

The Swedish Red Cross Volunteer Policy



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Introduction

Volunteer assignments in the Swedish Red Cross are the foundation and backbone of the organisation's existence. It is through the work of volunteers that the mission of the organisation is mainly carried out.

This policy clarifies the Swedish Red Cross' responsibility, approach and commitment to all volunteers and its activities, and sets out the rights and obligations of volunteers within the Swedish Red Cross. Volunteering in the Swedish Red Cross means a clear way for people to take a stand for humanity and solidarity. The Swedish Red Cross shall play a central role in community involvement both in everyday life and in crises and contribute to social sustainability and cooperation between people.

This policy applies to you as a volunteer in the Swedish Red Cross. This means people who occasionally or regularly carry out unpaid missions organised by a local branch or members of staff. Elected representatives are also volunteers and are also covered by this policy.

Policy commitments

Volunteer assignments within the Swedish Red Cross:

- is based on the voluntary commitment of individuals, carried out by their own free will, i.e. without any claim to profit and social, economic or political pressure
- are organised and managed by a branch or members of staff

Volunteers in the Swedish Red Cross

- have been informed about the nature of the volunteer assignment and the requirements
- have accepted a defined mission, following the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross, code of conduct, policies, guidelines, safety regulations, governing documents, and give of their time to help make a difference
- is part of the Swedish Red Cross's overall crisis preparedness capability and is prepared to act in the event of a crisis, based on his/her knowledge, his/her daily mission, and his/her circumstances
- has the right to receive ongoing psychosocial support both in continuous operations and in special cases crisis operations
- should, but need not, be members of the National Society
- those who are elected representatives, must be members

Background

The Swedish Red Cross Governing Board is ultimately responsible for all activities conducted in the name of the Swedish Red Cross and must ensure that there is beneficial support in the form of policy documents and tools for elected representatives, volunteer leaders and volunteers to carry out their tasks.

The branch board is responsible for activities organised under the branch in both everyday situations and crises. The branch board is also responsible for ensuring the democratic influence of volunteers in the branch and the organisation, and for ensuring that volunteers follow established guidelines within volunteering and the respective activities. Volunteers are preferably led by volunteer leaders.

Volunteer leaders are appointed by the branch board or a staff member. The person who appointed the volunteer leader is responsible for the quality of the activities and for ensuring that the activities comply with the policy documents. As well as delegating tasks and ensuring that volunteer leaders receive support, training, and development opportunities within their mission. The volunteer leader, in turn, is in cooperation with the local board, volunteers and the target group responsible for planning and developing activities based on local needs.

Application of the policy

The overall responsibility for the organisation's delivery of the policy lies with the board of the Swedish Red Cross and the management team. The branch boards and regional councils are responsible for the implementation of activities at the local level in line with the policy. The person responsible for operations is responsible for ensuring that relevant procedures and monitoring are in place to ensure compliance with the policy.

All Red Cross volunteers have a personal responsibility to act in accordance with this policy and to pay attention and act in the event of a breach of this policy.

The board of the Swedish Red Cross has the ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the rights and obligations within this policy entails on volunteers. To a large extent, the practical responsibility lies with the branch boards throughout the volunteering cycle – from recruitment and training to follow-up. The members of Staff provides support for this.

Obligations towards volunteers

When it comes to supporting and being accountable to volunteers, there are some guiding principles for the organisation;

Recruitment; is based on the needs of the target group and the individual's circumstances. That recruitment is based on people's different characteristics and different backgrounds in terms of gender, age, class, disability, ethnicity,

sexual orientation/identity, transgender identity or expression, religion or other beliefs. The branch board is also responsible for ensuring that volunteers are aware of the Volunteer Policy, Guidelines and Code of Conduct and the necessary safety regulations before starting their assignment and undertake to comply with them.

Introduction and skills development; that volunteers undergo mandatory and activity-specific training and appropriate introduction. Volunteers receive ongoing psychosocial support, skills development, encouragement and appreciation.

Planning, implementation and monitoring; implemented by taking into account the views and experiences of volunteers in the design, development and evaluation of the activities. Volunteers will also be reimbursed for approved expenses incurred during the assignment and provided with appropriate equipment for the assignment.

The promotion of volunteer safety; ensured in the activities by continuously carrying out risk assessments and taking relevant measures to ensure that volunteers are provided with the necessary knowledge and information for the assignment. Responsibility for these measures lies with the person in charge of the activity.

Drawing the line between what is voluntary or paid effort; is made by a person paid to perform an assignment is recognised as an employee or contractor.

Cooperation; by promoting and creating a dialogue with private, non-profit and public sector actors in the municipality or where the branch operates. To carry out needs assessments to identify needs, target groups and help to improve the conditions for voluntary work.

Removed from the mission; volunteers who turn out to be inappropriate, misbehaving or violating the volunteer policy and who, after discussion and support, do not change are removed from their assignment.

Rights and obligations of volunteers

As a volunteer, you will meet people taking part in various activities, receiving help and support in a difficult situation, and other Red Cross volunteers. In meeting people, volunteers receive many confidences and gain insight into people's lives. Therefore, volunteers should never use their position as a volunteer in an inappropriate way and never discriminate against any individual or group, regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, or disability. Volunteers should treat all people with respect and humbleness and never behave in a way that damages their own or the organisation's credibility.

As a volunteer in the Swedish Red Cross, you have several clear obligations.

You must:

- follow the procedures and commitments described in this policy
- act by the Code of Conduct and the Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross
- be informed of, and comply with, the governing documents (including the Charter), safety regulations, policies and guidelines for the activities in which you are involved
- not accept money or gifts for your use
- participate in the mandatory and necessary training for the mission
- promote and strive for high quality in the performance of your mission
- take a vow of confidentiality and sign an agreement for volunteers in the Swedish Red Cross
- be able to identify yourself during the volunteer assignment

As a volunteer, you have the right to:

- carry out training in Red Cross knowledge, additional training and continuing education required for the mission
- reimbursement of approved expenses
- the right equipment/facilities to carry out the agreed mission
- to refuse a mission
- appropriate insurance cover
- in special circumstances or for particularly vulnerable missions where you as a volunteer may be vulnerable/exposed in the performance of your mission, you should have received adequate introduction of risk information, safety procedures and protocols, and briefing on the use of the necessary protective equipment, before the mission. You should also have the right to psychosocial support and assistance during and after the assignment.
- the possibility of raising complaints regarding matters relating to the mission within the Swedish Red Cross and make suggestions for improvements

Definitions

Volunteers in the Swedish Red Cross are persons who occasionally or regularly carry out unpaid tasks organised by branches or members of staff. Elected representatives are also volunteers.

Elected representatives are volunteers who, through appointed by statutory election to manage the organisation by governing documents and the priorities decided by the Swedish Red Cross Governing Board.