IRON Cal
INSPIRATION ROBOTICS OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

VEX IQ AND V5 · 2026-2027 SEASON

EVENT VOLUNTEER GUIDE

Thank you for volunteering at our VEX robotics event. This guide covers VEX IQ events (elementary and middle school) and VEX V5 events (middle and high school). A typical local event runs on 15 to 20 volunteers, and most roles need no technical background.

Only two roles require a certification: Head Referee and Judge Advisor. Some age rules differ between IQ and V5, so check which program your event is before you pick a role. For 2026-2027, VEX IQ and V5 competitions are run under the Global Robotics and Science Foundation, and certifications are taken on VEX PD+. Past RECF certifications and links no longer apply.

START HERE

1. Sign up at https://www.ironcal.org/event: open the event, click Register, and choose a role or shift. Details on page 2.
2. Take our free online training, VEX IQ and V5 Volunteer Training. Scan the code or go to https://www.ironcal.org/slides.
3. Head Referee or Judge Advisor? Finish this season's certification on VEX PD+ and send us your certificate.

Free online training

VOL-110 · about 25 minutes

BEFORE THE EVENT

Please do these things in the week before the event:

1. Read your role on page 2 and in Volunteer Roles at a Local Event.
2. If you are a Head Referee or Judge Advisor, finish this season's certification on VEX PD+ and send your certificate to the event organizer.
3. Take the optional certification for your role if one is listed on page 3.
4. Watch a few matches of this season's games on YouTube: VEX IQ Level Up and VEX V5 Override.
5. Check the minimum age for your role and your event's program. We require volunteers under 18 to have an adult (18 or older) on site who is responsible for them in case of emergency. This can be a parent, guardian, or coach, or an IRON Cal event lead we assign when you check in. We'll ask for their name when you sign up.

WORKING WITH STUDENTS

Keep it positive and encouraging. Judges and Judge Advisors may not be part of a team competing at the event, and anyone with a conflict of interest should tell the event organizer ahead of time.

The Event Partner, Head Referee, and Judge Advisor must be three different people.

VOLUNTEER ROLES

Roles are grouped by what they involve. Source: Volunteer Roles at a Local Event, Global Robotics and Science Foundation.

Competition officials

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO	MIN AGE, IQ	MIN AGE, V5	CERTIFICATION
Head Referee	Rule on match play, make final scoring decisions, and answer rules questions from teams. The final authority on the field. On your feet all day.	16	20	Required
Scorekeeper Referee	Score matches with the Head Referee, track scoring elements during play, and confirm results before they are entered.	15	15	Recommended
Robot Inspector	Check each robot against the inspection checklist before it competes, and re-inspect robots that change during the day.	None	None	None

Judging

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO	MIN AGE, IQ	MIN AGE, V5	CERTIFICATION
Judge Advisor	Manage the judging process, lead award deliberations, and help with Code of Conduct and Student-Centered Policy concerns. Must not be on a competing team.	21	21	Required
Judge	Interview teams, review Engineering Notebooks, and evaluate teams against the award criteria.	18 (16 to 17 if paired with a judge 18+)	20, not on a competing V5 team	Recommended

More on judging: Judging Roles and Responsibilities.

HOW TO SIGN UP

1. Go to https://www.ironcal.org/event and open your event.
2. Click Register, then choose a role or shift in the window that opens. Each option shows its times and what the role involves.
3. Answer the sign-up questions. Register one person per registration, so each volunteer gets their own confirmation and reminders.

Volunteered with us before? Sign in first at https://www.ironcal.org/web/login.

VOLUNTEER ROLES (CONTINUED)

Tournament operations, team and guest support (no age minimum or certification)

ROLE	WHAT YOU DO
Tournament Manager Operator	Run the event software: enter results, manage the schedule and displays, and produce rankings and alliance selection. Best for someone comfortable with software who can practice ahead of time.
Emcee	Announce matches, keep teams and spectators up to speed, and run the microphone through the awards ceremony.
Field Resetter	Reset fields between matches and place game elements correctly. Easy to learn on event morning. Great for new volunteers and students who are not competing.
Queuer	Get the right teams to the right field at the right time, working a match or two ahead.
Team Check-In and Pit Administration	Check teams in, confirm rosters, hand out pit assignments, and point teams to inspection. Then help in the pits for the rest of the day.
Concessions and Volunteer Hospitality	Run concessions if offered, and keep volunteers fed and hydrated.
Setup and Teardown Crew	Help build fields and set up the venue the night before, or pack up at the end of the day.

EVENT DAY

Plan to arrive at least 30 minutes before your shift for on-site training. Sign in when you arrive, and you will be sent to your area.

What to wear and bring

- Comfortable closed-toe shoes (many roles are on their feet all day)
- A plain polo or t-shirt with jeans or slacks. Skip team shirts so you stay neutral.
- A water bottle
- Safety glasses if you will be near the fields or practice area

Food, flexibility, and hours

We provide water, snacks, and lunch for full-day volunteers.

Be flexible: if your area is quiet, we may ask you to help somewhere else.

Need a community service certificate for school or work? Tell us at sign-in and we will track your hours.

CERTIFICATIONS AND TRAININGS

All courses are free and taken on VEX PD+. Create a VEX PD+ account first, then take the course for your role and program. When you finish, download your certificate and share it with the event organizer.

ROLE	REQUIREMENT	COURSE
Head Referee, IQ event	Required, current season	IQ Level Up Head Referee and Scorekeeper Referee Certification
Head Referee, V5 event	Required, current season	V5 Override Head Referee and Scorekeeper Referee Certification
Judge Advisor	Required, current season	Judge Certification Course
Judge	Recommended	Judge Certification Course
Scorekeeper Referee	Recommended	Same referee course as the Head Referee for your event's program
All other roles	None	Read your role in Volunteer Roles at a Local Event

The IQ and V5 referee courses are separate, so a referee working both kinds of events needs both certifications.

SEE SOMETHING WRONG?

If anyone is in immediate danger, call 911 first. Then tell the Event Partner or an event lead right away. Don't investigate or confront anyone yourself. IRON Cal's Incident Report and Youth Safety Concern Report forms are at volunteer sign-in.

EVENT CONTACTS

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