

# ORGANISATIONAL PLAN

## Management of Spontaneous Volunteers

**A practical guide for volunteer  
involving organisations**



**volunteering**  
queensland

First published in 2021 by  
Volunteering Queensland Inc.

Enquires are welcome at:  
Volunteering Queensland  
Level 12,  
127 Creek Street,  
Brisbane, Qld 4000  
**Phone:** (07) 3002 7600

[emergencyvol@volunteeringqld.org.au](mailto:emergencyvol@volunteeringqld.org.au)  
[emergencyvolunteering.com.au](http://emergencyvolunteering.com.au)  
[volunteeringqld.org.au](http://volunteeringqld.org.au)

Proudly funded by the Australian and Queensland Governments  
through the 2017-2018 Natural Disaster Resilience Program



**Australian Government**



**Queensland  
Government**



**volunteering  
queensland**

#### © Copyright

Volunteering Queensland encourages the dissemination and exchange of information provided in this publication. Where this publication includes material whose copyright is owned by third parties, Volunteering Queensland has made all reasonable efforts to clearly label material where the copyright is owned by a third party, and ensure that the copyright owner has consented to this material being presented in this publication. Wherever a third party holds copyright in material presented in this publication, the copyright remains with that party. Their permission is required to use that material.

#### Disclaimer

Volunteering Queensland has exercised all care in the compilation and drafting of this publication. This Guide is provided solely for the benefit of Local Government and volunteer involving organisations by way of general information and is designed for discretionary use only. It does not replace the requirement for your organisation to obtain specific operational, legal, insurance, or other advice. In no event shall Volunteering Queensland be liable for any damages whatsoever, whether in an action of contract, negligence or other tortious action, arising out of or in connection with the use of or reliance on any of the information in this publication.

# HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

This document is designed to step you through how to develop your own Operational Plan with examples to get your started.

When developing your Spontaneous Volunteer Operations Plan it should work in conjunction with:

- Your Local Government's Managing Spontaneous Volunteer Sub-Plan.
- Your existing volunteer management policies, procedures and practices.

Remember, organisations managing Spontaneous Volunteers should already have existing volunteer programs, policies and procedures in place for volunteer management.

These policies and procedures apply to Spontaneous Volunteers, with the development of the Managing Spontaneous Volunteer Operations Plan to clearly articulate how to operationalise Spontaneous Volunteers when the need arises.

# CONTENTS

<b>HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT:</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>BACKGROUND</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISATION MANAGING VOLUNTEERS</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Insurance and Liability.....	<b>8</b>
Risks.....	<b>9</b>
The Decision to Use Spontaneous Volunteers.....	<b>9</b>
<b>KEY ROLES</b> .....	<b>10</b>
<b>TASKS AND RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>11</b>
Volunteer Tasks.....	<b>11</b>
Emergent Tasks.....	<b>11</b>
Tasks Excluded from Spontaneous Volunteer Activities.....	<b>12</b>
Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).....	<b>12</b>
Use of Equipment.....	<b>13</b>
Transport, Catering, and Other Resources.....	<b>14</b>
<b>VOLUNTEER RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION CENTRE</b> .....	<b>15</b>
Management of Centre.....	<b>15</b>
Centre Locations.....	<b>16</b>
<b>PHASES OF RECRUITMENT AND REGISTRATION</b> .....	<b>17</b>
<b>Phase 1</b> Pre-registration of Potential Spontaneous Volunteers.....	<b>18</b>
<b>Phase 2</b> Screening for Suitability.....	<b>18</b>
<b>Phase 3</b> Registration of Spontaneous Volunteers.....	<b>18</b>
<b>Phase 4</b> Identification.....	<b>18</b>
<b>Phase 5</b> Blue Card and Criminal History Checks.....	<b>19</b>
<b>Phase 6</b> Spontaneous Volunteers not Engaged.....	<b>19</b>

<b>SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT</b> .....	<b>20</b>
Rostering .....	20
Sign in and Sign Out Records .....	21
Briefings .....	21
Instruction and Training Needs .....	22
Supervision and Monitoring Tasks .....	22
Volunteer Support and Wellbeing .....	23
Incident Reporting .....	23
Debriefing .....	24
Spontaneous Volunteers no Longer Required .....	25
Reward and Recognition .....	25
<b>REPORTING</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>REVIEW AND EVALUATION</b> .....	<b>26</b>

# BACKGROUND

Below is an example of wording for the Background section of your document outlining the need for a Managing Spontaneous Volunteer Operational Plan.

## EXAMPLE

Disasters can strike anywhere and at any time. Community members are very committed to assisting each other and, whether we plan for it or not, volunteers will come forward spontaneously to offer all kinds of assistance at these times. These volunteers are called Spontaneous Volunteers.

These volunteers can be an invaluable additional workforce when effectively sourced and managed, and can greatly assist in helping with disaster efforts. A clear understanding of the affected communities' needs and strong management systems are required to effectively utilise these volunteers.

To ensure that no unintended harm or stress is caused to affected people, or disruption created to the response and recovery process, it is essential to have volunteers coordinated in an appropriate way. This will create a workplace environment where volunteers are safely and effectively engaged, work in an organised fashion, and have access to appropriate resources.

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES IN THE USE AND MANAGEMENT OF SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

While planning for the use of Spontaneous Volunteers it is important to keep in mind the Guiding Principles in the use and Management of Spontaneous Volunteers as outlined in the National Spontaneous Volunteer Strategy. These guidelines are also further defined in the AIDR Handbook [Communities Responding to Disasters: Planning for Spontaneous Volunteers](#).

## Guiding Principles

1. The people affected by an emergency or disaster are always the priority.
2. Spontaneous Volunteers are a valuable component of community response and recovery.
3. Jurisdictions and agencies will take considered policy positions on whether they will engage Spontaneous Volunteers.
4. Processes are needed to effectively engage Spontaneous Volunteers and to avoid agencies being overwhelmed with offers of support.
5. Standard volunteer management processes apply in times of emergency.
6. Arrangements for managing Spontaneous Volunteers should be embedded within existing emergency management plans and operating guidelines.
7. Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinators have a right to respectfully decline offers of assistance where they are deemed inappropriate or not needed.
8. Everyone has the right to offer their assistance and to feel their offer has been valued.
9. The time when Spontaneous Volunteers are needed may not coincide with the time when offers of help are being made.
10. Effective, timely, consistent communication is essential in the management of Spontaneous Volunteers.

## Motivations of Spontaneous Volunteers

The motivation for Spontaneous Volunteers to assist at times of disasters may vary from that of traditional volunteers. Understanding their motivations may be useful in planning for, and supporting them, at times of disaster.

Motivations of Spontaneous Volunteers include:

- Helping communities to recover.
- Relieving their own concerns.
- Taking back control of their lives.
- Curiosity.

Rarely but on occasion, there are negative motivations for Spontaneous Volunteers to offer their help. Some volunteers may want to exploit the situation for their own gain.

You may like to include the above guiding principles and motivations in your plan.

# RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANISATION MANAGING VOLUNTEERS

Organisations managing Spontaneous Volunteers should define their responsibilities in discussion with the Local Government prior to a disaster event.

Below is an example of some key responsibilities of an organisation managing Spontaneous Volunteers. There may be additional requirements depending on your own organisation's approach and the tasks required. For example, your organisation may also be responsible for the set-up and management of the Volunteer Registration and Reception Centre.

## EXAMPLE

[Name of Organisation] is responsible for the management of Spontaneous Volunteers including:

- Identifying, recruiting, training and managing Team Leaders and Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Developing, implementing and maintaining internal plans and strategies for the effective use and management of Team Leaders and Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Maintaining current and adequate insurances and liabilities associated with the delivery of its services, management of Team Leaders and Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Working in collaboration with the Local Disaster Coordinator and Local Recovery Coordinator or delegate (such as an appointed [Name of Local Government] Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator) to ensure the effective planning and coordination of spontaneous volunteer activity.
- Registering, screening and providing identification and relevant checks for the volunteer.
- Providing adequate briefing and work health and safety instruction to all Team Leaders and Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Ensuring approval has been provided by property owners or tenants, prior to entering private property.
- Identifying and mitigating risks and providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) associated with the tasks undertaken by the Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Ensuring supervision and appropriate duty of care until the volunteer has formally completed their role.
- Ensuring all Spontaneous Volunteers sign in and sign out of their shift via a timesheet.
- Ensuring Spontaneous Volunteers are recognised for their time and effort.
- Reviewing and evaluating the operations.
- Maintaining accurate records regarding operations and providing timely reports to assist the [Name of Local Government] in planning, preparation, response and recovery activities.
- Utilising EV CREW to support the recruitment and pre-registration of potential volunteers to support volunteer activities.

## INSURANCE AND LIABILITY

It is important that the organisation managing Spontaneous Volunteers ensures that all volunteers are insured for the tasks that they are required to undertake, prior to the event. It is recommended that any emergent task is alerted to the insurance company as soon as possible.

Overleaf is an example of wording and a table to capture your insurance plan.

## Example

All Spontaneous Volunteers involved in the coordinated response are to be appropriately insured for their activities. [Name of Organisation] maintains Public Liability Insurance and Personal Accident Cover for their volunteers.

INSURANCE CO	POLICY NAME	POLICY NUMBER	CONTACT DETAILS

## RISKS

It is important for organisations managing Spontaneous Volunteers to have good volunteer management practices, policies and insurances to ensure the well-being of volunteers and those with whom they work. Identifying potential risks to the health and safety of volunteers is a component of volunteer management. Risk assessments should be developed and mitigation strategies implemented.

Capture this in your plan for managing risks.

## EXAMPLE

[Name of Local Government] and [Name of Organisation] have agreed on the tasks to be undertaken by Spontaneous Volunteers including an assessment of the risks and appropriate mitigation activities for each task.

If any new tasks are identified for Spontaneous Volunteers, these tasks must be risk-assessed by [Name of Organisation] to determine any mitigation strategies required. If in doubt, notify the insurance company of the new tasks.

The identified risk and minimum PPE requirements will be communicated to all volunteers prior to their commencement.

## THE DECISION TO USE SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS

Within Queensland Disaster Management Arrangements (QDMA), the decision to utilise Spontaneous Volunteers will sit with the Local Disaster Management Group (LDMG).

There may be more than one organisation with the responsibility of managing Spontaneous Volunteers at times of disasters. It is important that these groups are working with the relevant Local Government in order to ensure that all organisations are working collaboratively in the field and reducing the duplication of effort. Below is an example of wording about the decision to utilise Spontaneous Volunteers.

## EXAMPLE

The [Name of LDMG] will decide if Spontaneous Volunteers will be utilised to support operations.

The [Name of Local Government] will communicate the approval to use Spontaneous Volunteers to [Name of Organisation].

[Name of Local Government] will also advise Volunteering Queensland's EV CREW that [Name of Organisation] will be managing Spontaneous Volunteers to enable easy referral of EV CREW volunteers to the organisations.

# KEY ROLES

A variety of roles may be used to support the coordination and management of Spontaneous Volunteers. Each role will have varying levels and areas of responsibility and may sit within different organisations.

Documenting these key roles in this plan will establish clear expectations on the roles and responsibilities of these positions.

The following examples outline some of the roles that may be used across Spontaneous Volunteer operations.

EXAMPLE	
ROLE	DUTIES
[Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager	The [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator is appointed by [Name of Organisation] and is responsible for being the link between the [Name of Local Government] and the Spontaneous Volunteer Team Leaders. They will need to brief the Team Leaders with information provided to them from the [Name of Local Government] and ensure any emerging issues or requirements are reported to the [Name of Local Government].
[Name of Organisation] Team Leader	Spontaneous Volunteer Team Leaders are responsible for the operational management of the Spontaneous Volunteers. Team Leaders are also responsible for ensuring that Spontaneous Volunteers sign in and sign out of their shifts on a timesheet.
[Name of Organisation] Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre Manager	Oversees the operations of the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre. Liaises with the Organisational Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator.
Spontaneous Volunteer	Spontaneous Volunteers are those people who have no formal association with the emergency management system that put their hands up to help when a disaster happens. This type of volunteer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assists following a disaster event and is time limited</li> <li>• Is motivated (often as a result of traditional and social media coverage) to assist disaster-impacted communities</li> <li>• May or may not have relevant training, skills or experience.</li> </ul>

# TASKS AND RESOURCES

Outlining the tasks, skills and minimum PPE requirements is critical to the planning phase to help you identify the tasks that Spontaneous Volunteers will undertake and the Team Leader to Spontaneous Volunteer ratio and the associated requirements.

Each task that is identified for Spontaneous Volunteers will need a Volunteer Task Management Plan developed, which includes a task description (this template can be accessed via the Volunteering Queensland website). The volunteer Task Management Plan will also help you identify the Team Leader to volunteer ratio.

Suggestion: Liaise with your Local Government (or other relevant authority) to help determine what is required and provide an opportunity for them to assist in accessing these resources.

Below is some suggested text to consider including in your plan.

## VOLUNTEER TASKS

### EXAMPLE

Key suitable tasks for Spontaneous Volunteers and the minimum PPE requirements for undertaking each task are outlined below.

TASK	SKILLS REQUIRED	MINIMUM PPE	TEAM LEADER TO VOLUNTEER RATIO
Clean up debris	General cleaning skills e.g. sweeping, mopping. Ability to lift up to 10kg. Follow direction and WHS requirements. Work as a member of a team.	Long pants Long sleeved shirt Gloves Protective eyewear	E.g. one Team Leader to six volunteers (1:6 ratio). <b>NB:</b> Throughout an event, re-evaluate the appropriate ratio for the environment and tasks at-hand. New or changing information may result in a lower ratio.

## EMERGENT TASKS

It may be requested that Spontaneous Volunteers support emergent tasks that have not previously been identified by the Local Government. Below is an example of wording that highlights some additional tasks for organisations managing Spontaneous Volunteers to complete prior to undertaking additional tasks.

### EXAMPLE

It may be requested that Spontaneous Volunteers support emergent tasks that have not previously been identified by the [Name of Local Government].

Prior to these additional tasks being undertaken the following must occur:

- Risk assessments must be undertaken by [Name of Organisation] prior to additional tasks being undertaken to identify the minimum PPE, skills and qualifications required to undertake the tasks.
- The [Name of Organisation] must also confirm with their insurance company that these identified tasks will be covered.
- A Volunteer Task Management Plan must be developed for these tasks prior to them commencing.
- The [Name of Organisation] must agree to the nominated tasks.

## TASKS EXCLUDED FROM SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEER ACTIVITIES

It is important to identify tasks that carry excessive risk or that require specialised qualifications and are therefore not suitable for Spontaneous Volunteers. Examples may include asbestos removal or chainsaw operations.

Below is an example of wording and a table to be included in your Spontaneous Volunteer Operational Management Plan.

### EXAMPLE

Currently, [Name of Local Government] and [Name of Organisation] have assessed the following tasks as carrying excessive risk for the [Name of Organisation] and therefore are not recommended to be undertaken by Spontaneous Volunteers. These tasks may be carried out by other organisations or trained, suitably qualified volunteers as deemed appropriate but should not be carried out by Spontaneous Volunteers.

Volunteers should not be tasked with the following roles unless [Name of Organisation] reassesses the situation and directly instructs the volunteers. These roles:

- may be perceived as a need on the day
- are taking place alongside volunteer tasks
- may need to happen at some point in the future
- may be completed by non-volunteers.

### TASKS THAT WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

E.g. Tasks that require specialist licenses or tickets such as Plant Operator, Traffic Control, Asbestos Removal


### EXAMPLE

All Spontaneous Volunteers must be issued with, or bring with them the appropriate personal protective equipment suitable for the task being undertaken.

Specific PPE requirements for each identified task have been determined by [Name of Organisation] and are listed in the section Volunteer Tasks and in the relevant Volunteer Task Management Plan for each task.

## USE OF EQUIPMENT

The use of equipment should be identified in the planning phase and be detailed in the Volunteer Task Management Plan. This plan should include whether or not Spontaneous Volunteers will be allowed to bring their own equipment or if it will be provided (by the organisation, Local Government or other supporting organisation).

The organisation should discuss the requirement for various equipment with the Local Government in the planning phase of Spontaneous Volunteer operations. Some consideration should be given to what pieces of equipment must not be provided by Spontaneous Volunteers due to safety, licencing or other reasons. If there are items of equipment that must not be provided by the Spontaneous Volunteers, this should be listed in this section of the Plan. Example wording and table is provided below.

### EXAMPLE

Use of personal equipment and resources of Spontaneous Volunteers will be considered, by [Name of Organisation]. The following equipment will be required for each task, at a minimum.

TASK	EQUIPMENT

### EXAMPLE

[Name of Local Government] will provide, at a minimum, the following equipment and resources for use in Spontaneous Volunteer disaster operations. Any other necessary equipment required, will be negotiated, on an as-needs basis.

TASK	EQUIPMENT

## TRANSPORT, CATERING AND OTHER RESOURCES

Transport, catering and other resources should be discussed with the Local Government in the planning phase. Below is an example of wording.

The information provided in this section will be an overview. It is recommended you have a separate plan in place that captures the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre operations.

### EXAMPLE

Depending on the size, impact and geographical spread of the disaster event, consideration will be given to the provision of transport from a central location to transport volunteers to their location of work, catering for the volunteers and other required resource (such as toilet facilities).

[Name of Organisation] will provide information to [Name of Local Government] regarding numbers of volunteers expected, and work with the [Name of Local Government] to arrange necessary transport.

# VOLUNTEER RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION CENTRE

Volunteer Reception and Registration Centres can be virtual, physical or a mixture of both. The purpose of these centres is to ensure that all volunteers can gather to be provided with vital information, personal protective equipment, tools, coordination before and after their shift. These centres are also an integral part of an organisation's ability to complete and verify Spontaneous Volunteers' registration.

Regardless of the size of the Spontaneous Volunteer operations, the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre/s will be used to support the management and coordination of Spontaneous Volunteers and will provide support with volunteer:

- Registration
- Screening
- Tasking
- Briefing / debriefing
- Personal protective equipment
- Equipment.

Even when using a central online system for the pre-registration of volunteers (such as Volunteering Queensland's EV CREW) it is important to note that the organisation responsible for managing Spontaneous Volunteers will still need to verify the information collected through the pre-registration process for volunteers that they utilise.

This verification process should be documented in the Volunteer Task Management Plan and may require a face to face meeting to ensure the volunteer is fit for the task and that they complete any other necessary paperwork required.

Physical Volunteer Reception and Registration Centres will also be required when there:

- Is lack of internet connectivity.
- Are large numbers of people turning up to the disaster site or Local Government building.
- Are large numbers of volunteers are required and they cannot be sourced through online pre-registration processes.

Below is an example of wording to include in your Plan.

## MANAGEMENT OF CENTRE

### EXAMPLE

The management of the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centres will be undertaken by:

- [Name of Organisation] / [Name of Local Government]

## PURPOSE OF THE CENTRE

### EXAMPLE

The purpose of the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centres is to ensure that all volunteers can gather to be provided with vital information, personal protective equipment, tools, and coordination before and after their shift. These centres are also an integral part of an organisation's ability to complete and verify the Spontaneous Volunteers' registration.

Regardless of the size of the Spontaneous Volunteer operations, the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre/s will be used to support the management and coordination of Spontaneous Volunteers and will provide support with volunteer:

- Registration
- Screening
- Tasking
- Briefing / debriefing
- Personal protective equipment
- Equipment.

## WHEN WILL VOLUNTEER RECEPTION AND REGISTRATION CENTRES BE USED?

### EXAMPLE

The Volunteer Reception and Registration Centres will also be required when there:

- Is lack of internet connectivity
- Are large numbers of people turning up to the disaster site or Local Government building
- Are large numbers of volunteers required and they cannot be sourced through online pre-registration processes.

For more information about Volunteer and Reception Centres please refer to [\[insert document name\]](#).

## CENTRE LOCATIONS

LOCATION	ADDRESS	MAXIMUM CAPACITY

# PHASES OF RECRUITMENT AND REGISTRATION

There are two phases for the recruitment and registration of Spontaneous Volunteers:

## 1. Potential Spontaneous Volunteers

This is where individuals or groups register their offer to volunteer.

## 2. Spontaneous Volunteers

When individual or group offers to volunteer are taken up by an organisation as part of the coordinated formal response. These individuals are formally registered as volunteers to assist with the response / recovery effort.

Recruitment of Spontaneous Volunteers (in Queensland) is generally undertaken by Volunteering Queensland through people registering their interest to volunteer through the Emergency Response to Extreme Weather (EV CREW) system.

### Potential Spontaneous Volunteers – Offers of Assistance

EV CREW allows interested parties to pre-emptively register offers of assistance meaning that organisations managing disaster response can simply request volunteers from Volunteering Queensland in order to recruit Spontaneous Volunteers.

NB: it is still the responsibility of the organisation managing Spontaneous Volunteers to screen all volunteers to ensure they are suitable for the role.

Depending on the scale and impact of the event, volunteers may register their offer to assist in a variety of ways. These may include:

- Pre-emptively registering online: Registration will capture information such as name, contact details and basic skillset. However, this process will not capture all information the responsible organisation requires. For example, Volunteering Queensland allows any adult member of the community local and Queensland wide to pre-register their interest as a Spontaneous Volunteer before, during and following a disaster event through their EV CREW service.
- Presenting to a Volunteer Registration and Reception Centre and completing a paper-based offer of assistance form. It is preferable that people generally be directed to complete their offers of assistance online to ensure supply and that on-ground resources are directed to the area most in need.

### Spontaneous Volunteers – Registered Volunteers

Once a potential Spontaneous Volunteer has been screened by the organisation managing Spontaneous Volunteers and is deemed suitable they will be formally registered with the organisation. It is at this point that they become a Spontaneous Volunteer.

The registration of Spontaneous Volunteers is an essential element to ensure they comply with insurance requirements and ensure they complete a Spontaneous Volunteer agreement.

Organisations managing Spontaneous Volunteers are responsible for the comprehensive registration of all Spontaneous Volunteers that they are managing before they undertake their first shift.

This registration process will include:

- Completion of registration and agreement forms [insert form]
- Induction and briefing [insert form]

It is the responsibility of [Name of Organisation] to determine if each person is fit to undertake the task assigned through the screening process.

Capture this in your Recruitment and Registration Plan by using the example wording and flow overleaf.

# ADD RECRUITMENT FLOW CHART

Include a simple overview of the steps to be taken during each phase of recruitment

PHASE 1

## Registration of Potential Spontaneous Volunteers

### EXAMPLE

Volunteering Queensland allows any Member of the community (local and Queensland wide) to register their interest as a Spontaneous Volunteer (both before and during) a disaster event through their EV CREW service.

Registration will capture information such as name, contact details and basic skillset. However, it will not capture all information the responsible organisation requires.

PHASE 2

## Screening for Suitability

### EXAMPLE

[Name of Organisation] is responsible for ensuring that volunteers are fit to perform the task assigned to each volunteer prior to the registration process.

Assessment of each Spontaneous Volunteer's suitability to perform duties will be undertaken by [Name of Organisation] to ensure:

- Their skills and experience are best utilised.
- That they are not placed in unsafe situations.
- That they are not undertaking tasks beyond their skill level without appropriate training being provided.
- They are not undertaking tasks that they are not qualified for or hold the correct licences to do.

PHASE 3

## Registration of Spontaneous Volunteers

### EXAMPLE

All Spontaneous Volunteers will be screened to determine their suitability, be required to complete a paper-based registration form (even if an online registration has already been made) and complete a Spontaneous Volunteer Agreement before they undertake their first shift.

This will be undertaken at the Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre.

PHASE 4

## Identification

Thought should be given to what identification (if any) the Spontaneous Volunteers will be required to wear, including if a valid picture of them is required and what the identification may consist of (for example laminated or on plastic, badge or lanyard etc). It is important to bring all the relevant equipment to the point of registration so that Volunteers can be issued with their identification quickly (printers, camera, materials, computer).

It is recommended that all identification display the logo of the managing organisation.

### EXAMPLE

All Spontaneous Volunteers will be required to provide identification at registration.

All Spontaneous Volunteers undertaking tasks at the direction of [Name of Organisation] must wear identification, dependent on the available resources in the field.

An identification template can be found here: [insert form].

## PHASE 5

### Working with Children and Criminal History Checks

If there is a requirement for Spontaneous Volunteers to possess either a Working with Children Card (Blue Card) or have a valid Criminal History Check, this should be identified in the risk assessment process for each task. Below is example wording. If Blue Cards or Police Checks are deemed necessary for any task, this section will need to be reworded accordingly.

#### EXAMPLE

Blue Card and Criminal History Checks have not been identified as a requirement to undertake the tasks identified in this plan. A risk assessment will be undertaken prior to the use of volunteers in each activation in collaboration between the [Name of Local Government] LDCC Volunteer Coordinator and the [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager to identify if these checks are necessary or if there are processes that can be implemented to mitigate the risks.

## PHASE 6

### Spontaneous Volunteers not Engaged

There will be instances when Spontaneous Volunteers directly offer their support to your organisation and their offer will not be required at that time. Regardless of whether the offer was accepted, it is important to keep records of those that have offered their support directly to your organisation so you can acknowledge their offer as well as provide them with additional information on how they can volunteer with your service in the future.



# SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT

Ensuring effective volunteer management practices are in place will support your organisation attract, manage, and retain volunteers, and help manage risk and the safety of the work undertaken by volunteers.

Include a brief overarching statement on the key aspects of volunteer management your organisation will use and how this will work in conjunction with your current volunteer management practices. You will provide further information relating to these aspects later in the plan. Below is an example of wording to be utilised in a Spontaneous Volunteers Operational Plan.

## EXAMPLE

[Name of organisation] uses the following volunteer management practices:

- Maintaining current Personal Accident and Public Liability Insurance for all volunteers.
- Effective screening, recruitment and registration of volunteers.
- Providing volunteer inductions, briefings and debriefings.
- Training and supervision of staff, Team Leaders, coordinators and volunteers.
- Providing Workplace Health and Safety policies, procedures and volunteer rights and responsibilities.
- Providing equipment and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).
- Ensuring reward and recognition of volunteers.
- Providing volunteer management policies, procedures, codes of conduct.
- Developing and maintaining current Volunteer Task Management Plans for all tasks identified for Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Providing direct management, supervision and coordination of volunteer activities.
- Adhering to, and implementation of the National Standards for Volunteer Involvement.

## ROSTERING

Rostering volunteers will help ensure you have the right volunteers at the right time to assist your organisation with the required tasks.

A range of factors should be taken into consideration when rostering Spontaneous Volunteers, including the:

- Availability of Team Leaders to support the supervision of Spontaneous Volunteers.
- Time required for the task.
- Timeframes provided for the completion of the task.
- Number of volunteers available.
- Issues such as temperature, humidity and the nature of tasks will impact on the duration of volunteer shifts.
- Regular rest and breaks for meals.
- The level of risk associated with the tasks.
- The level of supervision required.

Below is an example of wording.

## EXAMPLE

[Name of Organisation] is responsible for the rostering of Spontaneous Volunteers. Information regarding the numbers of volunteers required and the numbers of volunteers sourced to meet the task will be communicated to [Name of Local Government].

Volunteering Queensland's EV CREW can assist with rostering.

## SIGN IN AND SIGN OUT RECORDS

Having volunteers sign on and off from their volunteer shift will assist with:

- Reporting on volunteer activity.
- Monitoring the return of the workforce from their allocated tasks.
- Supporting future planning of activities when understanding time required to undertake a task.
- Providing evidence of the hours a volunteer worked should a workplace injury occur and claim is made.

Record how your organisation will manage the sign in and sign out process.

**NB:** The sign in and sign out process may also be done online or via mobile devices. Whatever format is used, volunteers need to be clearly informed about the process and the importance of both signing in and signing out.

Example wording below.

### EXAMPLE

At the commencement and conclusion of each shift, all staff and volunteers must sign in and out on the daily timesheet. Team Leaders must ensure that members of their team have signed on before and off after each shift. A copy of a sign in form can be found here: [\[insert here\]](#).

A new page is to be used for each day and at the conclusion of each day a copy is to be forwarded to:

- [\[Name of Local Government\]](#) for filing.
- Volunteering Queensland to crosscheck records of those referred to the organisation versus those that attended.
- [\[Name of Organisation\]](#) will keep the original copy of the completed form.

## INDUCTION / BRIEFINGS

It is critical that all Spontaneous Volunteers are briefed at the beginning of each shift. Briefing of the Spontaneous Volunteers will be the responsibility of the Team Leaders. This ensures they have an understanding of:

- The current situation.
- Their roles and tasks for that shift.
- The resources required and where they can collect them.
- Communication and supervising lines and requirements.
- Work health and safety requirements and any safety issues.
- Talking to the media and people affected by the disaster.
- Sign in and sign out process.

Record how your organisation will provide briefings to volunteers.

Example wording overleaf.

## EXAMPLE

Volunteers will be briefed prior the commencement of their duties daily. This briefing will include information on:

- The current situation.
- Their roles and tasks for that shift.
- The resources required and where they can collect them.
- Communication and supervising lines and requirements.
- Work health and safety requirements and any safety issues.
- Talking to the media and people affected by the disaster.
- Sign in and sign out process.

It is also important that volunteers have the opportunity to ask questions either during or at the end of the briefing to ensure they have a clear understanding of everything that has been said.

The briefing will normally be provided by the [Name of Organisation] Volunteer Manager and [Name of Local Government] Volunteer Coordinator.

## INSTRUCTION AND TRAINING NEEDS

Although it is important to ensure Team Leaders and coordinators are trained before the disaster event, you may identify emergent training needs depending on the required tasks. Below is an example of wording.

## EXAMPLE

The [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager and Team Leaders should identify any emerging requirements for training in order to perform the task assigned to them. This request for emergent training should be detailed to the LDCC Volunteer Coordinator to arrange appropriate training.

## SUPERVISION AND MONITORING TASKS

Organisations have a duty of care to supervise and monitor a Spontaneous Volunteer's performance, both in relation to their ability to undertake a task and with respect to their emotional and physical wellbeing.

Record below how your organisation will do this.

It will be important to consider the nature of the task being undertaken by the volunteers and the maximum number of volunteers the Team Leader can support at any one time. For example, if undertaking a clean up of a park following a windstorm that involves the collection of small debris with minimal risks and all volunteers can be kept in line of sight, the organisation may choose to use one Team Leader to 10 spontaneous volunteers (ie 1:10 ratio). However, if the clean up is occurring in a house that has been inundated by flood water with high risks associated due to heavy lifting, disease control and volunteers not being in line of sight, the organisation may choose to lower this ratio down to 1:3.

Example wording below.

## EXAMPLE

The [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager is to ensure the appropriate monitoring and supervision of Spontaneous Volunteers is undertaken by the Team Leaders to reduce the levels of risk associated with their tasks and increase the satisfaction levels of both volunteers and the recipients of the assistance being provided.

## VOLUNTEER SUPPORT AND WELL-BEING

The personal safety and welfare of Spontaneous Volunteers and all personnel should be considered and adequately planned for. Example wording below.

### EXAMPLE

The [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager and Team Leaders are responsible for monitoring their staff and volunteers to identify any wellbeing issues and prevent burn-out.

[Name of Organisation] is to ensure the appropriate monitoring and supervision of Spontaneous Volunteers is undertaken by the Team Leaders to reduce the levels of risk associated with their tasks and increase the satisfaction levels of both volunteers and the recipients of the assistance being provided.

Any workplace health and safety issues and associated mitigation strategies need to be communicated to the volunteers at the briefing at the start of the shift. Any incidents that occur throughout the shift need to be immediately reported to the [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager and an incident form filled in.

If someone is unaccounted for at any stage of each shift, the Team Leader must inform the [Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager as soon as possible.

If a Team Leader identifies that someone requires counselling, they will be referred to [Name of provider] which will be provided to them by [Name of Organisation]. A check-in with each volunteer is also recommended at the end of each shift as a part of the debrief.

## INCIDENT REPORTING

A clear process for incident reporting should be developed and practical information should be included in the briefing about the incident reporting process. If your organisation already has an incident reporting process this may be modified for use at times of disaster. Example wording below.

### EXAMPLE

In the event of an incident that occurs and involves a Spontaneous Volunteer, [Name of Organisation] Team Leader or manager, the Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator must be informed verbally and an incident form should be completed as soon as practicable after the incident. A copy of the incident form must also be forwarded to the [Name of Local Government] Spontaneous Volunteer Coordinator as soon as practicable. In the event of any serious injury (an injury requiring medical treatment) [Name of Organisation] must be notified immediately.

A copy of the [Name of Organisation] incident form can be found here: [insert form]

## DEBRIEFING

Spontaneous Volunteers should receive a debriefing at the completion of each shift.

Debriefing allows time to reflect on what went well and what could be improved. It also provides volunteers with an opportunity to discuss items they found challenging and to request help or guidance. A copy of a debriefing template can be found here: [\[insert form\]](#)

Some common questions to ask at a debriefing:

- What went well today?
- What didn't go so well?
- How could we do that differently?
- Was there anything you needed that wasn't available?
- How are you feeling?
- Were there any incidents we should know about?
- Did you find out about any additional recovery work that we need to think about?
- How would you rate today's work as being worthwhile and effective?

Any relevant information should be passed to the organisation's Manager and Local Government overseeing operations to implement relevant changes, as soon as practical.

Example wording below.

### EXAMPLE

[\[Name of Organisation\]](#) Spontaneous Volunteer Manager and Team leaders will undertake timely debriefing sessions at the completion of each shift.

A copy of a debriefing template can be found here: [\[insert form\]](#)

Following are questions you should ask in a debriefing:

- What went well today?
- What didn't go so well?
- How could we do that differently?
- Was there anything you needed that wasn't available?
- How are you feeling?
- Were there any incidents we should know about?
- Did you find out about an additional recovery work that we need to think about?
- How would you rate today's work as being worthwhile and effective?

Any relevant information is to be passed to [\[Name of Local Government\]](#) to implement relevant changes, as soon as practical.

## SPONTANEOUS VOLUNTEERS NO LONGER REQUIRED

The decision to cease the use of Spontaneous Volunteers will normally be identified and agreed in conjunction with the coordinating authority (within Queensland this responsibility will sit with the LDMG). The following factors may provide a guide to understand if Spontaneous Volunteers will no longer be utilised:

- The immediate to short term needs of those affected by the disaster have been met.
- The coordinating authority is satisfied that objectives of the volunteer operations have been met.
- Unsafe environment for the volunteers.
- Volunteer operations are ineffective.

### EXAMPLE

The decision to cease the use of Spontaneous Volunteers will be decided by the [Name of Local Government].

Once it has been identified that Spontaneous Volunteers are no longer required, the organisation will work with Local Government and other organisations such as Volunteering Queensland (EV CREW) to create information to be provided to Spontaneous Volunteers that:

- Notifies them that they are no longer required.
- Thanks them for their assistance.
- Informs them of future volunteering opportunities including in medium to longer term recovery activities.
- Notifies them that they are required to finish their duties earlier than expected.

## REWARD AND RECOGNITION

Recognising the contributions of volunteers is an integral component of volunteer management. It creates a sense of accomplishment for the volunteer, demonstrates to volunteers that their efforts have made a difference and have been valued and appreciated, and increases their likelihood of volunteering again.

Example wording below.

### EXAMPLE

[Name of Organisation] will work with [Name of Local Government] to ensure they recognise and reward the Spontaneous Volunteers that are managed by the managing organisation.

Individual, group and community acknowledgements are to be considered as part of the debriefing process and consideration should be given to additional recognition and reward through local, state or commonwealth government protocols.

[Name of Organisation] is responsible for the reward and recognition process on an individual and group level during volunteer shifts or as a part of the debriefing process.

# REPORTING

Reporting will be a regular part of Spontaneous Volunteer operations. It is important to discuss the reporting requirements with your Local Government and other relevant organisations (such as Volunteering Queensland) in the planning phases. Below is an example of the types of reports and whose responsibility it may be to complete them. Please adapt this to your organisation's requirements.

## EXAMPLE

A range of reports will be required to be submitted throughout spontaneous disaster operations.

POSITION / ORGANISATION	TYPE OF REPORT REQUIRED	FREQUENCY
[Name of Organisation] Team Leader	Incident Report Sign in / Sign out form	As required Daily
[Name of Organisation] Spontaneous Volunteer Manager	Incident Report Shift Log Situation Report	As required Daily Daily
Volunteer Reception and Registration Centre Manager	Incident Report Shift Log Situation Report	As required Daily Daily

# REVIEW AND EVALUATION

Review and evaluation play an important part in the planning process to ensure that lessons from each event are learned and are learned and incorporated into the planning for future events.

Below is some example wording.

## EXAMPLE

This Operational Plan is to be reviewed and updated following the use of Spontaneous Volunteers and should include the results results from evaluations that identify any lessons learnt or opportunities for improvement. This includes:

- Reviewing the roles of Spontaneous Volunteers in response and recovery.
- Evaluating how the involvement of Spontaneous Volunteers has changed from event to event.
- Sharing the results of any evaluation with all stakeholders.
- Identifying ways to improve the plan and the roles of Spontaneous Volunteers in response and recovery and update the plan accordingly.

Supporting documents, guidelines and standards in the management of volunteers were utilised to support the development of this document. Volunteering Queensland would especially like to acknowledge the work of:

- Senior Sergeant Paul Behne as part of his Master of Emergency Management studies through Charles Sturt University
- Managing Volunteers in Emergencies Plan, Gannawarra Shire Council