Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Module 1

Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Introduction

Contents

Introduction

Haere Mai. This programme of modules will introduce you to good practice principles for working with volunteers, who are a key part of our Fire and Emergency NZ organisation. It will help you understand the context volunteers work in, so that you can better support the volunteers you are responsible for or working with. These modules are primarily designed for those who are managers, whether in a brigade or in another leadership role from within our organisation.
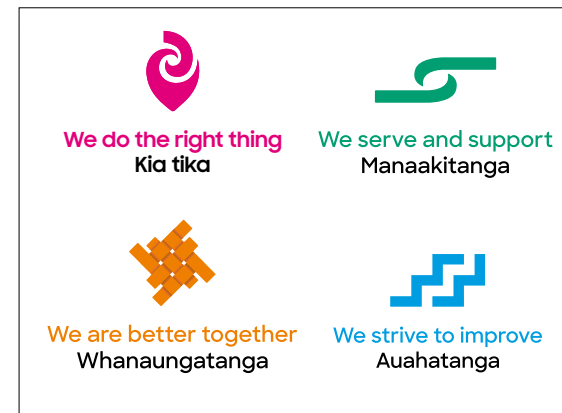
What are you going to learn?

By the end of this course you will understand:

1. The culture and ethos of volunteering in New Zealand, and in Fire and Emergency NZ in particular.

2. The roles, responsibilities and relationships of Managers in relation to the needs of a volunteer Brigade Manager.

3. The legislative and Fire and Emergency NZ requirements for working with volunteers, such as recruitment, training, and retention of volunteers.

4. How to effectively support the leadership of volunteers, recognising issues and opportunities, developing solutions and communicating effectively.

Fire and Emergency NZ values

Our values guide us in how we think and act. They were developed by our people and are for all our people, so are useful for shaping how we interact with each other whatever our role within the organisation or as we interact with stakeholders and members of our wider communities. When working with anyone in Fire and Emergency NZ you should consider how the values support your decision making. >

We do the right thing
Kia tika

We serve and support
Manaakitanga

We are better together
Whanaungatanga

We strive to improve
Auahatanga

Contents

> **THE** Volunteerism Strategy 2019-2029 'recognises the shared responsibility of all our leaders, and the vital role our career personnel play in supporting volunteers'.

Our Volunteerism Strategy lays out the principles to guide our decisions and actions working with our volunteers. >

To enable and sustain volunteerism, we will:

- **appreciate** that volunteering is always a matter of choice
- **make it easier** to be a volunteer
- identify, **share and grow** what works for volunteers
- **recognise** volunteers, their employers and families, as well as their contributions.

To respect and involve volunteers, we will:

- **involve** volunteer perspectives in decision making
- demonstrate **openness, transparency and fairness**
- operate with **trust and respect.**

To serve and strengthen volunteerism in communities, we will:

- be **responsive** to local needs
- be inclusive and **embrace difference**
- build an environment that **enables volunteerism to thrive.**

Xperts solutions *that* work

FIRE EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND
WHAKARATONGA IWI

1

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 1

Understanding volunteering

Note

Throughout these modules, Brigade Managers/Leaders are referred to. This includes CFOs and Controllers.

The Course Home Page referred to throughout the modules is the page on the Course online website which houses relevant material for each module you are working on.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Understanding volunteering

This section introduces the background to volunteering and its significance in New Zealand. This is valuable knowledge to understand the magnitude of volunteer influence on our organisation. With an estimated value of $4 billion per year (reference: Statistics New Zealand (2020)), the contribution volunteers make to our economy is enormous. In this section you will find out what motivates people to volunteer and why good management of volunteers is vital if this incredible resource is to be used well.

What is volunteering?

Volunteering has existed in many societies for hundreds of years. In New Zealand, 'giving to the community' at the marae level was a strong feature of Māori society prior to colonisation. However, the term 'volunteer' is not widely used in Māori—terms such as 'mahi aroha' and 'manaakitanga' give a better understanding of Māori unpaid work. European settlers introduced the British understanding of volunteering, which was strongly linked to charity—care of the needy, sick and elderly.

In simple terms, volunteering refers to any activity in which time is given freely to benefit another person, group or organisation. The western definition of volunteering is based on the notion of free will. However, for Māori and many other ethnic groups, unpaid work is often based on whanau commitments and a sense of cultural obligation.

The New Zealand scene

Volunteering has become a dynamic force in New Zealand society. The most recent national data shows that more than a million New Zealanders volunteer their time in some way or another. These days, volunteers are active in almost all areas of New Zealand society, including health, welfare and education, social services, emergency management, conservation, cultural groups and sport and recreation.

Contents

In 2017 when Fire and Emergency NZ was formed from the merger of 40 organisations, there was a declared commitment, reflected in our new legislation towards supporting and consulting with volunteers. In particular for Fire and Emergency NZ Managers appreciation is needed that the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act (2017) places important obligations on Fire and Emergency NZ in respect of volunteers.

Section 36 of the Act sets out as follows;

(1) FENZ must take all reasonable steps—

   (a) to recognise, respect, and promote the contribution of FENZ volunteers—

      (i) to the performance and exercise of FENZ's functions, duties and powers; and

      (ii) to the maintenance of the well-being and safety of communities; and

   (b) to consult with FENZ volunteers and relevant organisations referred to in Section 37 on matters that might reasonably be expected to substantially affect those FENZ volunteers; and

   (c) develop policy and organisational arrangements that encourage, maintain, and strengthen the capability of FENZ volunteers.

(2) The duty imposed on FENZ under Section 118 of the Crown Entities Act 2004 applies, with all necessary modifications, in relation to volunteers working for FENZ.

(3) A FENZ volunteer is not an employee within the meaning of Section 6 of the Employment Relations Act 2000.

Voluntary labour and non-profit organisations are important to the New Zealand economy.

Linking our Volunteerism Strategy 2019-2029

As a Manager working with volunteers it is important that you are familiar with the above document available on the Portal and the Course Home Page. The document sets out Fire and Emergency NZ's Volunteerism Strategy: Enabling Sustainable Volunteerism—(our strategy).

> **WE** recognise, respect and promote volunteers.
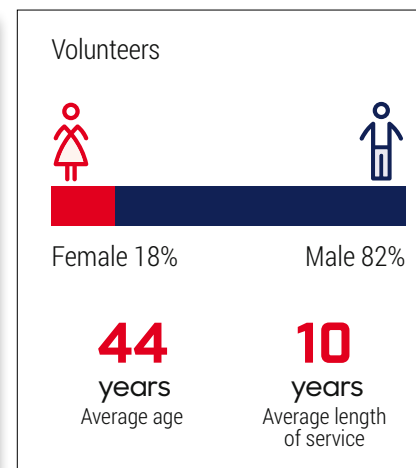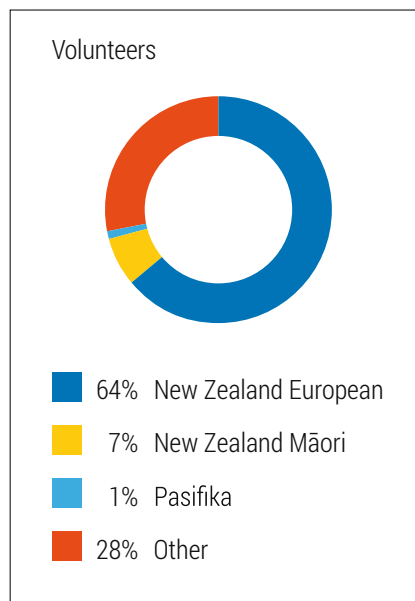
Facts and figures

Of our approximately 13,500 firefighters, approximately 12,000 (85 per cent) of them are volunteers, and of those volunteers approximately 1,850 are volunteer leaders of crews or stations.

Our volunteer brigades, supported by their families and employers, are often the only local emergency service responding to a growing variety of incidents. For example, in 2017/18 Fire and Emergency New Zealand volunteers were the first in attendance at 31,254 incidents, compared with 11,463 incidents in 1990/91, a growth of 173 per cent.

New Zealand volunteers contribute millions of hours labour each year to various causes.

There is demand for volunteers from a lot of other organisations, for example LandSAR and Coastguard.

From *Fire and Emergency NZ Annual Report* June 2019. >

Volunteers

- 64% New Zealand European
- 7% New Zealand Māori
- 1% Pasifika
- 28% Other

Volunteers

Female 18%   Male 82%

44 years
Average age

10 years
Average length of service

Contents

Contribution by Fire and Emergency NZ volunteer firefighters

In 2014 the United Fire Brigades Association engaged an independent valuation agency to calculate the value that volunteer firefighters contribute to the country. At the time they valued the contribution at $530m per annum. In 2019 the UFBA engaged the same agency to review the valuation in the current environment and this resulted in a valuation of $663m per annum.

Noting that volunteers make up 85% of the Fire and Emergency NZ workforce, volunteers are a significant part of Fire and Emergency NZ's response capability. Excluding false alarms, volunteers respond to more than 50% of all incidents, often as the only responders.

Volunteering NZ has produced a leaflet that sums up the impact on New Zealand society of volunteers

The leaflet highlights that:

- New Zealand is a leading nation in contributions made by volunteers. A recent study of the New Zealand not-for-profit sector estimated that volunteers make up 67 per cent of the not-for-profit workforce equal to 133,799 full time positions, a higher proportion than in any of the other 40 world countries participating in the research project. This represents 11.8% of people undertaking volunteer work.

You can view the NZ Statistics leaflet here: https://www.volunteeringnz.org.nz/research/volunteering-statistics-nz

IF you understand the significant influence volunteers have on the operation of Fire and Emergency NZ operational activity you are well on the pathway to working effectively with volunteers.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Why *do* people volunteer their time and skills?

People volunteer for a variety of reasons. Research from Kragt & Holtrop* (2019) in an Australian setting reflect on the New Zealand experience. Their findings show that volunteers deeply value their connection to their unit, derive meaning from both positive and negative emotional experiences, and sometimes have vague expectations about emergency services volunteering. Managing the expectations of volunteers is not a simple task; some volunteers have too few expectations, and others too many. Both of these scenarios can lead to volunteers having a negative experience and influence their turnover intentions.

The volunteer personas are a good source to generate some understanding of volunteer perspective. You can access these on the Course Home Page. See the activity below.

Kragt & Holtrop (2019) Volunteering Research in Australia: A Narrative review. Australian Journal of Psychology.

Volunteers possess a vast range of skills and experiences.

> **VOLUNTEER PERSONAS:** Use the document on the Course Home Page to consider the following task.
>
> From page 9 read about the volunteer personas. As you read, think about WHY each of the six personas would volunteer the time to Fire and Emergency NZ. How does motivation differ? This will be useful to you in future discussions during this course.

What motivates volunteers

Volunteer motivation is sometimes organised into three main areas (based on research by David McClelland, an American psychological theorist):

1. **achievement**
2. **power**
3. **affiliation.**

When you are meeting the motivational needs of volunteers, it may be helpful to see if they fit some of the areas above. It is worth making special note of power as a motivator—as power often attracts a negative connotation related to control.

Power is not necessarily a negative, and in the context of volunteering power can also mean wanting to make social change for the betterment of society.

- People who volunteer for the sense of *achievement* will need goals to strive for, new challenges, ongoing training/skill development, recognition of achievement, new responsibilities and training that will enhance employment opportunities.

- People who volunteer to experience *power* will need positions where they can influence decisions (e.g. committees), opportunities to formulate policy, leadership, decision making, and input into an organisation's development.

- People who volunteer for a feeling of *affiliation* will need positions working with other people, opportunities to mix with others in the organisation, higher level of involvement with day-to-day tasks and helping roles rather than leadership roles.

Adapted from *Managing Volunteers, New Zealand Federation of Voluntary Welfare Organisations (1993).*

Research undertaken by Massey University on volunteer motivation in New Zealand was based on six assumed reasons for volunteering:

1. The feel-good factor of giving to those less fortunate than oneself.

2. Being able to express personal values related to altruistic and humanitarian concern for others.

3. A form of work experience.

4. The opportunity for social interaction, and an activity that might gain status with important others.

5. A way to exercise knowledge, skills and abilities, and to learn through new experiences.

6. Opportunities for personal growth and enhancing self-esteem.

Overall the results showed that motivation based on personal values, and the opportunity to use knowledge and skills were the biggest drivers for volunteers.

Contents

Why do people join Fire and Emergency NZ as a volunteer?

Fire and Emergency NZ has conducted research in the past to find out what motivates our existing volunteers. This included results from:

- the Volunteer Sustainability Survey

- a Public Perceptions Survey.

1. Brought together, this information represents the key reasons why Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers join, why they stay, and the general public's perception of volunteering with Fire and Emergency NZ. This information is vital in assisting with recruitment and retention strategies.

   - The results of the **Volunteer Sustainability Survey** suggest that people join for the following reasons (in order of priority):

   - To serve the community (75.5%).

   - To protect property and lives in the community (57.2%).

   - To meet new people and make new friends (46.5%).

   - To develop skills (42.3%).

2. A summary of **brigade workshop themes** suggests that people join for the following reasons (in order of priority):

   - Friendships.

   - To serve their community.

   - They knew somebody already there.

3. A summary of **research by** PricewaterhouseCoopers (2009) and Zech (1982), suggests that people volunteer for the following reasons (in order of priority):

   - The desire to give back to the community.

   - Social motivators.

   - Personal and skill development.

Research helps Fire and Emergency NZ to find out the factors that motivate our volunteers.

Understanding what motivates people to volunteer with Fire and Emergency NZ will help you recruit, support and retain your volunteers.

Contents

The research conducted by Fire and Emergency NZ identified eight attributes important in defining why volunteers are attracted and engaged with Fire and Emergency NZ. While all eight are important, four attributes were consistently identified as the key attributes, and therefore the most benefit will be gained from developing recruitment and retention strategies with consideration for these.

These key attributes are (in order of priority):

Role reputation; Perception of volunteer firefighter duties, inspiration of seeing firefighters perform their role, community respect of role, most trusted profession.

Service to the community; Protecting property and lives in the community, contribution to New Zealand communities.

Development opportunities; Opportunities to learn new skills, gain experience to be a career firefighter, personal growth and development, opportunities for leadership development.

Camaraderie; Colleague interactions, positive volunteering environment, working in a team towards a common goal, and leadership.

The results of research conducted by Fire and Emergency NZ provide consistent themes for volunteering.

NOW that you know why people join Fire and Emergency NZ as volunteers, think back to the three main areas of volunteer motivation—achievement, power and affiliation. How do these relate to the key attributes identified by Fire and Emergency NZ?

Contents

Power = Role Reputation: Perception of volunteer firefighter duties, inspiration of seeing firefighter perform their role, community respect of role, most trusted profession.

Power/Affiliation = Service to the community:; Protecting property and lives in the community, contribution to NZ communities.

Achievement = Development Opportunities: Opportunities to learn new skills, personal growth and development, opportunities for leadership development.

Affiliation = Camaraderie: Colleague interactions, positive volunteering environment, working in a team towards a common goal, and leadership.

> **ABOVE** all, volunteering is a choice. Volunteers are offering their time, talents, enthusiasm and energy without reward, for the common good. Any manager working with volunteers ensures their efforts are valued and appreciated.

Contents

What demotivates volunteers?

- Bureaucracy/red tape.

- Poor leadership of the brigade.

- Poor brigade communications.

- Reiteration of past mistakes; a discussion of the past doesn't change the past; it only reinforces failure and raises the probability of future mistakes.

- Feeling powerless because they are not involved in any discussion.

- Not being confident about what they are doing.

- Not being treated with the same respect as paid workers, committee members etc.

- Inferior working conditions to others.

- Not being reimbursed for out of pocket expenses.

- Inefficient rosters.

- Working with unclear/lack of instructions or expectations.

Volunteers are *demotivated* when they feel poorly managed, under valued or exploited.

The use of volunteer personas is another useful tool to look at obstacles to the volunteer experience.

VOLUNTEER Personas have been created to assist our thinking about volunteer experiences. Familiarise yourself with the full document on the Course Home Page.

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Volunteer needs

- What do you want me to do?
- What do I need to know about this assignment?
- Where do I go?
- Who do I report to?
- What time do I start and finish?
- Who can I go to if I need information or advice?
- If I cannot do my duty who do I call?

This sort of information is especially important when a brigade organises any event. But these questions apply equally in other volunteer situations.

Leaders who have solid organisation, systems and processes for engaging and working with volunteers will achieve greater success.

Volunteers appreciate being well organised and managed.

Section Summary

If you can find out what motivates volunteers to join with your organisation, you can purposefully reinforce those aspects in the ways that you manage and the messages you give out.

In Section 2, you are going to read information about working with volunteers as a practice, and get a better understanding of the volunteer relationship with leaders in our organisation.

Read on and see what it is all about.

2

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 2

Working with volunteers

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Working with volunteers

This section discusses the role of managers and their importance in the volunteer experience. It is vital that our managers see themselves as a pivotal player in the volunteer environment. This is the essence of our organisational value: 'we are better together'.

The role of working with volunteers

A 'role' is the cluster of behaviours people would ordinarily expect in a given situation. Mothers and fathers are expected to care for their children; a Prime Minister is expected to provide leadership in government; a doctor takes care of our health, and so on.

As a manager there are usually expectations (often unwritten) placed on the hours you work, how you relate to other people in the organisation, and the skills you bring to your job. Sometimes these expectations do not necessarily match with your job title and your job description, but to be an effective manager you aim to meet the expectations regardless.

Why is working with volunteers important?

The answer to this question goes beyond respecting people who give their time and skills freely. As well as helping to support Fire and Emergency NZ work and making it successful in its goals, if volunteers enjoy their experience then there can be no better way of enhancing the credibility and reputation of Fire and Emergency NZ in the community. In this sense, each volunteer is an ambassador for Fire and Emergency NZ, and an excellent recruiting agent for more volunteers.

Anyone who has had a bad experience as a volunteer, whether it is due to poor communication, inadequate systems, poor leadership or lack of supervision and appreciation, puts the organisation's reputation at risk. Word of mouth is a powerful tool in passing on both good and bad opinions. Volunteers are ambassadors for Fire and Emergency NZ out in our communities, and it is important to understand that what is important to them, and supports them ultimately benefits our communities.

Brigade managers must ensure that volunteers' experiences are as positive as possible.

Negative experiences by volunteers will reflect poorly on the brigade and Fire and Emergency NZ.

Contents

The 'art' of working with volunteers

We can refer to working with volunteers as an art because for the most part it is all about relationships with people, with the people who present themselves as volunteers, and with the paid staff in the organisation. This can mean much of the role is about creative communication and interpersonal interaction with others.

Of course there is a knowledge base to working with volunteers, and the skills required to put it into effective practice. This course is more about giving you that underpinning information than a 'work by numbers' how-to manual.

Talk to any experienced manager of volunteers and you will hear them say their role is being an **advocate** for volunteers within the organisation, an **organiser** of systems and processes, a **coach** and **motivator,** an **administrator,** with an eye for detail in maintaining volunteer records, a **trouble-shooter** when things go awry, and a **confidante** of personal histories and experience when volunteers talk to you about their concerns.

The manager also needs to be an expert **juggler** of competing demands, and an excellent **communicator.** These divergent roles are not always spelled out in job descriptions and can lead to 'role confusion' or 'role conflict'—that is, you are not quite sure what is expected of you, or what you thought was expected of you is not shared by others in the organisation.

Please do not let this image of a super-person put you off. The role can be infinitely rewarding in the relationships established with volunteers, and in the successes of your programme and projects. And remember, most of your successes will be due to the quality of your volunteers and how you support them. And ultimately it's important to remember, the people who really benefit are the people in our communities, as we work towards our vision of Stronger Communities Protecting What Matters.

Volunteer managers, including brigade managers, require a wide range of key competencies and skills.

USING FIRE AND EMERGENCY NZ VALUES TO LEAD

How can you bring each of the Fire and Emergency NZ values to life in working with volunteers? Your reflection on this will be useful for future discussions on this course.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Responsibilities of working with volunteers

Successful managers who work with volunteers are able to combine excellent people skills with the attention to detail needed for administration. Getting a full understanding of your role will improve your performance, and your support of volunteers.

Here is a brief outline of the usual responsibilities of volunteer managers: as you read them think how the list compares with your job description whatever level you work at:

Recruitment

In your role you may need to assist brigades in recruitment. This may involve providing strategies and assistance in:

- attracting and recruiting volunteers

- screening them for suitability for the organisation and the tasks

- initial orientation and induction

- placement.

Support

In Module 5, Section 9 *Supporting volunteer performance,* you will learn about performance development. In addition to those requirements for working with volunteers, support is offered through:

- **Training**—an initial programme and opportunity for ongoing skill development and learning relative to volunteer tasks (see Module 4, Section 7 *Training with volunteers*)

- **Monitoring** (supervision) through regular communication

- **Evaluating**, through (for example) satisfaction surveys and exit interviews

- **Recognition and rewarding** volunteers.

Contents

Administration

It is important to ensure the following administration:

- Maintain volunteer records and manage volunteer information.

- Meet reporting requirements for the organisation (for example this may entail reporting to a funder or the Charities Commission).

- Manage budget, or at least submitting annual budget proposals. Ensure familiarity with relevant legislation.

You may have a management team as part of your brigade structure. This can be a number of roles to help manage the admin or running a brigade. It also helps share responsibility and plan for succession in leadership roles.

This course does not contain guidance on record-keeping, reporting requirements or budget management. These are part of the nuts-and-bolts of the manager's role but should also be built into a total approach to management by the organisation.

The Volunteer Hub is useful for the latest information on legislation, and to news and information within the local communities that are part of your area or relevant to the organisation.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Manager role descriptions

At Fire and Emergency NZ a role description has the following features:

- Position title.
- Position purpose.
- Key accountabilities.
- Core capabilities.
- Scope of job.
- Key relationships.
- Qualifications, attributes and experience.

Your role description outlines your roles and responsibilities.

READ: The various manager role descriptions which are available on your Course Home Page to understand organisational roles.

It is important to understand the roles of managers throughout the organisation. This provides and understanding of how we work together. The duties of the Brigade manager are part of the Model Rules of Association.

The Model Rules (2008) are currently under review by Fire and Emergency NZ as a major project. This project's purpose is to implement the intended direct volunteer relationship through the design and implementation of a single replacement volunteer personnel engagement framework that replaces the Urban Agreements of Service and Model Rules, and the Rural Fire Force Agreements/Constitutions. These will be referred to as 'In-House Rules'. In the interim, you can familiarise yourself with how brigades are structured and organized by referring to Volunteer Hub on the Fire and Emergency NZ Portal:
https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/volunteers/brigade-management-and-dashboard

Personal insights are included in different sections throughout the course. Here, experienced managers of volunteers give you the benefit of their personal experience in a practical sense.

Contents

Q&A

Bruce Stubbs MEmergMgt, Dip AET, GIFireE—Formerly Area Manager Southland and now Region Manager Te Upoko (These comments relate to his former role as Area Manager)

Q: WHAT ARE YOUR KEY ROLES AND TASKS OF THE VOLUNTEER MANAGER?

- My role in relation to volunteers as manager is a people focused role.

- The key to this is being available to the brigade, in particular the leadership and management team of the brigade, normally the Brigade manager, but with larger brigades it may include the training and equipment officers.

- Being available in person is primarily the most effective way to support volunteers, being visible and having the ability to both listen and provide guidance from an area, region or national perspective. My brigades know that with many stations I can't be everywhere all the time but I am always available. Phone and email as secondary forms of communicating. Calling in when you passing by, having volunteers call in when they are in town to say hello.

- Showing leadership for the big things but also being able to empower others to sort the smaller things and remove the 'noise'. The VSO role is a key enabler for this to happen.

The basic processes of volunteer management are recruitment, supporting and training volunteers.

Managers working with volunteers need to be highly organised, knowledgeable, people-centred and communicative.

Contents

Q: WHAT PERSONAL QUALITIES AND SKILLS WOULD YOU CONSIDER ESSENTIAL FOR THE ROLE?

- Having vision.
- Excellent time management skills.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Being empathetic.
- Being a good listener.
- Being trustworthy.
- Empowerment.

Q: WHAT STRATEGIES HAVE YOU FOUND USEFUL AS A MANAGER WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS?

- Having a clear vision–where you want to go and the ability to communicate this to others.
- Communication–getting involved first hand, staying informed, initiating new ideas, seeking other ideas and opinions.
- Persistence.
- Realistic and positive–yourself and others.
- Trustworthy.
- Paying attention to the people–induces self-esteem in others, often by challenging them.
- Communicate what you stand for.
- Ability to use situational leadership skills–i.e. conflict management, decision making.

Contents

Q: WHAT HAVE YOU FOUND MOST REWARDING IN ALL YOUR YEARS IN THE POSITION?

- Being able to make positive change in the valuable time volunteers give to Fire and Emergency NZ.
- A lot of time this is through recognition.

Q: HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH TENSION IN THESE RELATIONSHIPS?

- Be seen as a mediator in the first instance seeking both sides of the story, listening, clarifying etc.
- Having a good knowledge of both the Fire and Emergency NZ policies as well as the UFBA Model Rules of Association.
- Seeking advice from region or NHQ.
- Use/consult other volunteer CFO.

Q: WHAT TIPS WOULD YOU LIKE TO PASS ON TO A PERSON NEW TO WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS?

Get out of the office and spend time with volunteers, whether it be with brigades, at functions, promotions, training nights etc.

Being there when everything is going well, not just when it is not going well. You can't influence change if they don't know you or trust you and what you are doing.

Effective volunteer managers ensure that they are well-informed, and know how to handle volunteers fairly.

The human aspect of volunteer management can be hugely rewarding.

It is important for managers working with volunteers to focus on optimising staff-volunteer relationships.

Contents

Q: WHAT ARE THE KEY QUALITIES NEEDED FOR MANAGERS WORKING WITH VOLUNTEERS?

- Challenge the status quo—by looking at opportunities and taking some calculated risks.
  - Change is good. Just because we have done it a certain way in the past does not mean we have to continue that way. There may be opportunities to do it better using a different method.
  - Calculated risks such as with people being stretched, development opportunities.
- Inspire a shared vision—through envisioning the future with my commitment and the enlisting of others in creating this vision.
  - Seeking buy-in and input at the earliest stages, sharing and engaging.
- Enable others to act—by fostering collaboration and strengthening others.
  - Understand the performance required. Recognise the capability and the capacity. This assists in determining what is needed how long it will take.
  - Fostering collaboration through projects, delegation and empowerment. This strengthens the team and individuals organisation grows.

Managers working with volunteers should take their time to develop and grow in their roles.

Although managers working with volunteers will undertake a range of different tasks in their role, they should not overstretch themselves.

New managers working with volunteers should focus on becoming socially skilled.

Contents

- Model the way—setting an example and by making accomplishments feasible
  - Having realistic goals, expectations, standards, responsibilities and time frames.
  - Including others in the setting of goals or expectations.
  - Being positive and engaging that rubs off on others.
- Encourage the heart—by recognising individual contribution and celebrating accomplishments.
  - Recognition of contributions individuals, teams, brigades, area, region and organisation.
  - Celebrating the accomplishments through recognition and praise, awards

Next module's readings

There is a growing awareness in New Zealand of the value of volunteers and the skill necessary to be an effective volunteer manager. Keep an eye on the Volunteering NZ website and news articles for any further information as progress is made in that area: www.volunteeringnz.org.nz

In the next module you will cover, *You, the law and volunteers,* is key information for you. You need a basic awareness of the law as it applies to volunteers so both their rights, and your organisations can be accounted for in your management of people and information.

Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Module 2

Understanding volunteers and working with volunteers as a manager

3

You, the law and volunteers

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

You, the law and volunteers

This section looks at legislation relevant to volunteers in the areas of work responsibilities, access to information and privacy, human rights, health and safety, ACC and IRD. Legislation has had an instrumental role in shaping the direction of our organisation. This section will help you navigate which pieces of legislation, Fire and Emergency NZ policy and practice apply to you working with volunteers.

Understanding the relevant legislation

Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017

The Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 is the legislation which establishes and sets the Framework for how the organisation operates. This includes establishing the functions of Fire and Emergency NZ (what Fire and Emergency NZ is required to do operationally) and 'additional functions' (what Fire and Emergency NZ may do if it has the capability and capacity to do so).

This legislation has a number of clauses which relate to volunteers, which includes:

- Section 36 says that FENZ holds a number of duties in relation to FENZ volunteers.

- Section 36 of the Fire and Emergency NZ Act recognises that FENZ holds duties towards volunteers which go beyond those held in typical volunteer relationships. Requirement of this Section include a requirement for FENZ to recognise, respect and promote the contributions of volunteers, to consult with volunteers and to develop policy which supports volunteers.

- Section 37 provides that FENZ have a duty to make advocacy and support services available to FENZ Volunteers.

Several pieces of government legislation relate to volunteers.

The Privacy Act requires Fire and Emergency NZ fire stations to safeguard and not misuse the information that they hold about volunteers.

Technically, volunteers are not covered as 'employees' under the Employment Relations Act.

Contents

Privacy Act 1993

This Act sets out 12 principles that organisations need to follow to protect the information they have about volunteers and members of the public. A new Privacy Act will come into law during 2020 or 2021 which will increase penalties for privacy breaches. It will also make the reporting of breaches mandatory. The 12 principles that organisations will need to comply with will remain in effect. The 12 principles relate to how information is obtained, how the information is used, how information is stored, who has access to the information and when it should be destroyed. Read how these principles are applied at Fire and Emergency NZ (including within local brigades) by visiting Volunteer Hub and reading the Privacy Act section under the Management Resource heading: https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/volunteers/brigade-management-and-dashboard

TIP: There is internal policy for privacy worth reading found here: https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/national-teams/audit-legal-and-operational-efficiency/legal/privacy

Further information is available at: www.privacy.org.nz

Official Information Act 1982

This Act aims to provide access to information to the public, where the information relates to the working of public functions. There are exemptions under this legislation, but as a general principle the legislation provides an entitlement to the public to receive information about government agencies, including decisions made by those agencies. As a general rule a request received under the Official Information Act should be responded to within 20 working days of the request being received. Fire and Emergency NZ (including volunteer brigades) is obliged to comply with this Act.

TIP: A party who is not satisfied with how a government agency has responded to a request made under this Act can apply to the Ombudsman here: https://www.ombudsman.parliament.nz

Contents

Employment Relations Act 2000

> **ARE VOLUNTEERS EMPLOYED IN A LEGAL SENSE ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT LAW IN NEW ZEALAND?**
>
> The answer is no.

Volunteers are specifically excluded from the law that governs employment relations in New Zealand. The Act is about employment relationships between paid workers and their employers in New Zealand and it does not cover unpaid work or volunteering. In addition the Fire and Emergency Act 2017 specifically notes that FENZ volunteers are not employees.

Section 6 of the Employment Relations Act—Meaning of Employee—specifically excludes volunteers, where it says:

As well as holding a relationship with their local brigade, Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers also have a direct relationship with Fire and Emergency NZ. This means that they are entitled to expect certain standards of support from Fire and Emergency NZ are expected to adhere to Fire and Emergency NZ's expectations around behaviour and standards also.

'(1)   In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, employee . . .

    (c) excludes a volunteer who

        (i) does not expect to be rewarded for work to be performed as a volunteer; and

        (ii) receives no reward for work performed as a volunteer.'

This is often misinterpreted that volunteers have the same rights as paid staff under employment law, and leads some to wonder what their obligations in terms of 'hiring and firing' of volunteers is. This is perhaps because many of the positive aspects of staff employment (such as contract agreements, job descriptions, training and supervision, performance coaching) are translated into the volunteer setting.

It is also challenging because different laws in New Zealand treat volunteers in quite different ways. So while volunteers are not considered employees under the Employment Relations Act, they are considered to be a worker under other laws—most importantly the Health and Safety in Employment Act and the Human Rights Act—which both use expanded definitions of work to include unpaid volunteers.

Operation of volunteer brigades as a club/society is governed by the Model Rules of Association (which are under review). The Model Rules contain processes for selection and discipline of members and Brigade Managers.

Contents

There is information on managing allegations of misconduct and poor performance of Fire and Emergency NZ individuals in the Misconduct and Poor Performance section of the Volunteer Hub: Manager Resource Kit section.

Human Rights Act 1993

The Human Rights Act is relevant to both the starting and termination of a volunteers involvement with FENZ, as well as throughout the volunteers involvement with FENZ. The purpose of this Act is to provide basic protection to individuals, it does this by prohibiting unlawful discrimination. It is unlawful to discriminate against a volunteer on the basis of any of the prohibited grounds set out in the Human Rights Act. Prohibit grounds include age, race and disability. The prohibition is not absolute; depending on the situation discrimination which would otherwise be unlawful can be justified in some situations. An example of this is pregnancy in the context of operational firefighting (see Pregnancy and operational firefighting policy for more detail on this example).

However, the concept of 'being a good employer' means that organisations may wish to extend the principles of the law to volunteers.

The principles of natural justice apply to volunteers just as much as employees when taking action against them.

The Human Rights Act protects volunteers from unlawful discrimination.

TIP: For more help with the Human Rights Act, you can visit the Human Rights Commission website at www.hrc.co.nz or ring 0800 4 YOUR RIGHTS (0800 4 968 77).

Contents

The Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

The Health and Safety at Work Act came into force in 2015. It replaced the Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 and the Machinery Act 1950.

The Act applies to PCBU (Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking), and it is relevant to volunteers in some circumstances, namely:

- Volunteer organisations that employ a person to undertake work for them.

- A person who is volunteering for a commercial business.

Importantly, any volunteers to whom the Act applies will then have a duty of care the same as a paid worker, which is to:

- Take reasonable care for his or her own health and safety.

- Take reasonable care that his or her acts or omissions do not adversely affect the health and safety of other persons.

- Comply, so far as reasonably able, with any reasonable instruction that is given to them by the PCBU to allow the PCBU to comply with the law.

- Cooperate with any reasonable policy or procedure of the PCBU relating to health or safety at the workplace that has been notified to workers.

In an operational response Fire and Emergency NZ will usually be a PCBU. There may also be other PCBUs in addition to Fire and Emergency NZ and relevant Fire and Emergency NZ personnel. This means that the Health and Safety at Work Act makes employers responsible for volunteer's wellbeing at work.

The Health and Safety at Work Act makes employers responsible for volunteer's wellbeing at work.

Contents

Worksafe

Worksafe is the agency responsible for enforcement of Health and Safety legislation. Worksafe have website information where you can read more about the Health and Safety Reform Act information.

The Act has significant requirements for Fire and Emergency NZ (potentially including volunteer brigades), who are required to control risks to health and safety, and if they fail in those duties and are found negligent by a Court, they could endure significant financial penalties (which cannot be insured against). It may apply to you as a manager and affect the scope and type of training you are giving. Read all the Worksafe NZ information carefully, if necessary seek advice about the responsibilities.

Further information is available at www.worksafe.govt.nz or you can contact your Fire and Emergency NZ HR Manager.

ACC

Accidental injuries which occur in the course of voluntary work are classified as non-work injuries. The Accident Compensation (ACC) Act 2001 applies and supersedes any previous ACC acts. When a volunteer visits a medical practitioner with an injury that is a result of such an accident suffered while on Fire and Emergency NZ duty, the medical practitioner will forward a copy of the injury report to the Accident Compensation Corporation (ACC), the volunteer will be provided with a copy of the same report.

Payment for treatment

ACC will pay most of the costs for treatment. Depending on the treatment needed and where that treatment is received, volunteers need to complete the ACC Claim form available at:
https://www.ufba.org.nz/member_services/accident_assurance_scheme.

Loss of wages 1-7 days

If the injury results in the volunteer being absent from their normal work for a week or less, and where, as a result of the absence, there is no income from the employer the following action should be taken:

- Forward the ACC accident form to the UFBA along with proof of earnings. The UFBA administers loss of earnings on behalf of Fire and Emergency NZ.

Contents

Loss of wages 8 or more days

If the injury results in the volunteer being absent from their normal work for a more than a week, and as a result of the absence there is no other income for the period of the absence the following action should be taken:

- The volunteer should liaise with ACC as they will reimburse 80% of the volunteer's lost wages. The UFBA will administer the 'top up' to 100%.

In some rare cases reimbursement of lost wages leaves significant shortfall in the actual income loss of the volunteer. In such a case, claim for additional reimbursement may be made. Such cases for additional reimbursement will be considered. Claims should be submitted to the UFBA.

TIP: www.acc.co.nz has a very good Q&A section relevant to volunteers.

Section Summary

That's the basics of legislation completed. If you are interested and would like more information, or find yourself in a situation where you are not sure about rights and responsibilities, contact your Fire and Emergency NZ Human Resources Manager.

The next section (4) introduces you to the systems, processes and policies Fire and Emergency NZ has in place to support brigades looking to recruit volunteers.

Understanding what is in place, and why, is the focus of that section.

4

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 4

Good volunteer systems and processes

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Good volunteer systems and processes

This section looks at the crucial relationship between Fire and Emergency NZ and its volunteers and how best to sustain these. Although they are not paid members of staff, volunteers still need to have in place many of the policies and procedures used for staff including rights and responsibilities.

It is important to plan thoroughly for the involvement of volunteers, rather than bringing them on board in an ad hoc way. Volunteers are best supported when there are good systems to support their work, and such systems should be established before seeking volunteer applicants.

This includes thorough planning to begin with, sound recruitment and appointment procedures, effective support and training, and an understanding of the ways to retain volunteers.

> **WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF VOLUNTEERS IN RELATION TO THE ORGANISATION'S OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIC PLAN?**
>
> In a brigade, the Chief Fire Officer (CFO) or the Controller has overall responsibility for volunteers, including planning the recruitment drive, selection and screening, organising the induction and training, and arranging for ongoing support for volunteers.

Having one person with overall responsibility for volunteers does not mean that no one else in the organisation needs to worry about them; on the contrary, all levels of the organisation should have an understanding of the role of volunteers and be involved in the planning for their involvement. As Manager, you need to have a good knowledge of national systems, policies, and processes as they relate to volunteers in order to support the brigades within your sphere of influence.

The Fire and Emergency NZ Volunteer Journey has information about the life cycle of a volunteer. Go to your Course Home Page to read this now. Using this document, consider how CFO and Controllers influence this volunteer lifecycle. This thinking will help you during the workshop later in the course when you consider conversations with volunteer leaders.

To prepare for volunteers, Fire and Emergency NZ has effective recruitment, training and management policies and processes in place.

Volunteer support officers also provide operational and administrative support services to our volunteer brigades and firefighters.

Before you start recruiting

The Volunteer Hub has the process overview for recruiting:

Urban: https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/volunteers/brigade-management-and-dashboard/volunteer-urban-recruitment-process

Rural: https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/volunteers/brigade-management-and-dashboard/volunteer-rural-recruitment-process

It is highly recommended that before you start recruiting volunteers, as a minimum you should have the following paperwork in place:

Recommended paperwork	Fire and Emergency NZ Portal
An organisational policy regarding volunteers	• Model Rules of Association (Being reviewed) – Enrolment and membership
Code of Ethics/Code of Practice/Code of Behaviour/ Organsiational Values	• Model Rules of Association (Being reviewed) and VRFF Agreements – Standards of conduct of operational Members • Fire and Emergency NZ and volunteer brigade service agreement

Defined rights and responsibilities of volunteers and of the organisation	• Model Rules of Association (Being reviewed)
	  – Rights of membership
	  – Members' duties and conduct

An information package for prospective volunteers and application forms	• Volunteer Hub • Recruitment and selection – Volunteer firefighter application pack • Operational instructions
Job descriptions and volunteer agreements.	• Model Rules of Association (Being reviewed) • Job descriptions: Controller (currently under review) – The Chief Fire Officer

Contents

Volunteer policy

Membership in a brigade is similar to a typical employment relationship—but there are some quite distinct differences.

The Model Rules of Association 2008 contains a section on enrolment and membership of the brigade to help guide managers and volunteers through this relationship and the process. This section outlines the rules relating to:

- Application for membership must be in writing, and applications for operational membership must undergo and pass a medical test and security clearance. Comments from existing members must also be sought.

- Election of members—brigade members vote to determine whether applicants should be accepted into the brigade as a probationary member.

- Enrolment of members—New members may only be enrolled in the brigade to fill a specific operational or non-operational vacancy or new position. They must sign an acknowledgement that they have read and understood the Model Rules of Association and any Agreement of Service.

- Probationary members—New recruits undergo training and may only carry out duties as directed by the Chief Fire Officer. Within a specified time frame, they must attain the competencies and attributes (including education, training and experience) required to carry out the duties of the position the Member was enrolled to fill.

- Full membership—Following election, enrolment and successful demonstration of skills and attributes required for their position, the member will be notified that he or she is now a full member of the brigade and has the full rights of membership.

- Resignation of members—Any member may resign from the brigade by giving one month's prior notice in writing.

You can access the Model Rules of Association on your Course Home Page.

The Model Rules of Association ensure Fire and Emergency NZ brigades apply a consistent approach to recruiting volunteers.

Contents

Standards of Conduct

The Standards of Conduct, an appendix to the Model Rules of Association, summarises the standards of Fire and Emergency NZ in terms of the behaviour and conduct expected of all staff, including volunteer brigade members. Read that now on your Course Home Page.

Additionally, volunteers are bound by elements of the Fire and Emergency NZ Standards of Conduct policy, particularly personal behaviour, rights of others, conflicts of interest, and, use of official information. There is also a clear link to organisational values and the State Sector Code of Conduct. The policy is found here: https://portal.fireandemergency.nz/assets/documents/807fdf6789/Standards-of-conduct-policy.pdf

The Standards of Conduct outline the broader philosophical and ethical position of Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers.

Contents

Rights and responsibilities

Volunteers' and organisations' rights and responsibilities documents or charters should follow on from a code of ethics or code of practice. Many organisations use these to set out the commitments they undertake when involving volunteers, and the corresponding commitments they expect from their volunteers.

The Model Rules of Association 2008 set out the 'rules' a brigade must abide by to become as a volunteer fire brigade.

Service agreements between Fire and Emergency NZ and brigades also outline the roles and responsibilities of each party. See also section on *Advocacy and Support* in Module 5, Section 9.

Rights and responsibilities documents specifically state the commitments that Fire and Emergency NZ and volunteers have towards each other.

Contents

Information for prospective volunteers

Brigades will likely have a steady stream of enquiries about volunteering, particularly after national campaigns or major incidents.

Fire and Emergency NZ have the Volunteer Hub, a dedicated web page with the following information:

- The role of Fire and Emergency NZ and the types of people who are volunteer firefighters.
- How to join, including the need to live or work in the community, as well as passing medical and security checks.
- Station locations throughout New Zealand.
- Additional information, such as volunteer support roles and amount of time away from other work.

Becoming a Volunteer web page

Prospective volunteers need access to information about volunteering with Fire and Emergency NZ, how they can get involved and the recruitment process they need to follow.

ONE of the main principles when providing information to prospective volunteers is creating realistic expectations. This is because unrealistic expectations lead to dissatisfied new members, who then typically leave within the first three years.

Here are some examples of creating realistic and unrealistic expectations.

Realistic—we respond to a range of calls, so while you may respond to fires, we are also called to motor vehicle accidents, natural disasters, false alarms etc. So you get a lot of variety as a volunteer here—that's what's so good about it!

Unrealistic—You'll get to go to heaps of fires and be a local hero, it's always exciting!

Realistic—We are all expected to train every week, which is usually tough but heaps of fun together. It's really important to us to keep our skills current.

Unrealistic—We fit training in when we can at the expense of prioritising call outs and maintenance.

Contents

Application procedure

Everyone who is interested in volunteering for Fire and Emergency NZ can access information on joining on the Fire and Emergency NZ Portal website:

- Fire and Emergency NZ online application process.
- Medical questionnaire.
- Medical claim form.
- Information on the NZ Police vetting process.
- Consent to Disclosure of Information form.

Applicants will also receive additional information, including:

- Requirements for applicants under 18 years.
- Information Technology Network policy.
- Standard of Conduct for operational members.
- Information on volunteer firefighter skills, knowledge and attributes.

It is important we keep ourselves and our communities safe, well and free from harm. To help us do this we do both medical and Police vetting processes for all applicants.

Application forms are an important first step for gaining information about volunteers and assessing their suitability for volunteer roles.

NOTE: The Medical Questionnaire must be completed by all applicants for operational roles. Applicants must be informed that eligibility to be considered for a position will be dependent on successful completion of a medical clearance.

NOTE: The NZ Police vetting screening process applies to all applicants. Appointment is conditional upon gaining the necessary clearance.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Job descriptions and volunteer agreements

Clarity around the roles volunteers play in a brigade is important. Role descriptions are a useful way of clarifying the expectations and obligations of volunteers, the brigade and Fire and Emergency NZ.

As previously mentioned in an earlier section, a typical Fire and Emergency NZ role description has the following features:

- Position title
- Position purpose
- Key accountabilities
- Core capabilities
- Scope of job
- Key relationships
- Qualifications, attributes and experience.

You will find information about different volunteer roles on the Portal. These include:

- CFO role description
- Controller role description (under revision)
- Firefighting and support roles policy
- Support personnel policy
- Schedule of support personnel tasks.

Problems associated with unclear roles and expectations can be addressed using role descriptions.

NOTE: Make sure volunteers know how to access Volunteer Hub to locate policies, procedures and other resources related to their role.

Contents

Health and insurance

Fire and Emergency NZ offers support to volunteers through:

- Injury and illness prevention programmes.
- Support recover and rehabilitation services.

These are summarised in the table below.

Injury and illness prevention programmes	
Hauora	Health Monitoring Programme
Vaccination programmes	Influenza, Hep B and Tetanus only
Support recover and rehabilitation services	
Critical Incident and Personal Stress Support (CIPSS)	Provides information and strategies designed especially for emergency workers to help cope with Critical Incident and Personal Stress Support (CIPSS).
Loss of income (not covered by ACC)	Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers injured in the course of duty can receive payment for loss of wages in the first week of injury, and an allowance of 20% of wages for additional time of incapacity to top up the 80% paid by ACC.
Treatment surcharges (not covered by ACC)	ACC will pay most of the costs for treatment. Variable surcharges incurred as part of the treatment will be reimbursed.

Volunteers need to apply through their Manager or the Volunteer Support Officer who in turn claim back through the UFBA. You can access more information on the UFBA Accident Assurance Scheme on their website.

The UFBA administers an Accident Assurance Scheme to provide financial assistance to enrolled volunteer members of Fire and Emergency NZ who suffer accidents during approved fire brigade activities.

Contents

Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers perform a valuable service to communities across New Zealand. They receive no monetary reward for this, however it is recognised that reimbursement of some financial losses should be made. At Fire and Emergency NZ we ensure that volunteers claim expenses—as a sign of respect of the time and cost involved in volunteering, and because we value their contribution.

There is guidance for Brigade Managers on the circumstance and process for such reimbursements.

The following reimbursements are covered:

- volunteer annual reimbursement
- volunteer loss of income and other costs
- loss or damage of volunteers personal effects
- loss through personal accident
- accident rehabilitation compensation
- volunteer retirement gratuity
- attendance at conferences and competitions policy.

Fire and Emergency NZ reimburses volunteers for a range of expenses they may incur.

> **NOTE:** Full copies of all policies are available at:
> Details of reimbursements of expenses

Next module's readings

Next module you are going to cover hands-on attraction, recruitment and orientation/induction techniques. A lot of organisations struggle with getting enough volunteers, especially on an on-going basis. All Fire and Emergency NZ leaders need to work together to play their role in our efforts to bring volunteers on board.

Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Module 3

Understanding volunteers and working with volunteers as a manager

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 5

Attracting and recruiting volunteers

Contents

Attracting and recruiting volunteers

This section looks at the ways you can understand and support brigades to attract, recruit, interview and screen volunteers. These efforts are critical to sustain volunteerism, therefore constitute an important role for all leaders who work with volunteers. When a brigade is recruiting volunteers, remember that people respond to volunteer recruitment drives in different ways. Some may react best when asked by a friend or family member, while others may be quite happy to respond to a notice in the community newspaper. It is usually unwise to rely on one method of volunteer recruitment alone. The Volunteer Attraction Toolkit provides access to resources and advice to help ensure you can leverage the strength of the Fire and Emergency NZ brand in your messaging and the marketing materials that you use.

General recruitment methods communicate general information about volunteering with Fire and Emergency NZ to the wider public.

Using personal contacts and face to face methods are the most effective ways of recruiting new members.

HOW do we support the growth of volunteerism for Fire and Emergency NZ?

Effective attraction methods

Assessing the needs of the brigade

The Volunteer Attraction Toolkit is the prime reference for this work. You can also get specialist advice and support by contacting the Volunteer Attraction Team at volunteer@fireandemergency.nz

Before starting attraction and recruitment methods, it is important that you assess the needs of the brigade. For example, do they have a gap in rostering, does your brigade need particular skills? Once you have identified the gaps, you can then look at deciding who the target audience is in the local community. This will help you to work with the brigade to target the message. There are a range of tools in the toolkit.

There are some tips and examples to assist you with coaching your brigades' into targeting their message later in this section.

The ability to attract new volunteers is important for any organisation. This is especially the case for an organisation such as Fire and Emergency NZ, which requires a minimum number of people available to perform its vital role in New Zealand communities.

Contents

There are a range of commonly accepted approaches to attracting volunteers

General recruitment

This is when you send out very general information about volunteering. This may include a notice in the community newspaper, a leaflet drop in people's letterboxes, a stall outside the supermarket and so on.

Using general information about the organisation and its need for volunteers is not usually as effective as detailing information about the brigade. By accessing the Volunteer Attraction Toolkit you can see examples and templates that can be used.

Personal contacts

Recruiting volunteers using already established personal contacts—friends, family, colleagues and networks is probably one of the most common ways to recruit. This is quite an informal approach, but it can be a very successful way of bringing in new volunteers.

Research shows that many people are quite happy to volunteer their time for a service or project; they just need to be asked. Assuming they are happy in their role, existing volunteers are often in the best position to recruit new volunteers—they can speak from personal experience.

If you only ask existing volunteers to recruit amongst friends and family, you may be missing out on people who aren't 'in the loop', such as new arrivals to the community. It is useful to recruit on the basis that you are trying to ensure your brigade reflects your community.

The best recruitment drives use a combination of approaches applied in a purposeful and planned way.

Differences between brigades and their local communities mean that methods used to attract volunteers will be different in different areas.

Some brigades have used very creative promotional strategies, leveraging their contacts in the local community to effectively attract new and diverse members.

These initiatives include:

- brigade profiles in local newspapers
- open days at the fire station
- demonstrations at community days.

Often the best recruitment drives use a combination of approaches applied in a purposeful and planned way.

Contents

EXAMPLE: At 6pm on 23 August 2018, all 27 stations on the West Coast opened their doors in an area-wide approach to attract volunteers.

The campaign comprised news media, print and radio advertising, posters, social media and community newsletters. It involved hands-on activity by the Greymouth Area office working in partnership with the Volunteer Attraction Team at NHQ.

Public events such as the South Westland rugby tournament, the Woodham Shield were used to publicise the Open Nights. Brigades and fire forces were provided with posters and resources (many of which are in the Volunteer Attraction Toolkit) for the Open Night.

Subsequent, successful area/district wide campaigns have been held in Northland and Tairawhiti.

If you're interested in holding a campaign that involves a group of brigades, contact the Attraction Team at volunteer@fireandemergency.nz

Contents

Writing an effective recruitment message

If you were planning a recruitment drive using notices or advertising, the approach in the table below shows a useful way of thinking about how to present your message:

1.	We attend around [number] incidents every year – not just firefighting, but also responding to medical emergencies, hazardous substances, maritime incidents, weather events and rescues.
2.	We cover the area from [Place name] to [Place name] and our volunteers are often first at the scene.
3.	We help keep our communities safe, and we're always looking for more volunteers.
4.	We are committed to a supportive, inclusive and respectful volunteering environment. We welcome applicants regardless of gender, age, ethnicity and educational background.
5.	We need all sorts to volunteer – not just firefighters – we need people with administrative skills and people who can provide operational support.
6.	Our volunteers are fully trained to save lives, respond to emergencies, and stay safe. This means getting home from a call-out, safe and well every time.

It is essential that advertisements for attracting volunteers have a carefully designed and effective recruitment message.

Check out the Volunteer Hub on the Portal to see the national recruitment message.

Contents

Volunteer recruitment using a marketing approach

Another way to look at volunteer recruitment is to use a *marketing approach.* As demand for volunteers increases, and the volunteer options available to choose from are varied and interesting, then you need to make sure that you are communicating effectively with potential volunteers.

Pretending that you are marketing or selling a product or service, you might look at your volunteer recruitment like this:

- You have a 'product' you wish to 'sell'—*volunteer involvement in an organisation.*
- There is a 'price' for this product—*the time and energy of your potential volunteers.*
- There is a 'market'—*the pool of people in your community who are available to volunteer but have yet to be asked.*

> **READ:** in the Volunteer Toolkit examples of brigade attempts to attract volunteers. There is opportunity for assistance with brigade campaigns by contacting Volunteer Attraction.

Thinking about all this, what can you learn from a marketing approach to volunteer recruitment?

- What reasons do people have to volunteer with your organisation?
- Why would they choose you over another organisation in the community?
- What barriers are there for their involvement?
- Is your recruitment material up to date and interesting?

Marketing and sales strategies are excellent methods for communicating with and attracting potential volunteers.

A marketing approach can help organisations better understand the marketplace for volunteers, and subsequently refine their volunteer recruitment processes.

Contents

The recruiting process

The next step in recruiting is applicants meeting with the brigade leader/s or the brigade management team to be interviewed. The interview should cover:

- a realistic picture of the time commitment required
- timeline to become operational or trained in the role
- relationship with employer
- discussion on applicant's health and medical requirements for role
- discussion on applicant's Police history
- fit with brigade?

If the applicant is suitable the online application form can be completed and submitted to NHQ to start the recruitment process. The applicant needs to show two forms of identification to an authorised Fire and Emergency NZ person to confirm their identity.

The recruitment process consists of Police vetting. The reason we do this is to ensure our people are safe and to avoid future complications. Police vetting takes a full calendar month. Medical screening is required to ensure the volunteer firefighter is safe and able to conduct their role. Requirements for each role are:

- **Fire fighting**—requires Police vetting and full medical with GP, although if applicant is aged 16 or 17 parental consent is required rather than Police vetting.
- **Ops support**—Police vetting and self-medical, although if applicant is aged 16 or 17 parental consent is required rather than Police vetting.
- **Brigade support**—Police vetting but no medical is required.

Contact details for recruitment team volly.applications@fireandemergency.nz

Contents

As discussed in Module 1, Fire and Emergency NZ conducted research to find out about the 'market' for volunteers, part of this involved questioning existing brigade members to find out why they became volunteers and why they have stayed volunteering.

This research informed the Volunteer Value Proposition (VVP). This will help you help your brigades on how to target their recruitment.

Below are some tips to assist you in coaching your brigades to targeting their recruitment using a marketing approach.

Where are your gaps?	ADVERT TEXT
Day-rostering	Are you available during the day to help? Your local brigade supplies an essential service to you and the rest of your community. Currently we are struggling to respond to emergencies during the day. The commitment may not be as much as you think.
Non-operational	There is much more to your local fire brigade than just responding to emergencies. Your local brigade supplies an essential service to you and the rest of your community. You don't have to be at the end of a fire hose to be active in your brigade. There are many other positions available that have an important role in serving the community. Support crews for firefighters assist at the incident scene by providing a vital role, all without getting their hands dirty. Other roles are active in educating your community about fire safe practices, or even just assisting the brigade run its books or operate its IT systems.
Night-rostering	Are you available during the night to help? Your local brigade supplies an essential service to you and the rest of your community. Currently we are struggling to respond to emergencies during the night. The commitment may not be as much as you think.
Both	Do you live or work locally? Are you available to respond to emergencies or be a valuable part of our team? Your local brigade supplies an essential service to you and the rest of our community. Your brigade has successfully responded to the communities needs since (insert date), but we now require new members to help us achieve these needs.

Contents

Who are these people in your community?	ADVERT TEXT
Shift workers	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. If you are a shift or flexible hours worker, you may provide a solution to your brigade's needs. Being able to respond to emergencies or help with fire prevention activities can be customed to fit your life.
At home parents	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. Are you a home maker or care giver? You may be able to provide a solution to your brigade's needs. Your availability to help with emergences or fire prevention activities could easily fit the fire brigade's responsibilities. This can vary from either physically responding to a taking care of the children left behind while others respond.
Students	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. Students over the age of sixteen can be valuable members of a fire brigade. Is your school or home close to the brigade? Your location and enthusiasm could be just what your brigade needs to maintain its service to your community.
Local employees	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. Do you work close to your fire brigade? If you do, your availability and close location may be exactly what your brigade needs to supply an essential service to the community. There are benefits for your employer also. Your new skills could be useful in your work place and the employee recognition programme supports businesses that support fire brigades.

Contents

Local residents	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. Do you live close to your fire brigade? If you do, your availability and close location may be exactly what your brigade needs to supply an essential service to the community.
Work visas (not holiday visas)	If you are in New Zealand on an approved work visa, you are able to join a brigade. In many of our tourist attractions you will meet and work with people from throughout the world. Your availability and close location may be exactly what your brigade needs to supply an essential service to the community.
Self employed	To be a valuable member of your local fire brigade doesn't mean you have to give up your normal routines. Are you a business owner or self employed? Your flexibility and availability could be invaluable to your fire brigade. Not only would you provide an important service, networking within brigades is an excellent way of developing professional relationships.

Contents

What are these people looking for?	ADVERT TEXT
Serving their community	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one way street in terms of benefits. Yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Not many roles in life will provide you with the satisfaction that you can get from selflessly helping your community. Being a fire brigade member provides such a rewarding opportunity.
Development opportunities	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one-way street in terms of benefits, yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Skills vary from those with a formal qualification to those practical skills applicable to your role. By being a brigade member you will attain skills and abilities that will importantly enable you to carry out your role, but also greatly develop your personal skills and attributes beyond Fire and Emergency NZ.
Meeting new people	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one-way street in terms of benefits. Yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Are you new to the community? Would you like to meet and form relationships with like-minded people? Perhaps the fire brigade is right for you? Volunteer fire brigades are like family, caring and supporting each other through good and difficult times.

Contents

Volunteering with friends or family	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one-way street in terms of benefits. Yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Volunteer fire brigades often have a proud family history. The nature of this relationship is through understanding the valuable role they have in their community and the desire to maintain that service. The legacy of these families is permanently and greatly respected within brigades and communities alike.
Protecting property and lives in their community	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one-way street in terms of benefits. Yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Some roles are physical in nature. A volunteer firefighter can feel valued for their service physically saving lives and property. Other nonphysical roles, such as operational support, can still experience the feeling of making a difference by providing fire prevention lessons that result in saving lives and property.
The role reputation	Being a volunteer fire brigade member is not a one-way street in terms of benefits. Yes the community will greatly benefit from your commitment, but you will also. Fire and Emergency NZ has been voted the most trusted organisation for many years. We are also the most respected government department. This status is gained by FENZ people. You, as a volunteer, earn this status. This respect and admiration is rightly associated with all our brigade members.

How would you best get their attention?	Things to consider
Mailbox drop	A mailbox drop is a good way to invite local community members to an event that the brigade has organised. This event might be to teach the community about the brigade and their services, as well as to attract some new members. **Note:** Try to avoid doing a mailbox drop when there is a lot of advertising material being delivered.
Holding an open day	This method is typically very effective for building relationships between local community residents and brigade members. When arranging an open day, it is important to make sure there are things for people to see or even participate in to get them engaged. From here, it's a small step to ask if they would consider being a member of the brigade. **Note:** Try to avoid planning an open day when the community has other events planned, or during a time of year when the residents will be too busy to attend.
Posters in shop windows	Posters in shop windows can be very engaging to local community residents. This can also be an effective way of promoting the local volunteer brigade if there are a number of residents who don't realise their fire brigade is volunteer. **Note:** make sure the main messages are short and catching to attract the right people into the brigade. Also consider the type of shop window to advertise in, and the type of customers that normally shop there—are these the people they want in their brigade?
Newspaper	If the local newspaper is well-read, then see if you can use this as a way to help get your messages out there. Talk to the editor about possible story ideas and always ensure you include a message about needing more volunteers and ask to have contact details included. Some brigades have agreements with their local paper to provide a regular column which is a great way to ensure you can get regular messages out to your community—not just about recruitment but also fire safety.

Contents

Through a contact in the brigade	Through a contact in the brigade: If you have a brigade member who knows somebody who may be suitable, this is the most effective way to recruit a new member. Make sure you set this person up with all of the information they need. It may be beneficial for this person to be able to invite their friend or family member to either a training or social meeting where they can get to know other members of the brigade who will encourage them to join.
Community event	Community events are a great way to build relationships with local residents. To ensure this is successful, it is important to make sure the brigade stand is manned by people who can engage in conversation with strangers, and feel confident in talking about what the brigade does. When talking to people at these types of events, it is also beneficial to invite prospective new members to come to a training or social event at the station as soon as possible.
Facebook page	Facebook pages can be used to provide a particular message to potential new members. If you have your own brigade website or Facebook page, be aware of policy regarding its use, and, effective ways of managing the page. See the Volunteer Attraction Toolkit.

Contents

WOULD IT WORK FOR YOUR BRIGADE?

Naturally one downside of placing your message in such a public place as Facebook are the comments, which can support or detract from the good intent, so thought needs to be put in when considering this approach. Consider your own experiences, and with assistance from the Senior Advisor Volunteer Attraction, you may be able to think of new ways to attract new members in communities.

Thinking about what other people you know are doing, both in Fire and Emergency NZ, and outside. For example, you may have children or friends going through a recruitment process—what can you learn from what you see other people doing and apply it to the brigade(s) you are responsible for?

Recruiting for diversity

As the make-up of New Zealand's population changes and more people enter the paid workforce, there is a growing awareness among organisations which involve volunteers about the importance of being responsive to different sectors of society, and making sure that specific organisations and individuals are not being inadvertently excluded from their volunteer programmes. There are many different skills and talents that may be lost to your volunteer programme if you don't take the time to look at how you can involve people from all sectors of the community, including people with disabilities and from cultures different from your own.

The flip side of diversity among volunteers is the reality of diversity among the people in the community serviced by a brigade. The infinite variety of people in different communities means that you cannot apply the principles of one-size-fits-all in recruiting volunteers.

Think about some of these things:

- How responsive is a particular brigade to people from different cultures? For example, would new migrants feel welcome volunteering with the brigade?

- What other skills do potential recruits have from their paid job or life experience? For example, are they great at community events, or marketing and building community relationships? If so, could they help with promotion and education as part of a brigade support or operational support role?

Brigades benefit from recruiting a diverse range of volunteers.

Contents

Involving businesses in volunteering

Fire and Emergency NZ relies heavily on the support of employers in local communities who allow their staff to volunteer for Fire and Emergency NZ.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to encourage employers to allow their employees to be a Fire and Emergency NZ volunteer. Without the support of employers, local brigades will find it difficult to achieve full complement.

Fire and Emergency NZ has an Employer Recognition Programme (ERP) which allows brigades to print supporting employers business names on a decal for truck lockers, and signage outside the station. The ERP also provides brigades with funds to hold a night in recognition of these employers.

The programme is based on building partnerships with employers and the self-employed who share similar values and a commitment to help build strong, safe and caring communities.

The partnership between Fire and Emergency NZ , volunteers and their employers is based on mutual benefit. The Fire and Emergency NZ Employer Recognition Programme aims to assist in the acknowledgement of this contribution to Fire and Emergency NZ and the community.

To assist businesses in gaining a return from their Corporate volunteerism, they are presented with a certificate of appreciation and the Fire and Emergency NZ Volunteer Employer Recognition Brand for use in advertising and promotional material.

Assisting with employer engagement

Sometimes a new recruit may find it daunting to speak to their employer about any impact concerning them. For example, that there may be times that they will need to turn out to assist the brigade during working hours. In these scenarios, either you as the Manager, and/or the CFO/Controller could offer to meet with their employer to talk through the benefits to them from having a Fire and Emergency NZ volunteer in their employment. It goes beyond the signage and annual function; they will also now have a qualified First Aider (that Fire and Emergency NZ has paid for) and someone who is developing skills in team work, and in some cases leadership skills.

Where the employer is a little skeptical about people turning out during work and sacrificing productivity, it is possible to negotiate response hours within a month. For example, negotiate with the employer that once the volunteer has taken 8 hours out of their work time in a month, they will no longer use any more working hours until the next calendar month.

Volunteer brigades are heavily reliant on the support of local employers to allow their staff to volunteer.

The Employer Recognition Programme allows brigades to say thanks to these employers for their support.

Recruiting and the Human Rights Act

As well as it being good practice to recruit for diversity, the Human Rights Act requires that you do not discriminate against a volunteer based on things like their age, sex, race, or disability. The Human Rights Act uses an expanded definition of employment to include volunteers, and employment is one of the areas in which you cannot discriminate against people on the basis of personal characteristics defined in the Act.

Of course we do need to measure human rights against the skills and abilities of volunteer applicants. You would not engage a volunteer for an assignment that includes driving a motor vehicle if they have a disability that prevents them from actually driving, but maybe there are other activities where they could be involved, such as a support role.

Brigades must adhere to the Human Rights Act when recruiting volunteers.

Section Summary

Recruitment underpins all that your organisation needs volunteers for. If you have to recruit volunteers our best advice is to keep in mind what you have read, work out what you think will work best out of it all and give it a try. If you do not get enough response, don't give up on that approach, keep your message out there and introduce a couple of new ideas as well.

6

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 6

Inducting and onboarding volunteers

Inducting and onboarding volunteers

Once you have completed the interview, and your referee, security and medical checks have provided satisfactory information, you are ready to appoint the volunteer. The Brigade Manager can usually do this by contacting them to offer them the role, and let them know what happens next (orientation, training, first meetings and so on).

Induction is all about welcoming and introducing someone new to the organisation and explaining what they are going to be doing, and why, in terms of your organisation's goals.

This is an important step; people like to be valued enough to be given a broader understanding of the organisation they have made a personal commitment to.

The Volunteer Welcome Pack contains much of the material required.

Induction vs onboarding

There is a difference between induction and on-boarding. Induction tends to be learning about Fire and Emergency NZ as an organisation and its functions. For example Fire and Emergency NZ national and functional inductions.

On-boarding is about all of the activities/experiences processes set up to help assimilate a person into Fire and Emergency NZ—to make them feel welcome, making introductions, providing access to email, phone (part of which may be induction), ensuring they have what they need to be effective as soon as possible. On-boarding can be considered to start as soon as Fire and Emergency NZ enters into a relationship with a volunteer.

On-boarding typically includes such things as introduction to the brigade and its members, as well as engaging new members into the purpose and services that the brigade performs for the local community. On-boarding is one of the eight major levers for driving engagement in an organisation.

Induction and onboarding involves welcoming and initiating new people into the organisation.

Engagement is the relative strength of an individual's identification with, and involvement in, and loyalty to a particular organisation or job.

Research from the Corporate Leadership Council Recruiting Roundtable suggests that effective on-boarding improves the overall engagement, performance, and retention of new hires by helping them understand and feel connected to different facets of their job and associated success factors.

For Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers, on-boarding is the stage between application to be a volunteer and attending the recruit course to become a full-member of the brigade.

Currently, individual brigades use various techniques like 'buddy' and learning from fellow brigade members. The role of a buddy/mentor is to ensure the new recruit is engaged in the brigade culture and not left to find their own way through the myriad of new information and experiences that occur in new roles. This level of support will help make new volunteers immediately feel like they belong. The TAPS 'recruit' programme also covers some material on the wider role of Fire and Emergency NZ which is useful to new members.

It is important for you to ensure brigades are going through this process whether it is through formal or informal methods. Is there anything else you could do from an area perspective? For example, get all the new recruits together in the area as they are all going through the same questions.

Induction should have three aspects: orienting volunteers to the organisation, to the systems, and to the environment

Orientation to the overall organisation

This will cover things like the history and mission of the brigade and Fire and Emergency NZ:

- What Fire and Emergency NZ does—its purpose, and any other statements such as the mission statement. Refer to *Fire and Emergency NZ Strategic Framework* on the Course Home Page.

- FENZ Values: We Do The Right Thing, We Serve and Support, We Are Better Together, We Strive to Improve

- Chain of Command:

  – Brigade standing orders and operating procedures

  – Brigade structure and rules

  – Model Rules of Association and Standards of Conduct

- Links to other organisations.

Contents

Orientation to the systems

This will cover things like the policies and procedures and the organisation's structure:

- Who the volunteer will work with and report to and communication pathways within the brigade.
- Support networks, including formal (such as supervision) and informal (such as a volunteer social interaction).
- Organisational policies—such as privacy, health and safety, use of the internet/intranet, complaints/grievance.
- Operational procedures—such as the emergency procedures, accidents register and health and safety.
- Legal requirements of the brigade and any implications for individuals.
- Drill nights and attendance expectations outlined.
- What they key dates are in terms of training or other events.
- Location of facilities—exits, security features, after hours contacts.
- Administrative procedures—such as any record keeping requirements, expense claims forms.
- Any equipment the volunteer will be expected to work with.
- Probationary periods and expectations.
- Explanation about confidentiality and access to information.
- Mentor assigned.
- Uniform requirements and usage.
- Pager usage.
- Keys and access to station explained.
- Introduce new recruit to other members of the brigade and key people.

Contents

Orientation to the environment

This will cover the environment in which they will be volunteering—the physical spread, the culture of the brigade, the relationships within the brigade and so on.

This is also a good time to discuss any informal etiquette that prevails—the things are almost never written down and can be confusing at first for new people. This may include:

- Any 'unspoken rules'.
- Any jargon or acronyms that might be new to them.
- Standard of dress or cleanliness.
- Smoking.
- Ways the brigade celebrates or has social occasions (end of year functions, regular coffee catch ups etc.).

These components to induction can be discussed and their relative importance highlighted. Better still is to provide a copy of the *Standards of Conduct* which can be used as a reference for volunteers.

This includes the expected standards of behaviour and conduct of brigade members.

READ: The *CFO Induction Guide* (which applies to both urban and rural volunteer managers) on the Course Home Page for specific material related to Brigade Manager needs. It has great tips and ideas for you to make this process successful.

As you read through the guide, think about the importance of engaging brigade volunteers at this stage, and what other opportunities exist to maintain a volunteer's engagement throughout their tenure.

Contents

Next module's readings

Once volunteers understand the 'big picture' in terms of your organisation they need to focus on the actual task(s) they will be doing.

In the next module you cover *Training volunteers,* which can be seen as a wider part of induction but we wanted it as an individual topic because of its importance. The more effectively a brigade carries out the training step, the sooner the new recruit(s) carries out their tasks to the required standard.

Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Module 4

7

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 7

Training with volunteers

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Training with volunteers

For Fire and Emergency NZ, the importance of operational training is threefold:

1. Firstly, it helps us meet our strategic purpose: *'protecting and preserving lives, property and the environment'.*
2. Secondly, well trained Fire and Emergency NZ people with up to date skills and knowledge can carry out their duties effectively and safely.
3. Thirdly, training prepares people for succession (whether it is through the Training and Progression System—TAPS or National Rural Fire Authority NRFA Training Standards) and maintains the current skills of all brigade members (whether it be Operational Skills Maintenance—OSM or in the case of some rural brigades various other methods for maintaining records for skills). Other forms of training include Volunteer Leadership Development Programme, Mind Tools and Learning Station.

Training is not a one- off event, but consists of prior training, basic initial training, and ongoing training.

Prior training or knowledge may be a prerequisite for some voluntary positions, but remember that expectations should be realistic.

Basic initial training follows orientation, and covers essential skills and knowledge.

Ongoing training focuses on progressively developing volunteers' abilities and skills.

Types of training

Training is not just a one-off event although there is a need sometimes for specific training courses to deal with specific issues.

Training can be categorised as:

- acquisition (new training/progression training), and
- maintenance (refresher training).

Contents

Acquisition

Initial training follows on from induction. Whereas induction introduces the volunteer to Fire and Emergency NZ as an organisation and explains the structures and processes, basic training will cover essential operational skills and knowledge the volunteer needs.

Basic Training provides essential skills and knowledge. Recruit firefighters are required to attend 7 days of training including:

- 3 days basic skills
- 1 day validating skills
- 2 days breathing apparatus
- 1 day Realistic Fire Training Building.

All volunteers attend a 2-day medical co-response course.

Rural firefighters are required to attend a 4 day non-Breathing Appartus recruit course which is currently being trialled, for non-Breathing Appartus wearing brigades. Alternatively, we offer multiple 1-2 day courses which cover the basic skills for rural personnel.

Training may be run as one course or split into its different components. Pre-course learning is required, but on station help is available.

Some regions vary the structure of courses to weekends, depending on needs of the brigade members involved.

Following on from this, members may also build their skills, knowledge and experience by completing other volunteer programmes, including:

- Recruit Programme
- Qualified Firefighter (QF) programme
- Senior Firefighter (SF) programme
- Station Officer (SO) Programme
- Volunteer Executive Officer (VEO).

There is more information these programmes in the *Volunteer Station Training Reference Guide* on the Course Home Page.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Ongoing training

The initial induction and recruit training programme should not be the end of learning for volunteers. There are specialist courses for pump operating, Emergency Response Driving etc. Learning Station is widely used for course delivery of online learning modules.

Skills ITO, the external standard setting body for the fire and rescue industry, (formerly it was EMQUAL) is responsible for developing the qualifications that link to TAPS and that are registered with NZQA. They work with Fire and Emergency NZ to meet the national requirements.

Maintenance

Ongoing training is also required, such as at the brigade weekly training nights. This training covers OSM, for example ladder drills, to ensure the brigade is always operationally ready.

Station Training Co-ordinator

Most brigades have a Station Training Co-ordinator (STC) who co-ordinates brigade training on behalf of the CFO/Controller. The STC plans and co-ordinates brigade training. They have a leadership role in encouraging brigade management and members to be actively involved in training.

The STC does not have to do everything. Some will have training delivery skills, some will have planning and managing skills. STCs use other brigade members and region training to help plan, manage and deliver training, and involve people in training.

The responsibilities of STC are detailed in the reference guide on your Course Home Page.

The brigade training plan will show Station Management System (SMS) tasks and OSM skills, and when TAPS practical courses are scheduled.

Contents

Planning for training

The STC will work with the CFO, Controller, Officer in Charge and Region Training Co-ordinator to do a brigade training needs exercise which will help you develop an annual brigade training plan.

The brigade training needs exercise identifies areas where progression and/or training is necessary.

The table below gives you a list of things that you can consider when you are planning training. It might give you some ideas about ways to use the time well, and to cover off more than one need on a training night.

Things to consider	IDEAS
List your available dates over 6 months or a year	Remember to allow for public holidays and brigade meeting nights.
What other opportunities have you got?	Training nights, incidents, inter-brigade exercise, scenarios.
What do you need to cover?	TAPS or other training, OSM and other relevant reports, revalidations, new equipment.
What else has to be considered?	New equipment, new techniques.
Time of year—seasonal workers and type of training e.g. inside in the winter, outside in summer	Gaps in knowledge? What capability you need to build?
What do you need that you haven't got?	Time, equipment, knowledge, support.
How can you maximise the time?	Cover off specific needs in one scenario or activity e.g. someone on the SF course can run a drill or skill and brigade members cover off OSM skills at the same time.

Contents

Who else can help?	Other brigade members with interest and/or experience, VSO, region training, local paid station and staff, region training, other neighbouring brigades, other Region brigades, other STCs, Fire and Emergency NZ Learner Support.
Are all members catered for?	Allocate time for officer training and other individual role or position skills.
What else could you do?	Have a fitness session with the local rugby/sports club, have a joint training with St. John's. Talk your Manager to see what people and opportunities might be available. Plan training together with your committee.

Contents

Training support

Training is responsible for having the most current learning material on the Portal.

You can access learning materials, programmes and training schedules there.

Training information

Contact the Training Team

Phone: 0800 874 746

Fax: 0800 430 634

Email: courses@fireandemergency.nz

Training is based at National Headquarters in Wellington. For support, in the first instance, you should contact your Course Co-ordinator who can organise for assistance from the lead trainer for any relevant training. Training support is available through the local Region Training Co-ordinator and Region trainers based out in the Areas.

You do not have to reinvent the wheel. Training materials are available from Training that you can use.

To contact Learner Support phone 0800 874 746 or email courses@fireandemergency.nz

Contents

Deliver and evaluate your volunteer training

Next, the training will need to be delivered—by either yourself or someone in your organisation (such as the STC), an outside trainer, or an existing course that your volunteers have attended.

NOTE: An important final step in training is to evaluate it—to make sure that it met the needs of the learners.

Below are some evaluation questions that may be the basis of a questionnaire for use with your volunteers after a training session:

- What is one thing that you have learned today?
- What aspects of today's session did you find useful?
- What aspects of today's session did you find not useful?
- What would you like to see more, or less, of?
- Was this training relevant to your volunteering? Can you see how you might use it in your volunteer assignment?
- Any other comments?

It is useful to evaluate training programmes following their completion to ensure that they have met the needs of the learners.

Contents

PERSONAL INSIGHT

Sue Hine, previous Volunteer Co-ordinator for Mary Potter Hospice

VOLUNTEER TRAINING

There is a critical path for ensuring your volunteers are best prepared and informed to get 'best performance'. Much of this pathway will depend on the policies and procedures of your volunteer programme established prior to recruitment.

Job descriptions determine what skills, attributes and knowledge are required of a volunteer, which then shapes how you undertake a recruitment drive and the design of a training programme. New applicants need to be assessed (1) for their suitability to the organisation, and (2) for the kind of training they might need for assigned tasks.

There is much to be gained in a full orientation and induction phase of training. The physical layout of the office or building, meeting staff, and outlining organisational processes will help volunteers become familiar and comfortable with their surroundings.

An understanding of organisational structure and communication pathways will offer a sense of place. Policies relating to health and safety, emergency procedures, confidentiality and privacy, and to volunteer rights, are no less important. Volunteers need security.

The formal training programme needs to take into account the principles of adult learning and different learning styles. Most people prefer to 'learn by doing', and sharing experiences can also be a good teacher. Thus 'group work' may be the appropriate methodology to reinforce volunteer learning. Of course this approach can be supplemented by 'instruction' where there are technical skills to be learned.

Asking volunteers to evaluate their training offers feedback for refining and improving your programme. Finally, volunteers are entitled to ongoing 'professional development' as much as paid staff. Further training might include updating skills, specialist topics, or support for attending community courses and conferences.

Following this path of volunteer training will bring benefit to both volunteers and to your organisation.

Volunteers' performance often depends on how well they are selected, inducted into the organisation, and trained.

Contents

Section Summary

'HE TANGATA. HE TANGATA. HE TANGATA. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING? IT IS PEOPLE, IT IS PEOPLE, IT IS PEOPLE.'

At the heart of all workplaces are people. And workplaces cluster people together in different teams. When part of a team people react in different ways. As well as working with volunteers as individuals, you must also consider team dynamics. Do that right and you will have a well performing, happy, positive team. Get it wrong and your management skills will be put to the test.

Team performance really is the centre of good volunteer experience. You are about to get a greater insight into teams. Read the section carefully and think about teams you have been a part of. We are sure you will recognise elements of successful teams you have been involved in.

The next section, *Working with volunteer teams,* is one of the larger sections in the course, we suggest you work your way through it and then, to help you remember, come back to re-read what you saw as the key points for you.

8

Working with volunteer teams

Contents

Working with volunteer teams

Managing volunteer teams

This section concentrates on understanding team dynamics, working with volunteer teams/brigades and will help you work through tricky issues such as performance.

An introduction to teams

By now you may be confident in your understanding related to planning, supporting, orientating/inducting and training volunteers. However, all that information will be of limited use to you if you create a group and not a team.

There is a lot of detailed information about team psychology in existence, much of which is not relevant for what you need at this stage. So we have brought together some key points to help you learn more about teams. By understanding this information, you and volunteers will have a far greater chance of enjoying the benefits that a well-organised and functioning team can bring.

Some of the content you read will refer to you as part of a workplace team so you can use your own experiences and situation to learn from. Other content and examples will refer to the volunteer team environments that you may or may not be accustomed to working in.

By the end of this section of the course you will be better able to:

- understand the difference between groups and teams
- identify how to improve the standards which affect your volunteer team's performance
- assess your team's cohesiveness and morale
- understand how you can guide your team towards the achievement of its objectives
- improve communication with your team.

Effective team managers will understand the dynamics of their team.

Contents

WHAT IS A TEAM?

What do we mean by a group and how is that different from a team?
How can we identify the qualities and properties of teams?
How does belonging to a team benefit the individual?
Where does the team fit into the rest of the organisation?

We will try to answer all these questions in this section. We will also take a look at what is meant by team morale and culture, and the phases of team development.

This will prepare the ground for the second section, in which you will explore making teams successful.

There is a difference between a group and a team

DRIVING along a rural road, several cars suddenly found their way blocked by a fallen tree. The motorists each got out of their cars to inspect the problem, but as they were strangers they did not immediately speak to each other. When it became apparent that with a combined effort the motorists could move the tree off the road, they came together to plan the best course of action to take and how to work together at the task–who would do what and when. After a few minutes of hard work the motorists managed to drag the tree to the side of the road, where upon the whole group cheered and discussed the problem together.

- Would you consider these people a team or a group?
- Could these people be defined as a group before they stopped for the tree?
- Were they a group before they resumed their journeys?
- If so, at what point did they become a group?

Contents

When you walk into a room full of strangers such as at a cafe, you don't think of yourself as part of a group; you just happen to be in the same place at the same time as these other people. Even if you get to know some of them, and exchange opinions of information, you still may not perceive yourself as being in a group with them.

But if you can identify a common objective or purpose with the others, your perception may change.

The motorists who stopped for the tree became a group when they:

- interacted with one another—by discussing their common problem, and

- identified a common objective; in this case, to find a way out of their predicament, and

- perceived themselves as a group; they would show this by saying things like: 'what shall we do now?'

A group of people interact, share a common purpose, and perceive themselves as a group.

Think of your own team, or a team that you belong to. Do the three characteristics listed above—interaction, a common purpose and self-perception as a group—completely describe a team?

It might help if we compare a typical group to a typical team.

A group	A team
A collection of people at a wedding is a group; when we look at the photographs afterwards, we talk about 'the wedding group'. The friends and relations of the bride and groom talk to one another, they share a common purpose (of celebrating the wedding) and the people there probably perceive themselves as a group.	A netball team has all the characteristics of a group. But the purpose they share is more directed and longer-lasting than simply taking part in an occasion. The team's aim is to win matches—the team members have a defined task that involves them working together if a successful outcome is to be achieved.

Members of a group will interact, identify a common purpose, and perceive themselves as a group.

A _team_ is a group with a defined task.

Members of a team also depend on each others' efforts, are willing to work together, and are purposefully selected.

Contents

So this is the main difference between a team and a group:

A team is a group with a defined task or tasks.

But there are more differences between groups and teams. The group of motorists had a defined task of resuming their journeys as quickly as possible. They also had another team characteristic:

Each person in the team is dependent on the efforts of others in the team.

The group of motorists mentioned earlier had something else in common with a sports team or work team; they were willing to work together.

It's possible to imagine a group—a group of people at a confrontational meeting, say—who were unwilling to work together, and who might actually work against one another. But it's taken for granted that:

- **The members of a team are willing to work together.**

However, the strangers who had to stop for the fallen tree came together by accident. One more important difference between teams and groups is that:

- **Members of teams are selected** (purposefully, or coincidentally as may be the case of the tree group).

You may have thought about one other feature common to teams but not groups; that people in teams are generally trained to do a specific job. This is usually true, although some teams operate without being trained.

THINK: Is your volunteer group a team?

Answer yes or no to each of the following questions.

Do they have a defined task or tasks?	Are members dependent on each other?	Are members willing to work together?	Are members selected?	Is it a team?

If you answered 'yes' to all questions, then your group is indeed a 'team'.

Contents

Hierarchical teams and expert teams

There can be different types of teams for different tasks; two examples are **hierarchical** and **expert** teams.

Each of those teams has a different structure and the teams are often set up in that structure for a reason. You can choose how to set up a team in one of those ways once you understand the difference. Let's have a look at the two types of team and the differences.

Hierarchical team

In a hierarchical team:

- there is a recognised leader, who is responsible for the team's overall performance, and who may delegate responsibility to other team members

- there is a clear chain of command, based on levels of responsibility

- there may be sub-groups within the team, each having a leader who reports to the overall team leader.

General structure of a hierarchical team >

```
                          Team
                         leader
    ┌──────┬──────┬────────┼────────┬──────┬──────┐
  Team    Team  Sub group  Team    Team   Team
 member  member  leader   member  member  member
            ┌──────┬────┴───┬──────┐
          Team   Team     Team   Team
         member member   member member
```
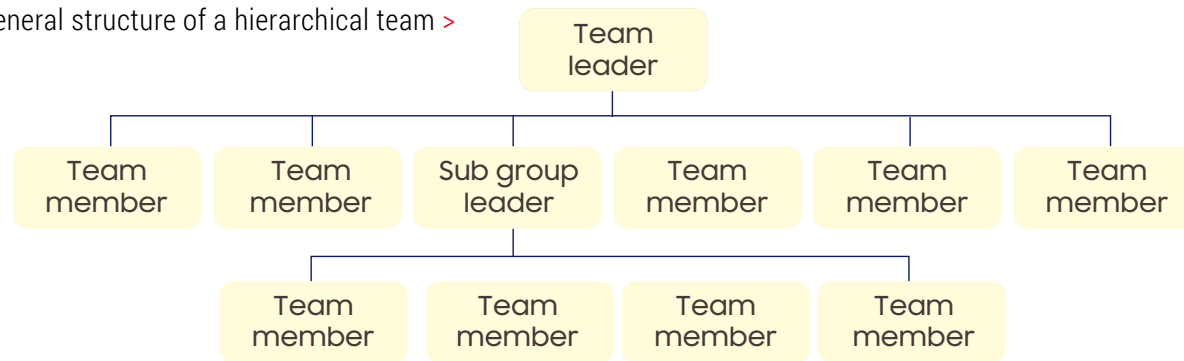
Most teams at work are hierarchical. If you are called a manager, you are a team leader, and so your own team is hierarchical. In this case, you are also almost certainly a member of a larger hierarchical team, because you head a sub-group.

Expert team

In an expert team:

- team members are selected for their particular expertise
- the hierarchy—that is, the relative seniority of team members—is not relevant, they may all be at the same level
- there is a team co-ordinator, rather than a leader.

General structure of an expert team >
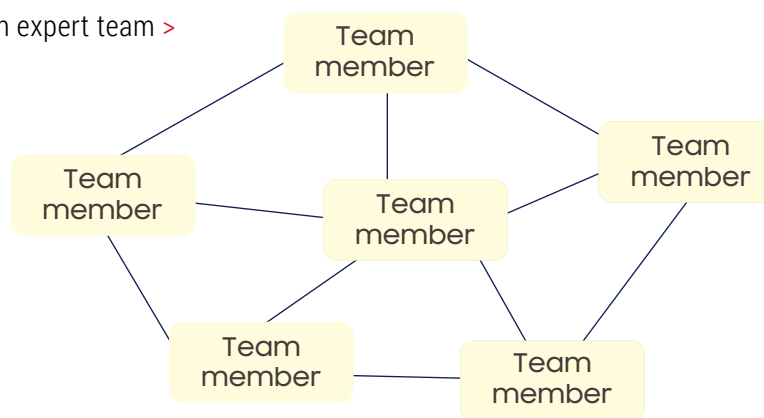
Expert teams are typically formed in work situations for a specific project, or as a panel of experts. Perhaps you also belong to an expert team called a safety committee or a sports club committee, in which all members contribute on an equal basis.

There can be two types of teams—*hierarchical* and *expert*—each of which is useful for undertaking different types of tasks.

***Hierarchical* teams have a recognised leader, a clear chain of command, and may have hierarchical subgroups.**

Most work teams are hierarchical.

Contents

THINK of any team you know which has the structure of a hierarchical team.

THINK of any team you might know which has the structure of an expert team.

So a team like yours is almost certainly:

  a team

    within a team

      within a team.

Every circle represents a team >

Company team
Department team
Section team
Work team
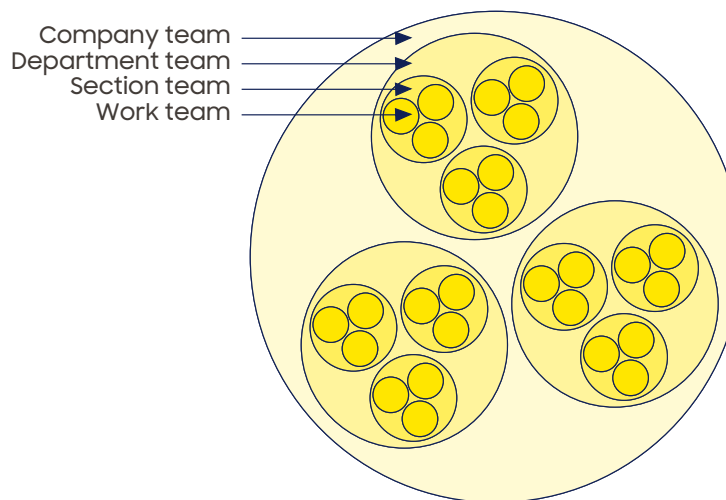
All too often in an organisation, people can identify with a team of people they know and work with, but find it hard to think of themselves as part of a larger team. It's the job of each team leader, whether a director, senior manager, a manager, a co-ordinator or a team leader, to blend the talents of individual members of the team he or she heads, into a cohesive and effective whole.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Our Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers come with a range of skills that they can contribute to the brigade.

THINK about what skills exist in a community where one of the brigades you work with is located. How could you use these local skills in a volunteer fire brigade?

Reflective Activity	Take a moment to time to think of all the different teams you belong to in your organisation (whether with Fire and Emergency NZ or any other context).
	Think about briefly the role you play in each of these teams.

You may have been surprised at the number of teams you belong to. Sometimes it is difficult to think of your Fire and Emergency NZ team in the same terms as the team you work most closely with—in other words your brigade.

Yet, although you work with your brigade members every day, and perhaps see people in other Fire and Emergency NZ teams only rarely, it's important to remember that you are all on the same side, and working towards the same objectives.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Leadership Qualities, Behaviours and Expectations (QBEs)

The Leadership QBEs are what our people tell us they want from their leaders. The Leadership QBEs sit alongside our values, but are not to be confused with our values which are designed for all our people. The Leadership QBEs are what our leaders tell us they expect from each other. They are a good basis for considering how you may work with teams and how you may conduct yourself as a leader.

Bring Courage – Kia māia
- **Champion change with optimism and an open mind**
- **Lead with integrity and humility**
- **Be reflective, agile and responsive**

Be Inclusive – Kia manawanui
- **Be flexible in your leadership style**
- **Role-model respect for others and a supportive approach**
- **Build trust**

Deliver Excellence – Mahi kairangi
- **Empower others**
- **Communicate, delegate and drive results**
- **Challenge and learn together**

WHICH of the Leadership QBEs are you best at?

WHICH do you need to work on the most to be a better leader?

YOU can find out more about the Leadership QBEs by visiting the leadership development page on the Portal.

The personal benefits of being a member of a team

What do people like about being a member of a team? Well, basically it is human nature to want to belong.

Being a member of a team can be an enriching experience. At its best, team membership brings:

- a feeling of belonging
- mutual support and friendship
- opportunities for self-development.

People who may perform ineffectively on their own often display:

- greater motivation
- more energy
- improved performance.

when they know that others in the team depend upon them.

So membership of a team can provide motivation, camaraderie and even inspiration.

'**WE** are Better Together' is one of the values of Fire and Emergency NZ–We respect and support each other. We are loyal to our teams and to wider Fire and Emergency NZ. As with any family, we look after each other in times of difficulty, accept differences, and handle conflicts with respect and honesty.

Camaraderie is one of the key reasons why Fire and Emergency NZ volunteers join, why they stay, and the general public's perception of volunteering with Fire and Emergency NZ.

Xperts solutions that work

FIRE EMERGENCY NEW ZEALAND

WHAKARATONGA IWI

? CAN YOU THINK OF ANY DRAWBACKS TO TEAM MEMBERSHIP?

For example, being a member of a team binds you to the common standards of that team, which can be perceived as a disadvantage.

Sometimes, the individuality of team members can appear to be submerged in the identity of the team. This may be the result of deliberate policy. For example, the skills or actions of people in service teams—fire brigades, the Police or armed forces for instance—are usually not reported. The team may be praised:

- 'The fire brigade soon got the blaze under control.'
- 'The Police did a splendid job in getting everyone to safety' and so on, but individual officers are rarely named.

Being a part of those teams means you have to accept your role is unlikely to be publically noticed, you must see personal value in your role, not public.

We've looked at what a team is, and at some of the benefits and drawbacks of team membership. Now we should look at what goes on inside teams.

? FIRE AND EMERGENCY NZ VALUES

Consider what 'Better Together' looks like in action in the brigade environment?

Think firstly how being part of such a highly focused and cohesive team can positively influence the performance of individuals and the team as a whole. And secondly, consider some of the compromises which may result from being a member of such a team, including restrictions on individuals' freedom and behaviour.

In the rest of this section, you will investigate:

- norms or standards; how accepted behaviour and attitudes become established; we do the right thing
- where the work team fits in the organisation: we serve and support
- team morale and culture; we are better together
- the stages of team development; we strive to improve.

How teams behave

Teams can show common overall behaviour patterns. An important clue to the behaviour of teams is that people in a group tend to behave the way they see others in the team behaving.

Professor John Adair has this to say about teams:

'Every group, if it is together for some time, develops its own code of conduct or set of standards about what is proper and acceptable behaviour.'

Professor Adair gives examples of team standards. These include:

- work
- attitudes
- interpersonal behaviour
- clothes and language
- moral standards.

Let's look at a couple of examples of those team sets of standards Professor Adair mentions:

- There may be an 'unwritten rule' among a team that a certain level of work effort is acceptable. A brigade member who 'cheats' by not reaching this accepted standard, may have pressure brought to bear by others in the group, until he or she conforms.
- Standards of clothing may be effectively judged by the team. This may be based on safety or company rules, for example that the correct identification is not optional and must be worn at all times. Volunteers not conforming to the standard are distanced from other members of the team.
- It is commonplace for teams to use jargon or technical language, abbreviations, and so on, which others not doing the same work may not understand. Standards like this are often adopted unconsciously.

For instance, people use convenient abbreviations such as TQM (Total Quality Management), ISBN (International Standard Book Number) or RAM (random access memory), because it becomes tiresome to repeat the terms in full, and because everyone working in the same industry understands their meaning. This jargon can be very confusing for outsiders but it can be an important identifier of team members.

Contents

The CFO/Controller is normally the person in the best position to set standards. If the CFO/Controller allows people to, for example:

- ignore instructions, or
- come and go as they please, or
- adopt any other form of behaviour without taking any action

then that can quickly become the accepted way to behave.

When standards become detrimental to the brigade or Fire and Emergency NZ, the CFO/Controller may have to find ways to change them, by persuading the brigade to modify work practices or behaviour.

Before a CFO/Controller can modify existing standards, he or she will need to:

- identify the existing standard and recognise its defects
- have a clear idea of the standard he or she would like to see established.

> **SUPPOSE** you took over a brigade, and found that it had become common practice for everyone to turn up to musters in their personal clothing—not their station wear uniform. What questions would you ask yourself, before you took any action?

Perhaps the first question you would need to ask yourself is: 'Is this practice unacceptable?' Some possible reasons why it might be unacceptable are that:

- others in Fire and Emergency NZ are complaining
- you are getting criticism from your Manager
- work efficiency or output is falling off
- you think the practice is symptomatic of a general air of sloppiness which you'd like to correct.

Contents

Whatever the reason, you would need to be clear about it, because you must be ready to justify any action you take.

You may also want to ask other questions before taking action, such as:

- 'Do I actually need to take any action?'
- 'What are the effects of this behaviour on brigade performance?'

Your approach to the problem might depend upon a number of factors, including:

- The standards others follow; if other brigades in the area allow members to turn up to musters in their personal clothing, you may have great trouble setting a new standard.
- The amount of support you are likely to get from your Region/District/GroupManager.

To change the practice, you could:

- Make it clear to everyone that you expect them to wear their Station wear uniform to all musters, and tell them why.
- Discipline anyone who doesn't conform.

It is important a leader addresses such issues to ensure standards remain high.

Perhaps until now you have not thought about your team's activities and behaviour in terms of norms or standards. You may need to reflect on the customs and habits which are accepted without question 'because that's the way we do things round here'. However, as leaders we need to be aware of change around us. Standards of what is acceptable in our communities' changes. Expectations from different generations change. Expectations from different cultures might mean change. You should intend to act in the most respectful and inclusive way possible, to set norms and standards that you can be proud of as a leader and that are also aligned to the purpose, values and vision of Fire and Emergency NZ.

It doesn't mean that you—as managers—should try to make changes for the sake of change, of course. Most practices survive because they work well. But it's wise to be on the look-out for a fresh approach.

When you want to change things, it is almost inevitable that there will be some resistance. People become comfortable in old habits, and you may have to 'sell' your new ideas in order to get your organisation and team to adopt them.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

How to maintain a volunteer brigade's morale

Now we come to two closely linked subjects: brigade morale and brigade culture. A dictionary definition of morale is:

'The mental and emotional condition (e.g. of enthusiasm, confidence, or loyalty) or an individual or group, with regard to the function or tasks at hand'.

Source: *Longman Dictionary of the English Language.*

If a volunteer brigade tackles its tasks with enthusiasm, it's a sign that morale is high.

There may be any number of positive factors or events, which can improve morale, and many negative ones that can lower it. Typically in Fire and Emergency NZ, those who are more active as a brigade whether at or away from incident, have a higher morale.

Some of the events in the following table might be expected to raise the morale of a team, and some might have the effect of lowering it.

Read the table and decide whether morale is likely to be higher or lower as a result of each event described. If you think morale will drop, what kind of action might you take, if any, to deal with the situation?
(Check your thinking on the next page.)

Event	Will the morale be	
a. The volunteer brigade has just completed a major task	higher	○
	lower	○
b. The volunteer brigade is congratulated on its performance	higher	○
	lower	○
c. A key brigade member announces their departure	higher	○
	lower	○
d. Conflict or rivalry arises between brigade members	higher	○
	lower	○
e. A member of the volunteer brigade is judged to have not followed brigade rules	higher	○
	lower	○

Contents

Check your thinking—How did you get on?

How far morale will rise or fall at the end of a major task—point (a)—in a brigade morale generally increases following a major task, it is the CFO's/Controller's responsibility to maintain this.

When a brigade is congratulated on its performance, as in point (b), morale usually rises considerably. That being the case, no action is needed. Praise—where it's due—it's always good for morale. Managers should both consider how they let the volunteer fire brigade know when they have done a good job.

If someone leaves the brigade—point (c)—unless he or she is very unpopular, there is bound to be some sense of loss, and perhaps a gap in the skills range. However, a loss of one member can often give someone else the opportunity to shine, so morale may not be affected for long. This is not the time for a CFO/Controller to show they miss the lost brigade member, but indicate that you have confidence in those remaining.

What about conflict or hostile rivalry between people—point (d) While it is healthy for brigade members to be able to challenge each other, if there is a divide in the brigade, this divides the community, and vice versa, as brigades are often the central and integral part of the local community. This needs to be effectively managed by a CFO/Controller with the assistance and coaching from their Group Manager.

Disloyalty—point (e)—may be upsetting, but if handled well, can have the effect of uniting the rest of the brigade. Your aims may include trying to get the rest of the brigade to forgive and forget.

As you may have thought by now, here is no simple way to improve morale. In the next section we will look at a series of positive actions you can take which will help build a successful brigade. Morale is always high when the brigade feel they are winning.

How you can create a positive brigade culture

It doesn't take long to sense the culture in a brigade. Although it isn't something that can be measured, it is usually easy to detect.

By culture we mean the general environment or mood of a place. If you walk into a room where people have been arguing, you can tell by the body posture and facial expressions of those present that the culture is 'charged'.

Similarly, it may only take a few minutes inside a volunteer brigade to sense whether the culture is:

- friendly
- warm
- cold
- formal
- strained
- relaxed
- free and easy
- positive
- negative
- pleasant
- and so on.

The workplace culture is linked with morale. Bad news—such as an announcement of tightening budgets—can cause morale to drop, and the culture to become pessimistic. Culture can be impacted by a series of negative incidents e.g. death; it can be particularly tricky to maintain morale at this time. Good news can have the opposite effect. CFOs/Controllers and Managers need to be aware of, and attempt to manage the culture within brigades by making sure good news does get through and bad news is not the only information heard.

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

WHICH of the following factors do you think have the greatest influence on the culture in a volunteer brigade? Rate each one as 'important', 'fairly important' or 'not important' by thinking about which box you would tick below.

FACTORS	Important	Fairly important	Not important
The kind of work the brigade does	○	○	○
The personality and attitude of the CFO/Controller	○	○	○
The competence of the CFO/Controller	○	○	○
How successful the brigade is in achieving its objectives	○	○	○
The personalities of the brigade	○	○	○
The culture in the rest of Fire and Emergency NZ	○	○	○
The way Fire and Emergency NZ is run from National Headquarters	○	○	○

How did you get on?

There are no clear-cut answers here. Your answers may differ from other managers, because your experience is different and your brigade is different.

We can say that:

- The culture in a brigade is greatly influenced by the culture in the rest of the district or region. It is difficult to be positive and friendly if you are surrounded by people who are negative and unhelpful. Similarly, the way you behave will influence others.

- If the people in senior positions withhold information, discourage new ideas or set up barriers to good communication, then brigade members will tend to follow this course.

On the other hand, if they adopt an open, positive, caring and sharing style of management, that will ripple down through the organisation, and others will also embrace this approach.

Contents

The brigade leader has the greatest influence within the team, because he or she has the greatest local authority and power. The CFO/Controller decides the levels of behaviour that are acceptable, determines the importance of conforming to standards and rules and via that, sets the culture and morale within the brigade teams.

Remember:

- The culture in a work team is greatly influenced by the culture in the rest of the organisation. It is difficult to be positive and friendly if you are surrounded by people who are negative and unhelpful.

- Similarly, the way you behave will influence others. If the manager withholds information, discourages new ideas or sets up barriers to good communication, then others will tend to follow this course. On the other hand, if people adopt an open, positive, caring and sharing style of management, that will ripple down through the organisation, and others will also embrace this approach.

- The team leader has the greatest influence within the team, because he or she has the greatest authority and power.

- The type of work being done has an effect on culture and morale.

- Personalities can be important, but tend to become less important the more the team is focused on the task.

- Use the values to explore morale within the team. Use them to create team discussions to improve morale. Some questions you could use might include:

- How often do we do the right thing? Is there any particular thing we do which is not a good example of doing the right thing? Do our younger brigade members see us role modelling this value?

- Do we serve and support each other as well as we do our community? How could we support each other more? Do our younger brigade members see us role modelling this value?

- Who do we work well with? Is there an opportunity to form better relationships with other local brigades, community groups or emergency sector partners? Do our younger brigade members see us role modelling this value?

- How do we challenge ourselves to try new things or do things differently? How do we create some safe-to-fail experiments? Do our younger brigade members see us role modelling this value?

Contents

The phases teams go through as they develop

Researchers have looked at the psychology of teams as they grow together, change and develop. This section explains the findings of one of the researchers, Bruce Tuckman, in 1965. His research is still relevant today.

It's important to recognise that, like all structures or organisations comprised of people, teams do not stay the same for very long. They go through different stages or phases as they mature as a team.

Tuckman's view of team development is to identify four distinct team phases: *forming, storming, norming* and *performing.* Let's have a look at Tuckman's stages in a little more detail. You may find it helpful to think about these stages in terms of your own team.

1. When a team is first formed, people do not know what to expect. They may not know the leader, may not have worked with the other members, and are probably unsure of their objectives. People are normally very polite to each other.	**This is the forming phase.**
2. Conflict may arise between individuals or sub-groups. The leader's authority may be questioned. There may be doubt about whether there are sufficient resources to meet the demands of the task ahead. People may look to push the boundaries.	**This is the storming phase.**
3. As the team begins to sort out its problems, and people start to co-operate, conflicts diminish. The standards become established, and members get to know what to expect from each other and to get a grasp of their mutual task.	**This is the norming phase.**
4. When the team is fully functional, progress is seen. Individual skills are used to their best advantage. The team is totally focused on the task.	**This is the performing phase.**

NOTE: You should be careful about taking these stages too literally. In any particular team, the phases may be difficult to identify precisely. If things go well, the storming phase may never occur. In some teams, there may be periods of storming, which suddenly settle down to performing.

Contents

Next module's readings

By now we have the volunteer(s) recruited, trained and on-job, they are a probationary member within a brigade. Your task now is to assist CFOs and Controllers in the on-going management of your volunteer brigade members throughout their tenure. To manage in a more insightful way it helps if you have a basic understanding of the differing human personality types you are likely to come across.

That is what the next module is all about—how you and your CFOs/Controllers go about creating and managing an effective volunteer brigade. We provide you some understanding of how to support volunteer performance and development. This is achieved through principles of good relationships and powerful two-way conversations. We also provide some thoughtful discussion of how to manage conflict in your working relationships.

Better Together: Working with Volunteers

Module 5

9

Better Together: Working with Volunteers – Section 9

Supporting volunteer performance

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

Supporting volunteer performance

Managing performance is about having two way performance and development conversations with volunteers about the aspects of their role and the volunteer brigade.

Why do volunteers need performance development? Volunteers, like paid workers, deserve the opportunity to talk about how their activities are going, how their skills are progressing and what further development, training or support would be useful.

In most environments, people have two key questions they want answered… what is expected of me and how am I doing against those expectations? Answering those two questions for people can go a long way towards ensuring members of the brigade are engaged and focused on developing themselves and others, delivering the best they can for their communities.

Given the sometimes stressful nature of our roles in the communities, establishing relationships where people can talk safely about successes and learning experiences is important in both sharing learning and mental wellbeing.

In the past, supporting performance was often assumed to be the management of poor performance. These days supporting performance is more often about job satisfaction and enhancement, and will include goals and future training interests.

Supporting performance is a lot easier when the overall volunteer relationships are based on respectful relationships. As described earlier in this course, a volunteer is a lot more likely to perform their role effectively when the following attributes are featured:

- clear leadership role descriptions and volunteer agreements
- good recruitment procedures
- regular coaching and feedback
- opportunity for supervision
- performance development
- a system for dealing with poor performance.

Supporting performance involves evaluating and appraising volunteers' work, as well as providing guidance and support.

Supporting performance focuses on developing people and enhancing their performance, as well as their job satisfaction.

This section will cover the last two items in the list above—performance development and performance problems.

It is important to remember that they are quite separate items. Performance development is a regular, ongoing process for listening, providing feedback and setting goals with your volunteers, whereas the managing of poor performance only happens when there is a problem.

Some volunteers may not wish to have performance conversations. This might be okay when things are fine, but have a conversation habit in place can be useful when things are not going so well. You may choose not to force the habit. But you may consider them useful for those who are new, those who are keen to progress, those who like structure and regular feedback, those who may be isolated from others in brigade or those who are vulnerable.

As a leader you should have regular performance development conversations with your leader. This helps you get feedback, improve and develop, get support and focus on the future of your brigade. Refer back to Module 4, Section 8 *Working with Volunteer Teams* and how you may bring to life the Leadership QBEs.

NOTE: Performance Development is quite separate from disciplinary action where you might need to remove a brigade leader from their role.

Contents

Performance and development

The current practice is outlined in the *Performance and Development Guide* on your Course Home Page. Building respectful relationships creates a high-performing organisation and positive workplace culture. To help build these relationships, managers and team members need to have regular, consistent conversations. To help them do this, we are shifting our focus from 'performance management' to regular, respectful and rewarding conversations. The shift looks like this:

Less of this…	More of this…
A discussion once or twice a year to set and review goals.	Continuous goal-setting and discussions throughout the year.
Cascaded goals from the top down.	Individual goals aligned with team goals.
Goals focussing on end-result only.	Goals for development and learning.
Directed by the manager.	Individuals set the agenda.
Focus on past performance.	Focus on development and the future.

This remains the same…
• All team members will understand what is expected of them through the setting of goals.
• Setting goals helps all team members understand what we expect from them.
• All team members can find out how they are progressing against these goals.
• Both managers and team members participate together in setting and reviewing goals, noting down key decisions.
• Managers and team members set and review goals together and note down key decision.
• The manager records discussions and agreement on a rating and a link to pay.

Performance development involves evaluating and reviewing volunteers performance, and setting new performance goals.

Performance conversations should provide both positive and negative feedback.

Contents

Performance goals

As part of performance you may like to negotiate performance goals with volunteers.

All goals should be **SMART** goals—that is they are:

Specific.

Measurable.

Agreed.

Realistic.

Time-framed.

They should also be aligned with the District or Group goal requirements.

Goals should be linked back to the role—the role expectations would set the overall tasks to be done, and performance goals would follow on from this, to set the negotiated performance expectations.

Examples of this might be how well the brigade is performing to operational requirements, how engaged their members are, and how strong their community relationships are.

Remember to align any goals to the needs of District or Group, and ensure they meet the SMART goals criteria.

If you still wish to put in examples, use things like how well the brigade is performing to operational requirements, how engaged their members are, and how strong their community relationships are as examples of measurements.

Performance goals should be specific, measurable, agreed, realistic and time-framed (SMART).

Contents

Performance two way conversations

Regular, respectful and rewarding conversations

Honest, two-way conversations between a manager and team member focusing on performance and development will help us to perform at our best. These conversations must be:

Regular	• Scheduled and organised. • Ongoing. • Simple and transparent.
Respectful	• Developmental. • Meaningful and two-way. • Relationship-driven.
Rewarding	• Clear paths for development and specific performance goals. • Clear connection to role purpose and organisation outcomes. • Recognition and inclusion.

Regular, honest, two-way conversations between a manager and team member focusing on performance and development will help Fire and Emergency NZ personnel to:

- feel engaged
- be clear about why they are here
- grow through development to be the best they can be
- perform their best
- enjoy being at work
- feel included and safe.

Performance conversations provide a formal setting for issues to be raised and performance goals to be set.

Two way conversations should be interactive and developmental.

Performance development conversations should be the same for both volunteers and paid staff.

Performance conversations should be carefully designed and organised.

Three steps to continuous conversations

STEP 1
Looking forward
Goal-setting conversations

STEP 2
Checking in
Feedback and coaching conversations

STEP 3
Looking back
Summarising and next step conversations

Regular | Respectful | Rewarding

TIP: Performance conversations are also good to review Leadership roles, to make sure they are reflecting what is happening in practice for a brigade leader, and if there were any performance goals set, to review these also.

Responsibilities

Manager and team member responsibilities and accountabilities are described below:

Managers will…	Team members will…
• Ensure there is opportunity for performance development conversations. • Help team members understand how they contribute to team and organisation. • Clarify expectations of team members. • Ask for, and keep track of, progress of team. • Provide regular feedback. • Support and broker development and growth opportunities for team members. • Provide resources to team members to support them to achieve their goals. • Ensure there is a record of key discussions and decisions.	• Set time and agenda for performance and development conversations. • Understand how their work contributes to team and organisation. • Seek clarity on what is expected of them. • Keep track of own progress. • Be available, and ask for, regular feedback. • Participate in learning, growing and development opportunities. • Work towards achieving goals. • Record their achievements and key discussions.

Records

The forms you may use are available on the Portal here

Raising performance issues

Refer to the Course Home Page and the guide *Manage volunteer poor performance or misconduct.* This provides support but is an interim process as the Model Rules are rewritten and 'In-House Rules' are developed.

The guide is re-published as an extract from the *2008 Chief Fire Officer's Tool Kit.* It has been updated as an interim guide solely to reflect the existence of the Fire and Emergency New Zealand Act 2017 without significant change. It will be reviewed and updated in the future as Fire and Emergency New Zealand further unifies. In the event of any inconsistency between this guide and any other document or instruction, the reader should seek initial guidance from the Regional HR Manager or Principal Advisor Workplace Relations.

Raising performance issues requires careful planning and a tactful approach.

Contents

Rewarding volunteers and recognising their achievements

We all like a pat on the back when we have done a good job and this is especially important if you are not getting paid for the job you are doing. This section explains how to reward your volunteers and make sure they know how valuable they are to your team which will hopefully make them want to stay with you.

This section could also be headed volunteer retention. While staff turnover can be a concern elsewhere in the organisation, it is important to recognise that volunteers come and go for all sorts of reasons, not necessarily related to their level of job satisfaction. Here we note the importance of 'valuing' volunteers as a way of reinforcing the organisation's appreciation of volunteer contribution, and to add to the 'feel-good' factors in the tasks they undertake.

Volunteer retention is often about having good systems in place to support volunteers.

A common complaint from volunteers is that they are unclear of their role or don't feel supported in their role. Following the steps outlined elsewhere in the course material will help volunteers to feel valued and empowered in their volunteer roles.

Retention issues should also be researched and addressed, and specific steps to address any volunteer retention problems that have been identified.

Fire and Emergency NZ has identified factors influencing retention. To reduce those factors that Fire and Emergency NZ can influence internally, retention strategies need to be developed that mitigate or reduce the impact of these. Some of this may include facilitating brigade transfers as individuals move towns, enhancing leadership and internal health of individual brigades.

Having good formal support for volunteers is important—so that they have access to training to develop their skills and supervision to provide them with the opportunity to reflect on their role and receive feedback.

Volunteers like to feel valued, empowered and rewarded by the organisation.

Retaining volunteers often depends upon the support they receive.

Contents

Fire and Emergency NZ currently has a range of ways of rewarding and recognising our volunteers, including:

- annual volunteer reimbursement
- access to a Benefits app
- discounted health benefits
- community recognition
- recognition through Long Service Good Conduct
- provision of medals and badges (from both UFBA, and Fire and Emergency NZ)
- structured development opportunities.

Fire and Emergency NZ also makes use of International Volunteer Day and Week of the Volunteer to show appreciation to our volunteer workforce.

Refer to the Volunteer Hub for reference to this information.

Recognition and rewards need to be appropriate to the situation, organisation and volunteer.

Contents

SUGGESTIONS ON WAYS TO SUPPORT AND RECOGNISE VOLUNTEERS

- always remembering that volunteering is a choice
- smile
- ask volunteers how their work is going
- reimburse out-of-pocket expenses that volunteers incur as part of their volunteer work
- provide good orientation and on-the-job training
- provide childcare facilities to enable parents of young children to volunteer
- contacting the NHQ communications team to do a feature piece on the Portal
- include volunteers in decision making
- take time to talk and listen to volunteers and show you appreciate their efforts
- send birthday, anniversary, Christmas or congratulations cards
- say thank you
- create pleasant surroundings for their work and meetings
- write newsworthy items about the work of volunteers for local newspapers
- show appreciation of volunteers to their friends and families
- celebrate successes
- write thank you notes
- keep challenging volunteers to extend themselves
- provide feedback after a brigade achievement

Contents

© 2020 Xperts Ltd Fire & Emergency NZ

- give an occasional gift of appreciation e.g. a book, music token, flowering plant
- share with volunteers positive comments you hear about them and their work
- give positive feedback and constructive criticism
- keep an accurate record of their training and work, and record this on a certificate
- be prepared to provide a reference if asked
- provide opportunities for volunteers to assess their satisfactions, needs, learning and development in their work
- have a picnic or barbecue for volunteers
- publicise information about recognition that volunteers have received for their volunteer work in other parts of the community
- arrange with a local theatre to use their unsold seats one night for a thank you to volunteers and a night out for client families
- propose volunteers for awards in their local community
- keep personal contact
- let volunteers know it is okay to arrange to take time out when needed
- organise support for volunteers in times of illness and bereavement
- be interested in what they are doing
- pass on any feedback from recipients of service
- say thank you, again.

Adapted from: Mary Woods. (1998), *Volunteers: A Guide for Volunteers and Their Organisations.* Christchurch, New Zealand: Hazard Press. © Hazard Press 1998.

This is a very long list, and any and all of them are important, though they do not have to happen all at once!

There are numerous ways to recognise and reward volunteers.

Contents

Reimbursement of expenses

Volunteers perform a valuable service to communities across New Zealand. They receive no monetary reward for this, however it is recognised that reimbursement of some financial losses should be made.

Feedback from workshops suggests that volunteers are becoming increasingly aware of the costs incurred as a result of being part of a brigade, such as the increase in petrol prices and that affordability could impact on their ability to continue volunteering with Fire and Emergency NZ.

There is guidance for Leaders on the circumstance and process for such reimbursements.

The following reimbursements are covered:

- Gratuity POLH R 6.6
- Loss of income POLH R 6.8
- Family/Whanau payment
- Annual reimbursement
- Loss of personal effects POLH R 6.9
- Loss through personal accident
- Accident rehabilitation compensation
- Attendance at conferences and competitions POLFA 4.11

It is important to reimburse volunteers for expenses they incur.

Full copies of all policies are available on Volunteer Hub.

READ: The Volunteer Reimbursements section of the *Volunteer Hub for Management Resource Kit.*

EXPERIENCED managers of volunteers agree that reimbursement of expenses is a must. The legislative intent behind the FENZ Act is that volunteers should not be left out of pocket.

Contents

Managing conflict and challenging behaviours

When organisations of people get together for work, social, recreational or other reasons, there can sometimes be some element of conflict associated with their interaction.

Volunteering is no different, and knowing that conflict is in some ways inevitable, you should put in place plans to deal with it when it arises.

> **NOTE:** The worst time to start to develop some principles around conflict resolution is when you are in the middle of a major quarrel!

Managing conflict

When dealing with conflict, make sure you address the problem early on or assist leaders to address the issue within their brigade. What may be a relatively small disagreement or problem may turn into something much bigger if it is left alone. Also, don't be afraid to seek assistance if you are feeling out of your depth. Conflict resolution is quite a skill, and your Fire and Emergency NZ HR Manager can give you assistance, or offer to help mediate a situation for you.

Conflict may arise between a number of parties:

- conflict between volunteers
- conflict between volunteers and paid brigade members
- conflict between volunteers and the volunteer manager/leader
- conflict between volunteers and governance (the brigade committee)
- conflict between volunteers and members of the public, or other organisations they work with.

Conflict management skills are essential when working with volunteers.

Conflict in social and work situations is common. It may exist between anyone and may arise for numerous reasons.

Contents

Examples of conflict could be:

- differences of opinion
- personal animosity
- expressions of sexism and racism
- inappropriate use of language
- non-compliance with Fire and Emergency NZ and/or brigade norms and values
- clash of values
- conflict between long standing volunteers and new volunteers
- conflict between volunteers and Fire and Emergency NZ regarding policies, procedures and organisational requirements (for example, when Fire and Emergency NZ brings in a new policy or procedure).

In some cases, conflict can be avoided or minimised by having open communication channels between all the people involved. For example, it may be possible to avoid conflict generated by a brigade bringing in a new brigade rule by involving volunteers right from the start—explaining the rationale behind the new rule, and involving volunteers directly in drafting the proposed rule changes.

Conflict management strategies can help to minimise the scale and scope of potential conflict.

Contents

Below is a useful model on resolving conflict from the New Zealand Department of Internal Affairs.

Sample conflict resolution or problem-solving model

This process is designed to resolve conflicts in which real needs are being frustrated.

Description:

The first time the process is used, it should be explained briefly, listing the steps. It is important to note that during the process other problems may arise that need to be solved. Do not try to solve them at this time. Write them down on a separate list and save them for later problem solving.

- Define the problem in terms of both people's needs. Each person should identify the conflict in terms of his or her own needs e.g. 'When the dishes are left unwashed following lunch I am irritated because I have to tidy up, and I don't have time to move the dirty dishes out of the way'. Avoid making statements of blame like: 'When you don't clear and wash the dishes after lunch, you are being irresponsible and insensitive'.

- Restate the problem in such a way as to include both persons' needs e.g. the problem is—person A needs the minutes circulated and person B doesn't have the time. Both persons A and B must agree with the definition of their needs. If difficulty occurs in reaching agreement, rotate attempts to state the problem. Until agreement can be reached about the nature of the problem, solution is unlikely.

- Brainstorm alternative solutions. Think creatively. All parties to the conflict should participate. All suggestions are listed. Use a sheet of paper large enough for all participants to see. No discussion, acceptance, rejection, or evaluation of solutions should happen at this stage. Brainstorming should continue until each person sees on the list several solutions with which s/he is willing to work.

- Evaluate alternative solutions. Each person in turn evaluates the list of solutions. Solutions which are unacceptable for any reason to any participant should be eliminated. It is essential that participants continue to be honest about their own feelings and needs throughout this process. Trust and encourage others to state their own feelings and needs. Never try to tell another person what their needs are, though use of active listening is effective and appropriate. The result of this step is a list of possible solutions which are acceptable to both or all parties.

- Decide on the best solution, acceptable to everyone. Usually one solution will appear to be much better than the rest, but don't jump to one solution without at least evaluating each of the other possibilities. Choose the best solution and make a commitment to try it.

- Implement the solution. Think through to the implications of the chosen solution. Who will do and not do what, when? How will things be different? How will things be better? Set up a time when participants will evaluate how well the solution is working.

Contents

- Evaluate how it is working. Find out how each person feels about the solution. If the solution needs adjustments, try to make them. Check to see that all persons still agree with the statement of the problem. The problem may have become clearer or disappeared, or new problems may have arisen. If anyone is unhappy with the solution or feels it is unfair or won't work, repeat the process from the beginning.

Conflict resolution involves identifying and understanding problems, evaluating possible solutions, and implementing them.

Managing challenging behaviours

Challenging behaviour is abnormal behaviour of such an intensity, frequency or duration that the behaviour is having a negative effect on relationships with the CFO/Controller or others within the brigade. It can also effect the volunteer's ability to complete the tasks agreed when they were selected and potentially the reputation of Fire and Emergency NZ.

When a problem arises concerning a volunteer, the CFO/Controller needs to address the following questions:

- Who is the problem?
- What is the problem?
- Why is there a problem?

You can follow these questions through the following model in a situation where the volunteer's behaviour is the problem:

- Describe the behaviour objectively e.g. 'This is the second time a person has described your behaviour as rude and objectionable'.
- Explain why e.g. 'The remarks you made are unacceptable and do not fit with our values and policies'.
- Specify what has to change e.g. 'When you get riled up please bring issues like this to the Leader and not to other brigade members'. (There might be more specific behaviour change described, depending on the nature of the complaint.)
- Negotiate an agreement for change e.g. 'You have agreed you will try to do better in future, and to contact the leader with any problems related to your volunteering. I would like to meet with you in [X timeframe] to see how you are going. Is this OK for you?'

It is important to address and resolve challenging and destructive behaviour.

It is important for volunteer managers to negotiate effective change in challenging behaviour.

Contents

Misconduct is where a member's behaviour does not meet the Brigade Rules and/or agreed Standards of Conduct.

Poor performance is failing to achieve the required standard of work. This includes poor attendance at training. The focus is on assisting the member to improve.

Most allegations of minor misconduct or poor performance can be dealt with by setting, modelling, clarifying and explaining expectations.

When this fails, an informal discussion between the CFO/Controller and volunteer can be effective in resolving the matter.

The Standards of Conduct (Appendix 2) in the Model Rules of Association and section 6 of the Model Rules outline members' duties and expected conduct. You can find these on the Volunteer Hub. They are under review before new 'In-House Rules' are created.

For serious misconduct or repeated poor performance, it may be necessary to deal with the matter with formal disciplinary action which is the responsibility of the your Manager. If in doubt about how to manage this, please contact your Fire and Emergency NZ HR Manager.

If you are considering dismissal, there are alternatives to consider. You could:

- re-supervise the volunteer
- re-train the volunteer
- re-motivate the volunteer
- re-assign the volunteer
- retire the volunteer with honour.
- recommend alternative options for volunteering.

There may be alternatives to dismissing a volunteer.

Contents

The following free advocacy and support services are available:

- UFBA and FRFANZ: Freephone 0508 832 269 (Mon-Fri business hours), or send a confidential message via the UFBA contact us page. Also see: UFBA advocacy and support services
Note: UFBA and FRFANZ provide advocacy and support services to all volunteers, but cannot provide rulings on any conflict or dispute.

- Apply for alternative advocacy services email: independent.advocacy@fireandemergency.nz
Note: These applications are considered case by case for management on a 'by exception' basis.

- The Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO)are providing an independent service for bullying and harrassment, see: Interim process for bullying and harrassment complaints

- Personal stress support: Seek safety, health and wellbeing support

- The UFBA Benevolent Fund provides for UFBA members and their families who are going through tough times financially or who have suffered misfortune.

- The Firefighters Welfare Society focuses on helping firefighter's and their families. Membership fees apply.

Contents

Ending a volunteer's involvement

Brigade turnover is inevitable. When a brigade member is leaving Fire and Emergency NZ their resignation should be conducted in a professional way, so they retain a good impression, and become ambassadors for Fire and Emergency NZ.

There may be a number of reasons for a volunteer's involvement to come to an end. These may include age/health issues, a job transfer or changes in family circumstances. There are a number of reasons for volunteer departure. When a volunteer ends their involvement, for whatever reason, it is important to acknowledge their service.

Conducting exit interviews

Exit interviews are those carried out as a person leaves an organisation and they are a good way of learning why people have chosen to end their volunteer involvement.

Upon notification of a resignation the HR Administrator will make contact with the individual and offer them the opportunity to complete a formal exit survey.

Information gained from brigade members who leave has the potential to provide Fire and Emergency NZ with invaluable insights into the strengths and/or weaknesses of its policies and practices, and key information into how we can improve our services.

Fire and Emergency NZ volunteer exit surveys (2007-2010) show the key reasons for leaving (in order of impact) include:

1. moving out of the area (21%)

2. problems within the brigade—poor communication/management (19%)

3. not enough time—work demands (19%).

Given this insight, our leaders understand that they can positively influence the second highest reason for volunteers leaving. That is addressing problems within the brigade: poor communication/management.

Volunteers may end their involvement with an organisation for a number of reasons.

Exit interviews may be useful for ascertaining why volunteers are ending.

Contents

FAQ

Q. WHAT DO YOU TELL A VOLUNTEER WHO DOES NOT FIT THE MOULD OF YOUR ORGANISATION OR THE TASKS AVAILABLE?

This is a hard one. In the first instance you would be trying to find an alternative job more suited to the volunteer's skills, possibly referring them to other organisations.

If you have clear guidelines and policies for your volunteers then you should be able to present information that demonstrates the volunteer's interests fall outside your organisation. Or perhaps some creative thinking can find a way to engage the volunteer in tasks that have not previously been envisaged. Ultimately you will have to consider the organisation's best interests and the basic roles available to volunteers.

Q. HOW DO YOU GO ABOUT IMPROVING STAFF-VOLUNTEER RELATIONSHIPS?

This question is best addressed via your organisation's management team. It relates to the vision held on why volunteers are engaged and the importance of their contribution.

If the management team promotes the rationale for volunteer involvement throughout the organisation then the question should not arise. Conflict between paid staff and volunteers is well documented in research literature. The first essential is not to let it fester. Maybe there is some staff training that needs to be undertaken; maybe there is some mediation between the parties that is required. The volunteer manager should not be expected to undertake this alone.

Contents

Q. THE VOLUNTEER IS HAVING TROUBLE FULFILLING COMMITMENTS/IS UNDER-PERFORMING/IS NOT ABLE TO BE OPERATIONAL. WHAT DO YOU DO?

As with any human resource management issue, you take it up immediately. The longer you delay dealing with the issue the harder it is to find a resolution satisfactory to you and to the volunteer. The aim in all these situations is to enable the volunteer to bow out with dignity.

Perhaps the volunteer who has run out of time has the easiest out. A simple question framed as 'it looks as though you have too much on your plate at the moment' can bring a sigh of relief, especially if there is a promise of future engagement when the volunteer has more time available.

The unreliable volunteer needs more direct confrontation: 'You signed up to do X, but you have trouble meeting this commitment, and this is not satisfactory/acceptable for the organisation'. Invite explanation and possible resolution, but the bottom line has to be an agreement on what is best for the organisation. A statement of volunteer rights and responsibilities which is agreed to before engagement is a useful document to invoke in these circumstances.

For the older person who may have been volunteering for upwards of 20 years it is very difficult to recognise their involvement may be now beyond their capacity to be effective. Strategies that might be employed include shifting to a less onerous task, or reducing work hours. If these do not work then ultimately, your decision has to be based on organisational needs. But do not forget the farewell ceremony that will give due recognition to the volunteer's service.

Contents

CONGRATULATIONS!

YOU have completed all five modules for Better Together: Working with Volunteers. Take time to reflect on the understanding you have gained from these modules. Consider how you may apply the information to the practical realities of your role. The course is continued with a face-to-face workshop which will allow you to connect with other leaders and to practise the skills required of those people who work with volunteers.