

# Annual volunteer reimbursement

## Introduction

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**When to use** This policy sets out the rules that apply to the annual volunteer reimbursement (referred to in this policy as a ‘reimbursement’) for volunteers.

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**Contents** This policy contains the following content:

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## About this policy

**Purpose** The intent of this policy is to provide an annual reimbursement to contribute to the cost of incidental expenses incurred through the nature of a volunteer’s routine contribution to Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

The annual volunteer reimbursement is based on an estimate of the average costs a volunteer may incur.

This policy does not limit the reimbursement of specific costs, nor payment of an honorarium as specified in the volunteer brigade grants policies.

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**Who it applies to** This policy applies to all Fire and Emergency New Zealand volunteers, including volunteers who are also employees or contractors of Fire and Emergency.

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## Eligibility

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**Full annual reimbursement** A volunteer is eligible for the **full annual reimbursement**, provided they:

- are a Fire and Emergency volunteer on 1 December of the current year
- started as a new volunteer, (the time when you receive your volunteer ID number), on or before 31 May of the reimbursement year,

and have been an active volunteer for six months or more in the reimbursement year (1 December of the previous year and 30 November of the current year).

[See notes below](#)

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**Pro-rata based annual reimbursement** A volunteer is eligible for a **pro-rata based annual reimbursement**, provided they:

- are a Fire and Emergency volunteer on 1 December of the current year, and have either:

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- started as a new volunteer (the time when you receive your volunteer ID number) between 1 June and 31 October and been actively volunteering for one month or more over that period.
- been on leave for more than six months but have returned to active volunteering for one month or more in the reimbursement year.

[See notes below](#)

**Notes on full and pro-rata reimbursement**

- Volunteers who are also paid employees are still eligible for this payment on the basis that their volunteer activity incurs cost.
- The payment is made to each volunteer as an individual. If a volunteer is a member of more than one brigade, they are only eligible for one payment in total.
- Any period of leave taken in the year will be determined as not 'actively volunteering', except for any exemptions noted below. See also:
  - [Ineligibility for reimbursement](#)
  - [Exemptions](#)

**Ineligibility for reimbursement**

A volunteer is ineligible for this reimbursement and will not receive payment in a particular year if any of the following criteria apply during the previous 12 months (between 1 December and 30 November).

The volunteer:

- is solely an honorary or life honorary member of a brigade.
- has been actively volunteering (as recorded in the payroll system) for less than one month in the reimbursement year
- has received a payment directly from Fire and Emergency for attending regular station training or meetings, in accordance with specific schedule conditions of their engagement letter.
- has left Fire and Emergency as a volunteer before 1 December of that year.

**Exemptions**

On a case-by-case basis, a volunteer with more than six months' volunteering experience who is on leave from operational duties, but still actively contributing to the ongoing functioning of the brigade, may still be eligible for the full reimbursement. This includes, though is not limited to, volunteers on parental leave, ACC or other extended leave.

The final decision to approve this reimbursement to any volunteer in such circumstances will be made by the Principal Advisor, Volunteer Resilience with endorsement from the relevant Region Manager or Deputy Chief Executive.

## Optional and enduring

**Payment optional**

In order to receive the annual volunteer reimbursement, volunteers must complete the [Annual volunteer reimbursement claim](#) form. Volunteers may opt-out of receiving the reimbursement for a period and may still opt-in at a later date.

**Enduring payment**

Once the application is approved, the annual volunteer reimbursement will continue for all following years, provided that eligibility conditions are met (as above), until a volunteer opts-out.

## Reimbursements

**Status of reimbursements** Reimbursements recognise volunteers for expenses incurred while participating as a Fire and Emergency volunteer. These reimbursements are discretionary and have the sole purpose of reimbursing the volunteer for costs incurred in volunteering.

**When are reimbursements made** A single reimbursement is made annually during the month of December to the volunteer's nominated bank account.

**Amount** The full annual reimbursement is \$300 per volunteer.

The pro-rated reimbursement is calculated as follows:

Actively volunteering for	Amount	%
6 months or more (full reimbursement)	\$300	100%
5 months or more, but less than 6 months	\$240	80%
4 months or more, but less than 5 months	\$180	60%
3 months or more, but less than 4 months	\$120	40%
2 months or more, but less than 3 months	\$60	20%
1 month or more, but less than 2 months	\$30	10%

**Tax status** These reimbursements are tax-exempt.

**Payment amount review** The amount of the reimbursement will be reviewed at a minimum every three years, and the Deputy Chief Executive People will authorise any future adjustments.

**Estimate register** The Deputy Chief Executive People will maintain a register of reasonable estimates of incidental and transitory expenses incurred by volunteers. The register will be reviewed at a minimum every three years.

**Document information**

Owner	Deputy Chief Executive People
Steward	Principal Advisor Volunteer Sustainability
Last reviewed	27 October 2022
Review period	Three-yearly

**Record of amendments**

Date	Brief description of amendment
November, 2019	Initial version
November 2022	Updated to include pro-rata rates and strengthen advice about eligibility and exemptions