



Department of Biodiversity, Conservation and Attractions

# Volunteer Work Health and Safety

## Induction

DBCA Health Safety and Wellbeing  
October 2025

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# INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

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# Purpose of the WHS Induction

## 1. WHS Knowledge for Volunteers

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

## 2. Clarifying Responsibilities

The induction clarifies volunteer responsibilities under the WHS Act 2020 and DBCA's safety procedures.

## 3. Empowering Safe Contribution

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

## 4. Culture of Safety and Compliance

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

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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 to 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.

## Key Roles under the WHS Act 2020



### **PCBU (Person Conducting a Business or Undertaking)**

DBCA is the PCBU. It has the primary duty of care to provide a safe workplace, safe systems of work, and resources to eliminate or minimise risks.



### **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.

# Responsibilities

## Volunteer responsibilities under the WHS Act

- 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 Duty of Care

- 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 by:
  - Identifying and managing risks.
  - Creating a safe, healthy workplace.
  - Ensuring DBCA meets WHS obligations.
- Leadership sets the tone for safety culture.

# 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.



# Hierarchy of Controls

The Hierarchy of Controls is a step-by-step system used to manage workplace risks. It ranks control measures from the most effective to the least effective. The goal is to eliminate hazards wherever possible and only rely on lower-level controls when higher ones are not practical.

- **Elimination (Most Effective)**

**Remove the hazard completely.**

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

Why? If the hazard is gone, the risk is gone.

- **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.

- **Engineering Controls**

**Isolate people from the hazard using physical measures.**

Example: Install guards on machinery, use barriers, or improve ventilation.

Why? Protects people without relying on behaviour.

- **Administrative Controls**

**Change the way people work.**

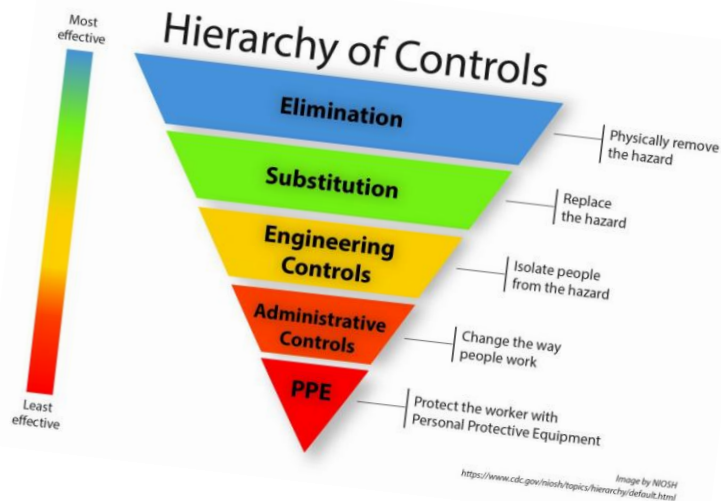
Example: Safety procedures, training, job rotation, warning signs.

Why? Helps reduce exposure but depends on people following rules.

- **PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) – Last line of defence**

**Wear protective gear like gloves, goggles, or high-vis clothing.**

Why? PPE does not remove the hazard; it only reduces harm if something goes wrong.



## Incident & 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 for further assistance.

# Health, PPE and fitness for work

## First Aid and Medical Support

### What is it?

Immediate care provided to an injured or ill person before professional medical help arrives. This includes having appropriate first aid kits, trained personnel, and access to emergency services.

### 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 during track maintenance
- Assisting an injured person until help arrives
- Managing heat stress or dehydration in remote areas

### Prevention Strategies:

- Know the location of first aid kits and emergency contacts
- Report any 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 (as a PCBU) must provide:
  - Adequate first aid kits
  - Access to trained first aiders
  - Procedures for contacting emergency services



# 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, hearing protection, or high-visibility clothing.

## DBCA Responsibilities:

- Under the **WHS (General) Regulations 2022 (WA)**, DBCA 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 defects or issues immediately

## Key Point:

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

**THIS PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT  
MUST BE WORN  
ON THIS SITE**



## Fitness for work (fatigue, alcohol & 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:

- Get adequate rest before volunteering
- 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 (as a PCBU) must manage risks to health and safety, including those related to fitness for work
- Workers and volunteers must:
  - Take reasonable care for their own health and safety
  - 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 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 DBCA 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



## Hazardous manual tasks

### What is it?

Any 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 camping gear or equipment
- Moving logs, rocks, or heavy materials
- Lifting water containers or fuel drums

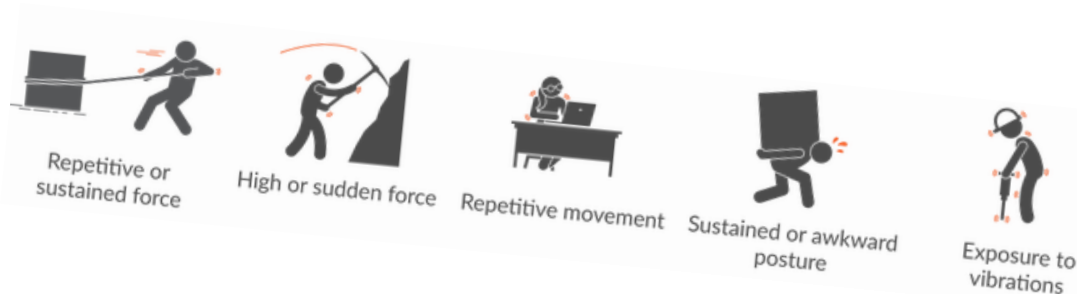
### Prevention Strategies:

- 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



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

### What is it?

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
- Refueling 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



## 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:

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

### 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

## Sun protection

healthdirect



**Slip**

on  
protective  
clothing



**Slop**

on SPF30+  
or higher  
sunscreen



**Slap**

on a  
hat



**Seek**

shade



**Slide**

on  
sunglasses



### Concerned about a sunburn?

Use healthdirect's Symptom Checker to get advice on when to seek medical attention.

[healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker](https://healthdirect.gov.au/symptom-checker)

## 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



# Driving / Operating Plant

## What is it?

Operating DBCA vehicles or machinery (e.g., 4wd, side by sides, mowers, or other plant).

## Risks:

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

## Examples for Volunteers:

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

## Prevention Strategies:

- Only authorised and trained volunteers may operate vehicles or plant
- Complete pre-start checks before use
- Always wear seatbelts and follow road/off-road rules
- Report defects or hazards immediately
- No unauthorised passengers

## Legal Duty:

Under the WHS Act 2020 (WA):

- DBCA (PCBU) must ensure vehicles and plant 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 fires
- Fires that rapidly change direction
- 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



# Wellbeing support and injury management

## 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** or visit [www.peoplesense.au/ZH4-EQ7](http://www.peoplesense.au/ZH4-EQ7)

# Injury Management

- Personal injury arising from incidents as a volunteer are covered under the Personal Accident Insurance Cover with the Insurance Commission of WA (ICWA).
- It is important to note that this insurance cover is for out of pocket medical expenses and is **not** Workers Compensation.
- 
- Limitations and exclusions to the insurance cover
  - It does not cover
    - Sickness
    - Volunteers who are under the influence of alcohols and drugs.
    - Vehicle damage
- 
- To be covered for this insurance volunteers must be registered and have completed a time-sheet or signed on at the worksite at the time of any incident.
- Volunteers are required to complete the WHS induction and sign the Code of Conduct at registration, prior to commencing any volunteer work.

# Injury Management

- To lodge a claim for a personal injury, you will need to:
  - complete the Personal Accident Claim form (available via your supervisor from DBCA injury management)
  - request your medical practitioner for a medical certificate (**not** a workers compensation certificate) describing the injury, diagnosis, and treatment.
- The Personal Accident Claim form, along with the medical certificate, can be sent to [injury.management@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:injury.management@dbca.wa.gov.au)
- Your claim is then submitted to ICWA for assessment of liability.
- You will be notified by ICWA within 14 days of receipt of your claim.
- In the first instance, discuss with your immediate supervisor and/or the Volunteer Coordination Unit - [PWSvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au](mailto:PWSvolunteers@dbca.wa.gov.au)



The image shows a 'Personal Accident Claim' form from the Government Insurance Division of Western Australia. The form is divided into four main sections: 1. Agency details, 2. Claimant details, 3. Incident details, and 4. Personal injury details. Section 1 includes fields for Agency name, Address, Contact name, Phone, and Email. Section 2 includes fields for Last name, First name, Date of birth, Address, and Email. Section 3 includes a question about whether the incident was previously reported, a date and time field for when the incident occurred, and a section for describing the incident. Section 4 includes a question about what actually happened and what caused the injury, a field for the object/machine/substance involved, a field for the most serious injury or disease caused, and a field for the bodily location of the injury or disease.

**Government Insurance Division**  
Level 11, Fereday Centre  
221 St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6000  
GPO BOX 4337  
Perth WA 6002  
Tel: (08) 9246 3333  
[www.gia.wa.gov.au](http://www.gia.wa.gov.au)

### Personal Accident Claim

**1. Agency details**

Agency name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Contact name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_  
Risk/accident centre: \_\_\_\_\_

**2. Claimant details**

Last name: \_\_\_\_\_ First name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of birth: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**3. Incident details**

Has the incident previously been reported to us? Yes  No  If yes, incident number: \_\_\_\_\_  
Where did the incident occur? \_\_\_\_\_  
Date of incident: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_ am/pm  
Date ceased paid work: \_\_\_\_\_ Date returned to paid work: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe how the incident occurred:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
State the allegations made by the claimant (if known):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Access type at incident location: Restricted access  Common user access  General public access

**4. Personal injury details (if applicable - attach any medical certificates or supporting documentation)**

What actually happened and what caused the person injury? What action was involved, e.g. - fall, caught between, struck by moving object:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
What object/machine/substance was involved, e.g. petrol fumes, wooden door frame:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Describe the most serious injury or disease caused by the occurrence, e.g. fracture, burn, cut, abrasion:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Describe the bodily location of the injury or disease, e.g. upper arm, ankle, eye:  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

# Key Takeaways

## Purpose of Induction

- Provides essential WHS knowledge for volunteers.
- Clarifies responsibilities under the **WHS Act 2020 (WA)**.
- Promotes a culture of safety and compliance.

## Legal Framework

- Volunteers are legally recognised as “workers” under the WHS Act.
- DBCA (as a **PCBU**) has a primary duty of care to provide a safe workplace.
- Officers must exercise **due diligence**; workers (including volunteers) must take reasonable care.

## Volunteer Responsibilities

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

## Risk Management

- Apply the **four steps**: Identify hazards → Assess risks → Control risks → Review controls.
- Use the **Hierarchy of Controls**: Elimination → Substitution → Engineering → Administrative → PPE.

## Incident & Hazard Reporting

- Report all incidents, near misses, and hazards promptly.
- Serious incidents must be legally notified to **WorkSafe WA**.

# Key Takeaways

## Common Hazards

- Slips, trips, and falls.
- Hazardous manual tasks.
- Hazardous chemicals.
- Outdoor risks: heat, UV, wildlife.
- Working alone/remote.
- Driving and operating plant.
- Bushfire awareness.

## Prevention Strategies

- Follow DBCA safety procedures and training.
- Use PPE as the last line of defence.
- Communicate and report hazards immediately.

## Wellbeing & Injury Management

- Your wellbeing starts with self-awareness—recognise signs of fatigue, burnout, trauma, or mental health challenges.
- Support also comes from colleagues, Peer Supporters, the Wellbeing Coordinator, and DBCA's free confidential EAP (1300 307 912 or [www.peoplesense.au/ZH4-EQ7](http://www.peoplesense.au/ZH4-EQ7)).
- Volunteers are covered by ICWA Personal Accident Insurance for out-of-pocket medical expenses (not Workers Compensation).
- Coverage excludes sickness, alcohol/drug influence, and vehicle damage; volunteers must be registered, signed in, and have completed WHS induction and Code of Conduct.