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|  | **WILDCARE Inc**  **WORKPLACE HEALTH AND SAFETY**  Think safe, plan safe, be safe |

**Introduction**

It is a tragedy when a volunteer, who is providing their time, passion and good will to a project, ends up being injured or killed and therefore **WILDCARE Inc** is keen to assist volunteers to consider and plan safer ways of volunteering.

Some volunteers feel that safety planning and the associated paperwork is designed to get in the way of their enjoyment of volunteering. Others think it’s a way of avoiding blame, or related to insurance covers.

The purpose of safety planning is to *make sure that everyone comes home, safe and sound, at the end of the day.*

It is impossible for **WILDCARE Inc** to provide all of the answers for all occasions. People undertaking the project are the best people to judge the risks and develop safe solutions.

In many circumstances we look to our partner organisations, that engage our members as volunteers, to take responsibility for safety planning for projects. Agencies such as Parks and Wildlife Service and Department of Primary Industries and Water, with whom our members do a lot of their voluntary work, certainly have obligations to ensure appropriate risk management procedures and safe practices are in place when volunteers operate under their supervision/authorisation and in their workplace. Whenever our members are engaged by PWS to undertake works undertaken on reserved land, or are undertaking works directed and/or approved by a PWS staff member, those WILDCARE Inc members are volunteering for PWS and must adhere to their safety requirements. The responsibility for your safety lies with the PWS and you.

However, WILDCARE Inc branches and members also undertake projects independently and unrelated to Parks and Wildlife Service or other government Agency. In those circumstances members are volunteering for WILDCARE Inc, and operating in a WILDCARE “workplace”. Voluntary project leaders or branch leaders are responsible for safety planning and briefing on behalf of WILDCARE Inc. In this case responsibility for your safety lies with Wildcare Inc (including voluntary project leaders or Branch Presidents) and you.

To assist voluntary project leaders, and others, to think safe, plan safe and be safe **WILDCARE Inc** has developed a Workplace Health and Safety process.

This booklet outlines the WILDCARE Inc Workplace Health and Safety process for those occasions when WILDCARE members are volunteering for WILDCARE Inc.

**Forms and process**

* Individual Volunteer Job Description and Authorisation

Complete for volunteers operating on a visitor centre roster, or independently on a once-off or recurring activity. Describe what the volunteer will be doing in the role, and any expectations associated with that role.

* Project Description

Complete for group working bees and on-going standard activities by a group. This document ensures that volunteers participating in the project are clear about what the job/tasks will include, what expectations there are and what pre-requisites are required.

* Medical Disclosure

In some circumstances your safety planning will suggest that you need to know of any illness or condition that participants have that might endanger themselves or other participants, or that may require easy access to medical treatment. Examples include when the volunteering is being undertaken some time and distance from medical assistance, or the type of work requires a particular fitness level. Having a medical condition does not necessarily exclude someone from volunteering, particularly if they are able to administer their own treatment, or the condition does not endanger the safety of other participants, or if the medical condition does not impact on their capacity to undertake the required work.

* Hazard Identification

Prior to work being started on a site it is important to identify physical hazards present and ensure that all volunteers are aware of those hazards and what they should do about the hazard. Some hazards will require marking so that they are obvious to volunteers. In other cases pointing out the hazards and explaining appropriate mitigation behaviour is all that is required. If significant hazards cannot be mitigated or avoided you should reconsider operating on the site. Involving the participants in the process of identifying hazards and mitigations is sometimes a very effective way of completing the task as well as making sure everyone is aware of the hazards and what they should do.

* Emergency Response Plan

Developing a plan about how and who you will contact in the event of an injury is important preparation for a volunteer project or activity. This plan may be very simple because emergency services and medical treatment are close at hand and easy to contact. In other cases this will not be the case, and you will need to have a good plan about what you will do. There are reporting obligations under the Workplace Health and Safety Legislation in the event of an injury that also need to be considered. A copy of this Emergency Response Plan should be left with a responsible person not attending the event.

* Minimum Safety Guides

The Minimum Safety Guides provide a guide to working safely. By printing all of the guides that relate to your project, you will have a list of minimum equipment, skills, practices and briefing requirements.

Each guide should then be assessed for risk level, using the Ready Risk Reckoner, as the risk relates to your specific project. Example – a roadside weeding project on a straight and quiet country roadside with wide verges presents a lower likelihood of being hit by a car than if the same work was being carried out on the side of the Bass Highway.

If your assessment, assuming the minimum requirements are in place, puts the risk at a high or extreme level then you will need to add additional safety measures to the guide to deal with this elevated risk level to make the job safer, or choose to not undertake the project.

For instance, in the example above, extra safety measures such as road lane closure, would be required at the Bass Highway site to reduce the risk levels.

The relevant Minimum Safety Guides, with any additional safety measures added, and the risk level assessed and recorded, becomes the Project Safety Plan for your project.

They do not replace the need to Think Safe, Plan Safe and Be Safe or remove the responsibility that each of us has to ensure our own safety and the safety of others.

If you are undertaking an activity that is not described on the existing Guides, use the blank Minimum Safety Guide to plan you safety measures for that activity/task. Send a copy of your new Minimum Safety Guide to [office@wildcaretas.org.au](mailto:office@wildcaretas.org.au) and, after reviewing it, we will place it onto this site for the information of other members who may be undertaking the same type of activity.

* Risk Reckoner

A table for assessing the risks associated with the activities to be undertaken. Use this table to assess the risks associated with each of the Activity Guides you have selected for the project.

* Working Bee Attendance Record

It is essential to keep a record of the volunteers who attended your volunteer project or activity. The Attendance Record form includes emergency numbers and people to contact. Use this to ensure everyone has “clocked off” safely at the end of the project. It collects valuable information about the number of hours contributed by volunteers. It might be required by the insurer in the event of an injury claim. The no-fault Volunteer Accident Insurance carried by WILDCARE Inc, covers those volunteers who are volunteering for Wildcare Inc on an identified Wildcare project, so it is important to be able to show who was participating on the day.

* Individual Volunteer Attendance

This time sheet is for individuals to keep a record of their attendance when undertaking activity other than working bees. If the volunteers are recorded on a roster, as is the case in visitor centres, the roster is also evidence of attendance.

* Workplace Health and Safety – briefing volunteers

Once you have done your planning it is essential that participants are aware of the safety requirements that you have identified. This is best done in two ways. Firstly, provide a verbal briefing about the hazards and the risks what people need to do to remain safe (equipment, behaviours, locations etc), what emergency procedures are in place, and what should happen in the event of an injury. The WHS briefing script is designed to help you provide this briefing. You may also ask each participant to sign the safety plan to indicate that they have received a safety briefing and/or read the safety plan..

* In the event of an accident or injury

Complete this form if an accident occurs that injures or could have been injured a volunteer or other person on site.