

Safeguarding in Swedish Red Cross

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1 A safe workplace

1.1 Background

The Swedish Red Cross' purpose is to prevent and alleviate human suffering wherever and whenever it occurs, to protect life and health and to ensure respect for the dignity of every human being. The principle of doing no harm shall be central to all the work of the Swedish Red Cross¹.

The purpose of this document is to describe how the Swedish Red Cross works to ensure that the people involved in our activities and who otherwise come into contact with the activities are protected from abuse, violence, exploitation, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and other violations. We call this our safeguarding work.

Cases involving abuse, violence, exploitation, harassment, discrimination and other harm inflicted by Red Cross members on other Red Cross members, on our target group or on partners we have chosen to call safeguarding cases.

Security issues relating to risk assessments concerning personal safety or property are outside the scope of our security work.

The document describes:

- Our stance against abuse, violence, exploitation, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and other violations
- The policies, guidelines and procedures in place to ensure a safe operation
- How we carry out our safety work
- How we deal with safeguarding cases

2 Safeguarding

2.1 Position

The Swedish Red Cross has a zero-tolerance policy for abuse, violence, exploitation, harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and other violations in our activities. This regards all members of staff and volunteers, in relation to our target groups and others who come into contact with our organisation.

¹ Protection are activities to protect people against violations of their rights and prevent harm to the Swedish Red Cross target groups. A basic protection perspective means having the ability to identify the protection needs of our target groups and take relevant action. However, a basic protection perspective does not mean that we have to meet all protections needs, but that we have the ability to prioritise and act on them. A core protection perspective also means the ability to address protection needs in a non-discriminatory manner, taking into account gender and diversity perspectives.

2.2 Policies

The policies of the Swedish Red Cross indicate our stance on an issue and establish principles for guiding our actions and judgements on a case-by-case basis in our operations. Policies are adopted by the Swedish Red Cross Governing Board and are owned by the Chief of Staff.

Listed below are the policies we have in place to ensure safe operations:

- **Anti-discrimination policy**

Expresses the basic positions and actions of the Swedish Red Cross in matters relating to discrimination and inclusion and how we ensure zero-tolerance of all forms of discrimination, racism, intolerance and other dehumanising attitudes within our organisation.

- **Anti-corruption policy**

Describes what applies to the Swedish Red Cross as an organisation regarding corruption and fraud and how we ensure our zero-tolerance for all forms of fraud and corruption

- **Volunteer policy**

Clarifies the responsibilities, approach and commitment of the Swedish Red Cross to all volunteers and volunteer activities and how we ensure the promotion of volunteer safety in our activities

- **Protection policy**

Describes how the Swedish Red Cross will work to ensure that all our activities have a basic protection perspective. This means being able to identify the protection needs of our target groups.

- **Code of Conduct and whistleblowing instructions**

The Swedish Red Cross Code of Conduct and Whistleblowing instructions describe how we ensure that all members of staff in their daily work show respect for the value of every human being and do not commit violations.

2.3 Guidelines and routines

The Swedish Red Cross's guidelines describe recommended ways of acting and state absolute limits and requirements for the organisation and all members of staff and works as a guide for operations in the field and can be used to guide the activities of branches. They can also express our basic view on a subject matter in the form of directives, regulations, orders of action, rules of procedure, delegation orders or positions. Policies are adopted by the Board of Directors to whom the Secretary General has delegated responsibility.

The following guidelines are related to the work of ensuring safe operations:

Guideline for:

- Working environment
- Background checks

- Incident management (routine)
- Complaints
- Discriminatory treatment
- Protection of personal data
- Training

2.4 Manuals, procedures and e-courses

Our manuals and procedures describe how we can work concretely with issues. The following documents are available to help ensure safe operations:

- Activities involving children (routine)
- Safeguarding manual “Handbook on making safe referral”
- The E-course “Working with a basic safeguarding perspective”

2.5 Preventive work

Recruitment

Recruitments in members of staff and in our international activities undergo background checks in accordance with established guidelines and in accordance with the Inter-Agency Scheme for the Disclosure of Safeguarding-related Misconduct in Recruitment Process within the Humanitarian and Development Sector before they are offered employment. The Inter-Agency Misconduct Disclosure Scheme consists of three main commitments:

- A commitment to, during the recruitment process, systematically check with former employers if there is any reason to suspect the final candidate of involvement in Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)
- A commitment to respond systematically to such controls from other organisations who have joined the programme
- A commitment to report on an annual basis the number of incidents of a sexual nature, how many controls we have carried out ourselves and how many controls we have responded to on behalf of other organisations.

Employment and introduction

All new members of staff sign our Code of Conduct and undergo basic training in “Red Cross knowledge”, according to the established training progression regulated in the training guideline. Some training, such as the Code of Conduct, must be completed on an annual basis which is monitored at an individual level through our learning platform Learnster.

Members of staff engaged in our international activities receive an information briefing prior to their assignment. This briefing includes a review of the Swedish Red Cross Code of Conduct and emphasises the importance of reporting safety issues.

Managers are assigned work environment responsibilities and undergo work environment training in which the importance of a safe organisational and social work environment is highlighted.

Learning and competence development

We are a learning organisation, which means that we continuously learn new things and increase our collective competence. This also applies to the way we keep our policies, guidelines and how we cultivate a culture where safety issues are raised and reported.

Systematic security work

Our Protection Policy sets out how we are to work to ensure that all our operations have a fundamental safeguarding perspective. Our work environment guidelines show how we work systematically with issues related to a safe, secure and healthy working environment in our operations.

Both the safety and work environment processes are carried out in four stages. We strive to create an organisational culture that encourages dialogue on safety issues and shows that safety concerns are taken seriously.

Stage 1: Study

Prior to the start-up of any activity, a study is carried out on the risks of vulnerability, discrimination and protection needs, and barriers to people's safety, dignity and rights. The study is regularly updated and evaluated. Within the organisation, we also conduct regular work environment studies, which include studies of perceived safety.

Step 2: Analysis

The studies we carry out are the basis for analysing the causes of any risks and obstacles to safe operations. The analysis is carried out at different levels of the organisation by reflecting, analysing and drawing conclusions about why there may be shortcomings in security work.

Step 3: Actions

Once the study and analysis are completed, we take the preventive and promotional measures that we consider necessary. The aim of these measures is to remove the risks or obstacles that stand in the way of a safe operation.

Step 4: Monitoring and evaluation

Following the actions taken, we produce an annual report on security cases, incidents and whistleblowing to follow up on cases, and ensure that they have been dealt with in accordance with our procedures and then draw conclusions for preventive security work.

3 Handling of Safeguarding Cases

It is the responsibility and duty of everyone involved with the Swedish Red Cross to immediately report a safeguarding incident or suspicion of a safeguarding incident. Reporting is done in accordance with our Complaints Guideline which can be found on our external website as well as on our intranet Rednet.

3.1 Notification under the Complaints Guideline

Notification of safeguarding cases is made in accordance with our Complaints Guideline. Safeguarding concerns should be dealt with promptly and with privacy and security as a priority in each case. The action taken on the case should be proportionate to the harm which means that before any action is taken, all parties should be heard, consideration and respect should be shown to everyone involved and all risks and consequences should be assessed.

3.2 Measures in safeguarding cases

A first step in a safeguarding case is usually a clarifying dialogue. The method is described in the guidelines for discriminatory treatment. The aim of clarifying dialogue is to clarify what has happened to be able to create a basis for identifying risks and consequences, and for taking decisions about appropriate action. Clarifying dialogues usually result in some sort of action plan.

A serious safeguarding case will lead to an investigation which may, in turn, lead to disciplinary action against anyone who has acted in breach of our policies and guidelines and threatened the safety of others. Actions that are criminal will be reported to the police.

Once action has been taken, the case is closed and recorded in our safeguarding register in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Statistics on safeguarding cases are compiled annually by the HR department and is part of the Swedish Red Cross' incident reporting in its operations.