

ORIENTATION-SCARERS

Welcome to the Haunted Forest family! Our event runs on the energy, creativity, and dedication of volunteers like you! This packet lays out the expectations, rules, and resources for all scare actors. Please read carefully. You'll be required to sign off at orientation acknowledging that you understand and agree to follow these guidelines.

1. Orientation Requirement

Mandatory Attendance: All scarers must attend one orientation session per year, before the first October event, regardless of past experience. Why?

Every year in January the board reevaluates our safety plans/policies/procedures across all areas of our event to ensure we are meeting the minimum safety standards for events like ours. We discuss issues we encountered the previous year and revise our policies and rules accordingly which means every year the rules change. Or they might not.

The trail itself may be changing. For the 2025 season we have made some major changes to the woods at South Park. These changes affect the entrance and direction of travel for our event this year and you need to know what they are before opening night.

Handbook Sign-Off: You must sign off after receiving and reviewing this packet. Failure to do so will make you ineligible to scare, even if you've volunteered in past years. Scare volunteers get the information relevant to your position, if you want a copy of the entire Haunted Forest handbook it is available by request as a Google link.

Orientation Covers: Safety, scare techniques, appropriate attire, set walkthroughs, volunteer break areas, emergency procedures, and role assignments.

2. Safety

RULE #1- The tractors have the right of way. Period. End of story. It is the responsibility of ALL volunteers to ensure they are maintaining a minimum distance of 6' from the tractors at all times. These are huge pieces of equipment that can't stop quickly and need a wide turn radius. Respect the vehicle, give it distance. Remember: They can't see you, they can't hear you, and they won't notice you until the tires go over you.

RULE #2- The thorns out in the woods don't care how cool your tennis shoes are or what brand they are. They'll go right through them and into your foot. Boots or something with a hard sole and ankle support. The ground is uneven and has forest debris all over, downed branches/limbs are hard to see in the dark and a shoe with ankle support will reduce the risk of strains/sprains.

RULE #3- Layers. It might start at 70° or even 80° but after the sun goes down it can get cold. We've had events run in the upper 30's and low 40's at night in the past, especially later in the season. Bring as many layers as you think you'll need, feel free to bring hand warmers, gloves, etc but expect it to get cold at some point and please plan accordingly.

RULE #4-When it comes to costumes and acting follow the 4 No's and you'll be fine: No depicting suicide, infanticide, abortion, or sexual assault. We have a zero tolerance policy and you will be asked to leave. If you are also working with the design team, no sets depicting any of the 4 No's.

RULE #5- No chasing. We don't want guests running and getting hurt and we don't want you to get hurt. A couple of steps is fine, anything more than that, especially if they're running already, is chasing. It's tempting. We know. Don't do it.

RULE #6-No terrorizing the kids. They're way too easy of a target and they are the ones most likely to take off running. We would rather you break character to help calm a kid down than hear you traumatized a kid into running screaming into the woods. (Same goes for adults who are panicking. Scared is funny, panicking isn't.)

RULE #7- Do NOT smoke in the woods or in front of guests. There will be a designated smoking area at the volunteer break area. This spot will have sand on the ground, a bucket of water to be used as an ashtray, and a fire extinguisher next to the bucket of water. Don't risk setting the woods on fire. Use the designated smoking area.

3. Be Ready to Scare

Come up with a character and commit to it. This is your chance to be as weird or scary or whatever you want to be (see RULE #4).

Show Up Prepared: Arrive on time, in costume (or ready to change into one), and in the mindset to entertain and spook.

Character Creation: This is your stage. Be as weird, creepy, spooky, or over-the-top as you like. Build a persona and commit to it. While in costume in guest facing areas you are expected to continue to stay in character so have fun with it.

Respect the Rules: Creativity is encouraged, but safety and appropriateness come first.

Don't Ruin The Scare:

Site scarers- stay in your chosen site area. The Scare Team will be moving around through the night to cover for breaks, etc. The break area will be stocked with drinks/snacks/etc, please utilize it over going to the front unless you're using the public restrooms. Trail scarers- Know the color zones. Don't scare in red or blue zones. Find your green zones. If you want another green zone added in a specific area, find Rachel. Character scarers-Know when to draw the line. Don't chase. Don't antagonize until they swing on you. We aren't saying you can't be as annoying as you want to be, you be you, boo boo. Just know when to stop.

4. Breaks and Belongings

Volunteer Break Area: The designated break area is Campsite 11. This location will be pointed out at orientation. The break-area will have:

An enclosed trailer with a space heater in it

A port-a-potty (fully functioning bathrooms in the parking lot)

Hand sanitizer (because bathrooms)

Baby wipes (for hands and removing makeup)

Bottled water

Gatorade/some type of sports drink
Hot chocolate
Snacks (chips, cookies, etc)
Some seating (bring a lawn chair if you want)
Maybe-Extra makeup kits
Maybe-extra costumes
*we are trying to work the maybes into the budget

Concessions is Off-Limits: Concessions is not a hangout spot and may not be used for storing personal items. We have teamed up with BMX this year, they'll be running concessions out of their stand during walk-throughs and utilizing the concession stand at the main pavillion for hayrack events.

Belongings: You may store your items at Campsite 11 or keep them with you. We recommend a backpack or something that you can keep everything in. Haunted Forest is not responsible for lost or stolen property. Ask yourself: if you're worried about it getting lost in the woods, do you really need it here?

5. Conduct Expectations

Professional Fun: While this is a volunteer role, remember you represent Haunted Forest. Be respectful to guests, staff, and fellow volunteers. Bullying, harassment, violence, offensive language, etc will not be tolerated.

No Horseplay: Running, roughhousing, or careless behavior in scare zones or backstage areas is prohibited. Don't be jumping on or trying to climb on the sets. Do NOT try to ride the inflatables. You WILL pop them and you'll be responsible for paying for a new one. Most of the animatronics and inflatables in the woods were purchased in August and September of this year (2025). Please help us keep them working this year.

Stay Sober: Absolutely no drugs or alcohol before or during your shift. Anyone under the influence will be asked to leave immediately.

Respect Fellow Scarers: Don't sabotage or interfere with another actor's scene or scare. Unless it is your zone, do NOT scare in a red zone.

Don't Group Up: When the entire scare team is at one site, it doesn't increase the scare, it eliminates it. One person doing something unexpected will always be scarier than a group of people running at the hayrack. Spread out. Pick a red or green zone and stick with it.

6. Scaring Rules & Boundaries

No Physical Contact: You may never touch guests, and they may never touch you. If a guest crosses this line, notify security or a staff lead immediately.

Absolutely no jumping on or off of hayracks while they are in operation. We have a zero tolerance policy for it.

Maintain Safe Distances: Jump scares are encouraged, but always leave enough room for guests to move without tripping or colliding. Give yourself a "punch bubble" during walk-throughs.

Language & Content: Stay spooky, not offensive. No slurs, sexually explicit comments, or inappropriate behavior. If a guest gets unruly, walk away. Find security or a member of the Scare Team. Do not engage. Do not escalate.

Stay in Character: Commit to your role while in guest facing areas, but drop character if there's a safety concern or emergency.

7. Safety Procedures

Emergency Signals: You'll be taught emergency call-outs and signals at orientation. Learn them and use them only when needed.

Radio Codes: We use colors to dictate emergency situations. See the Emergency Codes section in your handbook for more information.

Code Red: Fire in the woods

Code Blue: Medical emergency / injured guest

Code Yellow: Severe storm / tornado

Code Orange: Mass casualty incident

Code Black: Hayrack or tractor accident

Code Green: tractor/equipment failure

Pineapple: Walk-through events only, used to get a panicking guest through the woods without scaring them further

Three Whistles: At orientation you received a whistle and we discussed using them to signal an emergency. Any emergency that can mean the imminent loss of life or necessitating the immediate evacuation of the woods. Remember, false alarms will NOT be tolerated and because it will result in an emergency response, you will be charged for filing a false 911 report.

Flashlights & Radios: If provided, keep them on you at all times in case of emergency.

Trail Awareness: Know your exits, know the nearest staff lead, and keep your area free of tripping hazards. Pay attention to what color zone you're in and scare or don't scare accordingly.

Blue-zones marked with blue tape are "cold zones". Don't scare in them. At all. This could be leading up to a scare/decorated site/whatever but there is a reason why it is marked in blue. Don't scare inside a blue zone.

Red-Red zones mark decorated site areas. If that zone is open, you are free to scare inside of the decorated site area (NOT off the side of the trail). If there is already 1-2 people there then move on to another decorated area or locate a green zone. Do NOT ruin the scare for another group.

Green-Green zones are areas along the side of the trail that have been cleared of most of the trip hazards/poison ivy/honeysuckle/etc. If you find a spot and you want to make it a green zone, find Rachel and talk to her.

Pink- Pink Zones designate an emergency egress point out of the woods.

Heat/Cold Safety: Dress in layers, hydrate, and use the break area as needed.

8. Commitment & Communication

Reliability: Show up on your scheduled nights. If you can't make it, notify a coordinator as soon as possible.

Shifts: Volunteers are expected to stay in role for the duration of their shift, aside from designated breaks.

Feedback Welcome: Have an idea for a scare or character? Share it! We love collaboration!

9. Final Note

We are here to create an unforgettable experience for our community. Haunted Forest only works because of people like you who bring it to life. Show up, commit, scare your heart out, and have fun—you're part of something special.

Meet Your Haunted Forest Team – Roles and Responsibilities

Event Director-Rachel Cox

*In charge of all forest operations during events

*Oversees all forest-related operations to ensure smooth, safe, and effective execution of the event.

*Communicates and coordinates with team leaders from other areas (Hayrack, Ticketing, Parking, Concessions, Security, etc.) to maintain alignment and address issues quickly.

*Serves as the primary decision-maker for any issues or emergencies within the forest during event hours.

*Ensures all safety protocols and emergency procedures are being followed by staff and volunteers.

*Provides clear direction and support to the Scare Team Leader and Assistants throughout the event.

*Handles escalated guest or volunteer issues that cannot be resolved by team leaders or assistants.

Communication Protocols:

*Carries a radio at all times; responds to all "Code" calls and emergency communications immediately.

*Maintains open communication with Security and First Aid teams for any incidents or medical needs.

*Conducts periodic radio check-ins with Scare Team Leader and Assistants.

*Documents any significant incidents or safety issues for post-event review.

Scare Team Leader-Jasmine McKittrick

- *In charge of scarers and volunteers inside the woods
- *Supervises all scarers and volunteers working in the forest area during events.
- *Ensures all team members understand and follow safety protocols and operational procedures.
- *Coordinates with Scare Team Assistants to schedule and manage volunteer breaks without disrupting the event flow.
- *Acts as the primary point of contact between the Event Director and the scare team inside the forest.
- *Conducts safety checks throughout the night, addressing hazards or unsafe behavior immediately.
- *Supports volunteers by providing guidance, answering questions, and managing performance or behavior concerns.

Communication Protocols:

- *Keeps radio on-hand and set to the assigned forest operations channel.
- *Reports any incidents, injuries, or unsafe conditions to the Event Director immediately.
- *Uses established "Code" system for emergencies (e.g., "Code Red – Fire," "Code Blue – Medical").
- *Provides updates to the Event Director every hour or as needed.
- *Notifies assistants promptly of changes in volunteer assignments or rotations.

Scare Team Assistant(s)- Chloe Christie, Ellie Martin

- *Supports the Scare Team Leader in day-to-day forest operations
- *Assists in enforcing safety protocols and operational procedures for volunteers and staff.
- *Monitors scare zones to ensure scarers are safe and appropriately engaging guests.
- *Coordinates and facilitates volunteer breaks and role rotations as needed.
- *Communicates with the Scare Team Leader regarding any safety issues, equipment needs, or volunteer concerns.
- *Provides on-the-ground support to volunteers, helping with costume or prop issues, and addressing minor challenges promptly.
- *Acts as a secondary point of contact for volunteers, relaying instructions and updates from the Scare Team Leader.

Communication Protocols:

- *Keeps a radio on-hand for real-time communication.
- *Alerts Scare Team Leader of any injuries, unsafe behavior, or escalating situations immediately.
- *Confirms with Scare Team Leader before rotating or moving volunteers between zones.
- *Documents minor issues or incidents for end-of-night reporting.

This is your copy of the release from liability waiver you signed at orientation or the parent/Guardian copy that was signed for you.

Volunteer Sign-Off & Liability Waiver

I have read and understood the Haunted Forest Volunteer Scare Actor Handbook. I agree to follow all rules, procedures, and expectations as outlined.

I acknowledge that participation as a scare actor at the Haunted Forest involves inherent risks, including but not limited to: uneven terrain, low visibility, loud noises, physical exertion, weather exposure, and potential interactions with guests.

By signing below, I voluntarily assume all risks associated with participation. I release and hold harmless the Haunted Forest organizers, staff, landowners, sponsors, and affiliates from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action arising out of injury, accident, illness, or property loss that may occur as a result of volunteering.

I understand this waiver is binding upon me, my heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns.

Volunteer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

For Volunteers Under 18 – Parental/Guardian Consent

I am the parent/legal guardian of the minor named above. I have read and understood the Haunted Forest Volunteer Scare Actor Handbook and the liability waiver. I grant permission for my child to participate as a volunteer scare actor in Haunted Forest.

I understand the risks involved and, on behalf of myself and my child, agree to release and hold harmless the Haunted Forest organizers, staff, landowners, sponsors, and affiliates from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, or causes of action arising out of injury, accident, illness, or property loss that may occur as a result of volunteering.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Emergency Contact Number: _____