

Maritime New Zealand Guidelines

SAFETY BULLETIN ISSUE 22 – NOVEMBER 2009

VOLUNTEER HEALTH AND SAFETY

This safety bulletin is for

Any New Zealand organisation, body or company that uses volunteers for water-based or maritime work activities.

Purpose of this bulletin

The purpose of this safety bulletin is to inform organisations, public entities or companies of their responsibilities for volunteers who are helping, assisting or interacting in any water-based or maritime work activity.

Responsibility for the health and safety of volunteers

The safety of any volunteer involved in a work activity is an important responsibility for employers, companies or organisations.

The Health and Safety in Employment Act 1992 (HSE Act) sets a minimum standard of safety that applies to all volunteers:

the person for whom any volunteer does the work activity should take all practicable steps to ensure the health and safety of the volunteer while he or she is doing the work activity, in particular by taking hazards into account when planning the work activity.

This includes, but is not limited to, those volunteers involved in fundraising, assisting a sports/recreational club or institution and assisting in the activities of an educational institution.

People responsible for volunteers must be aware of the minimum safety requirements and put in place the basic steps required under the HSE Act. In addition to the HSE Act requirements, the Maritime Transport Act 1994 requires that all maritime activities are carried out without unnecessary danger or risk.

Key issues

- The 'work place' in the HSE Act is not confined to being a factory or a building. It can be a river, a lake or any area of water where your work activity is done.
- Any work place or work activity has hazards, and all practicable measures must be taken to ensure the health and safety of volunteers.
- The safety of volunteers must be given full consideration when planning the work activity and before volunteers start the work.
- Volunteers should be made aware of all the hazards involved in the work activity and how safety control measures have been arranged and will be applied.

Continued overleaf

Recommendations

- Every organisation, public entity or company that uses volunteers should review the parts of the HSE Act that relate to volunteers (Sections 3C and 3D), and carefully consider the responsibilities and issues outlined.
- Every organisation, public entity or company that uses volunteers should:
 - Methodically list all the safety issues for the volunteer activity as a first step to identifying all the potential hazards volunteers might be exposed to.
 - Work out, for each hazard, how to mitigate the risk involved and set up reliable control measures to make sure the mitigation steps will be followed by all, including any employees involved.
 - Communicate the hazards and controls to everyone, and nominate a safety officer to maintain an overview of safety and to ensure that reliable communications are maintained.

Further information

For further information please contact the MNZ Wellington office:
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