

Support Worker Agreement

This Agreement applies when a Support Worker will accompany and support a volunteer at an SPCA New Zealand centre or activity. It should be read by the volunteer, the Support Worker and, where applicable, the volunteer's legal guardian before the application is submitted.

1. Purpose

This Agreement explains the role, responsibilities and limits of a Support Worker who accompanies a volunteer while volunteering with SPCA New Zealand. It does not transfer legal guardianship or decision-making authority. Legal responsibility remains with the volunteer or, where applicable, their legal guardian.

2. Application and Approval

The volunteer application must identify that a Support Worker will accompany the volunteer and provide any information requested by SPCA about the proposed support arrangement. The arrangement is subject to SPCA approval and may be reviewed to ensure the volunteer can participate safely and that the placement is suitable.

3. Support Arrangement

The Support Worker must complete any induction, orientation, screening or training required by SPCA before accompanying the volunteer. Any change to the Support Worker or the agreed support arrangement must be discussed with and approved by the relevant SPCA contact before the next volunteer shift.

4. Role of the Support Worker

The Support Worker provides practical, day-to-day assistance that enables the volunteer to participate safely and effectively. The Support Worker will:

- help the volunteer understand and follow SPCA staff instructions, policies and agreed role boundaries;
- support the volunteer to complete only the tasks assigned and approved by SPCA;
- provide the level of supervision and assistance agreed with SPCA;
- support compliance with health, safety, animal welfare, hygiene and biosecurity requirements; and
- promptly raise any concerns about safety, wellbeing, behaviour or the suitability of a task with SPCA staff.

5. Limits of Authority

The Support Worker supports the volunteer but does not replace SPCA supervision or hold authority on behalf of SPCA. The Support Worker must not:

- provide consent for medical treatment, except to provide emergency first aid within their training;
- make animal welfare, legal, placement, performance or disciplinary decisions;
- authorise new, unsupervised or higher-risk activities;
- perform tasks outside the agreed volunteer role unless separately authorised by SPCA; or
- override SPCA staff instructions, policies or decisions.

6. Health and Safety Responsibilities

The Support Worker must comply with all SPCA health and safety requirements, take reasonable care of their own health and safety and that of others, use required protective equipment, follow infection-control and biosecurity instructions, and immediately report hazards, incidents, injuries or near misses to SPCA staff. SPCA may pause or end an activity if it considers that it cannot be completed safely.

7. Consistency of Support

Where possible, the same approved Support Worker should accompany the volunteer to provide continuity. A replacement Support Worker may attend only after SPCA has been advised and has confirmed that any required checks, induction or training have been completed.

8. Emergency Situations

In an emergency, the Support Worker must follow SPCA staff directions and site procedures. They may assist with evacuation, provide first aid within their training, contact emergency services, and contact the volunteer's emergency contact or legal guardian when requested or when reasonably necessary.

9. Privacy and Confidentiality

The Support Worker must respect the privacy of volunteers, staff, members of the public and other people they encounter through SPCA. Personal, operational or confidential information accessed through the volunteer placement must not be shared or used for any purpose unrelated to providing the agreed support.

10. Agreement and Ongoing Suitability

By submitting the volunteer application, the volunteer, Support Worker and, where applicable, the volunteer's legal guardian confirm that they have read and understood this Agreement and agree to follow it. SPCA may review, change, pause or end the support arrangement or volunteer placement if requirements are not met, circumstances change, or the arrangement is no longer safe or suitable. Any changes will be discussed with the volunteer and Support Worker wherever practicable.