



Environmental Service

Good Practice Guide
Version 1
2021

Environmental Service

For the purposes of this GPG, Environmental Service activities can include but are not limited to weeding, planting, environmental monitoring, beach clean ups, pest control, track maintenance and rubbish collection.

The participants can include but are not limited to volunteer groups, school groups, corporate groups, social media groups, and individuals.

Organisers of Environmental Service may include but are not limited to volunteers, teachers, environmental education providers, social media posts, and youth groups.

This GPG is intended to guide organisers of activities where there is a defined outcome of work being done for the benefit of the environment. Organisers of activities designed to give participants experiences in nature may also find information in this GPG useful.

This GPG covers situations where participants are being supervised by a designated leader and is not intended to cover unsupervised or free-time use.

This guidance is specific to **Environmental Service** and is designed to be used in conjunction with the [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#) and the **Environmental Service Planning Template**.

Potential value of activity

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE CAN PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PARTICIPANTS TO:

- Kaitiakitanga - engage with, take responsibility for, and take action for the environment
- Develop connection to local places and natural spaces
- Contribute to making a difference to the natural environment
- Feel that they are part of the solution, rather than the problem
- Develop a sense of discovery and exploration in nature
- Engender sense and satisfaction of volunteering and giving back to community, environment, and place
- Manaakitanga and whanaungatanga - engage with other people in their community and experience a shared sense of identity
- Engage in physical work and learn new skills
- Contribute to habitat restoration
- Learn about environmental issues, e.g., fresh water, habitat, climate change.

Planning considerations

In addition to the generic considerations (see [General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities](#)) consider:

Tangata whenua

Consider who has come before and their interest in the environment.

- Does the local iwi and tangata whenua have an interest in the Environmental Service?
- Do mana whenua have stories of the site they would like to share?
- Does the Environmental Service impact taonga species? Are there local stories about those taonga species that should be shared?
- Who are the appropriate people to share the stories?

Venue

How to ensure the venue is appropriate for the activity and participants

A pre-activity site visit is important to:

- Establish access permission e.g., farm owner / manager, and how much involvement they want in the activity?
- Assess if the planned project can feasibly take place e.g., is the ground appropriate for planting, is the waterway able to be accessed?
- Ensure that the plants are the correct plant for the location e.g., eco-sources, naturally occurring in that area
- Identify potential hazards, e.g., other users, slippery ground, waterways, and pre-plan boundaries for participants
- Check toilets, food preparation areas, drinking water availability
- Assess suitability of terrain for the participants e.g., wheelchair access, steepness

Have, and visit a backup venue in case of:

- Environmental conditions making planned venue unsuitable e.g., weather, high river flow, toxic algal bloom in waterway
- Other users making venue inappropriate for participants
- Access permission falling through

“Toitu he whenua, whatungarongaro he tangata”.
The land is permanent, people disappear

Participants

How to ensure the activities match the participants' abilities and needs.

In addition to the generic participant considerations (see **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities**) organisers of Environmental Service activities should consider:

- Do participants understand that everyone is responsible for safety, which includes participants taking responsibility for their own and others' safety. Are they able to take on that responsibility?
- Do the participants have sufficient fitness and mobility to be able to undertake the planned activities?
- Can participants be relied on to carry out safety sensitive tasks? Are they likely to follow instructions throughout the whole session? Can they be trusted to operate unsupervised, or should an adult / leader constantly monitor them?
- Pre-existing injuries or medical conditions.
 - How will participants share that information? How will that information be shared amongst leaders? How will medical information that is new on the day be shared?
 - Written health declaration should be completed before the event then checked, confirmed, and updated verbally
 - Explain the different tasks and ask participants to choose the exertion level appropriate to their body
- Choose sites that matches the competency / maturity of the group e.g., a group of primary children would plant trees more effectively on flat ground with clear boundaries and no water features.

Supervision

The level and style of supervision typically required for this activity.

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING WHEN DETERMINING THE APPROPRIATE SUPERVISION STRUCTURE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICE ACTIVITIES:

- Supervision structure should be specific to the activity, site, and participants. It will be informed by completing a hazard analysis specific to the activity, site, and participants.
- Clarity of who is responsible e.g., organisation, leader, school, teachers. Often teachers are responsible for behaviour and discipline, but the leader delivers the safety briefing and instruction.
- Sending out safety procedure document to be read beforehand
- Grouping of participants, e.g., buddy system, one adult with a small groups of children
- Can the whole site be seen or are there blind spots? Could participants get lost? Could participants be injured and unnoticed?

- To ensure work, time and resources are not wasted, how will you ensure quality?
 - Demonstrate how to do the task, then work alongside participants to ensure they understand the instructions, then monitor throughout the event to ensure quality of work
 - Ensure you don't expect too much work – e.g., once you know the number of participants on the day, weigh against the number of plants you have and reduce how many you realistically can expect to be planted
- Lone operators (e.g., trapping lines, monitoring) should carry a communication device, the nature of which will be determined by the cell phone coverage in the area.

External providers

Schools, corporate, clubs and other groups may engage an external provider to deliver the Environmental Service event or activities.

In addition to the generic external provider considerations (see **General Guidance for Organised Outdoor Activities**) organisations who engage an external provider should also consider:

- Current health and safety legislation is clear that EVERYONE is responsible for safety. Engaging an external provider does not subcontract out your legal responsibilities.
- Expecting the external provider to provide hazard identification and management information which should be read by the group beforehand. The group should use that hazard analysis to make an informed decision whether to participate on the day or not.
- Clarifying who is responsible for what on the day e.g., discipline of misbehaviour, emergency procedures, safety briefings
- Clarifying what checks your organisation is legally required to complete, and what checks the external provider is responsible for, and ensuring that they been done e.g., Safety Checks for Children's Workers



“Environment is no one’s property to destroy; it is everyone’s responsibility to protect”. Mothith Agadi

Leader competence

Consider the experience and knowledge required of leaders, both for normal operation and for managing emergencies. The competence of assistant leaders should also be considered (e.g., where parents or other adults are helping the person running the activity).

Skills and knowledge

Requirements for a leader who is working independently, or is responsible for a larger group of activity leaders could include:

- Ability to prepare group for activity including:
 - The group clearly understanding safety roles
 - Ensuring the group are appropriately clothed and equipped
 - Briefing activity outcomes and instructions for specific tasks
- Familiarity with the area, site-specific requirements, hazard identification and management, and emergency procedures
- Knowledge of and proven ability to use specific tools and /or specific protocols (e.g., effective weeding, the maximum time lapse between cutting and pasting)
- Ability to teach, coach and diligently monitor correct and safe practices
- Confidence and authority to appropriately step in to improve tool use and/or or the quality of the work being done (e.g., are the holes being dug deep enough? Are the target weeds being identified? Are safety precautions being followed consistently?)
- Ability to identify, manage, communicate, and monitor hazards and risk

Other leaders (including parents, other adults, or trainee leaders) should be operating under supervision and have received training that includes:

- Briefing and monitoring the safety and quality of the mahi, and the importance of intervening when safety and quality is compromised.

Relevant knowledge, experience, and qualifications

It is recommended that a leader managing an Environmental Service activity have:

- Current first aid certification
- Relevant qualifications for any specialised tools, equipment, or chemicals e.g., chainsaws, herbicides, pesticides.
- Growsafe training and/or certificates for agrichemical use www.growsafe.co.nz
- Completed short online courses e.g., Predator Free branch – alongside DOC
- Ecological and environmental knowledge to provide participants with context to the work.

“Competent leaders are one of the mainstays of ensuring safety”

Resources and equipment

Consider what equipment and resources are required to run the activity safely. Do the risk assessment first then create the gear list as it should be specific to site, participants, and activity.

- Will tools be provided for participants, or will they bring their own?
- Will tools be well maintained and therefore functional?
- Will there be tools available for participants of different sizes, abilities, and interests?
- What Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) is required? Will this be provided for participants and leaders? Will there be sufficient supplies for the numbers coming?
- Is the number of participants likely to change on the day? e.g., is it a requirement to register? Can people bring friends?

Note: some regions have community funding available to purchase sets of tools for Environmental Service.

Participant

The participants may be required to bring this, or it may be provided to them.

- Personal clothing should be suitable for active participation, and for the weather conditions
- Appropriate footwear may need to be specified, e.g., gumboots, closed toed shoes, boots
- Personal medication (EpiPen, asthma inhaler), sunblock and insect repellent
- Personal water bottle, and cup
- Sufficient food and water.

Group

Equipment that should / could be provided for the group:

- Toilet facility, or tools to create one with privacy
- Handwashing and sanitising supplies
- Access to drinking water
- Hot water and hot drinks (depending on the weather)



Leader

Equipment and/or information that the leader should carry or have easy access to:

- Site map and information e.g., instructions for using the venue, emergency evacuation information
- Emergency contact information, e.g., farm manager, local DOC office,
- Activity specific operating procedures
- List of participants, their emergency contact details and medical information.
- Communications device
- First aid kit
- Incident report form
- Bullet pointed safety briefing
- Consider a Covid tracer code or sign in register

Put the activity in context

To add value beyond the physical work being done, allow participants time to explore the environment and to understand the impact their work may have.

When people appreciate and feel connected to the environment, they're more likely to feel responsibility for then willingness to take action to enhance it.

The sequencing of the activities will depend on the group. A group of adults volunteering at a tree planting may prefer to get on with the work and learn from a knowledgeable person working alongside them, or over a hot drink at the end of the session. A school group may benefit from a more structured approach such as:

- Explore – listen, watch, play, experience
- Educate – increase the participants knowledge of the issues, e.g., introduced pests, endemism, riparian corridors, bio- diversity
- Work – plant the trees, pull the weeds, count the birds
- Reflect – what did we learn? What further action could we take? What could we do at home?

Further support

Educational resources and opportunities

<https://www.kidsgreeningtaupo.org.nz/>

Example of Environmental Service in NZ that provides 'rangatahi with opportunities to learn about and take action for our native plants and animals'

<https://sustainablecoastlines.org/>

Beach cleanups, waterway restoration projects, enabling "people to look after the places they love"

<https://www.weedbusters.org.nz/>

Raising awareness of weeds and supporting individuals in actively controlling weeds

<https://enviroschools.org.nz/>

Environmental action-based programme where young people are empowered to design and lead sustainability projects in their schools, neighbourhoods and country.

<https://predatorfreenz.org>

Resources, toolkits, suggested ways to get involved, success stories

<https://www.nzwatercitizens.co.nz>

For anyone in New Zealand interested in volunteer stream monitoring

<https://inaturalist.nz/>

Guides, projects, community connections, maps, forums, interactive app

<https://www.mm2.net.nz>

Citizen science project and resources, NZ Marine Studies Centre, University of Otago

Regional and City Councils

Information on environmental plans, events, opportunities

Apps

Walk the Line is DOC's trapping app for Android

INaturalist

trap.nz helps you record and understand your predator control and biodiversity data.

Technical guidance

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/methods-of-control/>

Guidance on approved methods of trapping and requirements

<https://www.doc.govt.nz/get-involved/run-a-project/restoration-advice/weed-control/>

Weed control methods, community projects

<https://www.dairynz.co.nz/environment>

Guidance on planting riparian zones on farms, protecting waterways, climate change

<https://www.growsafe.co.nz/>

Safe, effective, responsible use of agrichemicals

Legal guidance

Volunteers:

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/understanding-the-law/volunteers/information-for-volunteers/>

Who has primary responsibility – duty of care

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/managing-health-and-safety/getting-started/understanding-the-law/primary-duty-of-care/what-is-the-primary-duty-of-care/>

Children on farms

<https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/agriculture/keeping-safe-on-farms/children-and-young-people-on-farms/>

Safety checking of people working with children <https://www.orangatamariki.govt.nz/working-with-children/childrens-act-requirements/safety-checking/>



[Environmental Service Planning Template](#)

[Overarching Risk Management Guidance](#)