + 1. Pricing of Goods

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Policy

Pricing of merchandise will be controlled and will be sensitive to the needs of the clients while reflecting the comparative value of the goods. The Thrift Store Manager will have responsibility of establishing prices. Pricing of merchandise is often a sensitive area not only for our clients, but for the public at large. It is important to maintain a balance between the ability to pay for many of our clients, while keeping an on-going revenue stream to cover operational costs of our programs.

In addition, given the high volume of goods which often flow through our operations, donated items need to be moved quickly but in a consistent manner.

Procedure

Sorting of Merchandise

Clothing items are removed from the donation bags for an initial inspection and sort by staff. This inspection is intended to accomplish the following:

* Items which are clearly unsaleable are set aside for disposal (see below). This determination considers
  + the condition of the items (damaged, torn, dirty, etc.),
  + current stock (e.g. how much of the item do we already have, how much is being sold, etc.)
* Items which are useful and in new or good condition, but are more likely to sell at another time of year (I.e. seasonal items), are boxed and stored in a designated location for access later in the year.
* Remaining items are priced at this point in time, with the exception of linens, jewellery, and electrical items which are placed in the designated locations for special pricing.
* Some items which have value if they are cleaned (e.g. baby clothes, lingerie, linens) are washed and then priced.
* All priced items are taken to the store floor to await placement in the Thrift Store.

Pricing of Merchandise

* Clothing items are priced according to condition and quality. There is a start price for t-shirts, pants, etc. Clothing is priced with coloured tags that are on a 5 week rotational basis. Each Monday and Tuesday the coloured tag from 5 weeks prior are on sale for 50% off. Clothing left over after the sale is either further marked down or recycled.
* Electrical items are tested and priced by a specially designated person and then put out directly on the floor. If the item cannot be made to work without anything more than very minor repairs, it is disposed of.

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* Jewellery and linens, are priced by a specific clerk trained to price jewellery. Then the items are put on the floor.
* There is no negotiation of prices.
* From time to time, the Store Manager may initiate special promotions or sales events. This will be communicated to the Assistant Director since media coverage may be involved.

Retailing of Merchandise

* As part of the daily routine, items are transferred from the sorting area to the floor for sale.
* Throughout the day, store clerks will be on the floor to keep racks and bins orderly, review the merchandise, and generally keep the store in good order.
* 1 staff will be assigned to be responsible for the checkout counter, and will always be within line of sight of the cash register. When the store becomes busy, the floor person will also assist at the checkout counter.

Disposal of Surplus or Unsaleable Merchandise

* All textiles (except pillows and anything wet) which are determined to be unsaleable at any time are bagged and put aside in the designated area. They are then transferred to the recycle trailer.
* All textiles are then sold to Recycling.
  + 1. Store Opening & Closing Procedures

Department: Thrift Store

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Policy

Aldergrove Thrift Store opening and closing procedures will be clearly documented. Well documented opening and closing procedures allow for maintaining security during these times, and ensures that these functions can be carried out smoothly.

Procedure

Opening Procedures

* The Store Manager is responsible to unlock the doors and open the store at the appropriate time.
* The Store Manager will bring the "daily float" out to the cashier, who will count it and also ensure that all necessary supplies for the day are on hand.

Closing Procedures

* Approximately 10-20 minutes before closing time, an announcement is made to let customers know the store will soon close.
* The Store Manager is responsible to close the store and lock doors.
* All cash is removed from the till, and given to the Store Manager for secure storage until the next business day.
* Upon completion of work, all Thrift Store staff must leave by the main store entrance.
  + 1. Purchase Policy

Department: Thrift Store

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Policy

The Aldergrove Thrift Store exists to provide financial support to the Gateway of Hope, provide a low cost shopping outlet and recycle service to the community. Our customers and those we serve have first priority in terms of access to goods for sale. Staff and volunteers will be expected to follow the policy outlined below with respect to shopping and personal purchases.

All saleable merchandise must be displayed on the sales floor for a minimum of 24 hours prior to being eligible for purchase. This includes newly marked down/discounted items.

Procedure:

* Non-saleable items are not eligible for purchase.
* Items cannot be hidden on sales floor or any other location of the store.
* Staff cannot purchase non-24 hour items at full price, nor have another person purchase the items for them.
* Family members or friends are not eligible for the Staff discount.
* Staff purchases must be made during regular store hours Monday through Saturday.
* Staff discount of 20% applies to all items. Staff discount cannot be combined with any other promotions or discounts.
* Staff may only select items eligible for purchase on non-paid work time, during regular store hours. Items cannot be selected or purchased on coffee breaks, or during their shift, other than their lunch break.
* Items selected for purchase must be approved by a member of Management, and rung in by a member of Management.
* Members of Management will write up Staff Purchase Log and process sale, initial both journal roll and receipt, and issue receipt to employee. Items purchased will be sealed in a store shopping bag with receipt affixed to the outside of the bag.
* Purchases for store staff or volunteers who are working must be immediately placed in the Manager’s office until the end of the staff or volunteer’s shift. Merchandise must not be stored or held in any other location, including lockers.
* On a day off, items purchased must be removed from the premises upon leaving.
* Any and all bags must be removed from the Manager’s office at the end of their shift, and will be subject to inspection upon leaving the premises (including personal bags).
* A copy of the Staff Purchase Log must be submitted to Head Office weekly.
* ABSOLUTELY NO payment plans or deposits on staff purchases.
* Any infractions or deviations from this policy will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.