



# VOLUNTEER TERMS + CONDITIONS

The following terms and conditions are an agreement between you and Centro Ecológico Akumal (CEA). When you make an application to any one of the programs with CEA, you are agreeing to what is stated below.

By applying to volunteer with Centro Ecológico Akumal, you agree to the following terms:

## Insurance

CEA does not provide the volunteer with insurance of any kind. Travel/medical insurance is mandatory for each volunteer, and the volunteer will purchase this prior to departing on the trip. The volunteer is solely responsible for evaluating and determining the type, extent and levels of any insurance coverage they need or desire for their planned volunteer travel period. However, it must cover their entire travel period.

Volunteers who will be participating in any dive-related activity with CEA are also required to have insurance for scuba diving. Again, this is solely the responsibility of the volunteer in determining the coverage, organization and levels of insurance.

## Travel

The volunteer is solely responsible for arranging and paying for their own travel, including all airfares or other transport costs to, from and within Mexico as well as any local transport costs.

Passport, visa, and health requirements are subject to change and volunteers must check current requirements before departure. It is the responsibility of the volunteer to obtain all documents required and carry all documents when travelling. While CEA may advise the volunteer on required travel documentation, CEA is not responsible for any supporting documents necessary for the volunteer's travel needs or other purposes.

CEA is not liable in any respect, if, whatever reason, the volunteer is refused an entry visa and cannot enter the country or continue travel plans. Additionally, volunteers understand the requirements of their visa including, but not limited to what the authorization of the visa entails and its expiration date.

## Immunizations

The volunteer is responsible for checking and confirming the immunizations required for the Mexican Caribbean. Where CEA makes suggestions, these are indicative only.

Volunteers are solely responsible for having the correct and necessary immunizations required. We strongly recommend that volunteers visit their healthcare professional at least eight weeks prior to departure.

## Accommodation

The volunteer is responsible for arranging, booking and paying for their accommodation. The volunteer is solely responsible for all accommodation-related fees, contracts, agreements, etc. There are dormitories close to the CEA offices that offer CEA volunteers the rate of \$450 USD/month. Other accommodation options include apartment rentals in Akumal or surrounding areas such as Tulum or Playa del Carmen.

## Application Process

Once we receive your application, a confirmation email will be sent. From this point, please allow two business weeks for processing. At this time, CEA may request additional information from the volunteer. In certain circumstances, which are beyond our control, it could sometimes take a little longer than 10 working days. CEA cannot be held responsible for emails going to the volunteers' junk/spam folder in such cases.

Note that CEA reserves the right to deny applications that do not meet the requirements of the program, project or position. Volunteers will be notified if their application has been approved or denied.

## Program Fees

PROGRAM	RATE	DURATION
Coral reef communities- Monitoring	\$ 2.595	12 weeks
Coral reef communities- Restauration	\$ 219	1 week
Sea turtle camp	\$ 276	4 weeks
Tourism Impact Studies	\$ 250	2 weeks
Environmental Education	\$ 276	4 weeks

Details of the program fees are set out on our website. Once a volunteer has been accepted, twenty-five percent of the total program fee must be paid no later than 60 days before the start of the voluntary program placement as deposit and indication of commitment. Failure to make this payment can result in losing your volunteer placement.

The remaining seventy-five percent must be paid within 30-days prior to arrival.

Payments will be accepted via PayPal or bank transfer (which would be subject to a 5% transaction fee to cover bank fees and/or currency conversion charges).

Volunteers will be sent the fee schedule and payment details by email. CEA cannot be held responsible for emails going to the volunteers' junk/spam folder in such cases.

## Cancellation and Refund Policy

### 1. Program Fees (25% Deposit)

Deposits are non-refundable. However, in the event a volunteer has made their deposit and wishes to change dates prior to arrival, CEA will accommodate this for up to one calendar year. All cancellation or rescheduling notifications must be submitted in writing/email. Rescheduling is dependent on availability of positions and/or projects.

### 2. Program Fees (75% Balance)

The program fees are dependent on the activity of the project and are based on either a 15-day window or 30-day calendar. Upon the final approval of the director, refunds will be based on the per diem rate and used to calculate and credit the remaining days until the completion of the program. The refund shall not exceed the balance.

Our diving-related programs have a higher fee than non-diving programs due to the related expenses associated with the dive portion of the program such as equipment usage, tanks, boats, captains, gasoline, and the administration of such details. To put that into perspective, on average local dive shops charge between \$60-\$75 per one tank dive, plus gear rental!

Dive bookings and payments have been made in advanced on your behalf and CEA is unable to issue refunds in the event of cancellations. Any refunds for volunteers in dive-related programs will be calculated accordingly and not include dive-related expenses

In the event volunteers need to cancel, the remaining time or unused portion of the volunteer stay will only be refunded based on the following situations:

**a) The volunteer is within the first FIVE days of the program from the day of commencement.**

CEA works with volunteers before and during their arrival to ensure they are prepared, ready and committed. However, we do understand that sometimes, due to personal challenges or difficulties, there may rare circumstances where volunteers do not wish to continue with the program. In this case, we ask volunteers to submit their cancellation in writing before the end of their fifth day.

**b) The volunteer has an emergency and needs to return home.**

If the volunteer is required to return home for unexpected or emergency reasons, volunteers have the option to defer the paid portion of their volunteer period for up to one calendar year and return within this timeframe.

If, however, this is not an option, the refund calculation will be applied for the unused volunteer period and issued to the volunteer.

**c) The volunteer has encountered a health/medical issue and is no longer able to complete the required program.**

If the volunteer can no longer complete the program due to health/medical reasons and is unable to switch to another program or project to accommodate the issue, the refund calculation (according to the project/program) will be applied for the unused portion of the volunteer period and issued to the volunteer.

Volunteers who wish to cancel and do not fall into one of the three categories above will not be issued a refund. However, CEA will work with the volunteer to either change the program or defer the payment for up to one calendar year. See points 3 and 4 below.

### **3. Change of program**

Under certain circumstances (health issues or physical challenges, for example), and if availability exists, volunteers may change the program into which they are registered. Volunteers would need to discuss with the Program Coordinator as well as the Volunteer Coordinator prior to any change of program.

### **4. Date and Duration**

Any date or duration changes that shorten the volunteer's volunteer period must be received in writing. Refunds will only be given based on the refund/cancellation policy above.

Any date or duration changes that lengthen the volunteer's stay must be received in writing and will be based on availability within the program. Fees will be adjusted accordingly.

## **Equipment and usage**

Depending on the program, volunteers will be issued dive gear and/or equipment to use throughout the duration of the program. While the gear and/or equipment is in the volunteer's possession it is their responsibility for using and maintaining accordingly, and understand that replacement is required for any lost, stolen, damaged and/or destroyed equipment.

## **Personal Risks**

The volunteer acknowledges and accepts the responsibilities and risks associated with their agreement to travel to, temporarily live in and provide volunteer services in a developing country. Such travel and volunteer work can be often hazardous and involves a certain degree of risk, inherently dangerous activities and personal perils to the volunteer, both foreseen and unforeseen, all of which are fully accepted by and solely assumed by the volunteer. Therefore, CEA, including any and all of its employees, managers, directors, shareholders, board members, staff and partner organizations are not liable, to the maximum extent of the law, for any loss or harm the volunteer or associates may suffer, including but not limited to loss caused directly or indirectly by:

- Personal injury;
- Emotional injury;
- Death;
- Illness or disease;
- Damage to or loss of property;
- Natural disasters;
- Hostage situations; or
- War or terrorism.

## Indemnity

The volunteer agrees to indemnify CEA against any and all claims, demands, losses, causes of action, costs, expenses, fees and damages which the organization may incur directly or indirectly out of:

1. the breach of these terms and conditions by the volunteer; or
2. any claim or other cause of action made against CEA as a result of the volunteers' omissions/actions/inactions and/or failure to perform the services required.

## Drug and Alcohol Use

Drug use and possession (unless prescribed by a doctor) is strictly prohibited and will result in instant dismissal from the program with no refund. Reporting to the program while under the influence of drugs and/or alcohol will result in an immediate dismissal without refund.

CEA will not be held responsible for the volunteer's physical condition and/or consequences of any use of alcohol or illegal substances.

## Local laws, rules and policies

CEA will not accept responsibility or liability for any volunteer who contravenes any law or regulation within Mexico or the rules and policies of CEA. Volunteers participating in illegal or prohibited activities will be immediately dismissed without refund.

## Force Majeure

CEA will not accept liability or pay compensation where the performance of CEA is prevented or affected by reasons and circumstances amounting to a "force majeure." Circumstances amounting to a 'force majeure' include any event which we could not, even with all due care, avoid such as; war or threat of war, civil strife, government intervention, natural disasters, terrorist activity, adverse weather, fire and similar events.

## Miscellaneous

The volunteer agrees to comply with the CEA's Code of Conduct, Confidentiality Agreement and other guidelines and/or policies.

CEA reserves the right to notify the emergency contact(s) appointed by the volunteer in the event that the volunteer is dismissed from the program, and in other circumstances deemed appropriate by CEA.

In the event of an emergency during volunteer work, CEA will contact medical support on your behalf. If first aid attendants or onsite paramedics recommend a physician's examination, or hospitalization, volunteers will be responsible for the transport and all costs associated with the visit.

CEA reserves the right to use feedback and images provided by volunteers for website materials such as testimonials.

CEA reserves the right to change these Terms and Conditions or the services it offers from time to time.

CEA reserves the right to refuse acceptance to any volunteer application.

CEA reserves the right to remove the volunteer from the program and terminate this contract without compensation, by giving verbal and written notice to the volunteer.

**When you make an application to any one of the programs or volunteer projects with CEA, you are agreeing to the Terms and Conditions indicated above.**

LAST UPDATED FEBRUARY 2020