

# What is an International Safe Community?



Safe Communities is a World Health Organisation (WHO) concept that recognises safety as *"a universal concern and a responsibility for all"*. This approach to safety promotion and injury prevention encourages greater cooperation and collaboration between non-government organisations, the business sector, central and local government agencies, and creatively mobilises local community members to action. The WHO Safe Communities model creates an infrastructure in local communities for addressing injury prevention initiatives through the building of local partnerships. It is a programme that was initiated in Sweden by the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion at the Karolinska Institute for Social Medicine ([www.phs.ki.se/csp](http://www.phs.ki.se/csp))

SCFNZ has been established to work collaboratively with other key stakeholders to further support the development of injury prevention and safety promotion. It will provide an opportunity for all relevant stakeholders to increase action on injury prevention and safety promotion.



## Criteria: International Safe Community

In order to be designated as an International Safe Community, communities are required to meet the following six criteria of the WHO Safe Community Network:

1. An infrastructure based on partnership and collaborations, governed by a cross-sectional group that is responsible for safety promotion in their community.
2. Long-term, sustainable programmes covering genders & all ages, environments, & situations.
3. Programmes that target high-risk groups and environments, and programmes that promote safety for vulnerable groups.
4. Programmes that document the frequency and causes of injuries.
5. Evaluation measures to assess programmes, processes and effects of changes.
6. Ongoing participation in national and international Safe Communities networks.

It is recommended that New Zealand communities wishing to apply for accreditation as a safe community contact the **Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand** (SCFNZ).



## Process: International Safe Community

The process for designation as an International Safe Community includes a letter of intent, written application, and a site visit. When a community considers it has achieved the above criteria they should apply to the SCFNZ. The process includes:

- Letter of Intent signed by the Mayor.
- Application fee (\$5000 + GST NZ dollars) paid to SCFNZ. The application fee covers travel and accommodation costs associated with site visits, and designation ceremony (including the provision of a flag and plaque) and the international peer review process.
- Community Outline/Internet Summary (template available to complete on SCFNZ website).
- A report describing the safety promotion/injury prevention activities in the "community" organised around each of the six criteria. Applicants need to describe/define the "communities" they are working with, in the context of their own environment. No universal definition is implied by the use of the word *"community"* within the criteria, but mostly it has been applied to a geographical area. SCFNZ is available to support communities as they develop this application.
- Send five hard copies including all appendices of which one is to be unbound and one electronic copy (including appendices) of the application to:

Dr Carolyn Coggan, Director, Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand  
Box 331399, Takapuna, North Shore 0740, NZ [coggan@scfnz.org](mailto:coggan@scfnz.org)

*Applications should be addressed to the:*

The Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand, a Certifying Centre of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion.





The application for membership to become an International Safe Community has to be lodged at least six weeks before a site visit can be arranged. It is advisable to submit your community outline/internet summary early on in the ISC process. This internet summary is hosted on both the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety and SCFNZ website. Please note that your application will be internationally peer reviewed through SCFNZ.

## **Site Visit: International Safe Community**

Once the above paper review is completed and standard achieved. Representatives from SCFNZ will make the on-site visit (usually 1 day) to review your programme and application, at a time and place mutually suitable to both your community and the Certifying Centre representative. Emphasis is given to how your community has achieved each of the six criteria and needs to include:

- a meeting with the cross-sectional group that is responsible for the safety promotion/injury prevention programme in your community; and
- a field visit with community groups/agencies that are responsible for initiatives and other relevant activities relating to injury prevention and safety promotion in your community.

## **Designation: International Safe Community**

Once the above have been satisfactorily completed, a designation ceremony is to be arranged at a time and place mutually suitable to both your community and the Certifying Centre representative. In addition, the group also needs to agree to make an announcement celebrating their designation. After receiving designation, the designated community work with SCFNZ staff as part of their ongoing commitment to the international and national safe communities network; and complete the ISC annual report activities template, that are hosted on the SCFNZ and Karolinska websites.

## **Advantages of Accreditation from a Local Government perspective:**

It makes good business sense to be involved with safety promotion and injury prevention. For example, 145 small businesses in three Ontario Safe Communities reduced their claims costs by over 50% and their injury rates by 22%. Additionally, Local Government should be seen to take the lead role as injury prevention champions within their communities. This involves ensuring that they have good safety promotion injury prevention programmes for their staff and contractors. Local Government support for safety promotion and injury prevention initiatives within their wider community also provides a vehicle for Local Government engagement with local businesses, community organisations and groups as well as individuals.

Finally, the Safe Communities model has been nationally and internationally proven as an effective intervention to both promote safety and reduce the injury burden. Promoting safety and preventing injuries is important as the benefits of staying injury free are considerable:



- for individuals and families there is continued quality of life, ongoing participation in work, leisure and educational activities, and preservation of income and assets.
- for organisations and businesses the benefits of injury prevention include reduced disruption to their operations, increased productivity, retention of valued staff, and reduced levies.
- the wider community has a lot to gain from having a safer, positive and more productive population, and from less demand being placed on the health care and justice systems due to injury.

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### **Safe Communities Foundation New Zealand (SCFNZ)**

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SCFNZ is a: Certifying Centre & Affiliate Safe Community Support Centre of the WHO Collaborating Centre on Community Safety Promotion;

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