

**Health and Safety
for Community Volunteers**

**Auckland
Council**

Te Kaunihera o Tāmaki Makaurau



allaboutpeople

HEALTH & SAFETY · EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

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Introduction

The purpose of this Booklet is to provide you with the skills, knowledge and simple tools to help you manage risk during Volunteer Work.

As Volunteers, you need to understand:

- Your legal responsibilities
- Risk management: on the ground
- The process to manage Health and Safety before, during and after Volunteer work.

Health and Safety at Work Act 2015 – A Summary specifically focusing on Volunteers

THE HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK ACT – OBJECTIVE

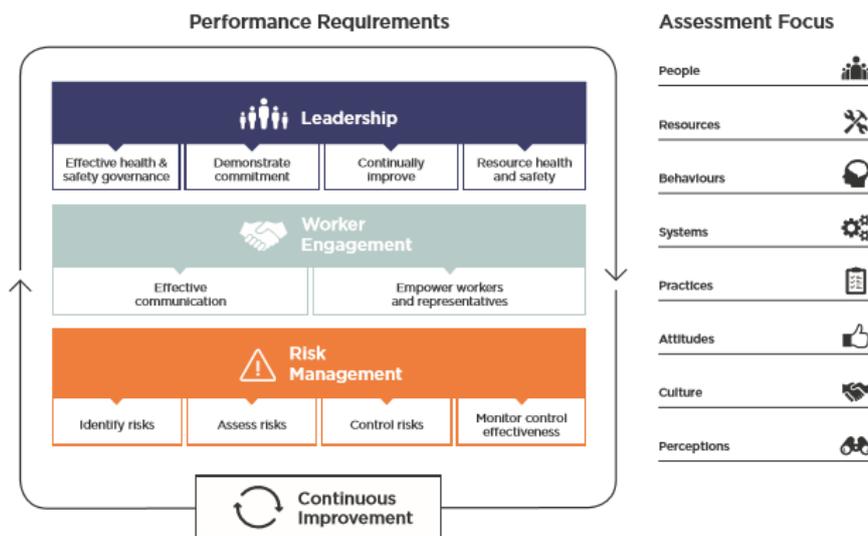
To promote the prevention of harm to all persons at work and other persons in, or in the vicinity of, a place of work. The Act continues the philosophy of self-regulation, with an increased emphasis on Employee participation.



What Does That Mean?

Do everything you can to keep your people and others safe. Making sure that you know and manage your risks by having plans that everyone understands and knows about.

WorkSafe New Zealand’s Position



WorkSafe New Zealand believe that for PCBU’s (Auckland Council), and Workers (includes Volunteers) to successfully manage safety, they need to focus on Leadership, Managing Risk, Engagement.

Auckland Council

Auckland Council have a general duty to take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure the safety of Workers while at work. The trap that we fall into is telling Workers to "take care" and to "work safely" what does that actually mean, and have we ever asked the Workers what they think?

Auckland Council must...

- Provide and maintain a safe working environment;
- Provide and maintain facilities for Workers' safety and health;
- Ensure that plant used by Workers is arranged, designed, made and maintained in a safe manner;
- Develop procedures for dealing with emergencies that may arise while Workers are at work; and
- Ensure that Workers are properly trained and supervised.

Volunteer Responsibilities

As Volunteers, you must take all reasonably practicable steps to ensure your own safety while working by doing what a reasonable person would do under the circumstances by:

- Doing tasks that have been assigned to you
- Doing tasks you have been trained to do/familiar with
- Not doing tasks you think are unsafe
- Reporting hazards and risks
- Providing feedback on health and safety issues
- Using the personal protective equipment (PPE) if it is required, and using it as instructed

Risk Management

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF CARRYING OUT RISK ASSESSMENT?

Improves awareness and understanding of hazards and the risks they carry, and how that risk can be managed to prevent injury and accidents. Therefore, preventing injury and complying with Legislation.

WHAT IS A RISK ASSESSMENT?

A risk assessment is a review of the work a Volunteer group is proposing to do before the work is undertaken, and while the work is being carried out to identify and manage risk that could cause harm to people. A Risk Assessment involves:

- Identifying hazards linked to the proposed work and workplace
- Assessing the level of risk
- Deciding how you will deal with the risk, taking into consideration control measures already in place; then
- Monitoring the control measures for effectiveness.



What is meant by the term hazard and risk?

Hazard means anything that can cause harm (e.g. driving a Quad Bike, carrying heavy weights, lack of fitness, working alone, using chemicals etc.)

Risk is 'the chance that somebody will be harmed by the hazard?' The overall level of risk reflects the likelihood (i.e. chance) of the hazard causing an injury, and consequence (i.e. severity or harm) associated with the hazard. Determining the risk rating (e.g. **Extreme**, **High**, **Moderate** or **Low**) allows you to prioritise and then deal with the risks appropriately.

HOW DO WE ASSESS AND MANAGE RISKS FOR COMMUNITY WORK?

There are 5 simple steps to follow:

1. Work as a team.
2. Identify the hazards in tasks or workplace environment.
3. Decide who might be harmed and how?
4. Evaluate the risks and decide whether existing controls are adequate or whether more controls should be put in place.
5. Record your findings on the basic **Safety Plan (Low Risk)**.
6. Review and revise your assessment when necessary.
7. Review Safety Plan with Participants either before or on the day. Note, this can be done electronically by sharing on media such as email, Facebook etc.

MAIN HAZARDS/RISKS AND CONTROLS FACING YOU

Below is a selection of hazards/risks and their controls that you need to consider when carrying out Volunteer Community work with Auckland Council.

Lifting/handling heavy or awkward items:

- Ensure any loads are dropped-off close to point of use (e.g. seedlings).
- Wear safety footwear suitable for the environment.
- Identify and clear the route of travel making any hazards safe (e.g. ditches, fences).
- Use safe lifting techniques or more than one person to move.
- Use a wheel barrow or similar.
- Keep work areas/walking paths clear.
- Ensure you are fit to move the item(s).

Falling from heights – Steep banks etc.:

- If working where there is a risk of falling (e.g. working near steep banks, cliffs, river banks etc.), isolate the area and make it a no-go area. Discuss with all participants at Pre-start meeting/Induction.
- Monitor risk and people.

Falling from heights – using ladders/climbing trees etc.:

- If working where you are at heights pruning or collecting seeds, make sure you use the right tools that are well maintained and safe to use.
- Make sure you are wearing suitable clothing and footwear.
- Make sure you are physically able to do the work.
- Monitor risk and people

Sunburn:

- Cover up with long sleeves and hat.
- Use sun block of suitable rating and apply regularly.
- Wear sunglasses.

Injury to eyes with sticks, dust etc.:

- Wear safety glasses

Exposure to Chemicals:

- Only trained and approved persons to use chemicals.
- Make sure the substances are in the correct containers and they are well labelled.
- Make sure Safety Data Sheets (SDS) are available for each chemical or hazardous substance.
- Wear the appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE). This information is available on the SDS or Container Label.
- Ensure persons using the chemical or hazardous substance follow the safety directions on the container and SDS (e.g. storage requirements, personal protection requirements).
- Ensure empty containers are disposed of in a safe and an environmentally friendly manner.
- If laying bait/spraying aggressive chemicals, the appropriate training and approvals is required.

Poisonous Plants could cause injury or illness:

- Identify any at risk plants before starting work.
- Wear correct PPE (e.g. sturdy gloves, overalls, safety glasses etc.).
- Dispose of plants correctly.

Slips/Trips/Falls:

- Identify “no go” zones and enforce (e.g. Pot Holes, Steep banks, creeks etc.).
- Wear safety footwear suitable for the environment.
- Identify and clear the route of travel making any hazards safe (e.g. trenches).
- Three points of contact when climbing up, over or down walls, stairs, etc.
- Use safe lifting techniques or more than one person to move.
- Use lifting moving equipment (e.g. digger).
- Keep work areas/walking paths clear.

Using Power Tools (Chainsaws, Scrub Cutters):

- These items are not allowed to be used.
- Refer to Auckland Council Team Leader if these items are required.

Working Alone:

- Ensure someone knows where you are, when you will be back, and have a mobile phone or radio with you at all times.
- Ensure you are medically and physically fit to work alone.
- Do not put yourself at risk (water, steep banks, cliffs etc.).
- Set-up a series of 'Welfare' checks. E.g. You text someone every hour.

Hypothermia:

- If the forecast is for rain and/or severe weather, consider postponing the event.
- Make sure you have a change of warm dry clothes in case you get wet/cold.

Heat Exhaustion:

- Dress for the conditions (refer to Sunburn Hazard)
- Make sure you have access to and drink lots of drinking water and shade (if required).
- Recognise the symptoms of Heat Exhaustion which are:
 - Confusion.
 - Dark-colored urine (a sign of dehydration)
 - Dizziness or Fainting.
 - Fatigue.
 - Headache.
 - Muscle or abdominal cramps.
 - Nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea

Using Hand Tools:

- Make sure you are wearing suitable footwear (i.e. your feet are fully covered/protected).
- Make sure the tools are in good condition (e.g. Sharp, no broken handles etc.).
- Know how to use them!

Some Other Rules!

- No Chain Saws, Scrub Bars or other high risk equipment or Activities. Council will engage a Contractor if this type of work is required.
- Let the person in charge know if:
 - You have a pre-existing injury or medical condition.
 - Have an accident or injury while carrying out the volunteer work.
 - Discover a risk that may affect others.
- Look after yourself and others.
- Have fun!!

Pre-start Briefing

Where possible, a pre-start briefing will be held prior to people starting work. If you arrive after everyone else has started, please contact the person in charge to be briefed on the day's work, and any hazards/risks specific to the site or work. The pre-start briefing will include:

- Weather conditions.
- Risks and controls.
- Emergency Procedures such as Emergency Meeting Point, First Aid Kit, First Aider etc.
- Specific contact details.
- Expected timelines.

If there is an Incident

INJURIES

If there is an injury:

- Ensure the surrounding area and scene is safe.
- Carryout First Aid as required.

If it is serious and requires hospital treatment:

- Contact the emergency Services, **dial 111** and give them the details of your location, with the nearest Access Point (refer to the Safety Plan for the day).
- Someone cares for the patient, someone meets the emergency services at the access point.
- Notify:
 - The injured persons emergency contact (if available).
 - The Team Leader on site.
 - The Auckland Council Representative.
- Someone is to travel with the injured person to the Hospital, providing updates as required.

ACC CLAIMS

For volunteers who are injured and who are employees of other employers:

- It gets reported to ACC as a non-work injury (Auckland Council still reports it to WorkSafe as a Work-Related Incident though if it is notifiable).
- If the injured person is employed, they have a stand-down period of 7 days (if they were Council's employee, this would be covered by Council). So, they would take this as some form of leave from their employer. After the 7-day stand-down, ACC cover 80% of their salary/wage. Also, medical costs etc. as per normal.

For volunteers who are injured and who are retired or unemployed persons:

- It gets reported to ACC as a non-work injury (Auckland Council still reports it to WorkSafe as a Work-Related Incident though if it is notifiable).
- ACC cover any medical costs etc. as per normal.