

TEMPLATE: BRIEFING SHEET

Spontaneous Volunteer Operations

Briefing is an essential part to any Spontaneous Volunteer operation and will form part of an organisation's induction. Briefing allows volunteers to know what they will be doing and what your expectations of them are. It should outline all the information that volunteers need to effectively and safely undertake their role.

A briefing is the provision of succinct and critical information. It occurs at activation, a change of shift, and with a new team entering and dispersing in a particular area. It is expected to be short and to the point. A briefing is NOT a discussion or opportunity for debate, but should allow for attendees to ask questions following the completion of the briefing. Briefings are given by those in senior positions such as Team Leaders, or representatives from disaster agencies or Local Government.

Consider including the following information:

About the organisation

- An overview of the organisation's mission and fundamental principles.
- The command and communication structures in place.
- Any organisational policies that Spontaneous Volunteers will be expected to adhere to during their engagement e.g. WHS, Media Protocols, Code of Conduct.

About the emergency / disaster

- The current emergency situation and location/s affected.
- An overview of what Spontaneous Volunteers may encounter.

About the volunteer's role

- The Spontaneous Volunteer's role including boundaries and limitations.
- Communication and reporting lines and requirements.
- Details of their task for that shift.
- Information regarding affected people.
- Information on the dos and don'ts of the activity.
- The resources that will be required and where volunteers can collect these.
- Work, health and safety requirements and any specific requirements (PPE, immunisations etc)
- Self-care and available ongoing support.
- Any administration requirements.

SMEACS-Q (Situation, Mission, Execution, Administration, Command and Communication, Safety, Questions) is a useful shorthand way to remember the information required in a briefing, and how briefings are structured and conducted. This is important for both the informant and the audience, as it sets up a routine and a clear, consistent and expected structure for information flow. This form of briefing is intended to be used amongst operational responders, rather than for public meetings or disaster affected community briefings.

SMEACS – Q	TALKING POINTS
INTRODUCTION	Introduction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce yourself and your role. • Thank volunteer/s for their time.
SITUATION	Describe the event and current situation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location/s involved. • Extent of damage to property. • Number of affected people (be careful and respectful advising on death and casualties – do not provide specific details or private details identifying individuals). • Predictions – likelihood of spot fires, further flooding etc. • Weather forecast – and if this will affect the activity.
MISSION	Describe the volunteer work involved <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim of the work – what it is hoped can be achieved. • The Spontaneous Volunteers’ roles including boundaries and limitations. • Specific tasks that will need to be undertaken. • Confirm skills required (administration, physical strength etc.). • Confirm that the volunteer/s understand the work is unpaid.
EXECUTION	The plan of action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How the team will operate and carry out the tasks. • How many teams will be in place. • Locations the teams will be supporting.
ADMINISTRATION	Logistics <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where volunteer/s will be going. • How they will get there (own transport, carpooling etc.). • Timeframes (lengths of shifts, breaks etc.). • Catering (what is provided, what they need to bring). • Location of nearest amenities. • Equipment and tools required. • Any specific organisational policies that Spontaneous Volunteers must adhere to.
COMMAND AND COMMUNICATION	Communication <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who they will report to at the location and provide contact details. • Other agencies or key personnel who will be assisting the effort. • People sensitivity – reminder about working with affected people. • Protecting the confidentiality of people’s situations. • Reminder to check with the affected householder before destroying or discarding items during clean up efforts. • Media – what to do if approached, who to refer to.
SAFETY	Safety <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify any known or potential hazards. • Location of first aid kit/s. • Appropriate clothing for weather and site. • Self-care and available ongoing support.
QUESTIONS	Invite Questions