

Sar-El Canada

HANDBOOK

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Introduction

Sar-El Canada (sometimes called Canadian Volunteers for Israel, or CVI) is the Canadian branch of *Sar-El*- The National Project for Volunteers for Israel. Founded by Israeli General Aharon Davidi, in 1982, Sar-El is represented worldwide. Sar-El Canada is the third largest branch after Volontariat Civil (U.P.I.) in France and Volunteers for Israel (VFI) in the USA.

Sar-El is the Hebrew acronym for *Sherut l'yisrael* - service to Israel.

Volunteers have the unique opportunity to meet and work with Israelis during an important part of their life cycle - their military duty time.

The late Ezer Weizmann, former President, has said:

"Your spirit of volunteering to work in the IDF bases exemplifies the unity of *am yisrael*, the people of Israel. When you come, you become Israelis for the short period you stay with us. When you go back, your life is enriched with a profound Israeli experience."

Make the most of that experience.

IMPORTANT SECURITY MESSAGE

The IDF has recently discovered that many soldiers are posting pictures on Facebook and other websites that contain sensitive and classified military information. The IDF is beginning to closely monitor all such websites and will be taking strong actions against soldiers who post such pictures, including court-martialing the soldiers. We at Sar-El welcome our volunteers' pictures, articles and publicity about Sar-El, but we ask you to

refrain from taking pictures of anything that you might even think may be classified or sensitive. This includes mentioning the names and specific locations of bases.

Obviously we cannot "court-martial" our volunteers, but we CAN and WILL reject volunteers for future programs if they disobey the rules. Please tell your fellow volunteers and if you happen to see something on a website which should not be there, please tell the person who posted it, or tell us.

Before you leave.

Travel light! Avoid taking more than one checkable suitcase and a carry-on. **You'll be carrying your own luggage**, and likely be living, partly, out of your suitcase, on the base. You'll be issued uniforms as work clothes, but your other garments are your own responsibility. **DON'T TAKE VALUABLES.**

Documents

You must have three copies of the picture page of your **passport**, your **medical certificate**, and **proof of medical insurance coverage**, as well as a **list of your prescribed medications**.

A record of charge-card numbers, safely stowed away from the originals, will be helpful if you lose the real things.

Army issue on base

You'll be issued the following:

- a uniform - shirt, trousers, cap, belt
- a blue Sar-El shoulder "flash"
- in winter, a sweater and parka
- army boots, only if the work-site requires them. So, bring closed-toe shoes that you can work in
- blankets or sleeping bag, and, **generally**, narrow sheets, (see below)
- pillows, likely, **but not always**, (see below)

Packing check-list

Essentials. You must supply the following:

- your own underwear, T-shirts, handkerchiefs, and any clothes that you wish to wear after work and off the base. (Women need skirts on Shabbat, in Orthodox areas.)
- closed-toe shoes, suitable for work site
- in winter - rainwear, and waterproof footwear
- in spring and summer - sun hat
- a robe for getting to and from the showers; they may not be very close to your bunk.
- towels and soap; washcloths for a first-dry are useful, since they'll dry more quickly than a wet towel, particularly in a damp winter environment
- scuffies for the shower ("rubber" sandals or "flip flops")
- toiletries; prescription medications with copy of generic prescription; medical devices (e.g. 220 v CPAP with extension cord and Israeli plug), Tylenol, Band-Aids, and Imodium may be useful too; sunblock; insect repellent; spare eyeglasses with prescription; sun glasses
- To be safe, consider bringing a pair of cot-sized or single sheets, pillowcase and small pillow, since some bases **may not** supply sheets & pillows. You will be issued blankets or a sleeping bag.

Optional, for convenience (see also Laundry)

- work gloves, rubber or plastic gloves, may be useful. Scotch tape can be handy too.
- if you use a hair-dryer or electric razor, remember that Israel uses 220 volts; you must have 220-volt appliances, or a transformer. The plug prongs are different too. so buy an adapter for Israel.
- A small mirror can be useful; there are usually no electric outlets in the washrooms.
- a small lock for your locker, if you get one. Combination locks are cheap; no key to lose.
- a small flashlight, a camera, and perhaps a small portable radio.
- ear plugs for yourself, and if you snore, (who doesn't?) for your barrack-mates.
- In spring and summer - shorts, bathing suit, sandals.

Laundry.

You'll usually get clean uniforms as needed but you are on your own for other laundry. So easy wash-and-wear clothes are essential. Some bases have a washing machine and dryer, but most do not. Laundry detergent is almost essential too; clothespins and string for clothesline can be useful, if you don't find some already on the base. (**Optionally** some experienced Sar-Elniks carry a small plastic container as a laundry basin. That's not as crazy as it sounds. It doesn't weigh much and can be filled with socks, underwear etc. in your luggage. And it's cheap enough to leave behind if you don't want to carry it back home.)

Insurance.

You must have proof of adequate health insurance. Sar-El provides no hospital/medical insurance for volunteers. So, review your out-of-country insurance, and if necessary, buy appropriate extra coverage.

Canadian Medicare, alone, is not adequate.

You must have access to sufficient funds to cover medical emergencies, since your insurance may not pay up front. Check with your insurance provider on their payment arrangements for service in Israel.

Money.

Credit cards, particularly VISA, are widely accepted. Traveler's cheques can be a nuisance, particularly Canadian-dollar cheques. But many volunteers don't bother with traveler's cheques at all, using automatic teller machines (ATMs) instead. Bank Hapoalim, and other ATMs too, accept Canadian ATM cards affiliated with PLUS or CIRRUS systems; insert your card and the screen message appears in English if that's the "language of your card" back home. You withdraw money from your Canadian account, in *shekels*, and your account is automatically debited in Canadian dollars at a correct exchange rate and with a service charge. And ATMs are "open" when banks are closed.

Telephones

Many bases no longer have pay phones, since Israelis are heavy cell phone users. **But don't ask your *madricha* (see below) to use her cell phone.** It's advisable to rent your own. You can arrange delivery of a cell phone in Canada, before you leave for Israel. Check with the Sar-El Canada office for information. In Israel, you don't pay for incoming calls on an Israeli cell phone.

Israeli **pay phones, when available**, use *Telecards*, and other similar cards, which you can buy at the airport and, sometimes, more cheaply, at the base canteen. **But remember: many bases don't have pay phones.**

To Canada or the US, dial 013-1, or 014-1, followed by the area code and the number. This works for both *Telecard* and cell-phone calls. Or use the special calling arrangements provided by your Canadian long distance supplier for calls to Canada.

Arrival at Ben Gurion Airport. Terminal 3

While waiting for your luggage you can buy Israeli currency, shekels, at the airport bank branch, or ATM (see **Money**). (Get enough for your first weekend off the base, because you may not be able to visit a bank or ATM before Shabbat.)

If you arrive during normal working hours on the prescribed Sunday, you will be met at the **meeting place** in the Arrivals hall: at the chairs as you face exit #2, next to the Swarovski counter. There will usually be a Sar-El representative there. A currency exchange and ATM are nearby. If you are early you can wait at the chairs. If you are not met, phone the Program Coordinator (052-821-9945) to make the arrangements for assignment to a base. Sar-El phone numbers (see below) are also on the back of your name badge.

If you arrive before a scheduled start date to join Sar-El in Israel, you **must** phone the Program coordinator to confirm your arrival and the arrangements for joining. Follow the instructions that you were given in Canada.

On base.

Each volunteer group has a *madricha* or *madrich*. She/he is a soldier assigned as your guide, mentor, and translator, to act as liaison with the base commander and arrange for uniforms, work, evening activities, trips, etc.

Work assignment.

Recall that you've contracted with Sar-El to put in a full day's work. You are entitled to get clear instructions for meaningful work within your capabilities. If necessary, ask your *madricha* for help.

Evening activities. You are expected to attend activities arranged by your *madricha*. You may not leave the base without permission from your *madricha*. She/he is responsible for your security; please cooperate.

Weekends.

Plan on leaving the base on weekends. You are responsible for your accommodation, off-base, on Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights. On request, your *madricha* will advise you about reservations at a hostel, or a hotel. Be sure to ask for a Sar-El discount. And Beit Oded, the Sar-El hostel in Tel Aviv/Yafo, may be available, at no charge.

Tours.

The program will likely include some guided tours during the work week. And your *madricha* may have some information on commercial tour guides for special weekend tours, at reasonable cost. **You are responsible for personal expenses on weekends.**

Your address in Israel.

c/o Sar-El, PO Box 953, Kiron, 5510802, Israel

Telephone:

Pamela Lazarus, Program coordinator

if dialed in Israel 052-821-9945

if dialed from Canada 011-972-52-821-9945

Sar-El office 03-682-9740

FAX to office, from Canada: 011-972-3-682-9743

Beit Oded (Sar-El hostel): 03-569-2848

in Yafo at 5 Jerusalem Blvd. near the GESHER (NOGA) Theatre; entrance on Segula (side street)

Departure from Israel.

Check with your airline to confirm your flight time. You may get help from your *madricha*, but you are responsible for your own arrangements, particularly if you are staying on after your "tour of duty".

Words to remember.

savlanoot (patience), *balagan* (confusion), *g'mi-shoot* (flexibility)

So *ne-see-ah to-va* and *l'hitra-ot!*

We'd like to hear from you when you return; please call.

GLOSSARY of SIGNS ON THE BASE

Near the gate		<i>al yahd ha-shar</i>	
ברוכים הבאים	<i>b'rookh-eem ha-ba-eem</i>		welcome
צאתם לשלום	<i>t'sayt-khem l'shalom</i>		go in peace
מחנה	<i>mah-kha-neh</i>		base (camp)
In the mess hall		<i>b'khe-der okh-el</i>	
כניסה	<i>k'nee-sah</i>		entrance
יציאה	<i>y'tzee-ah</i>		exit
חלבי	<i>kha-lah-vee</i>		dairy [blue dishes, usually]
בשרי	<i>bah-sah-ree</i>		meat [orange dishes, usually]
שמור על הכשרות	<i>sh'mor ahl ha-kash-root</i>		keep kosher
אסור לעשן בשבת	<i>ah-sohr l'ah-shen b'shabat</i>		no smoking on shabbat
On the base		<i>b'bah-sees</i>	
אש	<i>esh</i>		fire
אזהרה	<i>ahz-hah-rah</i>		warning
בפקודה	<i>bif-koo-dah</i>		by order
זהירות	<i>z'hee-root</i>		careful
חשמל	<i>khash-mahl</i>		electricity
מגורי חיילים	<i>mi-goo-ray kha-yah-leem</i>		barracks (male soldiers)
מגורי חיילות	<i>mi-goo-ray kha-yah-lot</i>		barracks (female soldiers)
עצור	<i>ah-tzor</i>		stop

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Make the most of your Sar-El experience.