



Engaging with local employers

Local employer engagement guide

If your brigade is struggling with day-time crew it may be worth engaging with local employers. Asking employers for help can be challenging, so we've developed this guide.



PROUD EMPLOYER OF
FIRE AND EMERGENCY
VOLUNTEERS
HE RÖPŪ KOTAHI TĀTOU

1. Identify local employers

Start with writing a list of employers near your brigade. From this work out which ones are most likely to release employees during the day. Prioritise contacting these ones first. These might be your local accountant, a self-employed plumber or the receptionist at your local school. Other things to think about include:

- Would their employees be able to drop what they are doing and easily respond?
- Do they have enough employees that can run the business while others are on a call?
- Hours employees might be available - shift work
- Potential links to existing brigade members
- Any other helpful things to know about making contact

Employer examples:

- Cafe/restaurant
- Trades
- Factories
- Supermarket
- Shops
- Farmers
- Self-employed

Employer	Business type	Business size	Work hours
Delicious Treats	Bakery	4 Bakers 5 Waitstaff	Bakers: 4am - 12pm Waitstaff 7am - 3pm

2. Make a plan

Decide on an approach

There are many different ways to approach employers. We recommend meeting with employers in person. That way you can answer any questions they might have about volunteering.

Here are a couple of ideas:

- Have a conversation at their location
- Hold an open night and invite all local employers
- Attend a local business association meeting
- Invite a current employer to join you in the conversation

Consider your audience

Once you've identified the employers in your community you want to approach, consider the business type and the kinds of people they might employ.

It's good to think about the benefits that will appeal to particular businesses. For example, a cafe owner or builder might be interested to learn that their employee would be trained in medical co-response. Whereas the local supermarket might be interested in our employer recognition programme.

Check out the back of this document to look at some of the important things to mention.

Gather materials

Once you've decided on an approach, collect the right set of materials to support your conversations.

Download and complete the **Brigade fact sheet for employers**. Order copies of **Employers are part of our crew** for employers and **Join the crew** booklets for employees. These can all be found in the Volunteer Hub on the Portal.

Also, make sure you take along this guide and use the **Important things to mention** found on the following pages.



3. Meeting the employer

Give them a heads up

Once you've made your plan give the employer a call or send them an email to let them know you're interested in talking to them about volunteering or inviting them to an employers meeting.

Next steps

Be clear with employers about how they can help promote volunteering to their employees. Suggest that they place volunteering materials in their staff room and/or posters to let them know that the local brigade are recruiting.

You might want to offer to talk to the employees at their next staff meeting. This can give you an opportunity to present some information of volunteering to their team.

Follow up with the employer

It's a good idea to follow up with the employer to see if anyone has come forward and is interested in volunteering.

If no one steps forward it is always best practice to follow up with an email to thank them for their time and give them an opportunity to answer any residing questions they have. Even if they don't have staff available now, this may change in the future.

Relationships with employers in the community is essential to the sustainability of the brigade.



Important things to mention

Benefits of employing volunteers

Most employers will want to know what the benefits are for them. Here are a few to get you started:

- Employees with transferable skills they've developed through training with Fire and Emergency, e.g. medical co-response, problem solving and leadership.
- Building a 'how can I help' culture within your team. Volunteerism crosses over to the way our volunteers working in their paid employment.
- A sense of pride knowing that your business or organisation plays a vital role in keeping our communities safe.
- Recognition as a socially responsible employer which may mean more engaged and loyal employees.

Response flexibility

Mentioning response flexibility may appeal to employers and help alleviate concerns about how much time employees may not be at work and how this can be managed in partnership with their employee:

- Suggest employee can be on call during specific hours of the day e.g outside of peak work hours, between 1pm-4pm each day.
- If you have more than one employee as a volunteer, they can be rostered so only one goes at a time
- Put a limit of callouts per week. E.g. this employee can go to a maximum of 2 callouts a week.
- Agree that they will not attend some types of callouts e.g long duration incidents

Training

Training is an essential part of volunteering with Fire and Emergency. Be upfront with the training schedule to let them know that the employee will be required to take leave for training on induction to Fire and Emergency, depending on what role they occupy.