



Volunteers, Stay Safe!

A security guide for volunteers



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Strategy 2020 voices the collective determination of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) to move forward in tackling the major challenges that confront humanity in the next decade.

Informed by the needs and vulnerabilities of the diverse communities with whom we work, as well as the basic rights and freedoms to which all are entitled, this strategy seeks to benefit all who look to the Red Cross Red Crescent to help to build a more humane, dignified, and peaceful world. Over the next ten years, the collective focus of the IFRC will be on achieving the following strategic aims:

- 1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disasters and crises**
- 2. Enable healthy and safe living**
- 3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.**

Voluntary service is at the heart of community-building. Volunteering promotes trust and reciprocity. It encourages people to be responsible citizens.

Volunteering within National Societies is carried out by people who are committed to the Fundamental principles, the respect of the Emblems and motivated by their own free will without the expectation of material or financial gain. Our volunteers serve vulnerable people, and work towards a more humane and peaceful world. They contribute their time, abilities, diversity and skills regularly or occasionally in the delivery of humanitarian services, in resource mobilization, administrative, governance or advisory functions.

National Societies are committed to improve quality, standards, capacities and volunteer retention by creating a welcoming and socially inclusive environment. This environment means providing volunteers with training, supervision, regular evaluation and recognition; insurance protection, equipment and psychosocial support; and a supporting local structure relevant to the tasks that they carry out.

As living trends continue to change how people volunteer, the International Federation advocates for legal, social and economic policies that encourage and value volunteering more strongly in society.

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Prior to any volunteer activities, the Volunteer self-assessment form (Annex) should be read and completed by volunteers and if any questions regarding their security or well-being remain, their supervisor should be contacted.

Foreword

Volunteers are at the heart of communities and are the first to respond in times of emergency and disaster. Their safety must be our priority. With this in mind, I am pleased to introduce “Volunteers, stay safe”, this booklet produced by the IFRC security unit together with the Youth Action and Volunteering Development department, in collaboration with zone colleagues, National Societies and our dedicated volunteers.

More than 13 million people worldwide are Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers. Given the complexities of today’s emergencies and the risks that volunteers face, it is critical that our National Societies, together with governments, facilitate an enabling environment for the protection, recognition and promotion of volunteers and volunteerism.

The lessons in this booklet aim to help protect volunteers while ensuring their safe access to the communities they serve. These two points are integral to the volunteering and youth policies approved by the General Assembly in November 2011. They were also critical drivers in last year’s global “Find the volunteer inside you” campaign.

The security unit’s annual report for 2011 demonstrates that no staff member operating under the IFRC’s security mandate was killed last year. However, there were reports of other Red Cross Red Crescent personnel in the Movement losing their lives as a result of crime, conflict and vehicle accidents.

It is important to know that many security incidents are predictable and therefore preventable. This booklet addresses the common situations that volunteers and youth may face at the local level. For example, road accidents, domestic and school violence, common criminality (theft, burglary or robbery) and health problems (quality of water and food, diarrhoea, malaria, stress), as well as what to do before, during and after disaster.

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The booklet also provides basic guidance on establishing “Volunteers stay safe” procedures. It aims to inform National Society decision makers – leaders, managers and governance – on how to promote a culture of safety and provide operational security support to volunteers. I encourage all National Societies to share this booklet with their volunteers and staff as part of their basic induction, to ensure we provide the safest environment possible for the dedicated and selfless volunteers that serve the Red Cross and Red Crescent every day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized initial 'G' followed by a series of loops and a long, sweeping tail that extends downwards and to the right.

Bekele Geleta,
Secretary General
*International Federation of
Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies*

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Why we need the “Volunteers, Stay Safe” booklet?



Volunteers work in many different environments and it is important for them to be aware of their local security situation in order to stay safe, by minimizing the risks they face and increasing their capacities to deliver humanitarian services at all times. The stay safe procedures for volunteers should be organized taking into account three security scenarios:

- » **Scenario I** – low intensity during regular activities (normal situation): how to ensure the security and well-being of volunteers during their activities, including situations relating to health, events in public places, road accidents, local crime, and socio-economic problems.
- » **Scenario II** – emergency operations (situation during/after disasters): how to stay safe during crisis, emergency and disaster situations.
- » **Scenario III** – high intensity (situation during conflicts or internal disturbances): how to stay safe during internal disturbances, protests, escalating violence and conflict situations, which pose added risks for volunteers, such as antipersonnel mines, explosives, kidnapping, sexual assaults, and increased lawlessness.

This document addresses only the first two security scenarios for volunteers. Those working in conflict or high-risk environments (scenario 3) are recommended to follow the additional instructions provided in the Federation’s “Stay Safe” manual and/or ask the ICRC for advice.

Goal, objective and target population



Goal

Stay safe for volunteers is a prevention tool, which aims to enhance the security and well-being of volunteers and National Society staff at National Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies and the vulnerable people we serve.

Objective

The purpose of this booklet is to establish easy-to-understand security procedures to help prevent security incidents before, during and after humanitarian activities, protect volunteers, provide access to vulnerable people and deliver efficient services.

Target population

This booklet is a basic document explaining stay safe procedures for volunteers, which should be used by National Society decision-makers – leaders, managers and Red Cross/Red Crescent governance members at the local and national level and the volunteers by themselves – to promote a culture of safety and provide operational security support to volunteers.

It should be distributed and explained to ALL current volunteers and newly recruited volunteers (as part of their basic induction pack) to ensure that they are aware of the concepts involved in stay safe procedures for volunteers working with local branches.

This booklet should be part of any induction pack for National Society paid staff (to ensure that they have a good understanding of what kind of organization the Red Cross/Red Crescent, is the role and activities of volunteers and their safety).

The volunteer perspective on stay safe procedures



What is important to volunteers when it comes to their security?

1. To feel that the organization cares about volunteers and provides all the support needed, including psychological advice, specific and adequate equipment and materials, coaching, training, transport, accommodation and meals when required, accident insurance and administrative, legal and other support.
2. To know that the NS has clear plans and rules on security matters; to be aware of the risks/threats/dangers involved and the strategies and actions established to mitigate them.
3. To feel comfortable, respected, accepted and integrated (which increases self-esteem and confidence); to have a friendly working environment, which reduces stress and is effective for delivering quality humanitarian services.
4. To be aware of stay safe security procedures for volunteers who are participating actively in humanitarian programmes, assessments and decisions relating to them.
5. To receive information on stay safe procedures, supervision and coaching on a regular basis.
6. To be sure that their family and loved ones are safe and not in need, especially when a disaster/emergency occurs or in the case of tensions and conflict.
7. To be sure that they have decent, safe living conditions, providing a suitable environment for their active participation.
8. To have safer access to people in need (affected and vulnerable people)

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The volunteer perspective on stay safe procedures – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

How can volunteers be ensured safer access to people in need?

- » By consolidating good practices for the preparation of RC/RC people.
- » By ensuring full respect for and understanding of the Fundamental Principles by volunteers and communities.
- » By disseminating information about the correct use of the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblems.
- » By establishing a clear methodology to follow where access is difficult or complicated.
- » By being flexible and adaptable to the circumstances.
- » By having and follow standard operation procedures.

“Security is a state of mind”

Safety – the condition of being safe from undergoing or causing hurt, injury, or loss; being protected against physical, social, spiritual, financial, political, emotional, occupational, psychological, educational or other types or consequences of failure, damage, error, accidents, harm or any other event which could be considered non-desirable.

Security – the quality or state of being secure and free from danger; measures taken to guard against sabotage, crime and attack..



Key issues concerning stay safe procedures for volunteers

Individual approach

- » Understanding the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values;
- » Knowing how to use the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblems correctly;
- » Basic security awareness – mapping the local situation;
- » Personal conduct/behavior;
- » Competence, skills and knowledge;
- » Compliance with security regulations and standard operating procedures.

Institutional approach

Organizational environment (security culture):



- » Sound security plan; rules and standard operating procedures well understood;
- » Adequate security management and security support;
- » Information available and external relations with key security stakeholders;
- » Psychological support and stress management support;
- » It is recommended that all volunteers (and National Society staff) complete the “Stay safe personal security” course, available in the International Federation’s e-learning platform.
- » Training on security including the courses in the International Federation’s e-learning platform <https://ifrc.csod.com/client/ifrc/default.aspx>;
- » Code of conduct for volunteers; well explained and signed by all volunteers;
- » Insurance coverage for volunteers.

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Key issues concerning stay safe procedures for volunteers – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Briefings

The National Society should establish a security briefing and update system for volunteers, which explains the security situation in the country and in the specific areas of operation and addresses any threats to Red Cross/Red Crescent activities, based upon security analyses and risk, threat and vulnerability assessments.

It is important that volunteers understand the security hierarchy and line management system in place for them.



Personal Commitment

- » All RC/RC volunteers are to comply fully with the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent, the volunteer policy and the NS security regulations.
- » All Volunteers must be informed about the political, social, religious, cultural, and security environment, act appropriately and remain aware of and respond to changing situations.

Training

- » Before volunteers take up their duties, they should receive basic security and safety training and first aid training. Volunteers should also be given continuing education training.
- » This might include, but is not limited to, dissemination of the Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values, the correct use of the Red Cross Red Crescent emblems, telecommunications, safe driving, mine awareness, first aid, fire safety, and the local language.
- » It is recommended that all volunteers (and National Society staff) complete the “Stay safe personal security” e-learning course, which can be accessed at <https://ifrc.csod.com/client/ifrc/default.aspx>
- » Volunteers can request additional information and/or training, if needed, on the areas mentioned above.

Stay safe regulations and procedures

- » Security regulations should be mandatory in all locations where the National Societies operates and should include volunteers as well as all paid staff working with the National Society.
- » All volunteers should be insured against accidents according to the activities of the National Society and its capacity to cover such insurance.
- » The NS should maintain an updated record of the location and contact details of all volunteers working in the field.
- » The current Security Phase Level (if any) should be communicated to the volunteers together with security implications for the volunteers and their activities.

Incidents/ events

- » Volunteers are to report all breaches of security regulations, including the code of conduct – it is highly recommended that the National Society have one – and especially any form of abuse, to line managers (develop appropriate systems to report and communicate this issues).
- » All volunteers must know what to do in the event of accidents and security incidents.

Mapping the security situation at branch level



Volunteers are part of their local communities and can therefore help map the local environment in terms of factors that may affect their security and well-being, such as:

1. Health problems – quality of water, hygiene and sanitation, accidents, diseases, heat stroke, cold weather, mosquitoes, stress, sexually transmitted diseases, epidemics, etc.;
2. Security incidents in schools, houses, apartments, parks, restaurants, bars, shopping centres, open markets, banks, ATMs, religious places; local crime, bandits, gangs, burglary, theft;
3. Roads: traffic problems, lack of road safety and accidents;
4. Violence; against women, children, elderly, minorities, drug users, HIV/AIDS positive people and domestic violence;
5. Diversity – cultural differences and traditions; actions against minorities, immigrants, refugees and displaced people, discrimination, xenophobia and stigma;
6. Socio-economic problems – lack of opportunities; job-related problems: working conditions, type of contract, organizational environment, threats, opportunities, etc.;
7. Relations with the police, armed forces and other security actors (formal, informal).

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Volunteers can work in groups to address all these issues at branch level, taking into account the situation in their country and region and how the political and economic situations are perceived by volunteers: whether they are aware of how they feel and whether they know what to do in each case (see self-assessment).

Throughout all planning and management, you need to be aware that circumstances can often change rapidly. Therefore, it is important to maintain constant awareness of your surroundings and how they may affect your security.

Being security-aware means that you understand that there are potential threats that could materialize and deliberately or accidentally harm you, your colleagues and the resources being used in the operation.

“The Frog in the Pot”



There is an old fable which says that if you put a frog into a pot of boiling water, it will leap out right away to escape the danger. But if you put a frog in a pot filled with water that is cool and pleasant, and then you gradually heat the water until it starts boiling, the frog will not become aware of the threat until it is too late.

A frog’s survival instincts are geared towards detecting sudden changes.

This story illustrates how people may get themselves into trouble. It is often used as a warning that people must be on the watch for slowly changing trends in the environment – not just sudden changes. It is a warning to us to keep paying attention not just to obvious threats, but also to more slowly developing ones.

The seven pillars of security adapted to the volunteer environment

1. Acceptance

It is important to be politically, operationally and culturally accepted as a neutral, impartial and humanitarian actor by all parties. Acceptance is also necessary at the individual level. Volunteers must agree to work according to the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the rules and regulations of their National Society, the volunteer policy and the code of conduct for volunteers.

Volunteers must have an active dissemination and communication strategy to keep them informed about their RC/RC branch: what the Red Cross/Red Crescent is, what volunteers are doing and what they plan to do in the future. They must actively consult with local communities and adjust activities as needed to ensure acceptance by them. Volunteers continually monitor the local situation and understand the issues likely to hinder acceptance by local communities.

2. Identification

The Red Cross/Red Crescent must be identifiable and relies mainly on its emblems to achieve this. National Societies must therefore ensure that the uniforms of their volunteers and all their premises and vehicles are clearly identified with their logo, according to the national emblem law.

Volunteers should carry a photo identification card or wear a badge or recognized uniform at all times. Volunteers play an important role in disseminating information on the use of the emblems and preventing their misuse and abuse. “Such identification (uniforms and emblems) must be used only in the course of volunteer activities for the National Society.”

If you have to give credit/visibility to donors or sponsors, put their names and logos on printed material – pamphlets and documents – only. Avoid putting their names and logos on metal or outdoor objects, buildings, cars, and uniforms.



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For your safety, it is recommended that you NOT use uniforms or equipment similar to those used by the police, military or public security forces, in order to avoid negative perceptions and confusion and to maintain a clear and independent image of the Red Cross Red Crescent (it is also important to avoid the use of military boots, army helmets, security decorations and camouflage clothes).

Never use other emblems on National Society and volunteer group uniforms.

Avoid putting metal badges on uniforms, which could cause accidents, or other emblems or logos from different institutions or donors.

3. Information



Information must be up to date, and effective mechanisms should be established to pass on information, especially anything that could have an impact on security.

Volunteers should also collect and pass on as much information as possible on security matters. Any security incidents must be reported, mapped and analyzed, with appropriate action taken to address any identified deficiencies.

Maintaining good relations with the media is important; however, volunteers should follow the rules established by their National Society if approached by the media.

4. Regulations

Security regulations and procedures are mandatory for volunteers and must be established to mitigate risks and threats and ensure a secure working environment. They may be region- or country-specific and depend on the plans prepared by the National Society, based on security mapping.

In disaster or conflict areas, regulations should be harmonized with Federation and/or ICRC operational rules.

5. Behavior

Safety depends to a large extent on the personal characteristics of each volunteer, in particular solidarity with and respect for other volunteers and paid staff of the National Society, as well as correct behavior.

Volunteers should know their strengths, weaknesses and reactions to different situations and never provoke a situation with offensive personal behavior. They should respect cultural differences including habits, dress code and other sensitivities.

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The seven pillars of security adapted to the volunteer environment – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

The golden rule is to maintain correct, polite, impartial and neutral behavior. They should avoid using uniforms or clothes similar to those used by the police, military army or public security forces in order to avoid confusion and negative perceptions and maintain the independence of National Societies and their neutrality.

Volunteers represent their National Society, and their behavior has a clear impact on the image, visibility and reputation of the institution.

Volunteers should ensure their own physical and psychological well-being and ask for assistance if they need it.



6. Communication

Having a reliable and independent communications system in place is indispensable to the security of volunteers.

Effective communications networks must be established in order to monitor and check personnel movements, provide information on the local situation or the operational area and deal effectively with any crises that may arise.

Information on the net will be useful.



Radios, mobiles, internet and other equipment do not necessarily increase a volunteer's safety: only proper use of such resources will.

7. Protection

Measures should be taken to ensure the protection of volunteers and the protection and maintenance of equipment, facilities and vehicles, including passive protection such as barriers, alarm systems and security guards, as required by the situation.

These measures must include insurance for volunteers and authorization for priority access to premises, classrooms, warehouses and parking places in the evening and during weekends.

Factors contributing to security incidents



1. Poor understanding of the security situation/lack of basic security awareness;
2. Lack of respect for the RC/RC emblem and international humanitarian law;
3. Lack of coordination and information inside the organization and with other key partners;
4. Ineffective security management: lack of guidance, training, coaching and advice;
5. Personal problems: provocation and disrespectful behavior, lack of effective stress management skills, health problems, inappropriate relationships, etc.;
6. Increase in poverty-related crime;
7. Natural disasters, emergencies and crises;
8. Breakdown of state structures;
9. Misunderstanding of the aim of humanitarian aid;
10. Nature of the armed conflict and the victims' involvement in the conflict (volunteers must follow the special security systems established by the Federation or ICRC).

Road safety



The majority of security incidents involving Red Cross Red Crescent field volunteers and paid staff and humanitarian aid workers generally involve vehicles and vehicle use. They include traffic accidents, vehicle theft and the theft of equipment and/or supplies from vehicles.

Dos and Don'ts when using an Red Cross Red Crescent vehicle:

The recommendations below aim to stress the importance of safe behavior when in a vehicle.

DO:

- ✓ Be sure that you have a valid driving license with you;
- ✓ Follow road safety rules and regulations; respect local traffic laws and speed limits;
- ✓ Check that your car is in a roadworthy condition and properly equipped before using it;
- ✓ Test that all radios and communication equipment are working before departure;
- ✓ Inform colleagues about all your movements-set a fix way of do it; unexpected changes can give a signal;
- ✓ Always wear a seat-belt and park in secure areas;
- ✓ Always wear a helmet when driving a motorcycle;
- ✓ Use a local driver whenever possible;
- ✓ Stop at checkpoints or when ordered or threatened;
- ✓ Immediately report any accidents you are involved in.

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Don't:

- ☒ Drive if you have been drinking alcohol or if you are tired, sick or on strong medication;
- ☒ Leave your vehicle unlocked anywhere or at any time;
- ☒ Resist robbery or pick up hitchhikers;
- ☒ Transport any arms or military equipment in Red Cross Red Crescent vehicles;
- ☒ Drive unauthorized persons in Red Cross Red Crescent vehicles;
- ☒ Use a mobile phone or radio while driving;
- ☒ Drive outside urban areas after dark;
- ☒ Drive if you are not familiar with the vehicle (4x4, engine size) or road conditions.

Security awareness and vehicle use

Before using a vehicle...

- » It is helpful to conduct incident mapping and to familiarize yourself with the techniques used by local hijackers (e.g. roadblocks, 'Stop' sign attacks, vehicle cut-offs, fake accidents, false emergency vehicles, etc.), in order to avoid becoming a victim.
- » Drive, think and plan ahead; know where you are going and how to get there.
- » If possible, travel with copies of important vehicle documents and keep the originals at the Red Cross Red Crescent office.
- » Avoid central locking for car doors as this will lessen your control over access to your car when getting into the vehicle in crowded places and markets, etc.
- » Ensure that the vehicle is properly insured and have well maintenance.



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Factors contributing to security incidents and road safety – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

While driving...

- » Stay on well-travelled, populated, well-lit roads and avoid dangerous areas.
- » If possible, do not travel alone; there is safety in numbers. Generally, criminals are looking for easy, single targets.
- » If at all possible, avoid vehicle travel at night or when traffic is likely to be slow (rush hour).
- » Never follow a fixed driving pattern.
- » Always maintain a sufficient distance between your vehicle and the one in front, so that you can manoeuvre past it, if need be.
- » When approaching traffic lights, adjust your driving speed to avoid or at least minimize the time you stand still at red lights.
- » Be prepared to drive away, sounding the horn and drawing attention to your vehicle if you are threatened or attacked.
- » Keep your windows closed and your doors locked, even while driving. In hot climates, make sure that the air-conditioning functions in your vehicle.
- » In high-risk areas, drivers should concentrate 100 per cent on the driving; i.e., do not talk to passengers, listen to the radio or daydream while driving.
- » Think twice before deciding to offer assistance to what may appear to be a stranded motorist, regardless of gender, and do not pick up any hitchhikers.



General security awareness

- » Do not keep highly valuable items in your vehicle and do not leave anything of value in sight.
- » Remain particularly alert when approaching or departing from your residence as this is often a favorite place for criminals to strike.
- » If you are the victim of a carjacking, explain who you are and what the Red Cross Red Crescent is doing for the people. Try to protest about losing your vehicle, but do not resist. Give up everything but your life.

If an accident occurs...

In the event that an Red Cross Red Crescent vehicle is involved in an accident, follow this procedure:

- » Prevent further accidents from occurring – if necessary, get off the road – and put up your emergency triangle to warn others. Always report any accident.
- » Assist the injured, if any, and remain in control: stay calm and do not panic.
- » Call the local Red Cross Red Crescent, state your location and provide an account of the accident (who, when, where, what, future intentions or needs).
- » If possible, contact the nearest police station to try to get a police report of the accident for insurance purposes.
- » If the vehicle has to be abandoned, remove antennas, radios, flag and stickers, if possible.
- » Advise your volunteer line manager and complete an incident report form.
- » Avoid signing any papers without taking legal advice, especially regarding the admission of fault or responsibility. Do NOT make any agreement with the other party to pay any compensation without consulting security and legal colleagues.
- » In the unlikely event that an accident creates a situation that endangers your life (lynch mob, angry and violent population, etc.); try to leave the area as soon as possible. Attempt to leave only if you are 100 per cent sure that you can get away. If not, explain who you are and what the Red Cross/Red Crescent is doing for the benefit of the local community; appeal to the crowd.

Personal health

Keeping in good health during your volunteering activities is essential to ensure that you can do your job well. Being well prepared, for example, being adequately vaccinated, and taking certain precautions, for example, boiling drinking water, will improve your chances of staying well. In this booklet you will find information about various topics and problems that might arise during your humanitarian activities.

1. Insurance for volunteers
2. Vaccinations
3. Psychological Support Programme
4. Alcohol and substance abuse
5. HIV and sexually transmitted infections
6. Malaria
7. Food, water and diarrhoea
8. Skin protection



1. Insurance for volunteers

It is recommended that there should be an accident insurance system in place for all volunteers in the National Society. Please check that you have insurance coverage for accidents, disability, illness and injury. If you are sick or have a health problem, information should be on hand at the RC/RC branch about the care that is available locally.

In 2005, the Federation Secretariat introduced a global accident insurance scheme for volunteers through its insurance company. For the cost of only CHF 1 per volunteer per year, this insurance provides some basic cover, in case of death or serious injury requiring emergency treatment. There is currently no global insurance for minor serious accidents or injury incurred in the course of duty but our aim should be to increase the extent of the coverage to cover a wider range of injury.

In 2011 around 53 National Societies have their own insurance system for their volunteers. Only 25.000 volunteers in 31 National Societies have been insured under the IFRC scheme. This may be due either to a lack of knowledge of the Federation insurance scheme or because the National Society does not have sufficient funds to cover the costs of the basic insurance for each volunteer.

You can ask for more information at insurance.unit@ifrc.org . Also please see FedNet: summary of insurance, subscription forms, etc.

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2. Vaccinations

Do your vaccinations regularly. Keep the record of your vaccinations in a safe place and a copy elsewhere.



3. Psychological Support Programme (PSP)

Some degree of stress is inevitable when working with the Red Cross/Red Crescent, and as long as there is a balance between stress and recreation, stress can actually help to increase your performance.

However, conditions during operations are usually demanding, and volunteers need to know how to prevent stress from becoming harmful. It is important to recognize warning signs in oneself as well as in others, and to be aware of strategies that can help to alleviate harmful stress reactions.

The brochure “Managing Stress in the Field” provides the essential basics of dealing with stress that everyone should know, and each RC/RC branch should have copies. It is also available on FedNet.

The Psychosocial Centre has published a tool-kit “Caring for Volunteers” about psychosocial support to volunteers, with advice on what to do before, during and after disasters and how to help volunteers in social programmes.

You can order the toolkit at psychosocial.centre@ifrc.org.

4. Alcohol and substance abuse

For a number of reasons such as stress, loneliness, frustration, lack of leisure time, etc., volunteers sometimes increase their alcohol intake when engaged in humanitarian activities. However, it is a mistake to think that alcohol can help you to solve your problems.

On the contrary the impact of alcohol may affect your performance negatively, blur your judgment and may endanger your own life as well as that of your colleagues.



All drug use is illegal and therefore totally forbidden. In some countries alcohol is also illegal, and the internal regulations of the National Society will reflect this.

Refer to the National Society Code of Conduct for volunteers. This is highly recommended.

5. HIV and sexually transmitted infections

During your volunteer work you may find yourself in a high-risk situation with regard to HIV. Your risk of getting HIV is not about who or where you are – it is about what you do!

The Federation guide “HIV and You” has more information about how the HIV virus is transmitted and how you can avoid infection. The HIV virus, which eventually leads to AIDS, can be transmitted in three ways:

1. Through sex without a condom. The vast majority of all transmission occurs as a result of unprotected sex between a man and a woman.
2. Through blood or blood products, most commonly through sharing contaminated needles or syringes.
3. From mother to child during pregnancy or breast feeding.

Remember that a person can carry HIV in their system for many years, without knowing and without showing any signs or symptoms.

Consistent and correct use of condoms gives a very high level of protection.

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Stigmatization or discrimination of those living with or affected by HIV on the basis of real or perceived HIV status by Red Cross Red Crescent Federation members is not acceptable.

Sexually transmitted infections (STIs)

When infected with an STI, men and women get different symptoms: men usually experience discomfort: a burning sensation when urinating, yellow discharge and itching. In women, the symptoms can sometimes go unnoticed. Early diagnosis and treatment are essential, in the case of women, to reduce the risk of becoming infertile and, in the case of both men and women, to avoid spreading infection.

Untreated STIs increase the risk of contracting HIV for both men and women.

In addition, STIs put women at risk of becoming infertile. Condoms are the only effective means of protecting yourself and your partner from STIs. Condoms also give good protection against HIV and pregnancy.

6. Malaria

Malaria is endemic in most of Africa, many parts of South-East Asia and parts of Latin America. It kills approximately two million people every year and infects millions more. It is spread by mosquitoes carrying the parasite that causes malaria.



Malaria symptoms can develop as early as eight days after a mosquito bite, but can also develop months after departure from a malaria-endemic area. The most important feature of malaria is fever, usually, but not always, preceded by violent shivering. Each attack may last several hours and often begins with shivering, followed by a period of fever and finally profuse sweating. This is often accompanied by headaches, pain in the back, joints and all over the body. Vomiting and/or diarrhoea may also occur.

Individuals who have malaria-like symptoms should seek prompt medical attention. Delays in receiving appropriate treatment can have serious or fatal consequences.

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Personal health – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Strong prevention measures are important as there is no vaccine for malaria yet. Most important of all is to sleep under a permethrin-treated bed net.

Taking additional precautions, such as covering bare skin in the evenings, using insect repellents and taking prophylaxis, as recommended by your doctor, is as close as you can get to adequate protection. If you develop malaria-like symptoms, despite your best efforts, then seek medical care without delay.

7. Food, water and diarrhoea



Contaminated food and water are two of the most common causes of diarrhoea and can also cause hepatitis A and typhoid fever. Food should always be thoroughly cooked and served hot. Leftover food must be handled with great care in a tropical climate. As soon as the prepared dish is cool enough, it should put in a well-functioning fridge for a maximum of two days.

Food poisoning is the result of bacteria growing in food and usually becomes evident a few hours after eating. It is characterized by the sudden onset of profuse diarrhoea and vomiting and sometimes fever. It usually does not last long, 1-2 days at the most, but the weakness may persist a little longer. Fruits and vegetables that can be peeled are fine to eat raw. Lettuce and vegetables that cannot be peeled are best avoided.

In a tropical climate, try to avoid buffet meals in restaurants and hotels, as there is a high risk of food poisoning. It may be difficult to know how long food has been standing in the heat and sometimes hygienic standards are not adequate.

Ham, salami, mayonnaise, custard, cream, and eggs are best avoided at all times. Do not eat any type of raw or under cooked meat. If eating out while travelling, try to pick a busy restaurant and choose well-cooked local dishes. Avoid salads as the ingredients may not have been properly washed.

Water – in places where the drinking water is not safe

Drinking water should be boiled and filtered or disinfected with special water purifying tablets. When using a water filter remember to clean it regularly according to the instructions.

Remember to carry safe drinking water with you when travelling in the field. Hot drinks like tea and coffee are safe. Milk and cream (including ice cream) should be avoided unless you know they have been pasteurized.

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Generally, increase your intake of water in hot climates, especially if you have diarrhoea or fever. Adding ORS (oral rehydration salts) to the water can be beneficial in hot climates where salt is lost through sweating. In hot climates, you need to increase fluid intake substantially to prevent dehydration.

Diarrhoea

Diarrhoea is the most common health problem affecting volunteers. It can be caused by bacteria, viruses or intestinal parasites. Most episodes of diarrhoea are short lived and require no treatment other than replacing lost fluids and salts.

Fluid loss can be compensated by drinking water with oral rehydration salts (ORS), fruit juice, clear soup, or light tea. Milk products and alcohol are best avoided, as these might worsen symptoms. Caffeine and alcohol can aggravate dehydration. Eat light foods, such as fried rice, bananas, papayas, potatoes, dry bread or biscuits. Frequent small meals are better than fewer large ones.

If the diarrhoea lasts for longer than one day or is accompanied by fever or bloody stools, you should seek medical care and have a stool test to determine the cause.



8. Skin protection

Exposure to the ultraviolet rays of the sun can cause severe sunstroke, especially in people with a fair complexion. You will adjust more easily if you expose yourself gradually, wear a hat, sunglasses and use sunscreen with a high protection factor.

In hot/humid climates, it is quite common for small wounds to become infected and may require several days to heal. Do not neglect minor wounds such as cuts and scrapes, insect stings and scratches – always disinfect and cover the area affected with a dressing during the day, but if possible leave the wound uncovered at night to help it to dry.

Change the dressing at least once a day and check that the area surrounding the wound does not become inflamed (red and hot). If it does, have the wound dressed by a health care professional.

Beware of handling animals, especially monkeys, dogs, and cats, to avoid bites and serious diseases including rabies and plague.

Managing stress

Everyone experiences or suffers from the effects of stress in some form. Stress is normal. It is the body's natural reaction to a physical or emotional challenge. Stress can be positive in activating a person's body, mind and energy. It is often defined as an individual's capacity to mobilize every resource in the body to react promptly and adequately to a given situation.

However, if the stressors faced become too difficult to manage and deal with, the body's resources will be exhausted and the person will develop harmful or dysfunctional forms of stress reaction.



Basic stress is the baseline or underlying stress. It may be caused by various sources of tension at the individual, emotional, family or social level. It may be increased by the day-to-day environment.

Cumulative stress follows prolonged exposure to work and non-work related factors and may develop into professional exhaustion, also known as breakdown or burn-out. Factors causing cumulative stress range, for instance, from long-term relationship or financial problems to loneliness and prolonged extreme work pressure.

Traumatic stress is caused by situations outside the range of everyday experience and when life is perceived to be under threat. It can also be caused by a person witnessing or experiencing violence, brutality, a natural disaster or hostage-taking, the death of a colleague and extreme emotional situations. Traumatic stress, if untreated, can further develop into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), a pathological condition that will require referral to a mental health specialist.

Some of the main causes of stress are:

- » Difficult environment and living conditions (isolation, lack of privacy, climatic extremes).
- » Cultural differences, unfamiliar situations and lack of social contacts (for instance, the position of women in society, social and religious rituals, not being able to practice one's own cultural rituals, dependence of work processes on unfamiliar social, cultural and spiritual influences, restrictions imposed by the local security situation, ignorance, lack of knowledge, etc.).

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- » Heavy workload, inactivity and unrealistic expectations (fear of not being able to perform and complete the appointed task successfully).
- » Limited control of a situation.
- » Personal problems, problems at home (for example personal financial problems, or with one's partner or family, health problems, etc.). As far as possible, it is vital that each individual addresses and resolves these problems.
- » Relationship and communication problems.
- » Witnessing or experiencing a tragedy.
- » Health problems (general health, the need to take extra precautions over a long period of time, such as daily medications, continued use the mosquito bed nets, need to boil and treat water, take added hygiene precautions).

The signs of cumulative stress

The key to identifying cumulative stress is noticing changes in an individual's behavior:

- » Physical symptoms: over-tiredness, diarrhoea, constipation, headaches, abdominal and back pain, sleeping disorders, appetite changes.
- » Emotional signs: anxiety, frustration, guilt, mood swings, undue pessimism or optimism, irritability, crying spells, nightmares, apathy, depression.
- » Mental signs: forgetfulness, poor concentration, poor job performance, negative attitude, loss of creativity and motivation, boredom, negative self-talk, paranoid thoughts.
- » Relational signs: feeling isolated, resentful or intolerant of others, loneliness, marriage problems, nagging, social withdrawal, antisocial behavior.
- » Behavioral changes: increased alcohol, drug and/or tobacco use, change in eating habits or sexual behavior, increase in risky behavior, hyperactivity, avoidance of situations, cynical attitudes.

Symptoms of burnout

Emotional exhaustion is the main characteristic of burnout. This is when the symptoms of cumulative stress have intensified and become chronic.

The major symptoms are:

- » Chronic sleeping disorders, somatic problems and exhaustion;
- » Deterioration of mental capacities, loss of memory and efficiency;
- » Loss of self-esteem, focus on failure;
- » Profound disillusionment, sometimes rejection of values;
- » Panic or paranoid attacks, severe depression.



How to prevent cumulative stress

- » Take care of yourself: BE REALISTIC about yourself.
- » Know yourself, your own limitations, your resources, and your reactions to stress.
- » Do not be overly critical of your volunteer and paid staff colleagues.
- » Be alert to changes in another person's behavior.



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- » Recognize the importance of adequate support systems; support each other; show that you care for other volunteers and listen to them; ask for support from your colleagues at the branch and the National Society.
- » Eat a well-balanced diet and avoid excessive alcohol consumption.
- » Keep fit: allow sufficient time for rest, relief and relationships.
- » Make time to do things that you enjoy.

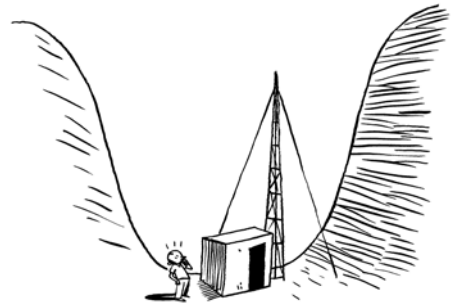


Staying safe in disasters and emergencies



In most types of disasters, crises and emergencies, the following factors should be taken into account:

Telecommunications will, in most cases, be difficult; the telephone system is often the first to break down or become overloaded – both landline and mobile. It is therefore important, in areas prone to natural disasters, to maintain some means of back-up communications, such as satellite phones and radio communication systems, and to know how to use these tools. Know how to use your communications equipment and check that it works before any movements outside the base of operations.



Transportation and movement may be made difficult by roads being destroyed or blocked by people fleeing. In such cases, other means of transport need to be made available, with emphasis on safety concerns.

Comply with radio procedures and respect the use of emergency and operational channels.

Always speak slowly and clearly when transmitting information.

Make a list of emergency numbers of key institutions to reach out.

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Travel in vehicles marked with the Red Cross or Red Crescent.

Volunteers should avoid travelling with vehicles used by security forces, police or military.



First aid and fire safety: as minor injuries to some members of the team are likely, a complete first-aid kit should be available in offices, warehouses, and vehicles.

Visibility and image: make sure that you have your uniform, vest, photo identification card and badge with you and review the information about the use of the emblem and the Fundamental Principles. Remember NOT to use uniforms or materials which might be mistaken for those used by the public security forces, police and military in order to avoid confusion and misperceptions.

Medical facilities are likely to be overloaded with seriously injured people, so you must be ready to deal with minor injuries yourself. The same goes for fire safety; extinguishers and fire-fighting equipment must be available in offices and vehicles. First aid and basic fire safety should be part of basic training in areas prone to natural hazards.

Law enforcement will, in most cases, be overstretched and this, combined with a desperate population, will lead to an increase in crimes and violence. Looting and mugging are likely to drastically increase in the aftermath of any disaster and will have to be taken into consideration when operating in such circumstances. Safe movement will be more important than ever.

Below you will find some general security guidelines. For more specific security guidelines for earthquakes, flooding, hurricanes, cyclones, tsunamis, mud slides and volcanic eruptions, please refer to the security handbook “Stay Safe - The International Federation’s guide to a safer mission”.

Remember that most areas are prone to specific types of natural hazards and all National Societies should have conducted a threat and risk analysis to identify specific risks based on the type of natural disaster likely to occur in their area.

In some cases, this may include risks associated with flooding, such as snake bites, the possible presence of crocodiles and an increased risk of malaria.

Be proactive and be prepared.

Before a disaster

Make a risk assessment, check and analyze the situation, collect basic information, check different scenarios:

- » Check the internet, radio and television for the latest information.
- » Plan and practise an evacuation route. Any evacuation plan should include information on the safest routes and key local authorities or actors. Be sure to identify more than one evacuation route as roads in and out of the area may become blocked. Check with your family, the RC branch and the headquarters the contingency response plan.
- » Ensure that your identity card, uniform, vest, cap or helmet with the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblem is clearly visible.
- » Know the location of the nearest hospital or health post and check the insurance coverage and expiration dates.
- » Agree on a re-grouping point in a safe area and make sure it is known to all volunteers.
- » Familiarize yourself with the emergency and evacuation procedures.
- » Be aware of all the protective measures in place in your operational area.
- » Make sure you have the following emergency equipment stocked:

- Torch and extra batteries
- Radio handset with extra batteries
- A whistle to attract the attention of rescue workers
- First-aid manual and kit with essential medicines (mosquito/dome bed net, insect repellent, face mask, gloves, chlorine, ORS, plasters, soap, dressings, hand wipes, etc.)
- Vest and cap with the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblem
- Rubber boots, raincoat/poncho, bag pack
- Plastic foldable jerry can for water (10 liters)

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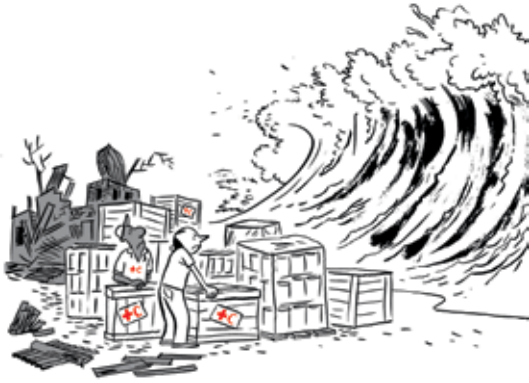
- ✓ Emergency food and water supplies
- ✓ Basic tools (spade, axe, rope, nails, hammer, etc.)
- ✓ Maps of the area and list of the key telephone numbers and contacts
- ✓ Optional: sleeping bag, tent, life jacket, portable mattress.



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During a disaster

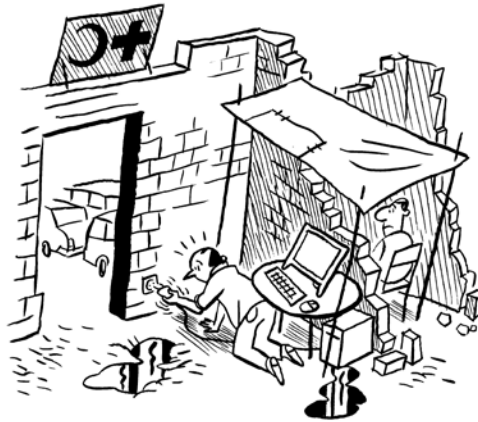


Keep yourself updated by listening to the radio or watching television, if possible, for the latest information.

- » Call outside for updates if the local information services are unavailable.
- » Do not seek shelter in damaged buildings.
- » Behave honestly, showing self-discipline and respect for the local culture, including its habits, dress code and other sensitivities.
- » Remember that you are representing the Red Cross/Red Crescent which means that your behavior reflects on the Movement as a whole and may affect the security of other volunteers.
- » Keep a low personal profile to make yourself a less attractive target for crime and always be aware of your surroundings and the neighborhood you are in.
- » Ensure your physical and psychological well-being and ask for assistance if you need it. Rest and avoid working long hours.



After a disaster



- » Regroup in the safe area and conduct a headcount. Make sure that all volunteers are accounted for or their whereabouts and condition are known.
- » Inform the National Society headquarters immediately after an incident.
- » Check yourself for injuries and give first aid to those who are seriously injured. Remember that further earthquakes, aftershocks, flash floods, mud slides, heavy rain, etc. can occur after the initial disaster.
- » Inspect your building for damage and do not go back inside unless you are sure it is safe. Aftershocks, flash floods, heavy rain, etc., can be fatal if the building is already weakened or damaged. Stay out of damaged buildings.
- » Collapsing infrastructure, gas explosions and electrocution from damaged electricity networks are some of the major threats after an earthquake.
- » Never touch wires lying on the ground, wires hanging on poles, or objects that may be touching them: they may be carrying electricity and could injure or kill if touched. Look for damage to the electricity system. If you see sparks, broken or frayed wires, or can smell hot cable insulation material, then turn off the electricity supply at the main fuse-box or circuit-breaker – but only if you consider it safe to do so. Do not attempt to do this if it means you have to step in water to get to the fuse-box or circuit-breaker. Carefully leave the area and call for professional advice.

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- » Look out for fire hazards and flammable or explosive materials.
- » Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas or hear a blowing or hissing noise, quickly leave the area and warn others. Do not use electrical switches, appliances, telephones or any naked flames if you suspect a gas leak, as sparks can ignite gas. If leaking gas starts to burn, do not try to put the flames out.
- » Keep yourself updated. If possible, listen to the radio or television for the latest information.
- » Provide psychological support to volunteers and their relatives if needed.



Remember that in many cases the radio, TV and telephone systems are the first to go down in a natural disaster. By having a satellite phone, you will still be able to call outside to the National Society Headquarters for updates on the on-going natural disaster and provide an update on your own situation.

Volunteering in the Red Cross and Red Crescent



Encouraging local people to volunteer in order to meet local needs was Henry Dunant's response to the humanitarian tragedy he witnessed after the Battle of Solferino on 24th June 1859.

It was the idea that volunteers should be systematically trained in every country in preparation for times of war, conflicts, disasters, crises and emergencies, which led to the formation of National Societies.

Voluntary service is one of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. National Societies often deliver their services by means of volunteers.

Volunteers help strengthen communities by learning skills and developing social ties. Volunteering is a way of helping communities build capacities to cope with crises. They provide value to National Societies in many ways, yet this added value often goes unacknowledged.

Volunteers are on the spot: When conflicts, disasters or epidemics strike, volunteers are already there and can act immediately. Outsiders will always arrive later, maybe too late.

Volunteers work part-time, normally about four hours a week. Ten volunteers would therefore be needed to do the work of one full-time staff member. In other words, ten times as many people are involved when services are delivered by volunteers rather than by paid staff. As a result, volunteer-based services increase the number of local people involved in the National Society and thereby increase its strength.

Also, by limiting their involvement to a few hours a week, volunteers can combine their volunteering with family life and work commitments and therefore continue to volunteer year after year.

Volunteers bring diversity and special abilities:

When recruiting staff, the choice is limited to those who are looking for a new job and accept the salary and conditions offered. When recruiting volunteers, a much wider choice is available, as almost anyone can be recruited as a volunteer, including people who have better qualifications, possess a special skill or can work odd hours. Volunteers can also be recruited from among beneficiaries and groups with backgrounds completely different to those of paid staff.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is calling on governments and National Societies around the world to increase the protection of volunteers by identifying and removing gaps and barriers in laws and policies concerning issues, such as liability, insurance, health and safety, and by putting in place effective systems to support them.

Volunteers are a sustainable resource:

Local volunteer programmes can be easily adapted to changing environments and cost very little to maintain. At the same time, a dynamic organization with good volunteer management systems in place can readily renew its volunteer base by attracting and retaining new generations of volunteers.

The Red Cross Red Crescent Volunteering and Youth development program at the branch level promotes the Initiative of the International Year of Volunteers (IYV) +10, the “Find the volunteer inside you” and the new Volunteering Policy adopted by the General Assembly in November 2011 and the Resolution Nr. 4 adopted by the International Conference on 1st of December, 2011, Furthering the auxiliary role: Partnership for stronger National Societies and volunteering development.

As for the Federation, its main strategic and comparative advantage is that it is the only international humanitarian organization with a grassroots base throughout the world. The Federation is global, but, with its volunteers, also truly local.

This is important, because money cannot deliver assistance, only people can.



Time dedicated to volunteering

Volunteers usually dedicate their time and effort as follows:

- » Working regularly in a local activity for 3-4 hours a week in the evenings or on weekends;
- » Spending 3-4 hours a month working on specific tasks, as in the case of leaders of the local board (Red Cross Red Crescent branch governance), providing legal or technical advice in their area of expertise, helping others using telephone or online systems, creating a humanitarian campaign, doing translations, teaching people etc;
- » Dedicating time and effort to short-term projects lasting 1-3 months (advocacy and advertising campaigns, internships, concept development, updating a web page, etc.);
- » Participating in one event a year (during one or more days) e.g. a training course or Conference, the Red Cross Red Crescent day on the 8th of May, HIV/AIDS Day, campaigns against discrimination and violence, fund raising activities and other local events;
- » A volunteer workforce can be expanded rapidly: in times of need the input from the existing volunteer workforce can be increased rapidly, as volunteers in emergencies contribute more time than they normally would and new volunteers can also be quickly deployed if proper leadership and support systems are in place.



Volunteer Management

Volunteer managers/coordinators at the branch level usually work evenings and weekends, coordinating volunteer efforts (can be volunteers or paid staff members). In order to facilitate their work, volunteer managers may also be the deputy of the branch Secretary General, representing the institution at different meetings and events, coordinating ongoing Red Cross Red Crescent activities and activating emergency response in the event of a crisis or natural disaster. In this capacity, volunteer managers are in a position to mobilize the resources of the local branch when needed (vehicles, equipment, warehouses, computers, etc.).

National Societies make it a priority to invest in their volunteer development by insuring that volunteers are properly prepared to carry out their work, through providing them with relevant and timely information, training and equipment, feedback on their performance as well as appropriately assessed safety and security measures.



Volunteering Policy

Adopted by the 18th session of the General Assembly held on 23-25 November 2011 in Geneva. To be reviewed by the 21st session of the General Assembly in 2017.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to guide volunteering in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

Strategy 2020 challenges the International Federation to “do more, do better and reach further” in saving lives and changing minds. It acknowledges that people themselves are the most important resource for their own progress, which can only be sustained through their own leadership and ownership of the process.

Volunteering is identified by *Strategy 2020* as being at the heart of community building. It also contributes to sustainable human development. As National Red Cross Red Crescent Societies are trusted to serve communities from the inside, volunteering is the essential foundation for making and sustaining strong National Societies. A National Society’s capacity and effectiveness is directly related to its ability to mobilise, manage and empower volunteers from across the communities that it serves. This in turn depends on the values and attitudes that the National Society reflects when it approaches communities to inspire them to volunteer.

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers operate in a range of diverse and complex circumstances in a fast changing world where social, demographic, economic, and environmental trends as well as technological advancements are altering the shape and functioning of communities and how people volunteer. The International Federation is committed to promoting a culture of volunteering in society in general and to position the Red Cross Red Crescent as the preferred choice of people seeking to volunteer.

Defining volunteering and volunteers

A Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer is a person who carries out volunteering activities for a National Society, occasionally or regularly.

Red Cross Red Crescent volunteers work for a more humane and peaceful world. They do this by delivering services directly to vulnerable people and through seeking to prevent and reduce vulnerability and exclusion where they can. They also govern and lead National Societies and their International Federation.

Volunteering with the Red Cross Red Crescent is organized by recognized representatives of National Societies and is aimed at furthering its services and activities, always working in accordance with the Fundamental Principles of the

Red Cross and Red Crescent. It is carried out by people motivated by free will, and not by a desire for material or financial gain, or by external social, economic or political pressure.

Protecting and supporting volunteers

National Societies have well functioning management systems and practices to supervise, support and encourage volunteers. These are adapted to the specific context of their work and responsive to new trends in volunteering that may go beyond the established structures of National Societies including, for example, informal, on-line, and corporate or other institutional forms of volunteering.

National Societies ensure that their volunteers are properly prepared to carry out their work, through providing them with relevant and timely information, training and equipment, feedback on their performance, as well as appropriately assessed safety and security measures. They insure their volunteers against accidents, and provide them with appropriate psychosocial support when required.

In certain circumstances, volunteers may themselves be vulnerable and National Societies ensure that their needs for assistance and protection are given due attention.

National Societies provide volunteers with access to accredited learning and personal development opportunities so as to help them to better undertake their agreed tasks or roles, as well as to motivate them to grow their skills and capacity and undertake future roles within the Red Cross Red Crescent.

When there is the need or opportunity for a volunteer with the National Society to carry out paid work as casual or contracted labour, the National Society recognizes this change in status and ensures that the employment complies with the relevant laws of the country.

Recognise volunteers and their achievements

National Societies recognise that volunteers have a significant stake in the organization. They take formal and informal opportunities to appreciate, individually and collectively, the work of volunteers and its impact.

National Societies encourage volunteers to participate in its decision-making and in designing and improving the work in which they are involved. A volunteer has the right to become a member of the National Society, i.e. someone who has formally agreed to the conditions of membership as required under the National Society's statutes.

Promote volunteers and volunteering

National Societies recognise the value of a diverse volunteer workforce, and actively recruit volunteers, irrespective of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, disability or age. They remove physical, economic, social and cultural barriers to participation, and recruit volunteers based on their potential. National Societies reimburse volunteers for pre-approved expenditure related to their volunteering tasks. National Societies also work with governments, the corporate sector and other partners to promote an enabling environment for volunteering in national life.

Agree volunteer rights and responsibilities

National Societies provide volunteers with written guidance and rules that sets out the rights and responsibilities of both the National Society and its volunteers. All Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteers are expected to act, at all times, in accordance with the Fundamental Principles.

Volunteers are expected to respect the regulations on the use of the emblem, and prevent its misuse. They should make themselves available to the National Society in case of emergency, according to their skills and abilities, as agreed with the National Society.

In working with vulnerable people, volunteers are expected to strive for the highest standards of quality in the services that they deliver. They fulfil their duties without discrimination, responding to the needs of vulnerable people in a compassionate and respectful manner. They respect the confidentiality of those whom they assist.

Impact of the policy

In reinforcing the importance of volunteers and volunteering, this volunteering policy serves as guidance for National Societies in creating or updating their volunteering policies in order to develop enabling environments for volunteers and volunteering.

The impact of the successful implementation of this policy is expected to be a growth in the Red Cross Red Crescent share of volunteering as measured by the increased number of people preferring to start and remain volunteering with the Red Cross Red Crescent.

This will be measured by comparison against the baseline of 2010, through the Federation-Wide Reporting System.

Youth Policy

Adopted by the 18th session of the General Assembly held on 23-25 November 2011 in Geneva. To be reviewed by the 21st session of the General Assembly in 2017.

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to inform, guide and enhance the participation of young people in the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation).

Strategy 2020 challenges the International Federation to “do more, do better, and reach further” in saving lives and changing minds. It asks for a special focus on young people not only for today but also for the future, recognizing their particular role in building and sustaining communities that are based on respect and solidarity.

Strategy 2020 recognizes that building-up and sustaining strong National Societies requires that they attract and retain more young people. It urges that young people be educated, enabled and empowered to be active in leading and participating in voluntary activities and in the governance, management, and services of National Societies.

Defining youth

The terms “youth” and “young people” in the International Federation cover people in the age range of 5 to 30 years. This includes children (5 to 11 years old), adolescents (12 to 17 years old), and young adults (18 to 30 years old). National Societies are guided reasonably by this range in adopting their own definitions according to local laws, social norms and cultural contexts.

Valuing the role of young people

National Societies recognise and value the important role and contribution of young people in addressing humanitarian and development challenges. Their multiple roles include being innovators, early adopters of communication, social media, and other technologies, inter-cultural ambassadors, peer-to-peer facilitators, community mobilizers, agents of behavior change, and advocates for vulnerable people. National Societies recognise the leadership role of young people in tackling contemporary and emerging issues.

Young people bring much needed skills and capacities when working alongside older people in a spirit of mutual respect. This is acknowledged as being crucial to the inter-generational transfer of experience that is vital to both progress and stability in society.

Strengthening the contribution of young people

National Societies educate young people in the humanitarian values and Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement and encourage them to acquire the practical skills needed to live, work, and relate to others accordingly.

Adolescents and young adults in National Societies are provided with the opportunity to be engaged as active members and volunteers and, in the context of prevailing national employment laws, as remunerated staff.

Young people are involved in all the activities of their National Society, taking into account relevant age-specific requirements of needed skills and experience, safety and well-being. They are encouraged to be fully involved in the planning, design, delivery, and review of Red Cross Red Crescent services to which they contribute or from which they benefit. National Societies provide their young volunteers and in particular the youth leaders with the opportunity to participate in decision making processes not only at the national but also at the international level.

Young people are fully included in the governance and management of their National Societies at headquarters and branch levels. They may be organized through integrated or specific youth structures according to the institutional context that best optimizes their contribution in the National Society.

National Societies treat young volunteers according to the International Federation's Volunteering Policy, while recognizing that young people may have different and additional needs to those of older volunteers. In particular National Societies take additional care to safeguard young people engaged with them.

National Societies provide their young volunteers, members, and staff with opportunities to advance their personal and professional development through learning and training, and preparing them for current and future leadership roles.

National, regional, and international networks established by young people themselves, are strongly promoted as an invaluable contribution to sharing knowledge and innovation across the Red Cross Red Crescent Movement. National Societies actively encourage and support youth representatives to participate in these networks aimed at promoting youth leadership and exchange of concrete ideas, innovations and activities.

Young people are encouraged to continue in an active role with their National Societies as older adults, facilitated by effective working practices that support their transition between the youth and adult structures of the National Society.

Young people as beneficiaries

Young people all over the world face unprecedented challenges in today's globalized society. These include violence, exploitation, discrimination, substance abuse, accidents and diseases, unemployment, poverty consequent to financial and economic crises, trafficking, migration, and urbanization.

Additional risks may come from negative peer pressure on personal and social behaviors, and the unsafe use of new communication and social networking technologies.

In tackling these vulnerabilities, and in supporting young people to manage and mitigate the risks they face, the aim is to enable them to grow as well adjusted, responsible, and caring members of the communities they inhabit.

Thus, their safety and protection, and their age and gender-specific development needs are given specific attention in the design and delivery of Red Cross Red Crescent services.

Impact of the policy

The impact of the successful implementation of this policy is expected to be a growth in the numbers of young people involved with National Societies, and a growth in those staying on with them as older adults. National Societies' activities and measures involving youth, and the number of youth in their governance and leadership positions are also expected to grow.

Youth will be engaged in high quality and high impact activities that contribute to the building of stronger National Societies.

The impact will be measured by National Societies reporting through the Federation-wide Reporting System against a baseline to be established by 2012. National Societies are encouraged to develop additional specific measures for tracking the youth involvement in its activities and services.

Annex: Self-assessment

Name: _____

This is a self-assessment form for volunteers operating at local branches; all volunteers should fill out the form prior to any field activity.

No.	Knowledge and understanding of the situation	None	A little	Yes
1	Do you have a good understanding of health problems in your community in relation to water, sanitation, epidemics, pollution, cholera, garbage disposal, accidents, sudden diseases, HIV/AIDS, etc.?			
2	Are you aware of security conditions at the local level in relation to traffic accidents, theft, burglary, violence and criminal activities?			
3	Are you aware of social problems arising from lack of respect, discrimination, stigmatization, etc. at the local level?			
4	Do you know about possible natural disasters in your area (earthquakes, floods, landslides, fires, cold weather, droughts, hurricanes, tsunamis, etc.)?			
5	Are you aware of the possibility of internal disturbances, protests or riots occurring in your region/area/town?			
6	Do you know of any internal conflict in your country, with military intervention and security implications?			
7	Do you have good knowledge and understanding of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Fundamental Principles and humanitarian values?			
8	Do you think that the Red Cross/Red Crescent seven Fundamental Principles are well known in your community?			
9	Are you familiar with the rules concerning the proper use of the Red Cross/Red Crescent emblems?			

Volunteers, Stay Safe!

Annex: Self-assessment – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

10	Do you feel that the protective function of the Movement's emblems is widely known and understood in your community?			
11	Do you know the standard operating procedures of your NS?			
	Individual behavior	Yes	A little	No
1	Could the situations mentioned above affect your daily life/routines?			
2	Do you feel insecure as a result of your participation in this Red Cross Red Crescent field activity?			
3	Are you identifiable as a Red Cross Red Crescent volunteer? (Red Cross Red Crescent clothing, photo ID, cap with the emblem, etc.)			
4	Could these situations affect your family, relatives and close friends?			
5	Could they affect your health and your physical condition?			
6	Could they affect your communication with others?			
7	Could they make you feel scared, tense and afraid?			
8	Could they affect the security of your house/apartment?			
9	Do you have insurance to cover accidents and illness? Is it valid? Do you know the coverage and the exceptions?			

Volunteers, Stay Safe!

A security guide for volunteers – International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

	Knowing what to do	No	A little	Yes
1	Do you know how to deal with potential security issues?			
2	Do you know how to cope with stress?			
3	Do you know how to provide first aid in the event of accidents or sickness?			
4	Does your branch have a security plan for volunteers?			
5	Do you know whom to contact for security issues? Do you know the security focal point at your local branch or NS headquarters?			
6	Do you know the procedures to report incidents?			

Recommendations based on the stay safe self-assessment results:

1. **Knowledge:** if you marked none or a little more than three times you need to improve your awareness and discuss these issues with your community.
2. **Behavior:** if you marked yes or a little more than three times, you have to learn how to deal with these situations.
3. **Knowing what to do:** if you marked no or a little more than three times you should ask for security advice at your branch or at your National Society headquarters.

Reference documents

- Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles
- Volunteering Policy and Youth Policy adopted in November 2011
- International Federation's e-learning security training courses: basic course and course for managers
- International Federation's security manuals: Stay Safe – The International Federation's guide to a safer mission and Stay Safe – The International Federation's guide for security managers.
- Staying Alive – ICRC security guidelines
- Safer Access Framework
- International Federation Code of Conduct and the National Society code of conduct (highly recommended)
- E-learning courses in the International Federation's platform <https://ifrc.csod.com/client/ifrc/default.aspx>
- International Federation's Global Security Rules
- Managing stress in the field booklet, IFRC
- Minimum Common Standards for Volunteer Workforce for Emergency Response and Early Recovery, IFRC
- Implementation guide for community-based health and first aid in action, IFRC
- Minimum standards for Volunteer Health Protection Kit, IFRC
- Epidemic control for volunteers, action tools and training manual, IFRC
- What you need to know to stay healthy when on mission, IFRC "Volunteers in Emergencies"
- "Toolkit for National Societies on legal issues related to volunteering".



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The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

Humanity The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavours, in its international and national capacity, to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever it may be found. Its purpose is to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the human being. It promotes mutual understanding, friendship, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

Impartiality It makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavours to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

Neutrality In order to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.

Independence The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.

Voluntary service It is a voluntary relief movement not prompted in any manner by desire for gain.

Unity There can be only one Red Cross or Red Crescent Society in any one country. It must be open to all. It must carry on its humanitarian work throughout its territory.

Universality The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, in which all societies have equal status and share equal responsibilities and duties in helping each other, is worldwide.