
Developing a Guardian Accord

Why Develop an Accord? *It can be helpful to develop a set of principles to guide how Guardians work together and to identify shared expectations of one another. Guardians may choose to agree on shared principles in the form of a team charter or formal accord. When an accord is created together and regularly referenced, it can become a powerful tool to keep your Guardian team working together respectfully, collaboratively, and with shared purpose. For an example of an Indigenous Guardian Accord, refer to the example [“Bakwam Accord - VIU STTP 2021 Cohort”](#)*

What Goes into an Accord?

Each Guardian accord or team charter will look different and reflect the needs, values, and culture of the Guardian crew. Here are some common themes that Guardian crews may want to weave in:

- Shared Purpose
- Responsibility
- Respect
- Open Communication
- Teamwork
- Planning and Preparation
- Safety
- Learning
- Leadership
- Recognition and Celebration

How to Create an Accord

1. Set some time aside and bring your Guardian crew together to workshop the key elements of a meaningful accord.
2. Brainstorm together what matters most when it comes to working effectively as a Guardian crew—whether in the office or out on the lands and waters.
 - Identify areas where it is important to have shared commitments or understanding (e.g., safety, timeliness, respect, recording information, community relations, etc.).
 - Jump start the conversation by running through specific and relatable real-world scenarios that might challenge the team or reviewing [Wise Principles for Guardian Teams](#).
 - Work with both Guardian managers and crew members to identify what they need and expect from one another.
3. Name and agree on the most important themes (e.g., have the group vote on the top 5) to include and build these into a draft document. Write the themes as values, principles, or commitments.

4. Review and refine the language together to create a document that everyone on the team agrees with. Once you're happy with the language, finalize it.
5. Identify ways you can use your new accord to provide meaningful guidance on a regular basis (e.g., during staff orientation, weekly check-ins, etc.). You may want to formalize your accord by printing it up, having everyone sign it, adding meaningful photos or images, or enlarging and framing it.

Example Brainstorming Discussion Questions

- Visualize a time when you were doing great work on a team and things were going well. What was happening? How did it feel?
- Visualize a time when things were not going well on a team. How did it feel? What was missing? What needed to change to improve team dynamics and/or the work environment?
- What are some challenging scenarios you can imagine or have experienced?
- Who do you turn to if problems arise?
- How do you feel when asking for help? How do you want to be received when asking for help?
- What do you need/expect from your manager, fellow crew members, and yourself?
- Managers: what needs, values, or principles are you bringing with you (your own or those communicated to you by Chief and Council or partners)?

Putting the Accord into Action

Once you've created an accord, use it! Reference it regularly in crew meetings. Review it at the start and end of each season. Adjust and add to it as you build expertise working together. By using the accord as a "living" document and tool, your team can rely on it to help continuously create the conditions for many successful Guardian teams and seasons.

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