



## SPCA Inspector

Inspectors play an essential role in the work of the SPCA centres around New Zealand. They are at the frontline of the SPCA's mission to prevent cruelty to animals. An SPCA Inspector's primary role is to respond to complaints about the ill-treatment or neglect of animals in the community.

SPCA Inspectors work with communities to teach people how to look after their animals. Education is so important, as animals are often unintentionally neglected and those responsible are genuinely upset by the incident. In many of these cases, the Inspector can help both the person and animal(s) by providing information and positive education.

In more serious cases of neglect or cases where animal abuse/harm is intentional, SPCA Inspectors have the ability to issue Formal Warnings or prosecute offenders, with their ultimate goal being to effect behavioural change and ensure it does not happen again. Some instances may require court action, so Inspectors also need to gather evidence and prepare a prosecution file.

### Staff Interview:

We interviewed Jamie Hancock about her experience as an SPCA Inspector and here's what she had to say:

#### 1 Why did you want to become an SPCA Inspector?

*I wanted to become an SPCA Inspector because I wanted a job that makes a difference. I knew that the skills I had learned in my previous jobs would help me to rescue animals and help animals in need and bring animal offenders to justice.*





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### 2 What are the main responsibilities or tasks as an SPCA Inspector?

*Inspectors check on animals and investigate cases where there has been an animal welfare complaint. Inspectors can give animal guardians (owners) advice about what they can do differently to make sure they aren't breaking any animal welfare laws and to make their animals' lives better. Some people choose not to take the Inspector's advice – in these cases, the Animal Welfare Act 1999 gives SPCA Inspectors special powers that we can use when we need to: we can write instructions which the owner legally must follow, or take an animal away from them if necessary, and even lay criminal charges - but we can only do that in the most serious cases.*

### 3 What do you enjoy most about being an SPCA Inspector?

*The thing that I enjoy most about being an SPCA Inspector is helping people to help their animals live a good life!*



### 4 What did you have to do to become an SPCA Inspector?

*I had to learn a huge amount of detail about the Animal Welfare Act, as well as a few other pieces of law like the Bill of Rights Act, the Privacy Act, and the Search and Surveillance Act – it's essential that we use all of the powers those laws give us correctly. I also had to learn about keeping myself safe while dealing with very upset and angry people. I had to learn about animal health as well – I have to be able to tell if an animal is well or not well, and if they're not well I can call an expert like our SPCA Veterinarians to diagnose the problem and make a treatment plan. All of this is taught to new Inspectors through an internal training programme at SPCA.*

### 5 What skills do you think you need to be an SPCA Inspector?

*Inspectors have to keep themselves safe while also achieving the right outcome for the animal. It's critical that we are highly skilled communicators, and are able to stay calm in stressful situations.*



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### 6 What advice would you give to someone who wants to become an SPCA Inspector?

*Focus on your verbal and written communication skills, as well as IT skills. In addition to spending a lot of time talking to people about difficult subjects, SPCA Inspectors also have a lot of office work to do, so fast and accurate record keeping is essential. Having a basic understanding of science, especially biology, is helpful too. Being an SPCA Inspector is not a job that many people will be ready to go straight into when they finish their school or tertiary studies, as it is something that most people are better equipped to do once they have some life and workforce experience.*

### How to become an SPCA Inspector:

To become an SPCA Inspector, you need to complete SPCA's Inspector Internship Programme. This programme generally runs twice a year and contains both classroom learning and on the job training. This covers animal welfare law, investigation skills, animal care and husbandry, situational awareness and tactical communications.

SPCA looks for people with good face-to-face and written communication skills preferably with an investigative background. Also, applicants for the internship need to understand that while we work for the right outcomes for animals, this is a people focused role. The people we deal with range in their knowledge and understanding of animal care and can be challenging to deal with. You will need to be empathetic to understand their needs and able to work with people in high pressure situations.

If you want to become an Inspector, your local SPCA is a great place to start getting experience. By starting with volunteering at your local SPCA, you'll become familiar with how the organisation works, who is responsible for what, how the various areas function, etc.

### Fun SPCA Inspector Fact:

SPCA is the only charity in New Zealand that can legally enforce the Animal Welfare Act 1999. Inspectors work with other organisations such as the Police, Animal Control, the Ministry for Primary Industries (MPI) and the Department of Conservation (DOC) to achieve the best outcome for an animal.

