



Temple Policies and Procedures

v1.3

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Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple of Colorado

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Introduction

The policies and procedures in this manual are intended to guide the decisions and day-to-day operations and conduct of the SVTC Employees, Volunteers, and Devotees. We expect all SVTC Employees, Volunteers, and Devotees to review the manual and make use of it in a strict manner.

We have tried to incorporate the many possible guidelines that are needed in the operations of a Hindu temple and the conduct of various events, but we realize that unique challenges will likely occur which will necessitate a review of this document. We will do our best to keep this manual current and updated on an ongoing basis.

Each year this manual is reviewed by the EC/BOT and revised as appropriate. A hard copy will be provided to each SVTC Employee and Volunteer. A hard copy of the section containing the 'Devotee Guidelines' section of the document will be prominently displayed in the temple notice board.

Frequently used acronyms:

SVTC – Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple of Colorado

BOT – Board of Trustees of SVTC

EC – Executive Committee of SVTC

TTD – Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanams

Our Philosophy

Our vision is that devotees will:

- See SVTC as a warm, friendly, and welcoming place of worship
- Eagerly participate in all temple related activities and events
- Utilize the educational facilities provided by the temple school, and benefit there from
- Feel as being part of the SVTC community

Our vision is that Volunteers will:

- Provide necessary help, and support on an on-going basis
- Serve the God, keeping in view the temple's interests as the sole focus
- Stand by the temple in times of need

Our vision is that Priests will:

- Live up to the religious expectations of the temple community
- Provide the religious, spiritual guidance and leadership to the community
- Treat all the devotees equally
- Abide by the rules set forth by the management, and updated from time to time

General Policies

1. All members of the management, including Board of Trustees and all committee members, to sign a confidentiality agreement. In addition, any devotee who is not part of the management, but would like to silently observe any official meeting is required to sign such a confidentiality agreement.
2. The EC shall maintain a list of interested volunteers to perform committee related and other volunteer tasks, and any filling of vacancies in different committees shall be from the list so maintained
3. The Executive Committee must meet with all the committee chairs once a month. Each committee chair may invite those members of their respective committees who may add value to the meetings with the Executive Committee.
4. All chairpersons of the various committees shall submit their respective budgets to the Executive Committee through the President within three (3) months after the Committees are established.
5. All committees are required to maintain accurate records of their income and expenses and submit a written report of the same to the Executive Committee through the President.
6. All chairpersons shall submit monthly reports and written quarterly reports to the Executive Committee through the President. Committees will maintain minutes of their meetings and submit the same to the Executive Committee through the President.
7. All expenses except regular maintenance expenses, not budgeted already or in excess of \$200.00 will require prior approval of the President of the EC, and all expenses in excess of \$2,500 shall require the approval of the majority of the BOT, unless already appropriated in the budget by the Executive Committee.
8. At least two quotations shall be obtained for purchases of materials or services for \$1,000.00 or more.
9. No individual member shall enter into any contracts, agreements or other instruments whether written or oral, with any other individual or organization at any time with the exception of the BOT Chairman by virtue of such authority conferred on him/her per the SVTC by-laws.
10. Each committee shall have at least three members. Any member who is absent from three (3) consecutive meetings without legitimate reasons will be disqualified from the respective committee
11. The chairpersons of the committees shall be members of the SVTC in good standing.
12. The committee functions can be modified by the Executive Committee, as needed.
13. The committee chairpersons of the previous year may continue as "ex-officers" of their respective committees for the current year.
14. Each committee chair must nominate an "Acting Chair" if the chair is unavailable or out-of-town for an extended period of time.
15. Modifications to this manual may be recommended by any committee for the Executive Committee's approval or the modifications may be initiated by the Executive Committee. Devotees may also request modifications through the Executive Committee.
16. In case of a conflict between the Temple Bylaws and the rest of this Policies and Procedures Manual, the Bylaws will supersede.

17. Appointed/Elected by Board of Trustees:

- a. Six (6) core committees as listed out in the SVTC by-laws
- b. Election Committee
- c. Internal Audit Committee
- d. Any ad-hoc committee/s, on need basis

Devotee Guidelines

1. Switch off your cell phone while at the temple, or leave your cell phone in your vehicle
2. No Photography or Videography in the temple except by authorized Temple Volunteer Photographer/Videographer
3. Dress conservatively: Devotees are encouraged to come to the temple in Traditional Indian attire. Adults should avoid wearing shorts to the temple.
4. Observe personal cleanliness, and also help keep the temple premises clean
5. Maintain absolute silence, decorum and reverence at the Sanctum sanctorum. Do not gossip, talk aloud or indulge in fun and frolic inside temple.
6. Keep your kids with you while in the temple, and help keep the serene atmosphere of the temple
7. Chant God's holy name, your mantra or hymns - But make sure that you do not do them loudly. Sri Ramakrishna Paramahansa said that our spiritual efforts must be secretive and never meant to show off to others
8. During big events and when the crowd is large, do not try to 'steal' more than your share of time in standing before the deity, at the cost of irritating and delaying other devotees
9. Do not engage yourself in prolonged and worldly chit-chats with the priests, which can prevent them from attending to the needs of other waiting devotees
10. Sashtanga Pranamam should not be performed inside the temple hall, it can be performed at the Dwaja Sthamba only
11. Any food/prasadam prepared outside the temple premises is not allowed in the temple. Instead, devotees are encouraged to donate Kitchen supplies (Rice, Dal, Oil, Sugar, etc...) which will be utilized in preparation of Prasadam.
12. Food purchased from the temple kitchen should not be taken near the deities
13. No one except temple priests are allowed in the Garba Gudi (sanctum sanctorum)
14. Reservations for religious services in the temple and/or devotees' homes shall always be booked with the Temple Manager
15. Payment for regular or special pooja/sponsorship inside or outside the temple, is due by check or online payment before the time of service
16. Get enrolled at the front desk for volunteer opportunities
17. Idols, Pictures of deities should not be brought to the temple
18. Devotees should not touch or do any abhishekam to any deities in the temple, unless the temple priest authorizes it
19. Do not light any deepam (oil lamps) in the temple unless authorized by the temple priest
20. Sponsorships/Archanaa:
 - a. Any sponsorship or archana should be paid for at the front desk - do not short-cut the procedure by paying money discreetly to the priests
 - b. Sankalpam will be performed for sponsors and seating will be on first come first seated basis
 - c. Event sponsors will be given aashirvadam and teertha prasadam first.
 - d. All sponsors will be treated equally
21. Suggestions/complaints can be dropped in the suggestions box provided near the front desk.
22. Temple Management, volunteers and priests will permit access to any disabled devotee with wheelchair into the main temple, to have darshan of the deities. It is the responsibility of the devotee and their wheelchair attendant to navigate the wheelchair without causing any inconvenience to other devotees. Entry into the Antralayam by wheelchairs is NOT permitted.

Annapurna Committee

The Annapurna Committee consists of members who can prepare food on a large scale and can manage the kitchen. The committee has the following responsibilities in addition to other duties that may occasionally fall under its jurisdiction after approval by the Executive Committee:

1. Coordinate the preparation of food and its distribution to devotees during regular temple activities and special events
2. Manage the supplies and inventory of the temple kitchen
3. Manage the groceries supplies for the priests for preparing 'naivedyams' for deities
4. Coordinate sponsorship of food for various events
5. Manage the Annadanam/prasadam donations and transfer the funds to the Temple Treasurer
6. Keep the kitchen in a clean, and organized manner

Education and Cultural Committee

The Education and Cultural Committee shall consist of four to six willing and interested individuals in the field of education/academics and who have the passion for promoting the rich Hindu culture and traditions. This committee will oversee and manage the activities of the SVTC School of Fine Arts and shall have following functions:

1. Coordinate and/or organize classes of classical music, dance, art, languages, and literary programs which shall reflect Hindu Cultural Heritage
2. Coordinate and/or organize music, dance, literary, and other cultural events which reflect the Hindu cultural heritage, including programs by visiting artists
3. Review and evaluate suggestions for courses/classes to be taught and the text materials and arrange for classroom instructions. Have the course materials evaluated by individuals with expertise in the particular field, as needed.
4. Arrange lectures on Hindu culture, art or related subjects
5. Assist in the development and maintenance of the temple library
6. Develop and maintain a system to ensure that the library materials are properly accounted for
7. Update and maintain the library materials periodically and file the updated listing in the temple office
8. Develop a program for acquiring and distributing educational materials that describe Hinduism for the benefit of devotees
9. Work with religious committee in organizing the temple festivals

Specific Responsibilities of the Members:

1. Assist the team in developing well planned and organized classes
2. Distribute the workload of collecting the fee and tally it in the master spreadsheet
3. Receive feedback from parents/teachers regarding any issues/concerns
4. To make sure the classes are held in an orderly fashion
5. Search/Identify local dedicated talent who can volunteer their time in teaching the kids

Specific Responsibilities of Chair:

1. Provide space for the classes
2. Build a strong dedicated collective team to take our school to a next level
3. Reimbursement of teachers' honorary pay
4. Provide all relevant information for the newsletter
5. Update the EC with the latest updates of the school every month
6. Recognize teachers and students of the school at least once a year as part of Saraswati Pooja during Navratri Celebrations
7. Ensure team meetings are held in orderly fashion at least once a month, record the meeting minutes and share them with the EC
8. Ensure proper communication between the committee members
9. Ensure all major decisions are discussed within the team before proposing to EC/BOT

Facilities and Maintenance Committee

This committee comprises of members who are willing and are experienced in maintaining, repairing, and improving temple facilities, including temple grounds. This committee has the following responsibilities in addition to other duties that may from time to time fall within its jurisdiction as approved by the EC.

1. Ensure cleanliness of temple premises which includes grounds maintenance (landscaping, temporary structures, etc.), parking lot and any other activity that falls in the "general up-keeping of premises" category
2. Oversee the maintenance of utilities and sanitation
3. Maintain and manage the temple equipment like the Air-conditioning/heating, vehicle(s), etc. in proper working order. Periodic maintenance of the various equipment to be scheduled and adhered to for optimum performance of such equipment.
4. Plan and coordinate Temple Maintenance/Cleaning Day: Conduct temple cleanup effort twice a year in the spring and fall, wherein community members can join in cleaning, painting, planting flowers, and doing minor repairs on the temple premises.
5. Develop a timeline for future repairs and upgrades, and submit plans/estimates to EC for such repairs/upgrades.
6. Prepare reports for implementation of long range, cost effective maintenance and submit findings to the EC/BOT for necessary approvals.
7. Snow removal, trash removal, lawn and tree maintenance activities

Finance Committee

General responsibilities of the committee:

1. Collect donor and family information including address, phone, email address, Gothra and Nakshatra, and enter them into the SVTC Parakamani system
2. Record and manage all income receipts by way of proper accounting of checks, credit card transactions, cash, and other donations
3. Collect and enter Hundi collections in the system twice a month
4. Enter detailed transaction information for all members and devotees based on the event and event sub type and report the details to the EC
5. Deposit checks and cash into the appropriate bank accounts at least twice a month
6. Create various reports as needed by the BOT and the EC
7. Prepare and send tax letters for donations and contributions of members at the end of the tax year
8. Backup financial database weekly and provide a copy for safekeeping in the temple office
9. Maintain the annual event and sponsorship details of members and provide relevant information to the religious committee and the priests for performing appropriate poojas
10. Schedule necessary front desk volunteers on all event days, public holidays, as well as Saturdays and Sundays
11. Monthly reconciliation of the previous month's finance data and use the accurate data in all of the reporting for the month, yearend for Koluvu, and for AGBM financial reports.

Specific responsibilities of the committee chair:

1. Schedule committee meetings every month to determine and assign tasks and action items for members
2. Ensure the information requested by the BOT Chair and/or the EC President is provided in timely fashion
3. Ensure the information provided by the BOT and the EC is transferred to the FC members
4. Ensure financial data transparency across all committee members

Specific responsibilities of the members of the committee:

1. Complete tasks and action items that are assigned, in a timely manner
2. Share Hundi collection duties with other members of the committee and participate in the monthly reconciliation of financial data

Religious Committee

The Religious Committee shall consist of seven to nine members who are willing and familiar with the Hindu religious rituals and traditions. They should have a basic understanding of the temple activities (poojas, Homas and other rituals). At least one priest of the SVTC shall serve as an ex-officio member of this committee. The Religious Committee has the following responsibilities in addition to other duties that may from time to time fall within its jurisdiction as approved by the EC and/or Board:

1. Recommend auspicious days to be observed and the religious festivals to be celebrated and prepare the calendar of religious events for the next year and present it to the EC for their approval, before November of the current year.
2. Establish, maintain and review the list of services that temple offers to the devotees and recommend the suggested donation for those services to the Executive Committee
3. Plan, make necessary arrangements and oversee the performance of religious services and festivals. These arrangements may include decorations, sponsorship of materials needed for the Poojas (flowers, fruits, Prasadam, etc.), assignment of tasks, and coordinating with other committees, as needed
4. Select Coordinator/s for temple events, and provide all the needed guidance and details for successful conduct of those events
5. Event details and Coordinator details shall be passed on to the EC and other Committees, at least a month ahead of the event
6. Prepare event flyers/brochures well in advance of the scheduled events
7. Review and revise suggested donation amount for Pooja services every 6 months
8. Review and revise list of items needed for various sponsored Poojas, and make it available to the sponsors of events
9. Evaluate at the request of the Executive Committee prospective candidates for priests and make recommendations to the Executive Committee/BOT for final selection
10. Review performance of the priests and make recommendations to the Executive Committee on a regular basis
11. Review and make recommendations for any text material that is used and/or published by the temple regarding religious events and rituals
12. Establish and maintain an inventory for jewelry, ornaments and clothing used for temple deities at least every six months and forward records to the temple secretary. The committee shall confirm the listing through verifications against the inventory list
13. Any disputes between the priests shall be settled by the religious committee and when necessary by the EC/Board.
14. Prepare a budget plan for the next year
15. Prepare and maintain play list/s of vedic chants/sthothams/songs/bhajans for all deities, and make use of them during temple events as appropriate
16. Provide the necessary organization to assist devotees during special religious events
17. Organize bhajans and religious discourses

Specific responsibilities of the committee chair:

1. Schedule committee meetings every month to determine and assign tasks and action items for members
2. Minutes of such meetings shall be presented to the EC
3. Ensure the information requested by the BOT Chair and/or the EC President is provided in timely fashion

4. Ensure the information provided by the BOT and the EC is communicated to the members

Specific responsibilities of the members of the committee:

1. Complete tasks/action items that are assigned, in a timely manner
2. Contribute to the successful functioning of the committee

Web and Communications Committee

The Web and Communications Committee shall consist of individuals who are willing and have experience in the area of written communications and the interest and ability to produce/edit articles relating to various aspects of the Hindu traditions. This committee has the following responsibilities in addition to any other duties that may from time to time fall within its jurisdiction after approval of the EC and/or BOT.

1. Maintain the temple website and ensure updated information on temple activities, in a timely manner
2. Work with the Religious Committee on preparation of event flyers and sending the same to the temple community in a timely manner, and at regular intervals.
3. Publish on the web site all the material as approved by the EC and/or BOT
4. Send out email communication/s to the temple community as approved by the EC and/or BOT
5. Maintain and update the temple email-list/s for various user groups as directed and approved by EC and/or BOT
6. Ensure confidentiality and safe-keeping of the email-list/s

Priest Roles and Responsibilities

Priest plays an important role in the day-to-day operations of the temple, and he shall properly receive the devotees, enquire about their well-being, and make them feel welcome.

Responsibilities of the Priest

1. All temple Poojas and rituals are to be performed according to the procedures described in the "Agama Sastras." The rituals shall be authentic and should not be altered.
2. Daily oblations to ALL of the deities shall be done at appropriate times.
3. The priests shall act as hosts of the temple and Serve the needs of the devotees as much as possible. Priest should be fair and impartial towards all devotees.
4. The priests of the temple must in their appearance demeanor and personal hygiene exemplify all that Hinduism stands for, especially in regard to cleanliness and appearance
5. The priests are not expected to collect or count money or otherwise involved in the financial functions of the temple, except as otherwise provided for in this document.
6. The priest will serve as a non-voting member of the religious committee to advise the committee on religious events, rituals, and Hindu traditions
7. The priests should be available for religious services in private homes upon request by devotees. This request shall be (with all necessary arrangements) only with the Temple Manager
8. The priests shall not perform any personal religious services for any devotee unless the arrangements and proper payments have been made and documented with the Temple manager
9. It is the responsibility of the Priest/s to ensure the availability of any pooja related items in the temple, by closely working with the Religious Committee, on a regular basis

Priest guidelines for daily temple services

1. Priest shall be at the temple 30 minutes before the opening time to ensure all preparations for the day are in place
2. Make sure to light all deepams for deities before starting Suprabhatam
3. Start Suprabhatam at 9 AM, open the Garba gudi curtain while chanting 'Sri Vaikunta Viraktaya..'
4. Offer Harathi to all deities
5. Offer Harathi, Ksheera theertham & prasadm to all devotees on first come first served basis
6. Perform 'Nityanusandhanam' before starting preparation of prasadam for temple deities
7. Make prasadams in Priests' kitchen as per the schedule. All utensils used for the cooking to be cleaned and kitchen to be kept in a cleanstate.
8. Perform first Archana at 10:30 AM and chanting of Sri Venkateswara ashtothram, Sri Lakshmi astotharam, and offer naivedyam to all deities
9. Offer Harathi, theertham, prasadam / fruits to all devotees after archana
10. Perform Sankalpam and Archana at the request of devotees who have paid archana fee and produced a receipt, every 30 minutes, or as needed
11. Morning naivedyam shall be offered to the deities before 12 Noon, and evening naivedyam around 8 PM
12. All poojas should be performed with all needed ritual and in timely manner

13. Seek any devotees' help to clean the temple(except Garbha Gudi), if necessary
14. Make use of CDs or other electronic media for vedic chants/devotional songs in any language, whenever there is no Pooja being performed.
15. Follow the needed rituals before closing the temple at noon time and reopening at 6 PM, during the week days
16. Priests should actively **participate** and lead the chanting of calendar events like Vishnu Sahasranama parayanam, Sri Lakshmi Sahasranama archana, Sri Venkateswara Swamy Sahasranama archana, asscheduled in the temple calendar
17. Last Archana of the day should be performed at 7.45 PM if there are any devotees with archana tickets
18. Perform Ekanta seva to Lord Sri Venkateswara at 8:20PM and offer ksheera teertham to all devotees present
19. Priest shall answer temple phone during regular hours when there is no front desk volunteer present in the temple, and update the Temple manager
20. Check and respond to the voice mails on the temple phone/s, and email communications, on the same day they are received.
21. Perform pooja services at devotees' home/place of business, as scheduled by the Temple Manager, in a punctual and timely manner. The Gothra and Nakshatra information of all the devotee family shall be obtained before the pooja starts, and kept ready for use while performing sankalpam, etc.
22. Maintain sanctity of the temple (e.g. No loud conversations in public, maintain peaceful atmosphere, maintain harmony among priests in public etc.)
23. In the absence of front desk volunteer, Priest can collect archana or any other puja fee and deposit the amount in the safe box. Only one priest is allowed to be present at the Front Desk for performing these duties. Temple computer not to be used for Internet browsing.
24. Priest should make sure that all surrounding areas of the deities are cleaned before closing the temple
25. Priest will make sure to switch off all lights, close doors, and set alarm in the building when leaving for the day
26. Close and lock parking gate before leaving the temple
27. Work Schedule and vacation:
 - a. Daily work schedule, personal day-off for each priest, vacation days will be handled by the Temple Manager in consultation with the Religious Committee
 - b. Priests shall strictly adhere to the above work/day-off/vacation schedule, and any deviation/s have to be notified to and approved by the Temple Manager
 - c. Only one priest can avail vacation at any given time, to ensure smooth functioning of the temple operations.
28. Prudent and judicious use of temple resources, as permitted by the templemanagement, devoid of any wastage
29. Use of Priest kitchen – The kitchen need to be kept and maintained in a clean and tidy state, including the floor, kitchen range, refrigerator, counter-tops, etc. Any utensils made use of by the priest/s in the kitchen shall be properly cleaned and stored. They should not be left lying in the kitchen sink.

30. Use of Flowers – Flowers (whether bought by the temple or offered by the devotees) are to be received by the priest/s, properly kept/stored for use while performing archana/pooja events.
31. Driver License – All the priests on joining the SVTC shall prepare for, take the test and acquire a driver's license within a two month period after joining the temple service, if not possessing a driver's license already.
32. Proper maintenance, storage and handling of jewelry as entrusted to them, or adorned on the temple deities.

Priest guidelines for special events

1. Provide an outline of Poojas/rituals performed during the event and the timeline to the devotees at the beginning of the event, and abide by that schedule
2. Perform sankalpam for all poojas' - For all major events Finance Committee will provide a list of the sponsors for performing the sankalpam, and sankalpam shall be performed on first-come-first-served basis.
3. Perform the rituals in an efficient and timely manner, keeping in view the time and other constraints
4. Help conduct the events in an orderly fashion by closely working with other priests and temple volunteers
5. All sponsors should be treated equally in the respective category
6. Provide blessings and offer theertha prasadam to sponsors first, before offering the same for non-sponsors

Non-Compliance:

Any violation of the above may result in disciplinary action and/or termination of services.

Temple Manager

The Temple Manager shall be appointed by the BOT. He/She shall be responsible for the smooth functioning of the temple operations and scheduling of Priest services, and any other duties as may be assigned by the EC and/or BOT from time to time.

Responsibilities of the Temple Manager

1. Ensure that responsible person(s) are available in the temple to answer telephone, perform daily services, and other duties related to temple activities and maintenance.
2. Responsible for reservations for religious events in the temple and community homes. This includes accounting for the money received for these functions as prescribed by the treasurer.
3. Assign Priests for Pooja services for both on-site and off-site services, keeping in view the devotee/sponsor preference for a particular priest.
4. Monitor Priests' activities and report any problems to the Religious Committee Chair
5. Temple timings: Decide if normal hours of operation need to be adjusted or the Temple should stay closed during the times of inclement weather. If such an action is taken, inform the priests and all affected volunteers who are in-charge of various activities.

Board of Trustee

Trustees are elected by the general body. He/She shall be responsible for the vision and mission of the Temple.

Responsibilities of the Trustee

1. Volunteer at least 120 hours/year.
2. As a member of the management, trustees are required to sign a confidentiality agreement.
3. To recognize the functions of the board of trustees & executive committee, maintain professional working relationship with other trustees of the board and committee members.
4. To maintain the dignity and integrity of the temple.

Version History

Version	Change Date	Change Description
1.3	6/21/2020	Added Wheel chair access (#22) under Devotee guidelines; Added this version history table