

Work Health and Safety Laws and Volunteers

Work Health and Safety

Everyone has a right to be safe at work, including volunteers. Volunteers play a vital role in communities across Australia and make significant contributions by carrying out unpaid work for a variety of organisations every day.

You are a volunteer if you are working for an organisation without payment or reward. A volunteer may be reimbursed for out of pocket expenses.

Not all organisations owe work health and safety (WHS) duties to volunteers under the model WHS laws. But those that do must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the physical and mental health and safety of all workers, including volunteers.

WHS laws and volunteer organisations

Organisations covered by the model WHS laws must protect the health and safety of their volunteers. An organisation may ensure your health and safety by doing things like:

- confirming that any equipment you use is suitable for the work and does not put your health and safety at risk
- providing you with personal protective equipment (if necessary), and
- providing you with instructions, information and training about how to carry out your volunteer work safely.

What you need to do

As a volunteer, you need to take reasonable care of your own health and safety.

You must do this by:

- following the instructions given to you by the organisation you volunteer for, and
- complying with the policies and procedures of the organisation you volunteer for.

You must also take care to ensure your actions don't affect the health and safety of other people, for example, other volunteers, a client you are assisting, or the general public.

More information

A complete volunteer resource kit designed to help volunteers understand how WHS laws apply is available from safeworkaustralia.gov.au/topic/volunteers

SWA is not a regulator and cannot provide you with specific advice about your circumstances. If you need help, please contact your state or territory work health and safety authority or [volunteering Australia](#). You can also seek further information and assistance from a number of [volunteer peak bodies](#).

Your state or territory WHS Regulator:

- [WorkSafe ACT](#)
- [WorkCover NSW](#)
- [NT WorkSafe](#)
- [Work Health and Safety QLD](#)
- [SafeWork SA](#)
- [Work Safe TAS](#)
- [WorkSafe VIC](#)
- [WorkSafe WA](#)
- [Comcare](#)