



Te Tikanga Whanonga

Our Code of Conduct

2024



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Introduction

At Fire and Emergency New Zealand, we strive to be a place where you belong and where you are supported to thrive as an individual so that, collectively, we can serve our communities and each other.



Gregory, Kerry
Chief Executive Officer

We must provide all our people with a safe, positive and inclusive environment and we must all behave in ways that uphold and foster that environment.

Fire and Emergency is part of New Zealand's public service, which has a reputation for honesty, transparency and integrity. This means that as an organisation and as individuals, we must behave in ways that uphold this reputation and cultivate the safe, positive and inclusive environment we all want and deserve.

As a large and complex organisation, we must aspire to be successful in what we have to achieve. We must maintain the public's trust in us by:

- having a great team of respectful and responsible people
- being accountable for our own actions and decisions
- being committed to service.

Our reputation depends on all our people being committed to doing the right thing in the service of Aotearoa New Zealand and each other.

By living up to our values and by each taking responsibility for our part in creating a safe, positive and inclusive environment for us all, together we show Aotearoa New Zealand that we are worthy of their trust.

Te Tikanga Whanonga: Our Code of Conduct



Te Tikanga Whanonga: Our Code of Conduct (the Code) sets out the standards of conduct and behaviour we expect of all personnel.

The Code applies to us all, regardless of our role – volunteer, employee, contractor, supplier or Board member.

Our individual behaviours shape our culture and reputation and define our character. They are at the heart of who we are and what we do. They directly impact, positively and negatively, on our reputation and the levels of trust and confidence people have in us.

The Code is a tool to enable a safe, positive and inclusive environment for every one of us. It supports us to behave in ways that reflect the high levels of trust and confidence the people of Aotearoa New Zealand have in us. It also help us all understand [Ngā Uara – Our Values](#) and apply them in our roles here and in our private lives if they affect our roles at Fire and Emergency New Zealand.

We are all accountable for our behaviour and for meeting the expectations that the Code outlines.

The Code also gives examples of behaviours that conflict with [Ngā Uara – Our Values](#) and a safe, positive and inclusive environment. These behaviours are not acceptable at Fire and Emergency. We expect all our people to use good judgement about their own actions and behaviours in any situation.

The Code:

- sets out minimum standards for appropriate behaviour and actions for all employees and volunteers
- helps our people make appropriate judgements and decisions about their actions and behaviours.
- sets out how we will manage breaches of these standards.



We expect you to seek out, understand and comply with all policies that are relevant to you and your work at Fire and Emergency.

This means that you must familiarise yourself with the Code so you can ensure that your actions align with our values and behaviours, and so you can act as an upstander at all times. We all have a role in upholding our standards of behaviour and conduct and challenging ourselves and others when we believe this isn't happening.

Your role

If you ever have a question about how we expect you to behave, this document is a good place to start. You can also seek advice from your leader or another people leader.

If you are a people leader, we need you to lead by example. You must take accountability for your own actions and those of your team.

If you engage third parties who work on our behalf, you must ensure they are aware of the Code and that their actions align with it.

You must speak up if you:

- believe an individual's conduct or behaviour has (or may have) breached the obligations in the Code
- witness or hear about behaviour you believe to be inappropriate.

We will support those individuals who have the courage to raise their concerns.

You should seek guidance if you are unsure of what to do, or if you think something conflicts with the Code.

On 29 April 2024, we changed the way we manage complaints with the launch of Speak Safe @ Fair Way, which replaced the Behaviour and Conduct Office (BCO). Speak Safe @ Fair Way is a safe and trusted independent avenue for people to raise concerns about inappropriate behaviour or conduct. You can find details on how to access this service on their website: fairwayresolution.com > Help for organisations > Your people > [Speak](#). You can also raise any concerns with your leader, any other people leader in Fire and Emergency, or with the People Branch.

This Code gives an overview of the standards of behaviour and conduct we expect of you. It does not provide definitive guidance on every situation. However, even without specific guidance in this document, or if you don't have our policies and guidelines or legislation to guide you, we expect you to act with the highest degree of integrity applicable to the situation.

Please take the time to read and understand the Code. We all know when something is amiss and not sitting right. In these moments, this document is a good place to look for guidance. Don't hesitate to refer back to it if you are ever in doubt. And don't hesitate to seek guidance from your leader, the People Branch, or any people leader at Fire and Emergency.

Public service principles and values

As part of the public service, we must all act with a commitment of service to the people of Aotearoa New Zealand and to each other. We must also demonstrate public service values by being impartial, accountable, trustworthy, respectful and responsive.

This means:

- treating everyone fairly and with respect
- striving to make a difference to the wellbeing of New Zealand and its people
- maintaining the political neutrality required to enable us to work with current and future governments
- not letting our personal beliefs affect how we carry out Fire and Emergency's functions
- acting lawfully and objectively
- working to improve Fire and Emergency's performance and efficiency
- being honest
- working to the best of our abilities
- not letting our personal interests or relationships affect our actions
- avoiding any activities, at or outside work, that may harm the reputation of Fire and Emergency or the public service in general.

For more detail about our obligations as part of the public service, read the Te Kawa Mataaho/ Public Service Commission Standards of Integrity and Conduct: [publicservice.govt.nz > Role and purpose > Integrity and conduct](https://publicservice.govt.nz/Role-and-purpose/Integrity-and-conduct).

The Standards of Integrity and Conduct sets out our obligations as part of the public service and applies them to our work at Fire and Emergency. They are an important part of the standards of behaviour and conduct we expect of all Fire and Emergency personnel, paid and volunteer.

Ngā Uara – Our values

When working for Fire and Emergency,
we must align our behaviours with our values.



Kia tika **We do the right thing**

- We hold each other to high standards.
- We are trusted by and trusting of others.
- We do what we say we will.
- We show courage to do what's right rather than what's easy.
- We take responsibility and think of others.



Manaakitanga **We serve and support**

We work towards strengthening and developing by being proactive and responsive to the needs of others, including our teams and communities.



Whanaungatanga **We are better together**

- We seek opportunities to connect and build inclusive relationships with others – our team members, different parts of our organisation, our partners and our communities.
- We bring people together, celebrate difference and provide a safe environment for all to thrive.



Auahatanga **We strive to improve**

- We meet the needs of our communities by looking to the future and continuously finding ways to make things better.
- We are flexible and adaptable.
- We embrace change.
- We acknowledge what's gone before and learn from experiences that help us adapt to future needs.



Kia tika

We do the right thing

What does doing the right thing look like?

Exceptional

Models the way.

Expected

- We act with integrity and honesty.
- We take responsibility for our actions.
- We ask ourselves:
 - do I speak up when I see harm?
 - do my actions match my words?
 - does my behaviour build trust?
 - do I own my mistakes?

Below the line/unacceptable behaviour

- Knowingly or carelessly breaches confidentiality or leaks information.
- Behaves unlawfully or unsafely.
- Misuses information.
- Ignores conflicts of interest.

Examples of Kia tika

- We act professionally, responsively and with integrity in everything we say and do.
- We lead by example.
- We maintain privacy and confidentiality.
- We don't ignore unacceptable behaviour.
- We take responsibility and accept accountability for our decisions, actions and behaviours.
- We follow established policies and procedures, lawfully given instructions and applicable doctrine, such as the Safe Person Concept (see [Related information](#), page 21, for a list of policies relevant to this expectation).
- We make all reasonable efforts to meet the performance and behavioural expectations that have been set for us.
- We are present at work as required, comply with attendance expectations and report absences.
- We maintain a professional appearance. We always dress appropriately for our role, task or situation.
- We understand and comply with our [Anti-fraud and corruption policy](#).
- We obey the law at all times. We declare any criminal convictions or criminal proceedings we may be subject to.
- We declare any gifts we receive, or we decline any gifts or benefits that place us under any obligation or perceived influence.
- We comply with our [Media policy](#) on acceptable social media behaviour. We don't make unauthorised comments to the media or on social media.



Manaakitanga

We serve and support

What do service and support look like?

We expect that our people, when performing their duties, will:

- commit themselves to the best of their ability
- act with honesty and integrity at all times.

Exceptional

Strengthens and builds communities within Fire and Emergency.

Expected

- We undertake our duties with professionalism and to the best of our abilities, focusing on the needs of our communities.
- We ask ourselves:
 - am I representing myself, my team and the organisation well?
 - does this decision serve my team and community well?
 - do I collaborate with others to achieve positive outcomes?
 - if I see team members performing well, do I recognise and celebrate this?

Below the line/unacceptable behaviour

Behaviour or actions which damage the trust and confidence of Fire and Emergency communities.

Examples of Manaakitanga

- We ensure that all interactions with external parties and stakeholders reflect well on our reputation.
- We carry out the functions of Fire and Emergency unaffected by our personal beliefs.
- We work to the best of our abilities, dedicating our time and attention to our work while we are carrying out Fire and Emergency business.



Whanaungatanga We are better together

What does being better together look like?

We expect our people to:

- interact respectfully, courteously and inclusively with each other, colleagues, other members of Fire and Emergency, the public and stakeholders
- contribute positively to creating and maintaining a great place to work.

Exceptional

Champions inclusion.

Expected

- We treat people with dignity, respect and empathy at all times.
- We ask ourselves:
 - am I demonstrating inclusive language and behaviour?
 - do I make the people around me feel valued for what they bring to the table?
 - do I appreciate and celebrate difference?
 - does everyone feel safe to be themselves around me?

Below the line/unacceptable behaviour

- Behaviour which causes harm, including bullying, harassment, victimisation or unwanted behaviour.
- Any form of 'hazing' – any action taken or situation created to produce mental or physical discomfort, embarrassment, harassment, or ridicule to (an)other person(s).
- Intentionally excluding or isolating people from participating in activities and conversations.

Examples of Whanaungatanga

- We treat everyone we come into contact with fairly, inclusively and with respect.
- We share our knowledge and expertise with colleagues and those who report to us.
- We positively reinforce and acknowledge our colleagues' contributions.
- We challenge actions and behaviours that don't meet our standards.
- We meet our obligation to provide a safe workplace, free from inappropriate, unacceptable and harmful behaviours.
- We are committed to working with Māori as tangata whenua.
- We demonstrate and promote safe workplace behaviours. This includes:
 - identifying and acting appropriately on any risks or threats to the health, safety, wellbeing and security of Fire and Emergency or its members
 - handling any conflict between parties constructively and respectfully.



Auahatanga

We strive to improve

What does striving to improve look like?

Exceptional

Drives change.

Expected

- We listen, ask questions and are open to different perspectives.
- We ask ourselves:
 - am I being open to new ideas?
 - what can I learn from this?
 - do I understand the pros and cons?
 - have I considered alternatives?

Below the line/unacceptable behaviour

Behaviour which discourages or shuts down the generation of ideas from different viewpoints.

Examples of Auahatanga

- We identify and act appropriately on opportunities to improve our organisation's performance and efficiency.
- We develop the skills and competence appropriate to our roles.
- We actively participate in any training or communication programme designed to improve our workplace safety, health and wellbeing.
- We are committed to work with Māori as tangata whenua.
- We address our own or anyone else's behaviour if it falls below the behaviours expected here.
- We own our actions and behaviours and acknowledge our mistakes.

Creating a safe, positive and inclusive work environment for everyone

We are all responsible for creating an environment where we each feel we belong and are supported to thrive so that together, we can serve our communities and each other.

An environment where we each feel we belong is one that is safe, positive and inclusive.

We contribute to this by being:

Adaptable and responsive

Respectful

Accountable

Trustworthy

Committed to service



What does a safe, positive, inclusive environment look like?

A sense of belonging comes from a positive, inclusive environment where we each feel safe.

What does a safe, positive, inclusive environment look like?

Safe

- Your physical, mental, spiritual, cultural, sexual identity and overall wellbeing are supported.
- You can be yourself while respecting others.
- You can make decisions to keep yourself and others safe.
- You are supported to learn from mistakes.
- Everyone is open to respectful challenge and alternative ideas and perspectives.

Positive

- We all focus on seeking out the positives and making things better.
- We are proud to be a part of Fire and Emergency.
- We support and help each other through challenging situations.
- We all want to do better and to contribute positively to our organisation and communities we serve.
- We celebrate success and recognise the contributions we all make to the organisation.
- We are optimistic and ambitious for what Fire and Emergency can achieve and contribute to Aotearoa New Zealand.
- We all assume good intent in others and all act with good intent ourselves.
- We tell our story/whakapapa and celebrate where we have come from, collectively and individually.

Inclusive

- Everyone feels their voice is heard.
- We listen to and accept others and their views when they are expressed respectfully and constructively.
- There are opportunities to be involved in decisions that impact you.
- We consider multiple differing perspectives in our decision-making.
- We actively share knowledge and information with each other.
- We recognise and respect that there is strength in diversity, both of background and of thought.
- We actively work to uphold the mana of others.
- We uphold our commitments to work with Māori as tāngata whenua.
- We explain our decisions clearly.

How we each contribute to creating that safe, positive and inclusive environment

We each contribute to creating that safe, positive and inclusive environment for each other by being:

Adaptable and responsive

Respectful

Accountable

Trustworthy

Committed to service

Adaptable and responsive

Adaptable and responsive means:

- developing creative solutions and applying them safely
- responding to what is in front of us and what is changing around us
- listening, learning, reflecting and responding to new and/or better information
- promoting effective and constructive problem-solving
- always being ready to deal with the unexpected, building flexibility into our approach and keeping our options open
- understanding a single person does not hold the answer.

Adaptable and responsive is not:

- jumping in and taking action without thinking
- being unplanned
- working outside our organisational parameters and systems.

Respectful

Respectful means:

- listening with purpose and curiosity, with the intention of truly understanding others' points of view
- acknowledging the strengths in diversity and respecting others for their individuality
- reserving judgement until we have understood others' points of view
- respecting the strengths, experiences and capabilities others bring
- recognising that everyone has something valuable to contribute and we are all responsible for empowering them to contribute.

Respectful is not:

- related to hierarchy, age, gender, rank or experience
- blind agreement or disagreement
- using your biases, background and experiences as an excuse or to devalue others
- personal criticism of the individual.

Accountable

Accountable means:	Accountable is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• being responsible for your action and decisions and the resulting outcomes• taking personal accountability, always striving to do your best and be the best version of yourself• thinking about the impact of your actions or words on yourself and others before you act or speak• being an upstander – challenging actions and behaviours that are not aligned with a safe, positive and inclusive environment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• blaming others• setting yourself or others up to fail• getting drawn into crowd behaviours• turning a blind eye.

Trustworthy

Trustworthy means:	Trustworthy is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• actively working to build trust internally and externally• being transparent and honest• actively contributing to creating a positive experience for others• being there when others need support.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• a 'one and done' – you have to continue to work to build and maintain trust, and inappropriate actions can quickly destroy it• a short-term tool as a means to an end• saying one thing and doing another.

Committed to service

Service is:	Service is not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• the ethos of putting others above self• demonstrating humility• striving to be trusted• outward looking.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• going above and beyond to the extent where it harms ourselves or others• being self-serving or focused only on bettering yourself• putting your own goals, aspirations and performance above those of the organisation.

Expectations of behaviour

Our actions and behaviours should reflect our values. They should contribute to creating a safe, positive and inclusive environment for everyone who is part of our Fire and Emergency whānau. This section outlines how we expect different roles in our organisation to put these expectations into practice through their conduct.

Our people

At Fire and Emergency, we expect our people to:

- be accountable for their own behaviour
- behave in ways that reflect the principles, expectations, standards and behaviours described in the Code
- encourage others to behave in ways that reflect the principles and behaviours described in the Code
- report behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code
- promote equality and diversity
- act with a spirit of service to the community and each other
- meet the highest standards of integrity and behaviour in everything they do
- be fair, impartial, responsible and trustworthy.



Our people leaders

At Fire and Emergency, we expect our people leaders to also:

- be our strongest upstanders – identifying, calling out, intervening and taking action when they witness or hear about inappropriate behaviour and supporting others to do the same
- lead by example by internalising and modelling our values and expected behaviours and instilling these in others
- positively reinforce team members' behaviour when it reflects our values and the Code
- act when one or more of their team fails to meet the expectations set out in the Code
- address any behaviour that is inconsistent with the Code:
 - fairly and objectively
 - in accordance with the Code and the policies and procedures for managing misbehaviour and poor performance.
- treat all of our people fairly and with respect and work with our people in good faith
- support those who have the courage to raise their concerns
- provide a safe environment, free from behaviour that could harm others
- be accountable for their own behaviour
- promote equality and diversity in the workplace.

More guidance

You can find more guidance on our values and responsibilities for creating a safe, positive and inclusive environment on the Portal > How do I > [Conduct and performance](#).

You can find comprehensive information and guidance on our obligations as part of the public sector on the Te Kawa Mataaho/Public Service Commission website: publicservice.govt.nz > [Guidance](#).

You can also ask for advice from your leader, any other Fire and Emergency leader or the People Branch.

Other relevant policies

All Fire and Emergency policies will have some relevance to the Code. You'll find them on the Portal > How do I > [Policies, topics and operational instructions](#).

If there is serious wrongdoing, or you reasonably believe that there is (or has been) serious wrongdoing, you can make a protected disclosure. For more information, go to the Portal > How do I > Conduct and performance > [Make protected disclosure about serious wrongdoing](#).

Where there is no policy or guidance, speak to your people leader in the first instance.

When expectations are not met

At Fire and Emergency, we expect a very high standard of professional and personal behaviour.

Sometimes our people behave in ways that don't align with our values. This may breach our responsibilities for contributing to a safe, positive and inclusive work environment or our obligations as part of the public sector.



If anybody's behaviour is inconsistent with the Code, we have a range of options for dealing with this. This may include further development or support to bring the behaviour up to the standard required or expected.

We don't tolerate bullying, harassment, unlawful discrimination, victimisation, sexual harassment or any instance of sexual harm. If you witness these behaviours, you should report them, and we will take them seriously. This may lead to findings of misconduct or serious misconduct. If we learn of allegations against you of any of these behaviours, or of other instances of alleged misconduct or serious misconduct, we may suspend you or stand you down from your role while they are investigated. If we find that you have committed any of these behaviours, we may remove you from your role through one of the following mechanisms:

- Termination of employment (for employees)
- Termination of engagement or discharge from your role/duties (for volunteers)
- Termination of your contract (for contractors).

If we identify an activity or behaviour as potentially unacceptable or of concern, we will follow a fair and reasonable process, appropriate to the alleged actions. We will tell you about the potential consequences if we find that your behaviour hasn't met the expected standards of behaviour and conduct in this Code and other Fire and Emergency policies. We will judge every situation on its own merits and circumstances.

Criminal breaches

We will report any potentially criminal breaches to the New Zealand Police/Ngā Pirihimana O Aotearoa.

If a criminal charge is laid against you, or you have been found guilty of a criminal offence, you must immediately inform your manager or brigade leader. If a criminal charge has been laid, we may stand you down or suspend you while we consider whether you should stay in your role. Before we make any decision, we'll give you the chance to comment on any proposal to stand you down, suspend you, or remove you from your role.

Isolated incidents

An isolated incident is a single or one-off event or behaviour that is less serious, not part of a pattern and not expected to happen again.

As long as it isn't serious misconduct, an isolated incident of misconduct doesn't usually break down the relationship of trust and confidence between a person and Fire and Emergency. However, we may still need to take disciplinary action. Individual instances will not normally justify dismissal, but we may consider dismissal if the incidents, or other instances of misconduct, are repeated, or serious enough that we consider them serious misconduct.

Serious misconduct

Serious misconduct is misbehaviour severe enough to break down or undermine the relationship of trust and confidence between a person and Fire and Emergency. Without trust and confidence, the employment relationship cannot continue, and we may have to dismiss the person, provided a fair investigation has been conducted.

For more information on the types of behaviour that are unacceptable and constitute misconduct or serious misconduct, and how we manage these, read our [Report and investigate alleged misconduct](#) guidance on the Portal.

If the misbehaviour is more serious, we may take disciplinary action. This could include:

- warnings
- terminating employment
- cancelling a contract
- discharging a person as a volunteer.

Related information

Use the QR code to
access the **How do I**
and **Policies** links



If viewing this on a digital device – click the links below to learn more.

How do I

- [Current process for bullying and harassment complaints](#)
- [Respond to bullying, harassment and victimisation and any instance of sexual harm](#)
- [How to respond if you are experiencing unwanted behaviour](#)
- [How to respond if you are supporting someone who has experienced or witnessed unwanted behaviour](#)
- [How to respond as an upstander if you witness unwanted behaviour](#)
- [How to respond as a people leader/manager advised of unwanted behaviour](#)
- [How to respond if you are told your behaviour is unwanted](#)

Policies

- [Bullying, harassment and victimisation](#)

Legislation

- [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#)
- [Human Rights Act 1993](#)
- [Privacy Act 2020](#)

Search for these at New Zealand Legislation: www.legislation.govt.nz

Schedules

- [Unacceptable behaviours schedule](#)

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