
WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS POLICY O900

Purpose of Report

To present Council with the Working with Volunteers Policy O900 for approval.

Recommendations

Officers recommend that the Community Board:

1. *Receive the Working with Volunteers Policy Report.*
2. *Approve the Working with Volunteers Policy O900.*
3. *Agree the next review of the Working with Volunteers Policy will be in August 2022.*

1. Executive Summary

The new health and safety legislation has placed much more stringent obligations on organisations to ensure workers of any kind are kept safe.

Ultimate responsibility falls on the “Officer”, who is personally liable. The “Officer” in the case of South Wairarapa District Council is the Chief Executive.

The volunteer workforce is very active in New Zealand, there are many people and organisations who take great pride in “doing their bit”.

Unfortunately, many volunteers are injured in the course of carrying out the volunteer activity. The health and safety legislation is to reduce harm in all work environments, including the volunteer sector.

2. Discussion

The attached Working with Volunteers Policy O900 has been prepared by Council’s Health and Safety team and was circulated to community boards in July 2018 as a guideline. Having reviewed the importance of this document, the management team have agreed it should be a policy rather than a guideline so the importance of the Health and Safety of any worker (whether paid or volunteer) be emphasised.

The attached document (Appendix 1) has been reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee via e-mail and is now presented to Council for review and approval.

It is proposed the Policy be reviewed again in three years’ time.

3. Process

Council needs to ensure volunteers understand the hazards and risks of their work and are competent to work safely. Any work done on council facilities or amenities creates a risk to Council that needs to be managed, and as such, there are potential hazards and risks with the work being undertaken in community projects.

To ensure the risks are managed effectively, Council will undertake a risk assessment for all proposed work. Where the risks are deemed medium to high level, this work would be awarded to an approved contractor. Council will also determine if the work will be self-supervised by the volunteer workers, or if a council officer will supervise the work.

The Policy covers a checklist for Pre-work, during work and post-work along with tables to identify if a piece of work is high, medium or low risk.

At the end of the policy are forms for the volunteer to complete and a place to list hazards and all volunteer details including their signature to indicate they have read and understood the Health and safety guidelines for volunteers.

The final page of the policy sets out the Health and safety guidelines for volunteers.

4. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Working with Volunteers Policy O900

Contact Officer: Harry Wilson, Chief Executive Officer

Appendix 1 – Working with Volunteers Policy O900

Health and Safety Policy for Council and Community Boards working with volunteer groups

Volunteer activities

Council, Community Boards and contractors sometimes enlist the help of volunteer groups such as Lions to assist with council projects. There are no contractual agreements in place and no payments are made for the work done.

Volunteer groups have assisted Council with installing park benches and paths, building seating, and may assist with light pruning, cutting small trees and other garden maintenance work.

Legal requirements

In the context of the Health and Safety at Work Act, South Wairarapa District Council is a person conducting a business or undertaking (PCBU). SWDC has no worker obligations when there are no SWDC workers on site. SWDC has worker obligations when contractors are engaged on site. SWDC also has legal obligations when volunteers are working on council projects.

The Health and Safety at Work Act, differentiates between two groups of volunteers, volunteers and casual volunteers. A PCBU has differing requirements in respect to these two groups, as shown in the table below.

Volunteers	Casual volunteers
Can carry out work in any capacity for Council	Does not meet the requirements of volunteers.
With the knowledge and consent of Council	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • participating in garden maintenance working bees • participating in fundraising activities for council. • assisting with sports or recreational activities.
On an ongoing or regular basis	
Are an integral part of the Council.	
Council requirements	
Need to ensure volunteers understand the hazards and risks of their work and are competent to work safely.	Same duty of care as every other person.
Not obliged to have a worker engagement or participation process.	

Note: A volunteer association, such as Lions, is not defined as a PCBU under the Act.

South Wairarapa District Council volunteer health and safety for Community Boards

Pre-work

Identify work to be done

Within delegation?

Within budget?

Will the work effect others such as members of the public, other PCBUS?
– *Notify SWDC if other parties effected and agree how to manage communications and risks.*

Assess risk – Volunteer work risk assessment

Low risk – *Advise SWDC officer of work to be done.*

Medium / high risk – *Discuss with SWDC officer how volunteers can contribute to work.*

Assess resourcing

Volunteers have skills and knowledge to do work?

Resources needed safe and fit for job?

Additional resources required? –*Advise SWDC officer of resources required.*

If engaging contractors, either donating time or paying for work – *Let SWDC know so they can approve the contractor.*

Agree with SWDC Officer who will supervise the work.

During-works

Application and on-site set-up

Set up site, *with other parties as required such as SWDC Officer, Contractor*

Site supervisor complete **volunteer application** – *Copy to SWDC Officer*

Volunteer worker induction and health and safety guide

Induct all volunteers to site – **Volunteer induction.**

Give all volunteers **Health and safety guide for volunteers.**

Confirm all volunteers on site are competent to work, understand the risks and mitigations.

Reporting incidents / accidents / hazards

Confirm all volunteers on site understand what to do in an incident / accident how to report it.

All incidents / accidents / hazards on site and remedial actions reported to SWDC.

Post-work

Post work review with SWDC Officer

- ✓ Work was done in a safe and healthy way.
- ✓ Volunteers skills were appropriate for the work.
- ✓ Resources were adequate for the work
- ✓ Learnings identified and implemented.

Pre-work - Assessing our risk

Any work done on council facilities or amenities creates a risk to Council that needs to be managed, and as such, there are potential hazards and risks with the work being undertaken in community projects. To ensure the risks are managed effectively, Council will undertake a risk assessment for all proposed work. Where the risks are deemed medium to high level, this work would be awarded to an approved contractor. Council will also determine if the work will be self supervised by the volunteer workers, or if a council officer will supervise the work.

Low risk activities could be done by volunteer groups. Where appropriate, Council will provide a health and safety guide, equipment and tools to ensure the safety of volunteers, as with any other person who comes into contact with the work. Any work that requires a Traffic Management Plan will not be done by volunteers.

During work

Before work starts a meeting will be held between the council officer and volunteer workers to discuss health and safety risks and controls. Volunteer workers will be given a volunteer induction which will include how to report hazards, accidents and incidents. All volunteers will be provided with a copy of Council's volunteer health and safety guide.

Depending on the work being done, to ensure the work is progressing as agreed and risks are being effectively managed, a council officer may periodically observe work which is carried out by the volunteer group.

Post-project works

Following completion of the work, the council officer will hold a post-work review, and where appropriate meet with volunteers. The Review will include verification that the risks were managed effectively, the work was done in a safe manner or not, and identify any learnings for future engagement of volunteer workers.

Volunteer work risk assessment for Community Boards

Low risk	Medium risk	High risk
<p>Examples of low risk work, able to be done by volunteers:</p> <p>Before commencing work volunteer workers will be provided with a volunteer induction, volunteer guidelines and how to report an incident or hazard.</p>	<p>Examples of medium risk work, able to be done by approved contractors :</p>	<p>Examples of high risk work, able to be done by approved contractors :</p> <p>Sophisticated safety systems required.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning • Picking up rubbish • Maintenance work requiring use of hand tools • Working at heights less than 2 metres • Gardening, landscaping and planting requiring use of hand tools within parks (no TMP required) • Data entry, clerical, library work • Cemetery upkeep – gardening with hand tools, headstone cleaning etc • Simple painting – fences etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 240V electrical work • Plumbing • Pest control (excl toxic chemicals) • Lone work in areas of poor cell coverage • Work dealing with potentially difficult public • Working at heights over 2 metres and under 3 metres • Auto door service and maintenance • Drone photography • Gardening / landscaping / lawn mowing (hand and ride-on mowers, TMP may be required) • Cash collection/banking • Fire extinguisher/alarm and sprinkler systems supply and maintenance • Elevated platforms under 5 metres • Work within 5 metres of public occupied spaces • Concreting. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any work requiring WorkSafe notification or permits to work • High voltage electrical work • Confined space • Excavations that are WorkSafe notifiable • Tree felling or pruning • Roothing projects • Asbestos removal • Demolition (>1.5m) • Handling hazardous goods/chemical • Lawn mowing using tractors, mowers, heavy machinery • Working at height over 3 metres • Hot works • Work involving self-propelled plant or equipment.

Volunteer application and induction

Volunteer name or volunteer group name (<i>see reverse</i>)	
Phone	
Address	
E-mail	
Emergency contact person (name, address, phone)	
Volunteer activity type	Environmental / Working bee / other
Volunteer skills (e.g. first aid, other relevant skills)	
Work site	

Induction - volunteers provided an overview by site supervisor of:

- Health and safety guide for volunteers
- Hazards and controls
- Council contact
- Site location
- How to report an incident – accidents, near misses, unsafe behaviour, unsafe equipment
- Site emergency procedures, including evacuation assembly point, first aiders.

I acknowledge the above information has been received and understood. I acknowledge that I must follow all relevant Council safety procedures to ensure the safety of myself and others around me.

Volunteer signature: (See overleaf if multiple volunteers)

Site supervisor name:

Site supervisor signature:

Hazards specific to site and day of working bee, e.g. health, weather, ground condition, traffic, emergency procedures. (See H&S guide for planting projects hazards and how to avoid them).

Hazard (what can harm you or others)	Controls (ways to prevent each hazard harming you or others)

Health and safety guidelines for volunteers

This guide is to assist volunteers at SWDC with an awareness of what could harm them or others, and procedures to keep everyone safe.

Clothing and equipment

- ✓ Use hand tools only, not machinery.
- ✓ Wear suitable clothing and footwear, depending on whether work is indoors or outdoors.
- ✓ Wear any personal protective equipment provided (eg: gloves, hi-vis).

Hazards

There are potential hazards with any council community project, which with care and common sense can be minimised or eliminated.

We ask that you discuss the main hazards at the start at each work session, re-assess the situation as you work and stop work if weather or other conditions become hazardous.

People care

- ✓ Ensure all workers are well informed about the project and how to work safely.
- ✓ Make sure there is plenty of water to drink, especially in hot conditions.
- ✓ If sunny, make sure sunscreen is used.
- ✓ Take adequate breaks and rest.
- ✓ Keep an eye on people, and help any who are getting tired.
- ✓ Anyone with allergies should carry their own personal medication and notify the co-ordinator.
- ✓ Anyone who is under the influence of drugs or alcohol is not able to assist in community work projects.

Hazards and how to avoid them

- ✓ People with hand tools working too close together.
- ✓ Sharp objects in rubbish (take care).
- ✓ Unsafe use of hand tools (show volunteers how to use tools correctly).
- ✓ Uneven ground (take care, appropriate footwear).
- ✓ Poor lifting techniques (bend knees, get help).
- ✓ Sudden adverse weather conditions (check weather report, wear suitable clothing).
- ✓ Vegetation such as rotten branches or trees, thorny or poisonous plants (avoid where possible).
- ✓ Roads (work at least 2 metres from the road, wear hi-vis jackets, take care).
- ✓ Heat / tiredness (seek shade, take adequate rest, food & drink, rotate and share the workload).
- ✓ Hives or wasp nests (leave the area, report nests to council for eradication).

What to do in an accident

Have a suitable first aid kit and cell phone on hand.

If someone is injured:

- ✓ Stop work and provide emergency first aid support
- ✓ Call 111 if necessary
- ✓ Notify SWDC of the incident

SWDC contact name

Phone number