

# Generic / Sample Health and Safety Guide for Activity Leaders

## Introduction

How you and your organisation prepare to lead an event will vary greatly depending on **the nature of activities and the people involved**.

**The people involved:** Do you know the people who will participate? Do you know their fitness and skill levels, or will you be working with a group whose personalities and abilities are unknown to you? Do you expect to include children, the elderly, or those who might require disability accommodation? Will some types of training be necessary?

**The nature of the activities:** How long is the duration of your event? A couple of hours or a couple of days? What types of activity are required of participants? Will they be able to choose between activities that may accommodate a range of skills or fitness levels? How far is your work site from emergency services? Is there cell phone coverage at all locations? What arrangements have you made for rapid response in the case of an injury or illness?

Given these and other variations, your organisation or leadership group will almost certainly need to adapt the materials provided below to their own purposes. Nonetheless, the Environment Network Manawatu hopes that you'll be off to a good start toward safer practice with the use of the following:

1. sample preparation checklist, and
2. sample structure for a health and safety briefing.

## Sample Preparation Checklist

Prepare all activity leaders in advance.	
	Has your governance / leadership team completed a full hazard management plan for the site, event, and/or activity?
	If you are using a standard hazard management plan that has been developed previously for a similar activity, has it been reviewed for this particular event?
	Have you decided who is responsible for implementing the safety management plan before and during your activity?
	Is the person with overall responsibility the best person to provide any necessary safety training or demonstrations, or is there someone more skilled available? Is a single person in a position to supervise everyone involved, or will volunteers be split into groups at different locations with different supervisors? Are there any other reasons that responsibility is best shared, and, if so, who is responsible for which aspects of volunteer health and safety?
	Who (if anyone) at the event will have First Aid training?
	Has everyone who will have responsibilities during the activity reviewed the full hazard management plan?
	Has a volunteer safety briefing been developed in advance of the event? Have enough people from the leadership team provided input to ensure that no gaps have been left in the briefing? <i>(Note: A sample volunteer safety briefing is provided on page three of this document.)</i>

*(continued on next page)*

## Sample Preparation Checklist (continued)

Prepare volunteers / participants in advance.	
	Do your potential participants have enough information to assess any demands that will be made on their health and fitness? <i>Note:</i> It is particularly important that you provide this information for publicly advertised activities where you do not know who might come along. When you know the participants, you might be able to determine in advance whether activities are appropriate given their health and fitness.
	Have you given your participants reminders to bring routine safety gear, such as a water bottle, any food, weather gear (sunscreen, hat, raingear, etc.), appropriate footwear, etc.?
	Have you let participants know if they need any specialised safety gear, such as ear or eye protection, extreme weather gear, a dry change of clothes or a blanket, etc.?
Bring the following gear to the event.	
	One or more copies of your full hazard management plan.
	Notes for delivery of your volunteer health and safety briefing.
	A participant register, including at minimum a request for each participant to provide their full name and emergency contact details.
	An incident report form.
	Any safety gear identified in your hazard management plan.
	Emergency communications tools, such as a charged cell phone.
	Back-up transportation if relevant.
	First aid kits.
Prepare at the start of the event.	
	All activity leaders should review their responsibilities.
	All activity leaders should know the location of key equipment, including the hazard management plan, safety gear, first aid kits, and cell phones.
	All activity leaders should know who are key personnel, including who has first aid training, who will be in charge of what in a rapid-response situation, etc. Is there someone who can help manage people who are present but uninvolved in an incident?
	Once participants have arrived, a clear speaker should give an oral health and safety briefing.
	All participants should sign the participant register.
	Activity leaders should review the participant register and pay attention to how many people are present. If appropriate, different activity leaders can be assigned to supervise different small groups.
Be aware during the activity.	
	Don't hesitate to give health and safety reminders to participants as required.
	If you are uncertain about whether something is being done in the safest way, don't hesitate to ask for an activity to stop temporarily while you assess the situation and/or confer with others.
	Follow the hazard management plan.
Review planning and process after the event.	
	Activity leaders (potentially including the governance group) should debrief on the health and safety aspects of the event. What went well? How can improvements be made next time?

## Sample Health and Safety Briefing

Below is a list of possible topics for a health and safety briefing, plus an example based on an imagined scenario for a planting party.

In many cases you may want to integrate your health and safety briefing with a more general welcome, with additional types of practical instructions, and similar. Please note that the more you include, the harder it is for participants to pay attention to any single point. You can give your key points extra emphasis by having participants reiterate them rather than doing it yourself.

Possible topics and structure for a health and safety briefing	Example
Gather participants together. Make sure everyone is present to hear your briefing.	<p>Welcome! Today we'll be planting trees along this stream. Before we start, there are a few important health and safety issues for us to go over. Is everyone here, or are we still waiting on some people?</p> <p>Can everyone hear me okay?</p>
<p>Share aspects of your hazard management plan with participants. To decide what to include, go through each hazard and decide:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does safe practice require action on the part of participants?</li> <li>• Is the possible harm significant?</li> <li>• Is harm likely?</li> <li>• Is an up-front health and safety briefing the best way to alert participants? (If not, have you planned alternatives, such as a demonstration right before an activity begins, or a person assigned to watch for improper tool use, etc.?)</li> </ul> <p>Tell participants the key ways you want them to act to eliminate, isolate, or minimise the risk of harm.</p>	<p>We've asked you all to wear boots, but if you're wearing trainers, that's okay too. We'll have those wearing boots use the spades to dig holes for planting. If you're wearing trainers, you could team up with someone digging holes and help hold trees upright while holes are being back-filled, or you could help firm the soil around the trees.</p> <p>Everyone, please be aware that it's hard to see uneven ground because of all the long grass. The stream edge is also hidden by grass in places. Everyone needs to watch their footing, and we'd appreciate having adults only near the stream.</p> <p>All of our planting today will be in this general area where we can see each other. As a general rule it's a good idea to work within hailing distance of one another. Just be careful not to turn around and accidentally swing a tool into someone nearby.</p> <p>It's a hot day, so I hope you all have brought your water bottle, sunscreen, and hats. We have some extra water and sunscreen by the bus. Don't hesitate to take a break whenever you need one. There's very little shade here, but the bus will provide some shade throughout the morning. Let me know if you're having trouble.</p>
Direct participants to key personnel and to any health and safety equipment that hasn't been pointed out already.	<p>Those are the biggest safety issues. If you wish to see a complete hazard management plan, I have one available.</p> <p>If something does happen and you need first aid, there's a kit available here at the bus, and another one with Jane Doe. Jane, can you please raise your hand? Jane is also trained in first aid. Both Jane and I are carrying cell phones and we can call emergency services.</p> <p>Please do let me know if you are involved in, or a witness to a health and safety incident, even if it's just a near miss. This will help us plan better and be more safe in the future.</p>
Ask if there are any questions.	<p>There's just a bit more I need to tell you, but before I proceed, does anyone have any questions about what I've just covered?</p> <p>If you do find you have questions once the work has started, any of us wearing the orange fluoro vests can give you a hand.</p>
Reiterate key points.	<p>All right, if there's no more questions, I'll just repeat key points.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Please use the spades only if you're wearing boots.</li> <li>• Adults only by the stream edge.</li> <li>• Everybody needs to watch their footing.</li> </ul>
Direct participants to the participant register.	<p>Finally, before you start, please sign this participant register. Once you've signed in, I think we're good to go!</p>