# Volunteer-related training in emergency services – improving training outcomes

## Findings from qualitative research

## Report to FRSITO (final version)

## July 2008

## Preface

NZIER is a specialist consulting firm that uses applied economic research and analysis to provide a wide range of strategic advice to clients in the public and private sectors, throughout New Zealand and Australia, and further afield.

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NZIER was established in 1958.

## Authorship

This report has been prepared at NZIER by Sharon Pells and reviewed by John Yeabsley.

We thank Liz Hamilton and other staff at FRSITO, as well as staff at LGITO and Learning State for their assistance.

We also thank the respondents who participated in the study, especially volunteers who gave up their personal time.

# Executive Summary

## Introduction

This report presents NZIER's findings from the second (and final) stage of a study into volunteer-related training in emergency services. The study has been commissioned by FRSITO, is a collaborative venture between FRSITO and other industry training organisations (ITOs) which cover emergency services, and is part-funded by the Tertiary Education Commission.

The main objective of the study is to identify ways in which volunteer-related training can be improved to enhance the delivery of selected emergency services. Secondary objectives are to describe the profile and characteristics of volunteers in emergency services, and to identify barriers which inhibit training participation or completion and how those barriers might be overcome.

The first stage of the study, conducted in April 2008, comprised a literature review. This stage went some way towards meeting the study's overall objectives, including describing the profile and characteristics of emergency services volunteers, and identifying potential strategies for overcoming barriers to training.

The second stage comprised depth interviews with a sample of volunteers, their managers and other stakeholders in urban fire, rural fire, civil defence and emergency management (CDEM), land search and rescue (SAR), coastguard and ambulance services. The interviews were conducted in May 2008. Whilst the total sample size of 52 respondents is fairly large for qualitative research, the sample in each emergency service is small and the findings at this level should be treated as indicative. But overall the approach did allow us to examine the impact of different training arrangements on service provision. This was a key focus of this stage of the study, as most of the findings from stage one related to training outputs rather than outcomes. A further focus was to identify the most effective strategies to emerge from the literature for lifting training participation.

## Profile and characteristics

Volunteers are not the same as paid workers. Volunteers retain a high degree of control over their time and behaviour. Understanding volunteer motivations is vital to the successful use of the volunteer resource. We identified from the literature three broad motivations for volunteering in general.

- The "consumption" motivation is concerned with the *current* satisfaction received by the volunteer from the act of volunteering.

- The "investment" motivation is when the individual invests volunteer hours out of current available leisure for *future* rewards (primarily in the labour market).

- The "public goods/altruism" motivation is a genuine selfless act for the benefit of others.

The "public goods/altruism" category is predominant for emergency services volunteers, who are driven by a strong sense of community. The key point here is that training appeals most directly to the "investment" motivation, and so may be a hard sell to emergency services volunteers.

The demographic and other characteristics of emergency services volunteers suggest there are distinct volunteer segments, both within and between different emergency services. Importantly, there is some evidence that emergency services volunteers are often engaged in several voluntary activities, in particular more than one emergency service. This means that the training burden is likely to be high, as volunteers have to undertake training in relation to each role.

## Barriers to training

Engaging volunteers in training is difficult unless the training relates directly to the underlying benefits of the voluntary activity sought by volunteers.

Time constraints is the most significant among the various barriers to training we identified from the literature. Volunteers are juggling their volunteer role with their paid work, family life and other activities. The time commitments required of volunteers in emergency services tend to be very high compared with those in other voluntary activities.

This creates a dilemma for emergency services organisations using volunteers. On the one hand, skill needs may be high, in line with the often demanding (and dangerous) roles undertaken by those volunteers. On the other hand, training strategy needs to be pragmatic and recognise the constraints on volunteers' time.

## Training and service provision

Training is seen as playing a vital role in the ability of emergency services volunteers to provide services. Some of the volunteers we spoke to said they would be unable to undertake their duties in a meaningful way without training. In particular, training contributes to improved safety, both of the volunteers themselves, their team-mates and the recipients of the service.

The nature and frequency of emergencies has several impacts on training. Many respondents noted that infrequent incidents reduce the currency of skills, or that the voluntary activity may no longer be "second nature". Refresher training, exercises and scenario training is seen by many as important in this regard.

But there is an irony here. Whilst low exposure to incidents may increase the *requirements* to train, it may in fact reduce volunteers' *likelihood* of training. If they do not attend incidents, emergency services volunteers become demotivated and therefore less committed to training. Rather than train people up for skills they will rarely use, target the pre-skilled (people who already hold the desired skill sets) was a suggestion made by some. More generally, a range of innovative strategies are needed to complement training when incidents are infrequent.

The challenges for training are especially pronounced in rural locations and other settings where there is a restricted supply of volunteer labour. Emergency services organisations are weighing up the risk of having *some* resource on the ground (albeit perhaps not trained to the desired standards) against the risk of setting standards/prerequisites which may result in *no* resources being available. The effective management and leadership of volunteer teams becomes essential in this situation, as the skills of individual volunteers within the team may vary considerably and tasks need to be allocated very carefully.

Overall, there were fairly widespread concerns around variable skill levels, both between individual volunteer team members, between different volunteer teams and (where the comparison exists) between teams of volunteers and paid workers.

## Lifting training participation – general themes

There were some cross-cutting themes to emergency services volunteers' training preferences.

- *Practical hands-on training.* Emergency services volunteers tend to be practical, active people who love action. They learn best by doing. Any written training materials should be stripped back to the minimum.

- *Exciting delivery.* Exciting, varied, interactive and interesting delivery style is considered important in terms of engaging volunteers' interest in training.

- *Relevant training.* Most volunteers want training requirements to be kept to the minimum to enable them to do their volunteer job. They need to see that the training is useful. Volunteers tend to be very disparaging towards any training which is perceived as wasting their (precious) time.

- *At a time and location to suit the volunteer.* Flexibility is the key here. Whilst most volunteers prefer training to be conducted at evenings or weekends, some (e.g. shift workers or retired) prefer an option of attending courses during week days. Trainers should come to the volunteers where possible.

- *Costs are covered.* These include the indirect costs of training (accommodation, travel, childcare, lost time) as well as the direct costs.

- *Effective ongoing refresher training.* This was seen as an important component of overall training arrangements, especially when the frequency of incidents is low and skills can erode. Training nights - regular evenings where volunteers meet at their brigade or station etc - were discussed in this context. Suggestions for improvement included tips and training for training officers, training plan exemplars, the exchange of ideas for exercises, the provision of worked-up scenarios and external skills maintenance trainers, and explicit funding for refresher training.

- *Effective management training.* Volunteers' managers play a crucial role in the service provided by volunteers themselves. As well as general leadership skills, the need for specific training in managing volunteers and understanding the volunteer psyche was suggested by some.

Note that many emergency services volunteers are generally very satisfied with the training they receive. Much of the training which currently takes place already reflects volunteers' stated preferences. For example, trainers generally come to volunteers, and training is often conducted at the weekends and evenings. And our discussions with training providers suggest that they have a good understanding of volunteer motivations and requirements.

This reinforces the point made earlier - that engaging emergency services volunteers in training is not easy. Despite current training arrangements often being geared to volunteers' requirements, take-up in some instances is patchy.

## Lifting training participation – specific segments

Whilst there were some cross-cutting themes to training preferences, there were also variations in training requirements across different groups of volunteers. These are summarised in Table 1 according to volunteers' underlying motivations.

### *Table 1 Volunteer segments*

| Motivation | | Emergency service/ volunteer characteristic | Implications for training |
|---|---|---|---|
| Broad motivation | Specific aspect | | |
| Consumption | Love of volunteer activity per se/ excitement | All – especially fire | Involve volunteers in activity as early as possible |
| | | | Hands-on, practical training |
| | | | Exciting delivery style |
| | | | Relevant to volunteer role |
| | | | Establish training requirements as a prerequisite to becoming operational |
| | Achievement/ satisfaction etc | All | Recognise training achievement (certificates, medals etc) |
| | Social | All | Interactive training delivery |
| Investment | Stepping stone into the emergency service itself | St John | Align volunteer training with that of paid workers, so volunteers can cross-credit their training |
| | | | (National) qualifications and formal assessment |
| | General labour market skills for CV | Younger volunteers | Transferable/generic skills |
| | | Immigrants | |
| Altruistic | Assist community | All – especially rural | Content emphasises relevance to community |
| | Provide something that might not otherwise be provided | Rural | Training should be kept to bare minimum |
| | | | Develop core requirements. Train everyone to those, then specialise beyond |
| | | | Target "pre-skilled" |

Source: NZIER

## National qualifications and unit standards

National qualifications and unit standards elicited mixed views. In general, respondents in those services where national standards have already been implemented were much more positive than those where they have not.

National standards and qualifications have a number of potential benefits in terms of service provision, and to the organisation. These include ensuring consistent standards across the country, having common expectations across and between organisations, and providing a measurable benchmark for performance.

Formal qualifications are seen as attractive to younger volunteers. They are also seen as helpful in those services (such as ambulance) where there is a clear career path for volunteers. More generally, some respondents commented that it is nice to take something tangible - the "piece of paper" - away from training, in recognition of the volunteer's time.

However, a number of changes are needed to address current reservations.

- *Don't ask too much of people.* The requirements of some existing national qualifications (and even limited credit programmes) are often seen as too much for volunteers. This is especially the case in senior roles.

- *Give realistic timeframes.* A limited credit programme (let alone a national certificate) may take several years for volunteers to complete due to a lack of practical experience. Expectations need to be managed in this regard.

- *Make assessment less onerous and threatening.* Older volunteers may feel threatened at having to "prove themselves" in front of their younger peers.

- *Improve recognition of current competence (RCC) process.* Experienced volunteers, who are a valuable resource, need to have their skills more easily recognised. Alleviating the concerns of experienced volunteers is particularly important when new standards are being introduced into a service. Some suggested that, rather than written evidence, interviews be used for RCC.

- *Improve clarity about what people have achieved.* Some volunteers are very confused about what unit standards have been registered in their name on the national qualifications framework. More generally, there is confusion in some emergency services around the extent to which training is unit standards-based.

- *Increase relevance.* The underlying skills and knowledge are often considered more important than a qualification. In some emergency services, a formal qualification is not seen as particularly relevant in the labour market.

Overall, these findings highlight some of the tensions between the objectives of volunteers and those of the organisation itself.

## Conclusions

This study has an outcomes focus – examining the role of training in enhancing service delivery. The key issue we identified is inconsistent take-up of training, which leads to variable skill levels and uneven service standards.

Engaging emergency services volunteers in training is challenging. For most of these volunteers, training is not a major benefit of their volunteer role. They are already devoting a significant amount of time to the underlying voluntary activity, even before any training requirements are taken into account.

Emergency services organisations have a certain amount of leverage to persuade volunteers to train where people are competing for volunteer positions, or where volunteers are seeking to gain qualifications for future jobs. However, where there is an under-supply of volunteer labour (e.g. in rural areas), or where volunteers' main motivations are other than the investment one, engaging volunteers in training is much more difficult.

In our view, emergency services organisations using volunteer labour face two fundamental choices:

- accommodate volunteers' training preferences, and/or adopt a range of other strategies to achieve the required service standards

- accept that service standards will vary.

## Opportunities for strategy development

Among the various suggestions for improvement made by respondents, the ones we would place emphasis on are as follows.

- *Tailor training to volunteers' preferences and motivations*. This will improve the likelihood of training participation. The key point here is that training strategies need to be developed and matched to specific segments. The alternative is to offer limited choice and recognise that training take-up (and therefore service standards) will vary among different groups of volunteers.

- *(Further) develop management training*. Managers play a key role in the services provided by volunteers in terms of volunteer recruitment and retention, task allocation and the organisation of volunteer labour. Volunteers are not the same as paid workers, and need to be managed in quite different ways. A reluctance to move up the hierarchy into more senior positions by some volunteers means that emergency services organisations may need to consider a greater role for paid workers in managing their volunteer workforce.

- *Ensure national qualifications are an enabler not a barrier*. Improving RCC in particular should assist the recruitment and retention of experienced volunteers.

- *Consider the role of training as a complement to other interventions*. Training is one of an array of instruments available to enhance services provided by volunteers. Other strategies include better resourcing of volunteers, better management and recruitment of those volunteers, better organisation of volunteer labour and other resources, and the substitution of paid labour for volunteer labour. Working out the role of training in the overall mix is relatively straightforward when the pattern and frequency of incidents is somewhat predictable, but is much harder when the opposite is true. Given the challenges around training emergency services volunteers, the shrewd distribution of skills is important.

Some of these strategies are directly within the control of FRSITO and the other ITOs involved in this study. Others may require the ITOs to take an influencing role among their stakeholders, which is relevant in the context of the ITO strategic leadership role in matters of skills and training.

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

Emergency services in New Zealand are heavily reliant on a volunteer workforce.

Fire and Rescue Services Industry Training Organisation (FRSITO) has engaged NZIER to conduct research into volunteer-related training in emergency services. The study is a collaborative venture between FRSITO and other industry training organisations (ITOs) which cover emergency services. The study is part-funded by the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC).

This report presents NZIER's findings from the second (and final) stage of the study – depth interviews with a sample of emergency services volunteers, their managers and other stakeholders. The first stage of the study, conducted in April 2008, comprised a literature review. This report should be read in conjunction with the report from the first stage.[1]

## 1.2 Objectives

### 1.2.1 Overall

The primary objective of the entire study is to identify ways in which volunteer-related training can be improved to enhance the delivery of selected emergency services. The term "volunteer-related training" recognises that better outcomes in relation to volunteers may not just come from training the volunteers themselves, but also from training paid workers who need to recruit, retain, and marshall volunteer resources.

Secondary objectives of the entire study are to:

- describe the profile and characteristics (demographic, occupation in paid employment, participation in more than one volunteer role, qualifications held, current engagement in training, willingness to undertake training etc) of volunteers in general and specifically selected emergency services volunteers

- identify barriers which inhibit training participation or completions in relation to volunteers in general and specifically in relation to selected emergency services, and identify ways in which these barriers may be overcome.

### 1.2.2 First stage – literature review

The focus of the literature review (conducted in April 2008) was to set the scene for the second stage of the study, such as informing the design of the sample structure and questions for the depth interviews.

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[1] NZIER (2008), *Volunteer-related training in emergency services: Findings from a literature review. Report to FRSITO*

The literature review went some way towards meeting the overall objectives of the study. It provided much information on the demographic profile and characteristics of emergency services volunteers, and on the barriers to training participation and potential strategies for overcoming those barriers. A summary of the findings from the literature review is contained in section 2, and definitions and concepts used in the literature review are contained in Appendix A.

### 1.2.3 Second stage – depth interviews

Our focus for the depth interviews was to fill in the gaps in knowledge following the literature review, namely to:

- *identify the specific mechanisms by which training enhances service delivery,* as most of the literature we uncovered in stage one related to training outputs (e.g. training participation) rather than training outcomes (e.g. service delivery)

- *better understand the role of management training,* as the literature revealed that managing volunteers is challenging and has a substantial impact on the effectiveness of the volunteer workforce

- *concentrate on actual experiences rather than intentions*, to try and identify the most effective strategies among those identified in the literature for increasing training participation

- *identify the relationship between training and other strategies,* as several previous studies suggest that there is a strong (and multi-directional) relationship between training and recruitment/retention of volunteers.

## 1.3  Approach

The stage two research was qualitative in nature. Qualitative research provides a rich understanding of the subject of interest.

We conducted depth interviews with a sample of emergency services volunteers, their managers and other stakeholders (personnel in training providers and volunteer organisations and government officials) - 52 people in total. The interviews were conducted in May 2008.

Each interview lasted one hour on average. The majority of interviews were conducted face-to-face; a few were conducted by telephone. Many of the interviews with volunteers were conducted in evenings or in lunch breaks, to fit in with respondents' requirements. We asked respondents a series of open questions (see topic guides in Appendix D). Towards the end of the interview, we asked respondents to rate various strategies identified from the literature review (see rating sheet in Appendix D).

The emergency services covered in the sample were urban fire, rural fire, civil defence and emergency management (CDEM), land search and rescue (SAR), coastguard and ambulance. The purpose was to identify a number of natural

experiments in training arrangements across different emergency services, to try and ascertain what works.

The sample covered three main locations – Wellington, Christchurch and Northland. The purpose was to include the experiences of both urban and rural volunteers, as the literature review had revealed particular challenges in relation to training rural volunteers. A few respondents (mainly training providers) were selected from other locations and interviewed by telephone.

The sample of volunteers' managers, who in many cases were themselves volunteers, was generally selected by key gatekeepers within the relevant emergency services organisation. The sample of volunteers was selected by their managers. In both cases we provided criteria for respondent selection. The sample structure is contained in Appendix C.

In general our analysis and reporting has been conducted by theme i.e. across *all* the emergency services rather than by sub-group. Whilst the total number of respondents (52 people) is a reasonably large sample size for qualitative research, the sample in each individual emergency service is small – ranging between four (coastguard) and ten (SAR) respondents. Having said that, some respondents had experience across a number of emergency services. So we have reported on key differences by sub-group where we believe they are useful. But overall the findings for each individual emergency service should be treated with care.

Our analysis and reporting covers not only industry training, but the wider network of training provision. It also includes the relationship between training and other strategies which may improve service delivery. Whilst such strategies may be outside the ITOs' direct control, they are relevant in the context of the ITO strategic legislated leadership role in matters of skills and training.

## 1.4   Structure of the report

Following an introduction (this section), we outline the key findings from the earlier literature review (section 2), then consider the role of training in service provision (section 3), perceptions of training (section 4) and suggestions for improvement (section 5) before outlining our conclusions (section 6).

# 2. Key findings from literature review

We outline here key findings from the stage one literature review. Further details (definitions and concepts) are contained in Appendix A.

## 2.1 Understanding volunteers

Volunteers differ from paid workers in important ways. Volunteers have a high degree of control over their time. The supply of volunteer time is linked to the extent to which the voluntary activity consistently provides the benefits sought by volunteers. This means that managing volunteers is challenging. It also means that training must relate directly to the underlying benefits sought by volunteers if it is to be effective. Understanding volunteer motivations is therefore vital to the success of training and service provision.

We identified from the literature three broad motivations for volunteering. The "consumption" motivation is concerned with the *current* satisfaction received by the volunteer from the act of volunteering. Under the "investment" motivation, the individual invests volunteer hours out of current available leisure for *future* rewards (primarily in the labour market). The "public goods/altruism" motivation is a genuine selfless act for the benefit of others.

*Table 2 Motivations matrix*

|  |  | Broad motivation |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Consumption | Investment | Public goods/ altruism |
| Degree of involvement | Highly involved | Love of volunteer activity per se<br><br>Joy and "warm glow" from giving<br><br>Express deeply held convictions | Labour market skills, experience and contacts specific to voluntary activity (to enable entry into that career) | Provide something that otherwise may not be provided<br><br>Help others/community |
|  | Marginally involved | Prestige/power<br><br>Social interaction<br><br>Overcome guilt from being more fortunate than others<br><br>Sense of achievement | Increase earnings potential<br><br>General labour market skills, experience and contacts<br><br>Signal altruistic behaviour (desired by firms) to prospective employers<br><br>Ability to influence volunteer activity to benefit self/family<br><br>Gather information on the volunteer activity before making donation | "Conscience good" – response to requests to volunteer |

Source: NZIER, drawn from Ziemek (2005) and other studies

Emergency services volunteers are driven by a strong sense of community, and so fit predominantly in the "highly involved/altruistic" category. The key point here is that training appeals most directly to the "investment" motivation, and so may be a hard sell to emergency services volunteers.

## 2.2 Barriers to training

We found several studies which outlined barriers to training participation for emergency services volunteers, as well as some which identified potential strategies to overcome those barriers. These are summarised in Table 3.

*Table 3 Overcoming barriers to training*

| Barrier | Strategy to overcome barrier |
| --- | --- |
| Time constraints – juggling jobs, family and voluntary activity | Ensure training is relevant and directly relates to the role<br><br>Do not overload the volunteers with training (e.g. conduct short courses) |
| Cost – direct costs of training, travel, childcare | Cover the costs of training and provide financial support<br><br>Conduct training on-site/locally (to minimise travel costs) |
| Lack of flexibility in timing/ delivery of training | Offer accessible, flexible delivery (e.g. at a time when volunteers are available such as evenings and weekends, rather than when trainers are available) |
| Challenges in rural areas – e.g. travel times to training courses | Conduct training on-site/locally (to minimise travel and disruption to volunteers)<br><br>Cover the costs of training (which may be greater for rural volunteers) |
| Intimidating/threatening requirements - e.g. formal assessment | Target the right people for recruitment, and only ask people to do what they are capable of<br><br>Train volunteers' managers (to provide support to volunteers) |
| Individual volunteer characteristics – some volunteers are more receptive than others to training | Ensure training is relevant to the needs of the individual (e.g. reinforces the underlying motivations of the volunteer)<br><br>Keep the enthusiasm up by getting volunteers involved in the voluntary activity itself as soon as possible |

Source: NZIER, drawn from various studies

Among the various barriers we identified, time constraints is the most significant. This creates a dilemma for emergency services organisations using volunteers. On the one hand, skill needs may be high, in line with the often demanding (and dangerous) roles undertaken by those volunteers. On the other hand, training strategy needs to be pragmatic and recognise the constraints on volunteers to undergo significant training.

## 2.3 Demographic profile

Evidence on the demographic profile of emergency services volunteers suggests that the workforce is not a homogenous group. For example, the profile of volunteer fire fighters is similar to that of their paid counterparts (e.g. predominantly male). However the profile of ambulance service volunteers is similar to that of volunteers in general (predominantly female, in the middle age bands, and in paid employment).

More importantly, there is some evidence that emergency services volunteers are often engaged in several voluntary activities, in particular more than one emergency service. This means that the training burden is likely to be high, as volunteers may have to undertake training for each voluntary role in which they are involved.

# 3. Role of training in service provision

The prime objective of this study is to identify ways in which volunteer-related training can be improved to enhance the delivery of selected emergency services. In this section we examine the link between training and service provision.

## 3.1 Perceptions of the role of training

We asked respondents to identify the ways in which they believe training contributes to improved service provision.

Respondents see training as playing a key role in the provision of emergency services by volunteers. They used words such as "vital", "critical", "core". Some volunteers said they would be unable to undertake their duties in a meaningful way without training.

> *"It's given us our personal safety, fostered the team spirit and helped with team building. Because we know the expertise of each team member, we're confident on the water, and know that our people are professional. In terms of service –we know what to do when there's an incident." (Volunteer coastguard skipper)*

The specific ways in which training is seen to contribute to service provision are outlined below.

- *Improve safety*, both of the volunteer him/herself and others. Many respondents referred to increasing OSH requirements and concerns around liability issues in this context.

- *Increase confidence*, both in the volunteer him/herself and in the rest of the team. For example, training prepares the volunteer by providing him/her with an idea of what to expect when attending an incident.

- *Provide basic skills* for example those skills necessary to undertake the tasks required of volunteers under supervision.

- *Ensure (minimum) consistent standards are reached*. This is especially important where search teams, brigades etc have to work with teams in other locations, so that expectations and the language used are common and understood.

- *Increase efficiency,* for example achieving more effective outcomes using less resources.

- *Increase the likelihood of a successful outcome, and reduce the likelihood of an unsuccessful one.* A few respondents noted that training had been tightened up in direct response to "near misses".

- *Ensure the currency of skills,* especially where the volume of incidents is low or where technology is changing rapidly.

A few respondents noted tangible outcomes from training. For example, one SAR respondent stated that in recent years whilst the number of searches has increased, the number of man hours has fallen and the success rate (i.e. finding the missing person within a given timeframe) has increased. He partly attributed this to training, as well as better resources. One respondent in ambulance services believed that improved training of ambulance personnel has resulted in a demonstrable reduction in mortality rates.

In terms of the link between training participation and training outcomes, our discussions with respondents as they completed the rating sheet (see section 4.4) shed some light on their perceptions. In general, those attributes which rated highly for "improving service provision" were also rated highly by the same respondents for "improving the take-up of training". When probed on the link between the two, most respondents stated that they believe a higher take-up of training will improve service provision.

## 3.2    Key determinants of training

In addition to the direct question on the relationship between training and service provision, many of the responses to other questions have implications for the link between training and service provision. We consider these here.

### 3.2.1 Role and duties of volunteers

Respondents' comments on the roles of volunteers confirm the findings from the literature review – that volunteers in emergency services are undertaking a wide range of direct and indirect services. In some emergency services, volunteers are conducting similar duties to their paid colleagues. In ambulance services, volunteers generally work directly alongside their paid colleagues in the ambulance. In urban fire, generally the entire brigade consists of either a volunteer workforce or a paid workforce, but volunteers and paid workers are conducting broadly similar duties. However in SAR, volunteers play a distinct role from paid workers (police officers) who co-ordinate the search. And in coastguard, volunteers effectively constitute the entire workforce, and undertake a range of indirect services such as fund raising in addition to the rescue activities. In CDEM and rural fire arrangements are more varied.

The frequency of incidents, discussed further below, has implications for the mix of volunteer and paid workers. In ambulance and urban fire, a paid workforce is more likely to be used where the volume of incidents is high.

However, in CDEM, as one respondent noted, there is a highly heterogeneous picture of service arrangements at the local level. The use of volunteers varies substantially from one council to another. Some councils are heavily reliant on a volunteer workforce, whilst others do not use volunteers at all. Instead, these councils use council staff, governments agencies and non-government organisations to manage an event. Some also have a process (or are developing a

process) for managing spontaneous volunteers. Respondents attributed the diversity of arrangements to a number of factors including: the immaturity of the new CDEM environment (i.e. the relatively recent introduction of the CDEM Act in 2002) and the fact it represents a paradigm shift from the previous environment; regional variations in the nature of emergency events and natural hazards and the resources available to handle those events; historical precedents of who has traditionally undertaken civil defence.

The inherently dangerous nature of emergency services was noted by many respondents. In other words, a mistake by a volunteer could result in injury (and in some cases death) to:

- the volunteer him/herself
- the volunteer's team mates
- the recipient of the service.

Emergency services volunteers are very conscious of their responsibilities towards others, especially their colleagues. Health and safety is a key driver of training requirements, as noted earlier.

### 3.2.2 Nature and frequency of incidents

The nature and frequency of incidents varies substantially across individual emergency services. For example, a volunteer in a busy ambulance station or fire brigade may attend a number of incidents in any given shift. At the other end of the spectrum, CDEM volunteers are preparing for major events (earthquakes, floods etc) which rarely happen. In general, rural volunteers are less likely to see incidents than their urban counterparts.

The nature and frequency of incidents has several impacts on training. Many respondents expressed concerns that infrequent incidents reduce the currency of skills, or that the voluntary activity may no longer be "second nature" to the volunteer. Refresher training, exercises and scenario training is seen by many as important in this situation.

But there is an irony here. Whilst low exposure to incidents may increase the *requirements* to train, it may in fact reduce volunteers' *likelihood* of training. People volunteer in emergency services predominantly to serve and protect their community, but also for the "enjoyment" of attending an incident (see section 4.2). If they do not attend incidents, volunteers may become demotivated and therefore less committed to training.

Other respondents suggested alternative strategies to training for dealing with infrequent incidents – see section 3.3 below.

### 3.2.3 Managing risk

Whilst the skills required of volunteers in emergency services are often high given the demanding and potentially dangerous roles they undertake, there are practical constraints on volunteers' ability to undergo training. But respondents could find no easy answer to reconciling the need for high skill levels with the practical realities of the time available to train.

> *"It's a difficult balance. Volunteers have a family and a work life. At this brigade we attend a lot of incidents, but even so you need refresher training. Also, every now and then you're thrown in the deep end. I've sometimes been the most senior person on the truck – you hope another truck will roll up!" (Volunteer senior fire fighter)*

More generally, even though respondents are very conscious that people's lives often depend on the quality of services provided by emergency services volunteers, they recognise that there is a limit to the resources that can be used to increase the level of that service.

In remote rural areas, the low volume of incidents in ambulance, rural fire, coastguard etc may not warrant significant resources being channelled into service provision. In addition, there may be practical constraints on providing services, such as a lack of resources in those locations. In reality this means that standards of service provision vary around the country. For example, in very remote areas the ambulance may be single crew, and manned by a volunteer with relatively low qualifications, as this is the only person available. (However, this "First Response" ambulance would be backed up by a double-crewed one which would be activated simultaneously.) Some respondents expressed concerns about variability in service provision (and training undertaken by their counterparts elsewhere) throughout the country, and even between different emergency services.

In CDEM in particular, risk management is a vital activity. The range of possible events, probability, location and timing of a given event, all have major implications for the resources required. There are a large number of variables which need to be considered in managing risk and allocating resources.

Some respondents discussed the relationship between volunteer training and managing risk. In locations where the supply of volunteers is limited, the emergency organisation has little leverage over volunteers to encourage them to train. In such situations, the organisation is weighing up the risk of having *some* resource available (albeit perhaps not trained to the standards which is deemed desirable) against the risk of setting standards/prerequisites which may result in no resources being available.

> *"Sometimes people refuse to train, but they're still very valuable – they provide an extra pair of hands. I won't crew single-handed." (Volunteer ambulance officer, female in a rural location)*

Respondents' perceptions of the organisation's attitude to risk was implicit in some of their comments. For example, some volunteer urban fire fighters noted that much more extensive training is undertaken by their paid colleagues, and generally those colleagues have much greater exposure to incidents, and so higher skill levels on average and greater ability to handle those incidents. But these respondents also noted the practical constraints on their own time to train, discussed elsewhere in this report.

### 3.2.4 Funding of the service

The funding arrangements vary across the emergency services. In most services, there is some form of government funding, either directly (e.g. urban fire) or indirectly (e.g. SAR).

Some respondents expressed concerns around funding levels and the resources provided for volunteers. For example, some volunteers across a range of emergency services commented they would like to be provided with more up-to-date equipment. More generally, several respondents, again across a range of emergency services, believe that the use of volunteer labour is a mechanism by the relevant organisation to reduce costs.

Funding issues were most apparent in coastguard, which relies entirely on fund-raising and donations. There are a number of implications for service delivery and training.

- Volunteers have to spend time fund-raising, which is not their prime motivation for joining coastguard.

- A lack of funding restricts what training is undertaken. One respondent stated that most funding goes towards essential equipment. Another stated that the boatmaster's qualification (the main qualification for volunteers) was only undertaken twice a year in her (busy) region. This was because the training was undertaken free of charge by a person who was only available/prepared to do it twice a year. However, the qualification is provided (for a fee) at other local training providers, but not undertaken because of the cost involved.

- Coastguard volunteers do not generally claim costs associated with training – see section 4.5.5.

## 3.3   Link with other strategies

Training is one of an array of workforce development and other business strategies which can influence service provision. Here we briefly consider the relationship between training and other strategies, some of which have already been touched on.

### 3.3.1 Recruitment and retention

Respondents confirmed the findings from the literature review – that there is an important and multi-dimensional relationship between training and the recruitment/retention of volunteers. For some volunteers, training is an attraction of volunteering and it therefore may enhance recruitment and retention. For others, training may be seen as onerous or off-putting. These differences are due to the differing motivations of volunteers, discussed throughout this report.

> *"A big issue is holding on to people and maintaining their interest. Training can affect that – training is one of the stimuli to keep the interest going." (Paid police officer re SAR)*

More fundamentally, review the volunteer audience was suggested by some respondents – have we got the right volunteers?

> *"We're looking for supervisors with initiative and leadership skills – the ability to see a problem and act accordingly rather than hyping it up. We don't want people seeking the power and the glory – but that's what some of them are looking for. But if someone wants to do it, and we don't think they're suitable, we're in a difficult situation." (Paid council officer re CDEM)*

Some respondents suggested that, rather than spend significant resources training volunteers for skills they may rarely use, instead it might be better to target people with existing skills for the activity, such as skills used every day in their paid employment. The use of "pre-skilled" volunteer labour was most frequently (but not exclusively) mentioned by respondents in the context of CDEM, where the incidence of events is low. For example, one respondent suggested that engineers and builders may be targeted as "volunteers" to handle building safety issues in an emergency, and simply be trained in the CDEM context. This approach is essentially already being adopted in SAR, where there is generally an expectation that volunteers arrive with bush and survival skills. Having said that, the SAR volunteer pool is changing. Whilst previously volunteers were drawn from tramping clubs, hunting clubs etc, this is changing, and therefore volunteers may not always arrive with the anticipated skills.

So understanding the skills that new volunteers bring to the organisation is important. Some form of assessment of skills at the outset was suggested by some respondents. This is not only to avoid volunteers being trained in things they already know, but also (more importantly) to avoid inappropriate assumptions around skill levels and volunteers being sent out on incidents for which they are poorly prepared.

### 3.3.2 Management of volunteers

The vital role played by volunteers' managers in the services provided by volunteers was noted by many respondents, and confirms the findings of our literature review. There are several aspects to this, discussed briefly below.

- *General leadership and management skills.* Respondents noted that, as in any organisation, managers play a key role in motivating and leading their teams etc. Often this comes down to innate personality rather than taught skills.

    *"A good team leader can lift the performance of a mediocre team, and a poor one can destroy it. You need the right mix of skills." (Paid LandSAR staff member)*

- *Role model for training.* Several respondents suggested that volunteers were more likely to train themselves when their managers were strongly supportive of (and undergo) training.

- *Special challenges for managing volunteers.* The particular challenges of managing volunteers, such as the lack of levers to influence volunteers' behaviour, and the need to understand volunteers' motivations and the volunteer psyche, was identified by a few respondents (most often those with a wider understanding of the volunteer workforce across a range of sectors). One respondent discussed the importance of mutual respect, understanding and a democratic rather than a heavy-handed style of leadership.

    *"There's a key difference between paid and unpaid workers. Paid workers are there for the $. But the key motivations are different for volunteers. So they need to be managed differently. "Why do I have to worry about rules and regulations – I'm a volunteer?"" (Paid staff member at a voluntary organisation)*

- *Relationship between (paid) managers and (volunteer) workers.* The relationship between paid and volunteer workers, and the impact this had on volunteer motivations, was noted by many respondents. Some felt that the culture of the paid organisation (New Zealand Fire Service (NZFS), police) may be very different from the type of culture that suits volunteers. In SAR a good working relationship between LandSAR teams and the police is vital. LandSAR teams want to be involved in as many incidents as possible, or, if that is not appropriate, to be kept well informed by the police of incidents as they happen. Some SAR respondents talked of walk-outs by volunteers when this was not the case.

### 3.3.3 Alternative ways to improve outcomes

Given some of the challenges of training volunteers in emergency services, and also of providing services in remote locations, some respondents suggested alternative solutions to training for improving service provision.

Increased specialisation and careful role allocation was mentioned by some. The team leader's role of allocating appropriate tasks within the team becomes especially important when engagement in training and skill levels vary substantially from one volunteer to another. And volunteers may have strong views on the roles and activities they wish to undertake. These points were made by several volunteer team leaders who have experienced difficulties in recruiting volunteers in their area.

Greater co-ordination and use of resources across different emergency services was suggested by others. For example, several rural fire volunteers suggested that the NZFS should call on rural fire volunteers in a support capacity, to undertake tasks  within their capability. This would keep rural fire fighter volunteers' motivations and skill levels high. Others suggested joint training sessions so that volunteers can be used to undertake activities across a range of emergency service as required. This would also have the benefits of one team understanding another's capability, and cross-fertilisation of ideas.

One suggestion by a SAR volunteer was to encourage local SAR teams to admit their limitations and put their hands up for help when appropriate. For example, this respondent suggested that the local SAR team may be given a certain timeframe in which to conduct a search. If the team was unsuccessful, other teams would subsequently be brought in.

## 3.4    Summary and interpretation

Training is seen as making a vital contribution to service provision. However, the ultimate test is whether the training on offer is a cost-effective use of resources in terms of its ability to enhance the delivery of emergency services.

Emergency services are in general inherently a risky activity. Training can play an important role in reducing risk. But volunteers are time-constrained, and there are practical limitations on the amount of training they can undertake. By becoming an emergency services volunteer, a person is effectively accepting the risk involved in the underlying activity. And by having a volunteer workforce, emergency services organisations are effectively accepting a higher level of risk than if they employed a (more highly trained) paid workforce.

We might expect to see volunteers used where labour demand is flexible and infrequent. So having a volunteer workforce in rural areas makes sense, so that resources can be mobilised quickly in the location of the incident. However, if volunteers are expected to act as professionals, they need to be treated as professionals. Resourcing should be adequate to enable them to perform their duties effectively. Volunteers are providing a precious commodity – their time. They want to see the organisation for which they work giving them a fair go.

The frequency of incidents has important implications for training. Whilst on the one hand a low volume of incidents reduces the volunteer's skill level and so increases the requirement to train, on the other it can reduce the motivation to train. Effective refresher training was seen as important by many respondents.

Training is important, but is one of a range of strategies which may enhance service provision. Training should be viewed as a complement to a number of other strategies, such as leadership, recruitment and retention, and task allocation.

# 4. Perceptions of current training provision

In this section we consider respondents' perceptions and experiences of current training provision, to try and ascertain what works well. When we talk about "what works well", we generally mean increased training participation rather than enhanced service delivery. Although this study has an outcomes focus, we generally accept respondents' own assertions that increased take-up of training improves services. However, we comment where there may be a divergence between the two.

## 4.1 Key features of provision

Before we consider perceptions of the current training available to volunteers in emergency services, it is helpful to consider the key features of that training.

- *Initial training is a prerequisite in some services, but not others.* In urban fire and ambulance services some induction training or qualification attainment is a requirement before the volunteer can become operational. However, in other services, whilst there is generally some form of structured training, in practice the situation is somewhat fluid.

- *Ongoing training.* Training nights, conducted every week or month etc, are common across most emergency services.

- *Limited number of providers.* In most emergency services, there are one or two key training providers, which in some cases are arms of the emergency services organisation itself (in urban fire and ambulance).

- *Delivery tailored to suit volunteers' lifestyles.* Much of the training for emergency services volunteers takes place at a time (evening and weekends) or location (the trainers come to the volunteers rather than the other way around) intended to suit volunteers.

- *National standards adopted in some services, but not others.* National qualifications and unit standards have been widely adopted in rural fire and ambulance services, and the principles accepted within urban fire. In other services there is a mixture of unit standards and provider-based training to varying degrees.

## 4.2 What training is undertaken

In very broad terms, there are two basic drivers for the training which is undertaken by emergency services volunteers.

Firstly, training which is a prerequisite to becoming operational is undertaken. Volunteers have no choice but to undertake the induction course in urban fire, and the prerequisite unit standards in ambulance.

Secondly, training is undertaken if it fits in with the volunteer's lifestyle and motivations for volunteering. We discuss this in detail below.

## 4.3 Motivations

Understanding motivations is vital to successfully engaging volunteers in training.

Our discussions with respondents support each of the broad motivations identified in the literature review – the consumption, investment and altruistic motivations. Specifically, the key reasons for volunteering were as follows.

- *Helping their community.* This was by far the most frequently cited motivation, and supports the findings of other studies. "I'd like to think someone would rescue me" was mentioned by several SAR respondents. A sense of local community appears to be particularly important for rural volunteers.

- *Excitement of the volunteer activity/adrenalin rush.* This motivation was common in urban and rural fire services, but was mentioned across the board.

- *Stepping stone to a job.* This motivation was frequently mentioned in St John, where many volunteers either move on to contract work or full-time paid employment. The voluntary activity provides an opportunity for St John to screen the volunteer and vice versa. A few respondents mentioned this motivation in the context of urban fire services, although some noted that being a volunteer did *not* assist on the path to becoming a paid fire fighter, and that a person moving from a volunteer to a paid role would have to start their training from scratch. In coastguard, some would like to see their volunteer training recognised in a commercial setting. More generally, gaining volunteer experience (and qualifications) for their CVs was seen as useful to younger volunteers and immigrants.

- *Love of the volunteer activity itself.* This includes the love of the outdoors – getting out into the bush or onto the sea.

   *"If you're in a community, you've got to do something. I'm not a PTA person. And ambulance and fire are too big a commitment. I love the bush, and being outside – it's a mix of my passions!" (Volunteer LandSAR)*

- *Social network/camaraderie.* This was mentioned across all emergency services.

- *Rewarding/satisfying/stimulating/challenging.* Several St John volunteers (who are retired from paid employment) said that their voluntary activity helps keep their brains active. And several SAR volunteers felt they had certain abilities which the general public did not generally possess, which they wished to apply in their volunteer role.

- *Status.* There are two aspects to this – status within the emergency service organisation itself and within the wider community. For example, several volunteer fire fighters noted that their profession is seen by the general public in a very favourable light.

   *"With coastguard, they've got this thing – "We've got to save the world"! Everyone wants to be a skipper. But when they get there it's different." (Volunteer coastguard operations manager)*

Sometimes the "motivation mix" varies throughout the duration of the person's term as a volunteer. For example, several St John volunteers said that they joined for community reasons, but became interested in paid work once aware of the opportunities available. And the social aspect and friendships of their colleagues, whilst not cited as the initial driver for volunteering, was seen by many as a key benefit further down the track and a reason for staying.

Motivations vary depending on the demographic and other characteristics of the volunteer. Respondents' impressions of the demographic profile of volunteers in emergency services are contained in Appendix B. The profile supports findings from the literature review (see section 2). For example, whilst males and people in the middle age groups are over-represented among emergency services volunteers, there is some variation in the demographic profile. And emergency services volunteers often undertake more than one voluntary emergency services role.

## 4.4    Ratings of selected strategies

The results for the rating sheets we asked respondents to complete towards the end of the interview are presented in Table 4. The first column shows the average score for each strategy in terms of how it will "improve the take-up of training". The second shows the average score for each strategy in terms of how it will "improve service provision". Note that the strategies are ranked in descending order of their score in the first column. We discuss the scores further below.

### Table 4 Rating of suggested strategies
Score out of five

|  | Improve take-up | Improve service provision |
|---|---|---|
| Training delivery style is exciting | 4.6 | 4.3 |
| Training costs (inc travel, childcare etc) are paid for by the organisation | 4.4 | 4.0 |
| Training is combined with getting volunteer involved in voluntary activity as soon as possible | 4.3 | 4.2 |
| Training is targeted at volunteers' managers (as well as volunteers) | 4.2 | 4.3 |
| Training consists of short (one or two day) courses | 4.2 | 3.6 |
| Training conducted at the weekend/ evenings | 4.1 | 3.7 |
| Training relates directly to the current role of the volunteer | 4.0 | 4.5 |
| Training conducted on-site | 3.9 | 3.7 |
| Training leads to a formal (nationally recognised) qualification | 3.7 | 3.7 |
| Training conducted off-site at a training provider | 2.8 | 3.2 |
| Training conducted by correspondence/ e-learning | 2.4 | 2.5 |

Notes:    (1)    N=39.  The rating sheet was not completed for the telephone interviews or for a few respondents who were interviewed face-to-face and where time was short

Source:  NZIER

## 4.5    Specific preferences

In this sub-section we outline respondents' comments in response to the open question "what works well, and what doesn't?", as well as the scores presented in Table 4.

### 4.5.1 Hands-on, practical training

Many respondents stated that hands-on practical training works best for emergency services volunteers. These volunteers tend to be practical, active people, who love action. In terms of learning style, several volunteers noted that they learn best when something is demonstrated to them and they practice it straight afterwards. They are keen to practice their skills as soon as possible – hence the reasonably high score for "training is combined with getting the volunteer involved in the voluntary activity as quickly as possible".

Volunteers recognise the need for, and importance of, theory training, but where possible they want it delivered in a practical way. Classroom-based theory training is generally preferred to book-based training.

Learning theory from workbooks and by correspondence was disliked by many (but not all) volunteers. This scored the lowest score of all the suggested strategies – see Table 4. Many felt that e-learning and correspondence, which relies on self-discipline, would be continually put off by busy volunteers. Some urban fire volunteers found the large NZFS workbooks off-putting, and suggested these workbooks be trimmed down as much as possible. (Note that the NZFS training personnel we interviewed are aware of these concerns.)

> *"Practical, hands-on, interactive training (works best). Some look at the big folders and think "Oh my god! I'm not doing that!" We need to remove those barriers." (Paid NZFS staff member)*

> *"One fire party had a crew of 11 people – seven couldn't read or write properly. But in the field they were good. In the rural areas, we can't afford to chase those people away." (Paid principal rural fire officer)*

Interestingly, ambulance volunteers rated correspondence/e-learning (average score of 4.3 for improving the take-up of training among the seven ambulance respondents who completed a sheet) much more highly than others (average score of 2.4). Some enjoyed the learning aspects of being a St John volunteer. Others commented favourably on St John's new e-learning training/assessment – that they could do the training at a time which suits them.

### 4.5.2 Exciting and varied delivery

Many respondents felt that exciting, varied, interactive and interesting training delivery style is important in terms of engaging volunteers' interest. "Training delivery style is exciting" scored the highest marks on our rating sheet in terms of increasing the take-up of training.

For example, many respondents across a range of emergency services noted that helicopter training is always very well attended.

Keeping training interesting and varied is particularly important (and difficult) for ongoing refresher training, discussed below.

### 4.5.3 Relevant training

Volunteers want acknowledgement that they are giving up their precious time, both for the voluntary activity itself and the accompanying training. Any training which is seen to waste their time is viewed very unfavourably.

> *"At the end of every course, I say "Thank you for giving up your weekend". It's important I recognise they're giving up time with family. With volunteers – you've always got to think of the "What's in it for me?" angle." (Paid staff member at a training provider)*

Volunteers want training requirements to be kept to a minimum to enable them to be able to do their volunteer job. They need to see that the training is useful. Whilst "training relates directly to the role of the volunteer" only received a middle ranking in terms of improving take-up of training, it achieved the highest score for improving service provision.

Some respondents did note the tension here between the amount and type of training the organisation might want volunteers to undertake for effective service provision, and that which the volunteers themselves are prepared to undertake. They are aware that a certain amount of training is required for volunteers to be effective in their role. However, the overall message is to keep requirements to a minimum.

> *"We've got to get back to what our core responsibilities are. For example with chemicals – just bring in the experts. You can't do everything, you can't do justice to it. Our core job is to make sure people in the valley are safe." (Volunteer chief fire officer)*

### 4.5.4 At a time and location to suit the volunteer

Flexibility is the key here. Whilst most volunteers prefer training to be conducted at evenings or weekends, some (e.g. shift workers or retired) prefer an option of attending courses during week days.

Many volunteers said that training is most effective when conducted on-site or where the actual incident would take place e.g. in the bush, on a boat. Some

commented that there may be value in changing locations, so that volunteers did not become over-familiar with a particular setting and complacent, or so that they could learn new ideas (e.g. from other emergency services).

> *"With regard to on-site or off-site, it's neither here nor there. What is important is the type of training and the activity itself. For example, pumps you can do at the fire station, log slashes are done at a log site." (Volunteer rural fire fighter)*

In general volunteers want trainers to come to them. Provider-based training is seen as necessary where specific resources, not available at the volunteers' home location, are required.

### 4.5.5 Costs are covered

Whilst covering training costs was not mentioned unprompted by many respondents, it *was* considered important when we prompted respondents, and this aspect scored highly on our rating sheet.

As well as the direct costs of training, such as course fees, there are a number of indirect costs of training, such as accommodation, travel and childcare. Some of these costs are not always immediately apparent, for example the cost of takeaway meals when attending training nights. And some are not monetary costs, for example the lost time spent on training courses.

Volunteer urban fire fighters are grateful to the NZFS for covering training costs, including making some financial contribution to loss of earnings whilst volunteers attend courses. In contrast, volunteers in coastguard (which is entirely funded by fund-raising) do not generally claim costs for training, but would like to do so.

### 4.5.6 Effective ongoing and refresher training

Ongoing, refresher training was seen by many respondents as a vital component of the overall training for volunteers. This is particularly important in locations (e.g. rural) or services (e.g. CDEM) where the frequency of incidents is low. Skills can become rusty, and it is difficult to keep up with the latest techniques (see section 3.2.2). Some SAR respondents expressed concerns about lack of funding for refresher training.

Training nights – regular evenings where volunteers meet at their brigade or station etc – were discussed in this context. Whilst respondents felt that these nights are potentially valuable, there are some caveats in some instances.

- *Lack of a clear training programme/schedule.* Volunteers need advance warning of the content of the sessions, and to see that the content is useful.

- *Concerns around trainers' skills.* Whilst some volunteers made very favourable comments about the training they received at training nights, others were concerned about the currency of the trainers' skills and the possibility of perpetuating (bad) habits.

- *Lack of fresh ideas.* It is hard to keep training fresh and interesting with a limited number of people undertaking the training. Some respondents suggested bringing in external trainers.

- *Volunteers cherry-picking which sessions to attend.* Some volunteers select the sessions they are most interested in, rather than those which may benefit them most in their volunteer role.

- *Social aspects.* Often the training nights extend into general meetings or social events. Some saw this as a good thing whilst others did not.

- *Diverging views on attendance requirements.* Some felt that ongoing or refresher training is so important some compulsory attendance is required, whilst others felt this is unrealistic. A further comment is that recognition needs to be given for skills learnt in paid employment i.e. compulsory attendance would not be appropriate for everyone.

> *"Of the 70 volunteers at this station, 45 are active, and we're lucky to get 15 to a training night. And some of the things they're interested in aren't useful to them in their role. We need to be firmer on attendance. If that means a few more paid staff – good. But we need to concentrate our resources on committed volunteers." (Volunteer ambulance officer)*

### 4.5.7 Effective management training

As noted in section 3.3.2, volunteers' managers play a vital role in the effectiveness of the volunteers themselves. The importance of good management training is reflected in the relatively high scores this aspect received, especially in relation to improving service provision.

In addition to general management skills, some respondents believe that volunteers' managers require specific training in managing volunteers. This includes understanding volunteers' motivations, and how to effectively influence volunteers (who need to be managed quite differently from paid workers).

However, there are limits to the amount of training that most volunteers are prepared to undertake to progress up the volunteer hierarchy. Some feel that the training requirements for team leader and other more senior roles are too onerous. In some locations (e.g. rural areas), this means that there may be an under-supply of volunteers in more senior roles.

> *"For me to do a management role, I'd need to get paid for it. If they want monkeys, then pay peanuts." (Volunteer rural fire fighter)*

### 4.5.8 User-friendly national qualifications and assessment

National qualifications and unit standards elicited mixed views from respondents, and on average scored low on the rating sheet. In general (but not always), respondents in those services where national standards have already been implemented were much more positive (e.g. rural fire, with "Training leads to a formal (nationally recognised) qualification" achieving an average score of 4.7 in terms of improving the take-up of training and 4.8 for improving service delivery across the six respondents who completed a rating sheet, and ambulance, with average scores of 4.3 and 4.0 respectively across the seven respondents) than those where they have not (e.g. SAR, with average scores of 2.8 and 2.6 respectively across the ten respondents).

Many respondents commented that national standards and qualifications have a number of benefits in terms of service provision (although interestingly this is not reflected in the overall score), and to the organisation. These benefits include ensuring consistent standards across the country, having common expectations across and between organisations, and providing a measurable benchmark for performance.

> *"We only use unit standards. There's a serious side to it. It's part of getting the respect from the other emergency services. They go on about "How do we know the quality of the training?"" (Paid council officer re CDEM)*

However, some respondents in services where unit standards are not the norm felt that existing arrangements already provide some degree of standardisation. For example, in SAR, some respondents noted that the fact that one key training provider is used throughout SAR means there is some consistency in training provision. Similar comments were made in coastguard. Having said that, some SAR and coastguard respondents did express concerns about varying service standards and did see some benefits of introducing national (unit) standards in terms of service provision.

Formal qualifications are seen as attractive to younger volunteers. They are also seen as helpful in those services (such as ambulance) where there is a clear career path for volunteers. More generally, some respondents commented that it is nice to take something tangible - the "piece of paper" - away from training, in recognition of the volunteer's time.

However, a number of reservations about national qualifications and unit standards were expressed as follows.

- *Asking too much of people.* Some felt that the requirements of some existing national qualifications were too much for volunteers. For example, a few of the CDEM respondents felt that the RAPID programme is too long for most volunteers. In rural and urban fire, some respondents felt that the qualifications for senior roles were very demanding (both in time and content).

- *Unrealistic timeframes.* A related point to the previous one is to be realistic over the likely timeframe required to achieve a qualification. A limited credit programme (let alone an entire national certificate) may take several years for a volunteer to complete due to the volunteer's lack of practical experience. Volunteers' expectations need to be managed in this regard.

- *Assessment seen as onerous and threatening by some.* Older volunteers in particular may be threatened at having to "prove themselves" in front of their younger peers. A couple of respondents felt that there was too much preoccupation with assessment rather than the underlying skills.

- *Recognition of current competence (RCC) process not user-friendly.* RCC provides an opportunity to recognise more experienced volunteers. This is important when new standards are being introduced into a service (such as is currently happening in rural fire), to try and alleviate the concerns of experienced volunteers. Several experienced volunteers made comments to the effect "If I didn't have to do this ten years ago, why do I have to do it now?". This is also important in the context of new volunteers who join a service who have relevant work experience attained elsewhere. However, current RCC programmes are generally not seen as particularly user-friendly, and in practice RCC appears to be little used. One (rural fire) volunteer believed that it was easier to undertake the full theory assessment from scratch rather than to provide the necessary evidence for RCC.

  *"From my observation there's a large generation gap. The old guys struggle with the training. The young guys get through because they can do the calculations. But we need that experience. There is some RPL, but it's paper driven. We need to adjust RPL so it's more suited to them. They should be sitting down and talking to an experienced assessor." (Volunteer rural fire officer, young)*

- *Confusion about what people have achieved.* Some volunteers appear to be very confused and frustrated about what unit standards have been registered in their name on the national qualifications framework (NQF). In some cases, there appears to have been a genuine delay in the unit standards being registered. In other cases, the respondent thought they had undertaken the necessary assessment, but it appears that this was not in fact the case. More generally, in some emergency services (most noticeably SAR) there is confusion around the extent to which training is unit standards-based.

- *Lack of relevance.* For example, several respondents stated that the skills and knowledge are more important than a qualification. In addition, a formal qualification is not seen by some respondents (especially those in SAR) as particularly relevant in the labour market.

## 4.6    Summary and interpretation

Much of respondents' perceptions of training can be explained in terms of volunteers' underlying motivations. For example, it is not surprising that formal training and relatively demanding training requirements are reasonably well accepted in ambulance services, where many volunteers are investing their volunteer time for future job opportunities. And an exciting and hands-on delivery style is likely to be preferred by volunteers whose motivation is the excitement and inherent love of the voluntary activity itself. The key point here is that, whilst there are some cross-cutting preferences and themes, there appear to be some distinct volunteer segments. This suggests that different training strategies may be required for different segments.

The findings also highlight some of the tensions between the volunteers' own preferences and the requirements of the organisation. This was most obvious in the context of national qualifications and unit standards, where the needs of the volunteer and the organisation may diverge. The tension was also apparent in relation to training nights and refresher training, which are seen as useful in terms of maintaining skills, but where volunteers may not necessarily select those sessions which are most beneficial from the organisation's perspective, or even attend at all. Overall this reinforces the challenges around managing volunteers – that volunteers retain a high degree of control over their time and behaviour.

In terms of national standards and qualifications, the overall message seems to be that whilst this may be useful medicine, some changes may be helpful to sweeten the pill. Well established long-serving (and valuable) volunteers may not be interested in undertaking national qualifications, and may require some incentives (medals, ceremonies etc) to do so.

# 5. Suggestions for improvement

We asked respondents to suggest improvements to current training arrangements, which we discuss in this section. Note that whilst the focus was on training outcomes, most suggestions related to volunteers' preferences.

It is important to note that many volunteers are generally very satisfied with the training they receive. Much of the training which currently takes place already reflects volunteers' stated preferences. For example, trainers generally come to volunteers, and training is often conducted at the weekends and evenings. And our discussions with training providers suggest that training providers have a good understanding of volunteer motivations and requirements. In addition, some respondents noted there have already been many changes to training arrangements in recent years, and they have little appetite for further change.

The main suggestions for improvement broadly reflect the preferences and comments outlined in section 4.5. In brief, they were as follows.

- *Tailor training to volunteers' preferences and motivations.* This includes a greater emphasis on hands-on practical training. More generally, some respondents suggested that any changes to training need to be grounded, realistic, pragmatic and flexible. Keep training to the minimum, and don't make the hurdles too high.

- *Provide assistance for training nights.* Suggestions included tips and training for training officers, training plan exemplars, the exchange of ideas for exercises, the provision of worked-up scenarios and external skills maintenance trainers. In SAR, provide funding for refresher training.

- *Improve written training materials,* such as the NZFS workbooks and the RAPID materials. These should be stripped down to the minimum.

- *Make assessment, including RCC, more user-friendly.* Experienced volunteers, who are a valuable resource, need to have their skills more easily recognised. Rather than written evidence, use interviews for RCC. Assessment requirements (and results) need to be better communicated to volunteers.

- *(Further) develop volunteer management training.* This includes understanding and responding to volunteer motivations and the volunteer psyche.

- *Conduct joint training across emergency services.* This includes the various ITOs working more closely together.

- *Recognise and reward volunteers for their time.* This includes covering training costs (where this is not already done), and providing certificates etc.

A few respondents also made suggestions beyond training. These generally relate to the wider issues discussed in section 3.3. For example, a few CDEM respondents suggested that current training arrangements should be reviewed in the wider context of alternative strategies such as volunteer recruitment. Another respondent suggested that the effectiveness of training should be evaluated. Funding issues were discussed by coastguard respondents.

# 6. Conclusions

## 6.1 Our take on the findings

This study has provided useful insights into training for emergency services volunteers. By considering training arrangements across a number of different emergency services, we have achieved a much richer picture than would otherwise be the case. However, there are limitations with this "shallow and wide" approach. The sample size in each individual emergency service is small, and so the information obtained at this level should be considered impressionistic.

### 6.1.1 The challenge

The focus of this study is on training outcomes – identifying how volunteer-related training can be improved to enhance the delivery of emergency services. The key issue we identified is inconsistent take-up of training, which leads to variable skill levels and uneven service standards.

Engaging emergency services volunteers in training can be difficult. For most of these volunteers, training is not seen as a major benefit of their volunteer role. They are busy people, who are already devoting a significant amount of time to the underlying voluntary activity, even before any training requirements are taken into consideration.

Emergency services organisations have a certain amount of leverage to persuade volunteers to train where there is an over-supply of volunteer labour, and people are competing for volunteer positions, or where training appeals to the underlying motivation of the volunteers, such as when volunteers are seeking to gain qualifications for future jobs. This appears to be the case in some urban fire brigades and ambulance services. However, where there is an under-supply of volunteer labour (e.g. in rural areas), or where volunteers' main motivations are other than the investment one, engaging volunteers in training is much more challenging. Organisations essentially have to take on whoever is willing to front up, and have limited ability to influence volunteer behaviour.

In our view, emergency services organisations using volunteer labour face two stark choices:

- accommodate volunteers' training preferences, and/or adopt a range of other strategies to achieve the required service standards

- accept that service standards will vary.

Training is merely one of an array of instruments available to enhance services provided by volunteers. Working out the role of training in the overall mix is relatively straightforward when the pattern and frequency of incidents is somewhat predictable, such as in urban fire and ambulance services. But it is much harder when the opposite is true, such as in CDEM.

### 6.1.2 The setting

Emergency services volunteers are not a single homogenous group. For example, there is a diversity of reasons why people volunteer. The training market is therefore characterised by distinct segments, so tailored training strategies need to be developed and matched to specific segments. The alternative is to offer limited choice and accept that training take-up (and therefore service standards) will vary among different groups of volunteers.

The volunteer workforce is changing. For example, in SAR, the pool of new entrants may not necessarily have the bush and survival skills previously expected. More generally, volunteers' degree of attachment to the volunteer activity may be lessening, as people face increasing competition for their time. Overall these changes are likely to increase the size of the training challenge.

## 6.2    Opportunities for strategy development

### 6.2.1 Tailor training to volunteer segments

Understanding volunteers' motivations as a means of lifting training take-up is possibly the most important insight from this study, which we consider in Table 5.

*Table 5 Volunteer segments*

| Motivation | | Emergency service/ volunteer characteristic | Implications for training |
|---|---|---|---|
| Broad motivation | Specific aspect | | |
| Consumption | Love of volunteer activity per se/ excitement | All – especially fire | Involve volunteers in activity as early as possible<br><br>Hands-on, practical training<br><br>Exciting delivery style<br><br>Relevant to volunteer role<br><br>Establish training requirements as a prerequisite to becoming operational |
| | Achievement/ satisfaction etc | All | Recognise training achievement (certificates, medals etc) |
| | Social | All | Interactive training delivery |
| Investment | Stepping stone into the emergency service itself | St John | Align volunteer training with that of paid workers, so volunteers can cross-credit their training<br><br>(National) qualifications and formal assessment |
| | General labour market skills for CV | Younger volunteers<br><br>Immigrants | Transferable/generic skills |
| Altruistic | Assist community | All – especially rural | Content emphasises relevance to community |
| | Provide something that might not otherwise be provided | Rural | Training should be kept to bare minimum<br><br>Develop core requirements. Train everyone to those, then specialise beyond<br><br>Target "pre-skilled" |

Source:  NZIER

Having these motivations in the back of their minds should help designers of training programmes and curricula when developing training for volunteers. The key point here is that different training strategies will be more effective with some volunteer segments than others.

### 6.2.2 Develop management training

Managing volunteers in any sector is difficult. Volunteers are not the same as paid workers, and need to be managed in other ways. Different volunteer segments may require quite different management styles. The challenges in emergency services are especially great. There may be an awkward trade-off between volunteers being told what to do (for their own safety and that of others) and being given sufficient flexibility and empowerment to retain their motivation.

Effective leadership of emergency services volunteers is particularly important when the skills of individual volunteers vary considerably. Team leaders may face tough choices as to which volunteers to send out on a particular incident and what tasks to allocate to those individual volunteers.

Overall the criticality of managing and organising the pool of volunteer labour suggests management skills should be a prime focus for training strategy. There may be a role for FRSITO or others to develop unit standards and training on "managing volunteers" and "the volunteer psyche".

However, many emergency services volunteers appear to be reluctant to move up the hierarchy into more senior positions, partly due to the extra training required. Emergency services organisations may therefore need to consider a greater role for paid workers in managing their volunteer workforce.

### 6.2.3 Ensure national qualifications are an enabler not a barrier

In those services where national qualifications and unit standards have been adopted it is important that they are not a barrier to volunteer recruitment and retention. There are two groups of volunteers at most risk here:

- pre-skilled new entrants, who possess valuable skills, but who may be reluctant to join the emergency service if their skills are not recognised and they have to start training from scratch
- experienced existing volunteers, who may feel threatened by the introduction of new training requirements.

At the moment there appears, in general, to be insufficient motivating benefits to outweigh the disadvantages of national standards for many volunteers. Having an RCC process which reflects the learning style of the target audience is important. Also important is using other levers, such as ceremonies, medals etc for recognising training achievement, depending on the motivations of the individual volunteer.

### 6.2.4 Consider the role of training as a complement to other interventions

Volunteer training, whilst important, is not the only mechanism for improving the service provided by emergency services volunteers. Also important are the management activities of:

- *recruiting volunteers* - ensuring a good fit between the organisation's and the volunteer's requirements. Assessing volunteers' existing skills when they join the emergency service is important, so they can be matched to appropriate tasks. And in services and locations where the volume of incidents is low it may be preferable (but challenging) to target people who already possess the required skills, rather than train people for events which rarely happen

- *allocating tasks.* This is particularly important where there is a limited supply of volunteers and the skills of those volunteers vary. In this situation, role specialisation may be helpful in terms of getting resources on the ground

- *organising (and funding) of resources.* Emergency services organisations need to organise services in such a way that they are realistic about the quantum and type of training volunteers will undertake. The mix of paid and volunteer workers may need to be reviewed.

Overall, training strategy should be considered in the context of the shrewd distribution of skills. For example, in each service there may be a "core" of very basic skills – the minimum required so that each volunteer can make a contribution under supervision whilst being safe. Beyond that, there may be some role specialisation which reflects the skills and attributes of the individual volunteer and which means that not everyone is trained in everything. And further up the skills hierarchy, activities may be outsourced including internationally.

### 6.2.5 Summary

Given the fairly high-level focus of this study, we have not prepared detailed recommendations for FRSITO and the other ITOs involved in this study. The suggestions made by respondents in section 5 appear to us to be sensible, and warrant further investigation. In summary, the ones we would emphasise are:

- *tailor training to volunteers' preferences and motivations,* which is at the heart of this study

- *(further) develop volunteer management training,* as managers play a key role in the services provided by volunteers

- *ensure national qualifications are an enabler not a barrier;* improving RCC in particular should assist the recruitment and retention of experienced volunteers

- *consider the role of training as a complement to other interventions,* as training is only one part of the overall mix.

Some of these strategies are directly within the control of FRSITO and the other ITOs. Others may require the ITOs to take an influencing role among their stakeholders.

# Appendix A Extracts from literature review

The following are extracts from our report from the first stage of this study.[2]

## A.1 Definitions

This study is concerned with volunteer-related training in emergency services.

### A.1.1 What is a volunteer?

There are three generally recognised elements to volunteering – free will, benefit to others and lack of payment.

> *"Those who, of their own free will, undertake unpaid work outside of their immediate household, to benefit the common good." (Ministry of Social Development (MSD), 2002)*

### A.1.2 What is training?

Training is instruction that is directly related to the employment activities of the trainees, and usually given in their place of employment. This differentiates training from education, which is typically less specific to the trainees' work tasks and most often (but not always) undertaken prior to employment. Both training and education are a subset of the more inclusive concept of learning. Formal learning is characterised by a defined curriculum and often leads to a qualification. Informal learning requires some form of systematic instruction but usually only for a single instance or infrequently.

In this study, whilst we are primarily concerned with industry training (work-based training facilitated by ITOs), identifying improvements in the wider network of training provision is relevant in the context of the ITOs' strategic leadership role in matters of skill and training.

### A.1.3 What is an emergency service?

There appears to be no common definition of emergency services in New Zealand. The definition used in the Civil Defence and Emergency Management (CDEM) Act 2002 is stated below.

> *"Emergency services means the New Zealand Police, New Zealand Fire Service, National Rural Fire Authority, rural fire authorities, and hospital and health services." (CDEM Act, 2002)*

However, for the purposes of this study when we refer to emergency services we add coastguard, CDEM and search and rescue activities to the above services.

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[2] NZIER (2008), *Volunteer-related training in emergency services: Findings from a literature review. Report to FRSITO*

## A.2    Concepts

### A.2.1    Why do people volunteer?

People do not normally supply their time and effort (outside their household) without being paid. So how do we explain volunteering?

We have drawn together the findings of various studies on volunteer motivations into Table 6.

### *Table 6 Motivations matrix*

|  |  | Broad motivation |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Consumption | Investment | Public goods/ altruism |
| Degree of involvement | Highly involved | Love of volunteer activity per se <br><br> Joy and "warm glow" from giving <br><br> Express deeply held convictions | Labour market skills, experience and contacts specific to voluntary activity (to enable entry into that career) | Provide something that otherwise may not be provided <br><br> Help others/community |
|  | Marginally involved | Prestige/power <br><br> Social interaction <br><br> Overcome guilt from being more fortunate than others <br><br> Sense of achievement | Increase earnings potential <br><br> General labour market skills, experience and contacts <br><br> Signal altruistic behaviour (desired by firms) to prospective employers <br><br> Ability to influence volunteer activity to benefit self/family <br><br> Gather information on the volunteer activity before making donation | "Conscience good" – response to requests to volunteer |

Source:  NZIER, drawn from Ziemek (2005) and other studies

In the columns of Table 6 the "consumption" motivation is concerned with the *current* satisfaction received by the volunteer from the act of volunteering. Under the "investment" motivation, the individual invests volunteer hours out of current available leisure for *future* rewards (primarily in the labour market). The "public goods/altruism" motivation is a genuine selfless act for the benefit of others.

We have added an additional dimension - "degree of involvement" - in the rows. Whilst there is likely to be a spectrum of commitment to volunteering, we have attempted to characterise motivations under "highly involved" and "marginally involved", as this will assist the analysis of training strategies later in the report.

**Interpretation**: Table 6 suggests that if volunteers can be segmented according to their motivations, then tailored strategies can be developed for their effective training, as well as for attracting, retaining and managing the volunteer workforce.

Table 6 also implies that volunteers *are* paid in a non-monetary form. The supply of volunteer time is linked to the extent to which the voluntary activity

consistently provides the relevant benefits to volunteers, and how those benefits compare to other ways volunteers can use their time. So there is a constant choice being made by volunteers – for example whether to attend the voluntary activity (including training), or to spend that time in other ways such as with family and friends. Volunteers retain a high degree of control over their time, ultimately with the right of veto. If training does not relate directly to the underlying benefits sought by volunteers, it is unlikely to be undertaken and/or completed.

## A.2.2   Why do organisations use volunteers?

Organisations' demand for labour generally increases as the price (wages) falls. So theoretically the demand for (volunteer) labour is infinite when the wage rate is zero. But the demand for volunteers is *not* infinite. How do we explain this?

Organisations are faced with choices of how much to use of the various inputs of production. The demand for one input – in this case hours of volunteer labour – will depend on its price, its productivity, and the availability of substitutes (namely paid workers and other inputs such as capital and equipment). And the demand for volunteer labour will be influenced by the organisation's objectives, as well as historical precedents of who has done the task traditionally.

Although volunteers do not impose direct wage costs, they generate other costs. The day-to-day operating costs of employing volunteers include recruitment, screening, training, managing and providing office space, materials and so on. Depending on the service being provided, these costs may be quite significant. There are also costs in terms of paid employee morale, liability issues and risks to service continuity and integrity.

In general, we would expect volunteers to be less productive than their paid counterparts. This is because the market for compensated labour places workers in their most productive use and pays them accordingly. In other words, individuals are likely to be more productive in their "day jobs" than in their volunteer role. And volunteers are likely to have less relevant experience or training, and may not be applying those skills as regularly, than paid equivalents.

By definition, volunteers can be expected to be highly dedicated and motivated. This can be a double-edged sword, however, as volunteers may have their own views on what is a valuable way of spending their time, and management does not have the same levers to drive performance standards as it has with paid staff. The management of volunteers is complicated by the lack of a contract for volunteers' time; so volunteers have a very high degree of control over when they can be available and for how long.

**Interpretation**: The management of volunteers can be challenging. Managers need to understand (and respond to) volunteers' motivations if the volunteer resource is to be used effectively. This implies that the training of volunteers' *managers* is as important (if not more important) than the training of *volunteers themselves*, in terms of enhancing the delivery of services which use volunteers.

Overall, we would expect to see volunteers used in roles:

- that contribute to the community or are for "good causes"
- which require relatively easily acquired skills, rather than highly specific skills with a long lead time to train
- where the demand for labour time is flexible or infrequent.

## A.2.3 What is the role of training?

Training is an investment in human capital; the returns to training may accrue over an extended period of time. An individual will invest in training if the benefits (higher earnings in the future, new skills etc) are sufficiently high to offset the costs (direct training costs, opportunity costs of time etc). Firms will also invest in training if the benefits they receive (productivity gains from the trainee's increased skills etc) are sufficiently high to offset the costs (direct training costs, increased supervision time for on-job training, time the trainee spends away from the workplace at off-job training).

**Interpretation:** In general, training is likely to be a "hard sell" to volunteers. Training only speaks directly to the "investment" motive in Table 6. Individuals who volunteer for other reasons may be reluctant to invest in training. Overall, volunteers are likely to be a relatively critical audience – they may be unwilling to engage in training activities which they see as irrelevant.

And volunteer training may also be a hard sell to organisations which use volunteer labour. These organisations may be hesitant to expend significant resources into training a workforce which might not stay long enough for the organisation to receive a return on its training investment.

# Appendix B Volunteer demographics

Here we outline respondents' **impressions** of the demographic characteristics of the relevant emergency service.

*Table 7 Volunteer demographics and characteristics*

Respondents' impressions

| Emergency service | Age | Gender | Ethnicity | Paid employment/labour market status | | Other voluntary activity |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | All | Individual service | |
| Urban fire | Ave age 42 (1) | 89% men (1) | Mainly pakeha | Mixed, but over-representation of self-employed, shift workers and others with flexible work patterns | Over-representation of trades | Some overlap between emergency services, esp in rural locations |
| Rural fire | Mixed, but over-representation in 30-50 age group | Mainly men | Mainly pakeha, but Maori possibly over-represented? | | Rural lean e.g. farming | |
| Civil Defence and Emergency Management | | Fairly balanced | Mainly pakeha | | Some retired | |
| Coastguard | | Mainly men | | | Some retired | |
| Search and Rescue | | | | | Rural lean e.g. farming, hunting (rural areas), some professionals (urban areas) | |
| Ambulance | | Fairly balanced, possible over-representation of women | | | Medical lean, plus some retired and homemakers | |

Notes:  (1)  These numbers have been provided by NZFS national headquarters

Source:  NZIER

# Appendix C Sample structure

## *Table 8 Sample structure*
Number of respondents

| Emergency service | Role | Region | | | | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Wellington | Northland | Christchurch | Other | |
| Urban fire | Volunteer | 3 | | 3 | | 6 |
| | Paid | 2 | | | 1 | 3 |
| | *Sub-total* | *5* | | *3* | *1* | *9* |
| Rural fire | Volunteer | | 2 | 2 | | 4 |
| | Paid | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| | *Sub-total* | *1* | *3* | *3* | | *7* |
| Civil Defence and Emergency Management | Volunteer | 1 | | 2 | | 3 |
| | Paid | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| | *Sub-total* | *2* | | *4* | *1* | *7* |
| Coastguard | Volunteer | | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 |
| | Paid | | | | | |
| | *Sub-total* | | *2* | *1* | *1* | *4* |
| Search and Rescue | Volunteer | 2 | 4 | 2 | | 8 |
| | Paid | 2 | | | | 2 |
| | *Sub-total* | *4* | *4* | *2* | | *10* |
| Ambulance | Volunteer | | 1 | 3 | | 4 |
| | Paid | 1 | 1 | 1 | | 3 |
| | *Sub-total* | *1* | *2* | *4* | | *7* |
| Training providers (Tai Poutini, ECANZ, Telford Polytechnic, SARINZ) | Paid | | | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| | Sub-total | | | 1 | 3 | 4 |
| Others (MCDEM, Volunteer NZ, MSD/OCVS) | Paid | 4 | | | | 4 |
| | *Sub-total* | *4* | | | | *4* |
| Total | Volunteer | 6 | 9 | 13 | 2 | 30 |
| | Paid | 11 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 22 |
| | Grand total | 17 | 10 | 18 | 7 | 52 |

Notes: (1) All interviews conducted face-to-face except those in "other" locations
(2) "Volunteer" includes (volunteer) management roles such as Chief Fire Officer. "Paid" includes (paid) management roles such as Principal Rural Fire Officer, and training personnel and other roles at the relevant national office
(3) ECANZ = Environment Canterbury New Zealand, SARINZ = Search and Rescue, MSD = Ministry of Social Development, OCVS = Office for the Community and Voluntary Sector

Source: NZIER

# Appendix D Topic guides and rating sheet

## D.1   Topic guide - volunteers

**Introduction**

Thank, explain objective (improve training to enhance service delivery), timelines/process, confidentiality

**Volunteer role**

1.   What is the nature of your volunteer role with (name of organisation)?

2.   How long have you been doing that role?

3.   Why did you get involved/what do you get out of it?

4.   What other voluntary work are you involved in? (Probe re emergency services)

**Training in main volunteer role**

5.   What training **have you received** since you have been in your  volunteer role? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing) Why did you do it?

6.   What training have you been offered and **not** undertaken? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing) Why not? How have your skill needs been met instead?

7.   Thinking about **how the training you have received has affected your ability to do your volunteer role**

    a.   What has worked well?

    b.   What not so well?

**8.**   What **changes to your training** would you suggest in order to improve the provision of (name) services?

9.   What **changes to the training of others** would you suggest in order to improve  the provision of (name) services?

   **PROMPT – show stimulus sheet**

**General**

10. Moving away from training, what else do you think could be done to **assist you** in improving the provision of (name) services? (Probe re management)

11. And to **assist others** in improving the provision of (name) services?

**(If relevant) Training in other volunteer roles**

12. You mentioned you are also involved in (name service). What training have you received in that volunteer role? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing)

13. What has worked well? What not so well?

**Background**

14. Please can you tell me

    a.  your job title in paid employment

    b.  qualifications/training received

    c.  your age

    d.  your ethnic group

Thank and close

## D.2   Topic guide – managers

**Introduction**

Thank, explain objective (improve training to enhance service delivery), timelines/process, confidentiality

**Background**

1.  What is your role in your organisation?

2.  How long have you been doing that role?

3.  What is your involvement with managing volunteers in your organisation?

**Volunteers in the organisation**

4.  What **roles** do volunteers undertake in your organisation?

5.  **How many** volunteers are there in each of those roles?

6.  What are the **demographic characteristics** of volunteers in each of those roles?

    a.  Age

    b.  Gender

    c.  Ethnicity

    d.  Paid employment

    e.  Involvement in other volunteer activities

7.  Why do you think people volunteer in your organisation? Are there various types of volunteers?

**Training of volunteers**

8.  Thinking generally about volunteer training, **how does training improve the provision of services** by volunteers in your organisation?

9.  What training is **offered** to volunteers in each of the roles you have identified? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing)

10. What training **is** generally undertaken by volunteers? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing) Why?

11. What training is **not** generally undertaken? (Probe – type of training, provider, length and timing) Why not? How have volunteers' skill needs been met instead?

12. What changes to volunteer training would you suggest in order to improve the provision of (name) services?

**PROMPT – show stimulus sheet**

**General**

13. What training would help **you** in managing volunteers to improve the provision of (name) services?

14. What else could be done to improve the services provided by volunteers in your organisation?

Thank and close

## D.3   Rating sheet

Score 1 to 5 (5 is high)

| Training strategies for volunteers | Will improve service provision? | Will improve take-up of training? |
|---|---|---|
| Training relates directly to the current role of the volunteer | | |
| Training consists of short (one or two day) courses | | |
| Training conducted at the weekend/ evenings | | |
| Training conducted on-site | | |
| Training conducted off-site at a training provider | | |
| Training conducted by correspondence/ e-learning | | |
| Training delivery style is exciting | | |
| Training is combined with getting volunteer involved in voluntary activity as soon as possible | | |
| Training leads to a formal (nationally recognised) qualification | | |
| Training costs (inc travel, childcare etc) are paid for by the organisation | | |
| Training is targeted at volunteers' managers (as well as volunteers) | | |