Releasing an Ineffective
Or
Detrimental Volunteer

Before an ineffective volunteer is released, the following sequence of steps is recommended:

1. Genuine efforts should be made to correct the negative situation, including closer supervision, re-training and motivational tactics. If these fail, a formal consultation should be scheduled. If the individual does not voluntarily resign during that conversation, the staff member responsible for the program will establish specific expectations and a specific trial period. After this trial period, the volunteer will be released if the expectations have not been met.

2. A schedule of supervisory meetings will be included in the written documentation that will be given to the volunteer and a copy of the documentation will be filed with the volunteer’s records.

3. If expectations have not been met by the end of the trial period, the volunteer should be officially released during a face-to-face meeting. Departure details such as the return of equipment, completion of reports should be discussed.

4. A letter should follow this verbal notification. See samples on the next page.

If the volunteer has been credibly accused of committing an illegal act or seriously endangering the safety or well being of others, or of engaging in other behavior deemed by CCE to warrant immediate suspension, the responsible volunteer supervisor will immediately suspend the volunteer without prior discussion. As soon as feasible, a decision whether to release the volunteer or to follow the above procedure will be made in consultation with the Executive Director.
Dear _________________________,

Thank you for the volunteer service you have provided to Cornell Cooperative Extension since (date Volunteer Agreement was signed).

It is unfortunate that serving as a (title of volunteer position) proved to be an unsatisfactory role for you in our organization. Effective today, Cornell Cooperative Extension releases you from your volunteer commitment.

(Add departure details such as return of equipment, completion of reports, etc. as appropriate.)

Sincerely,

Name
Title

Sample letter #1: When a volunteer is being released due to ineffectiveness or his/her own dissatisfaction.

Sample letter #2: When a volunteer is being released for violating the law or seriously endangering the safety or well being of others.