

# Travel guidelines

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# 1 Introduction and purpose

The development of these guidelines has been permitted by adjustments based on the preservation and creation of the Swedish Red Cross's trust capital, taking into account the signal value generated by the choices we make within the organisation. We all – employees, volunteers and elected representatives – have a shared responsibility to ensure sustainability, manage our funds responsibly, be cost-conscious and cost-effective. To carry out our mission, travel is sometimes necessary, but we must take responsibility for how we travel, both nationally and internationally. This means that we always think about why we travel, who is travelling and what means of transport are used.

The overall aim of these guidelines is to simplify and enable travel decisions to be made in a considered, responsible and appropriate manner with transparency. The travel guidelines thus help us to:

- Contribute to the responsible use of resources
- Raise awareness and explain our responsibilities as employees, volunteers and elected representatives within the Swedish Red Cross
- Highlight opportunities for alternatives to travel
- Highlight the importance of safe travel and individual sustainability

## 1.1 Scope and boundary of the guideline

These guidelines cover all travel undertaken by Swedish Red Cross employees, and the Swedish Red Cross volunteers and elected representatives, travel within the framework of the Swedish Red Cross mission and/or paid for by the Swedish Red Cross (nationally or by a branch).

## 1.2 Responsibility

Each manager is responsible for ensuring that these guidelines are followed by the employee. This means that the manager must ensure that all employees are aware of the contents of the guidelines and monitor compliance with them. It also means that the manager is responsible for ensuring clarity about what may be considered adequate travel. Each manager is responsible for ensuring that there is a procedure for approving travel both for employees and for volunteers and elected representatives within their respective activities.

Similarly, elected leaders are responsible for compliance within their respective organisation (e.g. Chairperson is responsible for the board, Regional Council Chairperson is responsible for the Regional Council, Volunteers leader is responsible for volunteers).

Each employee, volunteer and trustee is responsible for ensuring that their travel is undertaken in an economical, safe and environmentally responsible manner by the Guidelines.

## 1.3 Sustainability goals

According to the Swedish Red Cross' sustainability policy, we shall conduct humanitarian activities in a sustainable manner and contribute to sustainable social development.

Sustainable development is therefore part of the organisation's strategic direction. We define sustainable development as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.<sup>1</sup> One of several ways to contribute to sustainable development is to consider the negative consequences of our travel.

Since 2014, greenhouse gas emissions of the service organisation are compiled every year. These are measured in carbon dioxide equivalents and we collect data from our air travel, rail travel, car travel, paper printing and energy consumption. Travel statistics include all types of travel, most of which are booked through Tranås Travel Agency. All bookings invoiced and travel expenses booked at the service organisation are included and thus also include travel for volunteers and elected officials. To meet our sustainability goals and reduce our emissions, we need to travel less and more environmentally efficient. Our goal is to reduce our total CO2 emission by 10 % each year and to reduce our emissions per employee each year.

## 2 Traveling

### 2.1 Is the trip necessary?

Travelling is costly and both expenditure of time and direct costs should be taken into account before a trip. It is therefore important to consider whether the trip is actually necessary and that alternatives to travel are considered. Here are some examples of questions employees, volunteers and trustees can ask themselves before booking a trip:

- Is it possible to replace my trip with, for example, a meeting via video/Microsoft Teams or equivalent?
- Is it possible to combine more tasks and thus avoid another trip in the near future?
- Do several people need to travel, or is it enough to have one representative who then informs the group?

### 2.2 Can an equivalent effect be achieved without travelling?

Significant investment has been made and technical support is now available to enable meetings to be held remotely, for example via video (Microsoft Teams to which both staff and elected representatives have access). Technological aids lead to a reduction in our need to travel, which has a positive impact on the Swedish Red Cross' sustainable goals.

### 2.3 How to make the travel effective?

Once a decision has been taken to travel, it is the responsibility of each staff member, volunteer and trustee, to plan their trip well in advance and to carry it out as efficiently as possible, taking into account safety, environmental and financial considerations. "Well in

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<sup>1</sup> Read more about this in the Swedish Red Cross Strategic direction for 2020-2023 (Svenska Röda Korsets Strategiska inriktning för 2020-2023) and our Sustainability policy.

advance” here refers to good planning from a longer-term planning perspective and to plan from a cost perspective, as booking close to the time of the travel can generate higher travel costs. Good planning also means that time for recovery can be built in.

A reversible trip can be booked several months in advance as it is more economical, and any cancelled trips will accrue to the Red Cross and can be used by another employee.

## 3 Approval and reporting

### 3.1 Approval

Before commencing the trip, the traveller must ensure that it is conducted in accordance with these guidelines and obtain the approval of the immediate manager or elected leader. Such approval shall also cover any deviation from these guidelines. When volunteers and elected officials travel on a budget from the service organisation, any deviation must be approved by the manager who, according to the Swedish Red Cross’s attestation scheme, must approve the costs of the trip. Volunteers participating in a crisis response shall have their travel approved by the Head of the Crisis Management and Preparedness Unit, or by the Head of the Crisis team. Reasons for deviations must be documented in connection with the expense report, see instructions below.

### 3.2 Reporting

For employees, reporting of a trip must be done in the Flex HRM payroll system. In addition to reporting expenses for the trip, you must also enter the following in the *Subject field/Ärende*:

1. **Purpose:** write what was the purpose of the trip and the expected positive effects of the trip, such as skills enhancement and efficiency improvement.
2. **Justification:** please provide a brief justification as to why the trip was necessary and why it was chosen over videoconferencing/Microsoft Teams.
3. **Any deviations:** if there have been any significant deviations from the applicable guidelines, they should be clearly indicated here. For example, deviations in the choice of means of transport or accommodation.
4. Employees should also indicate **if the trip was made together with other employees**, volunteers and/or elected officials and the reasons for this.

Please note that the reporting of the trip must be done at the latest three months after the end of the trip. Documentation relating to travel must be attached to both expense and reports and invoices in ExFlow Invoices and travel bills are certified by the immediate manager in accordance with the certification scheme established by the Swedish Red Cross. Please note that a travel plan may in some cases be required by the manager.

Volunteers and elected representatives report their travel by filling in a travel reimbursement form<sup>2</sup> with an original receipt attached – which is approved and certified according to the Swedish Red Cross' certification scheme or according to procedures within the branch.

## 4 Booking

The current travel provider to the Swedish Red Cross is Tranås Resebyrå AB (hereinafter the Travel Provider). If it is the Swedish Red Cross that should cover the cost of the trip, the travel supplier must be used, both by employees and volunteers. When booking, the organisation code and reference must be stated. The reference is usually the staff member travelling or responsible for the project for which a trip is being made, this person should also be able to provide the correct organisation code if volunteers or other staff members book trips within the project.

Our cooperation with the Travel Provider offers the following benefits, for example:

- Consolidated invoice: reduces administration
- All trips gathered in one place
- 24-hour on-call service all year round
- Coordinated travel statistics including environmental statistics: helps to monitor our sustainability goals in terms of, for example, reduced carbon emissions/employee
- Security: full control over where travellers are
- Access to discounted RAPTIM tickets for international travel, where the price difference can be up to 50%
- Self-booking tools with lower fees
- Price guarantee

### 4.1 Passenger profile and self-booking system

To facilitate the booking, each employee registers a passenger profile with the Travel Provider. The employee is encouraged to use the Travel Provider's self-booking system, which implies a lower cost. For more complex trips, such as more than one destination or group travel, the employee is advised to contact the Travel Provider for booking.

Contact details and quotation forms are available at: [www.tranas-resebyra.se](http://www.tranas-resebyra.se)

### 4.2 Visa

For questions about visas and ordering visas, the employee can contact the Visa Service, which is the contractual partner of the Swedish Red Cross.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The form *Reseräkning frivilliga* is available at Rednet (kunskapsbanken) on the pages for elected representatives in the circuit and region/Förtroendevalda i krets och region, under the heading *Redovisa resor, boende och andra utlägg*.

<sup>3</sup> See [rednet.redcross.se](http://rednet.redcross.se) and [visumservice.se](http://visumservice.se) for further information.

## 5 Compensation and benefit taxation

The Swedish Red Cross reimburses employees, volunteers and elected representatives for expenses related to agreed assignments. For reporting of travel and expenses, see section 3.2 of this guideline.

### 5.1 Allowance/per diems and reimbursement of expenses and lost income

For employees of all legal entities of the Swedish Red Cross, the Swedish Tax Agency's rules for per diems in connection with domestic and international travel apply. Updates of reimbursement amounts are made as soon as the Swedish Red Cross receives information about changes. The per diem is intended to cover additional costs. If an employee claims reimbursement for additional expenses, these must be agreed upon in advance and substantiated with relevant documents after travel.<sup>4</sup>

Per diems does not apply to volunteers or elected officials. However, travel allowances may be paid for expenses that can be substantiated by relevant supporting documents. Volunteers and elected officials may also be reimbursed for loss of earnings.

Reimbursement of travel expenses and subsistence allowances may not be calculated for longer trips or absences justified by the purpose of the trip unless there is a special reason for this. Special reasons may include the fact that a ticket with a minimum duration is cheaper than one which covers the purpose of the trip only. The total cost of the extra ticket must be less than the cost of the regular ticket. When calculating the cost of the trip, all elements such as transport, accommodation, subsistence allowance, salary supplement, working time and travelling time must be taken into account.

Any fees and fines for incorrect parking, speeding or similar offences are not paid by the Swedish Red Cross.

### 5.2 Benefit taxation

The Swedish Red Cross is obliged to comply with the Swedish Tax Agency's regulations regarding benefit taxation. The Swedish Tax Agency uses the terms study or conference trips, which here are equated with travel. Benefit taxation may apply if the trip takes place over a weekend, to a very remote location or a popular tourist destination, for example.<sup>5</sup> The same applies if the element of recreation and pleasure plays a prominent role. In these cases, the trip, in whole or in part, can be considered a taxable benefit for the employee.

When assessing whether the employee should be taxed, several factors can be taken into accounts, such as the purpose of the trip, the choice of destination, the benefits of the trip and the structure and content of the conference.<sup>6</sup> The starting point is that no such benefit should arise.

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<sup>4</sup> See [rednet.rodakorset.se](http://rednet.rodakorset.se)

<sup>5</sup> Note that the Swedish Tax Agency's assessment of what is a "very remote place" and a "popular tourist destination" may be consistent with the Swedish Red Cross destination without being considered a taxable benefit, as such a destination may fall within the mission of the Swedish Red Cross.

<sup>6</sup> Read more at [skatteverket.se](http://skatteverket.se)

The Swedish Red Cross does not pay for travel for accompanying persons and therefore rules on benefit taxation do not apply.

Travel benefits earned in connection with travel, such as bonus points, free tickets, free nights in hotels etc., belong to the Swedish Red Cross and may not be used for private purposes. Therefore, it does not trigger the rules on taxation of benefits.

## 6 Way of travel

When choosing a way of travel, there are several factors to consider and trade-offs to be made. As a staff member, volunteer, or elected official, you have a personal responsibility to travel smart, based on sustainability, the environment and safety. The starting point for your journey should be to travel by public transport. Special considerations may need to be made, for example, for longer journeys and trips abroad or personal reasons, and these should be agreed upon with the responsible supervisor.

### 6.1 Travel by public transport

Within Sweden and in other countries where safe public transport is available, priority should always be given to travel by public transport. Tickets for local public transport, e.g., metro, tram, bus, do not need to be booked through the Travel Provider, unless another journey is booked at the same time through the Travel Provider, but can instead be accounted for as an expense against a receipt.

### 6.2 Travel by train or plane

You should preferably travel by train, and do not travel by first class other than nights trains. The benchmark for domestic and Nordic flights is that within 6.5 hours travel time, it is recommended that the journey be made by train, beyond that, flights may be replaced by night trains where available. This means that trains should be the first choice for most domestic journeys, but also journeys to Oslo and Copenhagen.

Outside Europe, there is the possibility of replacing flights with trains within Europe. Contact Tranås Resebyrå (see details under heading 5) and they will help with this. However, international rail travel should only be booked when digital alternatives to meet are not possible, and/or when there is a high signal value in travelling by train. International rail travel is on average three times more expensive than flying and should therefore be seen as a complement to reducing flying overall.

Travel by plane is booked in economy class. Deviations from this rule require justification from the traveller<sup>7</sup> and approval from the relevant Head of Department before the trip is undertaken. The deviation must also be justified in the trip report, as set out in point 3.2 of this guideline.

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<sup>7</sup> Exceptions that may be granted include intercontinental flights (longer than 6.5 hours) where the workload and/or security situation places extraordinary demands on the traveller to be rested and active immediately upon arrival.

### **6.3 Travel by rental car or pool car**

If travel by car is required, there may be reasons to choose a rental car, either for financial or road safety reasons. This should be reported as a deviation in the travel invoice and needs to be justified.

The Swedish Red Cross has an agreement with Hertz regarding rental cars. The cheapest option should always be sought. The size of the car should be adapted to the need and the safety aspect, and in the first instance, a mid-range environmental car should be chosen. When booking a rental car, the option of elimination of deductible/self-risk elimination should be selected. If carpooling takes place, environmental and safety factors should be taken into account. If a pool car is available within the Swedish Red Cross, it should be used. The pool car must meet the safety and environmental requirements applicable at the time. Each trip must be recorded in the car's logbook.

### **6.4 Travelling by taxi**

Travel by taxi, for example to and from airports, train stations, hotels, and meetings, may only take place in exceptional circumstances. There must therefore be specific reasons for the exception. Such special reasons may include the time of day, security considerations (e.g. in countries without secure public transport), heavy luggage or if the situation otherwise requires it. Taxi travel should be treated as an exception and justified in the travel report for staff, volunteers, and elected officials.

### **6.5 Overnight travel**

If the best way to travel is by night train, booking of own overnight compartment may be made. For travel by boat requiring overnight accommodation, a private cabin with shower and toilet may be booked.

Accommodation must be booked at the time of booking the trip. Single rooms with shower and toilet are standard. Bookings must be made in accordance with the environmental requirements and ethical guidelines in our Purchasing Manual and our Sustainable Development Policy; the cheapest option must always be sought. For security and privacy reasons, employees should always have the right to stay in their own rooms. In the case of private accommodation during travel in and outside Sweden, the employee will be reimbursed with a night allowance according to the rules of the Swedish Tax Agency. Read more about per diem above.

## **7 Security**

These guidelines shall fully consider the security aspects of the Swedish Red Cross guidelines on security. If you have any further questions, please contact the Swedish Red Cross Safety Officer in Human Resources. Employees, volunteers, and trustees may, as a supplement, read the recommendations of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at the time on their own.

## **7.1 Insurance**

The Swedish Red Cross has a general service insurance policy with Gouda. The insurance protects in the event of an accident, reimbursement of medical expenses, loss of luggage, etc. The insurance also covers volunteers and elected officials travelling within the framework of the Swedish Red Cross. If the trip differs significantly from what may be considered a normal trip, you should contact the safety officer at Human Resources.

## **8 More information**

On Rednet ([www.rednet.rodakorset.se](http://www.rednet.rodakorset.se)) you will find in-depth information on, for example, the safety regulations that apply when travelling, representation rules, the form for applying for travel reimbursement and what applies to visas and what insurance you are covered by.