

Volunteer Work Health and Safety Induction

**DBCA Health Safety and Wellbeing
Volunteer Coordination Unit**

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Department of Biodiversity,
Conservation and Attractions



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Purpose of the Work Health and Safety (WHS) Induction

WHS knowledge for volunteers

The induction provides critical Work Health and Safety knowledge to prepare volunteers for safe engagement in activities.

Clarifying responsibilities

The induction clarifies volunteer responsibilities under the *WHS Act 2020* and the Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions (DBCA)'s safety procedures.

Empowering safe contribution

Volunteers gain confidence and knowledge to contribute safely to conservation efforts through this induction.

Culture of safety and compliance

The induction fosters a culture of safety, risk reduction and compliance within the volunteer workforce.

Work Health and Safety Commitment Statement

At DBCA, we are committed to fostering a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace that safeguards the physical and psychological wellbeing of our people, visitors and others who work with us and for us, guided by our five core values:

- **Integrity**
- **Collaboration**
- **Accountability**
- **Respect**
- **Excellence**

We commit to:

- Establishing safe work systems through clear policies and procedures.
- Maintaining and improving safety through proactive risk monitoring.
- Operating in accordance with health and safety (WHS) legislation.
- Proactively identifying hazards and preventing harm.
- Supporting open reporting of hazards, near misses, and incidents.
- Providing training and supervision to ensure safe and competent work.
- Promoting mental wellbeing and access to support services.
- Consulting with staff and stakeholders on WHS matters.
- Ensuring effective risk controls and clear communication.
- Investigating incidents to learn and improve.
- Adopting a best-practice approach to our work program, with a focus on safety and continuous improvement.

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Legal and Departmental responsibilities – WHS Legal framework

Work Health and Safety Act 2020

- Provides the legal framework for workplace health and safety in WA.
- Volunteers are legally recognised as “workers” with similar obligations as employees:
 - Take reasonable care for their own safety.
 - Ensure their actions do not harm others.
- Organisations (PCBUs) owe the same duty of care to volunteers as paid workers.

General Regulations 2022 and approved Codes of Practice

- Regulations outline mandatory requirements for managing specific hazards (e.g., chemicals, working at heights).
- Approved Codes of Practice
 - Provide practical guidance to meet legal duties.
 - Following a Code is generally accepted as compliance with the Act and Regulations.

DBCA Compliance and policies / procedures

DBCA has internal policies and systems to ensure compliance with WA WHS legislation

These frameworks:

- Promote a safe environment for employees, volunteers, contractors, and visitors.
- Define clear responsibilities for all involved in DBCA activities

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Key roles and responsibilities under the *WHS Act 2020*

PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking)

In most cases, DBCA is the PCBU. It has the primary duty of care to provide a safe workplace, safe systems of work and resources to minimise or eliminate risks. However, if an external agency (that has paid employees), directs the volunteers' activities, that agency becomes the PCBU for that work and is responsible for the volunteers' safe work environment, including systems and resources. Where both DBCA and an external agency influence or direct the work, they share WHS duties and must consult, cooperate and coordinate to ensure the work is carried out safely.

Officer

Senior leaders who make or influence major decisions (e.g., Director General, Executive Directors). They must exercise due diligence to ensure DBCA meets its WHS obligations.

Worker

Anyone performing work for DBCA, including employees, volunteers, contractors, subcontractors, labour hire, and work experience students. Workers must take reasonable care for their own safety and follow DBCA procedures.

Duty Holder

Any person or organisation with a WHS duty under the Act. This includes PCBUs, officers, and workers. Each has specific responsibilities to keep the workplace safe.

Volunteer responsibilities

- Take reasonable care for your own health and safety.
- Ensure your actions do not harm others.
- Follow DBCA's reasonable instructions.
- Comply with DBCA health and safety policies and procedures.

DBCA responsibilities

As a PCBU, DBCA must, so far as reasonably practicable:

- Provide a safe work environment and systems.
- Eliminate or minimise risks.
- Supply resources, training, and supervision.

Leadership in safety

Managers lead and set the tone for safety culture by:

- Identifying and managing risks.
- Creating a safe, healthy workplace.
- Ensuring DBCA meets WHS obligations.



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Risk management, hazard awareness and reporting

Risk management is a systematic process used to identify hazards, assess the risks they pose, implement effective control measures, and review those controls to ensure they remain effective. The four key steps are:

- 1 **Identify hazards** – Find out what could cause harm.
- 2 **Assess risks** – Understand the likelihood and severity of harm.
- 3 **Control risks** – Apply the most effective and reasonably practicable measures to eliminate or minimise risks.
- 4 **Review controls** – Monitor and review controls to ensure they remain effective and make improvements where necessary.

Risk Management Process



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Hierarchy of Controls

The system for managing workplace risks ranked from most to least effective. The goal is to eliminate hazards wherever possible and only rely on lower-level controls when higher ones are not practical.

1 Elimination (Most Effective) Remove the hazard completely.

Example: If a chemical is dangerous, stop using it altogether.

Why: No hazard = no risk

2 Substitution – Replace the hazard with something safer

Example: Use a less toxic cleaning product instead of a hazardous chemical.

Why: Reduces the level of risk without removing the task.

3 Engineering Controls – Isolate people from the hazard.

Example: Machine guards, barriers, ventilation.

Why: Protects without relying on behaviour.

4 Administrative Controls – Change how people work.

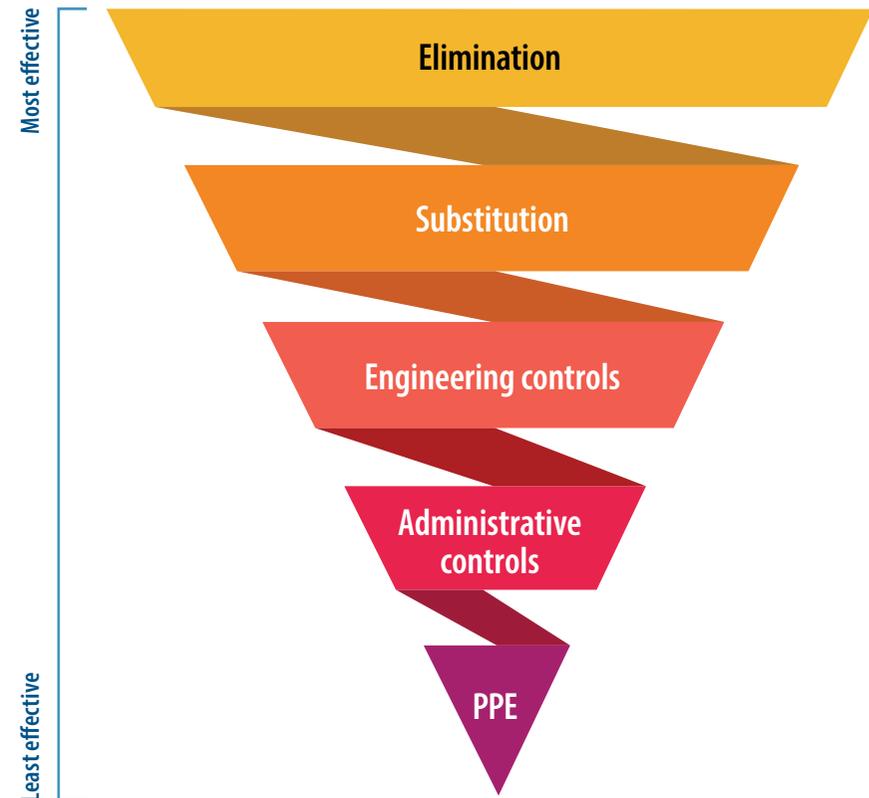
Example: Procedures, training, job rotation, signage.

Why: Reduces exposure but depends on compliance.

5 PPE (Last Line of defence)

Wear protective gear (gloves, goggles, high vis).

Why: Doesn't remove hazard; only limits harm.



Incident and hazard reporting (including legal notifications)

Prompt reporting responsibility

Volunteers must report all incidents, injuries, near misses, and hazards as soon as possible to ensure they are managed effectively, and workplace safety is maintained.

Reporting method

Reports should be made using the agreed reporting method for the site where you are working. This ensures timely action and accurate record-keeping.

Legal notification obligations

Certain serious incidents, such as fatalities, serious injuries, or dangerous occurrences, must be reported to external regulators like WorkSafe WA in accordance with legal requirements. Please contact your site supervisor or the DBCA Health and Safety Team for further assistance.

Support and assistance

Volunteers can seek help from their supervisor or a Health and Safety Representative when reporting, to ensure accurate and timely submissions. Alternatively, you can contact the DBCA Health and Safety Team or the Volunteer Coordination Unit for further assistance.

Health, PPE and fitness for work

First Aid and medical support

What is it? Immediate care given to sick or injured people before professional help arrives. Includes first aid kits, trained personnel, and emergency access.

Risks:

- Delayed response to injuries or illness
- Inadequate first aid supplies
- Remote locations increasing emergency response time

Examples for volunteers:

- Treating minor cuts or insect bites
- Assisting an injured person until help arrives
- Managing heat stress or dehydration

Prevention strategies:

- Know the location of first aid kits and emergency contacts
- Report injuries or illnesses immediately
- Carry personal medications if required
- Participate in first aid training if offered
- Follow DBCA health and safety procedures

Legal Duty:

Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)* and *WHS (General) Regulations 2022*, DBCA/PCBU must provide:

- Adequate first aid kits
- Access to trained first aiders
- Emergency contact procedures

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

What is it? Anything worn or used to protect a person from health and safety risks at work, such as gloves, safety glasses, high-visibility and or/ SPF protective clothing and sunscreen.

DBCA/PCBU responsibilities:

Under the *WHS (General) Regulations 2022 (WA)*, DBCA/PCBU must:

- Provide suitable PPE when risks cannot be eliminated or minimised by other means. Ensure PPE:
 - is appropriate for the hazard and task
 - fits properly and is comfortable
 - is maintained, clean, and in good condition
 - comes with training and instructions for correct use

Volunteer responsibilities:

- Use PPE as instructed
- Do not misuse or damage PPE
- Report any PPE defects or issues immediately

Key Point: PPE is the last line of defence after higher-level controls have been applied.

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Fitness for work (fatigue, alcohol and other drugs, stress, illness/injury)

What is it? Being fit for work means a person is physically, mentally, and emotionally capable of performing their duties safely and effectively.

Risks:

- **Fatigue** – Lack of adequate rest or excessive working hours can increase the risk of errors and accidents.
- **Alcohol and other drugs** – Being under the influence of alcohol, illicit substances, or certain medications can impair judgment and coordination.
- **Stress** – High stress levels can affect concentration, decision-making, and overall wellbeing.
- **Illness or Injury** – Health conditions or injuries may limit a person's ability to work safely.

Examples for volunteers:

- Working long hours without breaks
- Taking medication that causes drowsiness before a shift
- Attending work while unwell or injured

Prevention Strategies:

- Do not consume alcohol or drugs before or during work
- Inform your supervisor if stress, illness, or medication affects your ability to work safely
- Take regular breaks and manage fatigue

Legal Duty:

- Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)*, DBCA/PCBU must manage risks related to fitness for work.
- Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own health and safety, and:
 - Not attend work if unfit
 - Notify their supervisor if any factor affects their ability to work safely

You must present to work fit for duty and adhere to the following limits when undertaking work for the department.

The policy does not apply when work has ceased for the day, however you must be compliant when you resume work.

0.02% Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC) applies, unless legislation/policy stipulates lower requirement.

0.00% BAC applies when:

- Diving or operating marine vessels or equipment
- Working in, on or around aircraft
- Operating firearms
- Working alone

There is a zero tolerance to illicit substances

Work conditions and behaviour

Slips, trips and falls

Why it matters A common cause of injuries in outdoor environments like campgrounds due to uneven terrain and changing conditions.

Common Hazards:

- Uneven ground, tree roots, rocks, loose gravel
- Wet or muddy surfaces after rain
- Poor lighting on paths or campsites
- Items left in walkways (tools, hoses, gear)

Prevention Strategies:

- Wear sturdy, slip-resistant footwear
- Keep paths clear of obstacles
- Use adequate lighting in high-traffic areas
- Report and fix hazards promptly
- Follow site-specific safety instructions

Legal Duty:

- Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)*, DBCA/PCBU must eliminate or minimise risks as far as reasonably practicable.
- Volunteers must take reasonable care for their own safety and others.

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Hazardous manual tasks

What are they? Activity that involves lifting, lowering, pushing, pulling, carrying, holding or moving something in a way that could cause musculoskeletal disorders (MSDs).

Risk Factors:

- Repetitive or sustained force
- Awkward or sustained postures
- High or sudden force
- Vibration
- Handling people or animals

Examples for volunteers:

- Carrying equipment
- Moving logs, rocks, or heavy materials

Prevention strategies:

- Eliminate or reduce manual handling where possible
- Use mechanical aids (trolleys, wheelbarrows)
- Plan tasks – break loads into smaller parts, work in teams
- Avoid awkward postures and repetitive strain
- Get training on safe lifting techniques

Legal Duty:

Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)* and Hazardous Manual Tasks Code of Practice:

- DBCA/PCBU must manage these risks as far as reasonably practicable
- Volunteers must follow instructions and report hazards.

Work conditions and behaviour (...continued)

Hazardous chemicals (herbicides, fuels, cleaning agents, etc.)

What are they? Substances that can cause harm to health or safety, such as herbicides, fuels, and cleaning agents.

Risks:

- Poisoning
- Burns
- Fire or explosion

Examples for volunteers:

- Using herbicides for weed control
- Refuelling equipment
- Handling cleaning products in facilities

Prevention strategies:

- Read labels and Safety Data Sheets (SDS) before use
- Wear correct PPE (gloves, goggles, protective clothing)
- Store and handle chemicals safely
- Never mix chemicals unless authorised
- Wash hands after handling chemicals

Legal Duty:

Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)* and Hazardous Chemicals Code of Practice:

- DBCA/PCBU must manage chemical risks as far as reasonably practicable
- Volunteers must follow instructions and report hazards.

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Working outdoors (heat, UV, terrain, wildlife)

What is it? Tasks performed in outdoor environments where conditions can change, and natural hazards exist.

Risks:

- Heat stress and dehydration
- UV exposure (sunburn, skin cancer risk)
- Uneven terrain (slips, trips, falls)
- Wildlife encounters (snakes, insects)

Examples for volunteers:

- Track maintenance in bushland
- Campground support
- Conservation work in remote areas



SLIP



SLOP



SLAP



SEEK



SLIDE

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Prevention Strategies:

- Stay hydrated and take regular breaks
- Wear sun protection (hat, sunscreen, long sleeves)
- Use sturdy footwear for rough terrain
- Be wildlife aware – never handle animals unless trained
- Follow DBCA safety briefings and signage

Legal Duty:

- Under the WHS Act 2020 (WA), DBCA/PCBU must manage outdoor risks as far as reasonably practicable
- Volunteers must follow instructions and report hazards.



Working alone / remote

What is it? Tasks performed without direct supervision or in isolated/remote locations.

Risks:

- Delayed emergency response
- Communication difficulties
- Increased risk if injured or unwell
- Environmental hazards (heat, wildlife, terrain)

Examples for volunteers:

- Track maintenance in remote areas
- Monitoring wildlife away from main sites
- Travelling between DBCA locations alone

Prevention strategies:

- Follow DBCA remote work procedures
- Notify your supervisor of location and return time
- Carry communication devices (radio, sat phone)
- Take first aid kit and emergency supplies
- Report any changes to plans immediately

Legal Duty:

Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)*:

- DBCA/PCBU must manage risks of remote and isolated work
- Volunteers must follow procedures and report hazards

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Driving / operating plant

What is it? Operating DBCA vehicles or machinery (e.g., 4wds, side by sides, mowers, or other plant / machinery).

Risks:

- Vehicle accidents
- Rollovers on uneven terrain
- Injuries from plant machinery or attachments
- Fatigue-related incidents

Examples for volunteers:

- Driving DBCA vehicles to remote sites
- Using ride-on mowers or small plant machinery for maintenance
- Transporting equipment or materials

Prevention Strategies:

- Only authorised and trained volunteers may operate or travel in vehicles.
- Complete pre-start checks before use
- Always wear seatbelts and follow road/off-road rules
- Report defects or hazards immediately

Legal Duty:

Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)*:

- DBCA/PCBU must ensure vehicles and plant machinery are safe and maintained
- Volunteers must follow procedures and operate only if trained and authorised

Bushfire awareness

What is it? Understanding and managing the risks of bushfires in fire-prone areas where DBCA operates.

Risks:

- Rapidly spreading or direction changing fires
- Smoke inhalation
- Heat exposure
- Vehicle or equipment damage

Examples for volunteers:

- Working in bushland during high fire danger periods
- Assisting with conservation tasks in remote areas
- Travelling through fire-prone regions

Prevention Strategies:

- Check Fire Danger Ratings and alerts before work
- Follow DBCA fire procedures and evacuation plans
- Never enter fire grounds unless trained and authorised
- Carry emergency equipment as directed
- Report smoke or fire immediately to your supervisor

Legal Duty:

- Under the *WHS Act 2020 (WA)*, DBCA/PCBU must manage bushfire risks as far as reasonably practicable.
- Volunteers must follow instructions and report hazards

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Wellbeing support

Primary support – Yourself

The first and most essential source of support for your wellbeing is you. Self-awareness is key: recognising signs of fatigue, burnout, trauma, depression, or anxiety allows you to take ownership of your mental health and seek appropriate support.

Secondary support – Your colleagues

Your colleagues play a vital role in fostering a supportive workplace. This is why Mental Health First Aid training is encouraged. Be attentive to changes in your peers' behaviour, check in with them, and offer support when they appear to be struggling.

Additional support options

Peer Supporters

- A list of trained Peer Support staff is available on the intranet.

Critical Incident Peer Support

- Following a critical incident, a Peer Support staff member may reach out to check on your wellbeing.

Wellbeing Coordinator

- Available for confidential conversations regarding your mental health and wellbeing.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

- DBCA provides a free, confidential professional psychological service. Call [1300 307 912](tel:1300307912) or visit www.peoplesense.au

Insurance and injury management

Registered volunteers, who have signed on at the worksite / completed a timesheet are covered by DBCA's Personal Accident Insurance Cover with the Insurance Commission WA (ICWA) for out-of-pocket medical expenses related to an injury sustained while volunteering. It is important to note that this is not Workers' Compensation, and it does not cover:

- Sickness
- Volunteers under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.
- Vehicle damage

If you're injured while volunteering, you must:

- Seek first aid/medical attention and notify your supervisor.
- Submit an incident report.
- Complete Personal Accident Claim form with a medical certificate (not a workers' compensation certificate).
- Email your claim to injury.management@dbca.wa.gov.au for processing to ICWA.
- Your coordinator can help you with forms and next steps.

In the first instance, discuss with your immediate supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordination Unit PWSvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au

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WHS Consultation and volunteers

Why it matters Under the *Work Health and Safety Act 2020 (WA)*, DBCA/PCBU must consult, so far as reasonably practicable, with workers, including volunteers, on matters that directly affect their health and safety.

What consultation looks like for volunteers

- **Before work starts:** Site-specific inductions and safety briefings.
- **During activities:** Two-way communication; volunteers can raise hazards, suggest improvements, and ask questions.
- **When changes occur:** If tasks, equipment, or conditions change, DBCA will explain the risks and controls and seek input.
- **Through representatives:** Health and Safety Representatives (HSRs) and supervisors are available to listen and escalate concerns.

Your role in consultation as a volunteer

- Speak up early if you see a hazard or have a safety concern.
- Participate in toolbox talks, pre-start meetings, and safety discussions.
- Share feedback on controls and procedures. Your experience matters.

Consultation is a two-way process to keep everyone safe.

Site-specific Health and Safety induction

In addition to the general health and safety induction, volunteers must be provided with a site-specific induction prior to entering, or working on, a department site that may contain hazards.

The site induction should occur the first time the volunteer enters the site. This is applicable to volunteers new to the department and those who are commencing work at a different location.

The site induction should include:

- **Welcome and sign-in:** Confirmation of volunteer registration; verify completion of general WHS induction.
- **Site overview:** The site layout, restricted areas, amenities, and emergency exits; identify first aid stations and emergency communication devices.
- **Hazard identification:** Highlighting of location-specific hazards (terrain, wildlife, chemicals, plant) and seasonal risks (heat, bushfire, storms).
- **Risk controls:** Review site-specific safe work procedures; confirm PPE requirements and availability.
- **Emergency procedures:** Including evacuation routes and assembly points; explain communication protocols for incidents and remote work.
- **Reporting:** how to report hazards, near misses and incidents at this site; contact details for supervisors and HSRs.

Induction checklist

Now that you have completed this overview of volunteer work health and safety you should be aware of:

General information

- Your DBCA staff or volunteer group contact person and phone number
- Your role and responsibilities
- Location of worksite sign in/out sheet
- Emergency exits / assembly areas
- Location of First Aid kit
- First Aid contact

WHS information

- DBCA WHS and wellbeing policy and legislation (WHS Act 2020)
- Wellbeing support contacts
- Insurance cover and limitations
- Fitness for work – fatigue, alcohol, drugs, stress, illness
- Recognising, removing and reporting hazards and incidents
- Training and certification requirements for your role
- Manual tasks
- Working outdoors
- Working alone / remote
- Hazardous chemicals
- Driving vehicles / operating plant or machinery
- Bushfire awareness
- PPE



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17 Dick Perry Avenue, Kensington Western Australia 6151

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