

Would you like to get involved in voluntary work?

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Volunteering policy for the Swedish Red Cross

Approved by the Central Board,
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Introduction

Volunteering is based on people's humanitarian engagement and forms the foundation of the Swedish Red Cross' existence. The actions of volunteers in the name of the Swedish Red Cross is intended to alleviate and prevent human suffering, protect life and health, create respect for humanitarian values, promote mutual understanding and friendship and facilitate cooperation and permanent peace among people.

The purpose of the volunteering policy is to

- clarify volunteering within our programmes and during emergencies and disasters
- establish the Swedish Red Cross' basic values and attitudes toward volunteering
- set out the rights and responsibilities that volunteers and the Swedish Red Cross are bound by in regard to one another.

1. Definitions

Volunteering within the Swedish Red Cross is

- intended to benefit vulnerable people based on the fundamental principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement
- activities that are motivated by the free will of the person volunteering, and not by a desire for material or financial gain, or by social, financial or political pressure
- organised by branches or by paid staff, when it is justified and with the support of the branches*
- programme activities that are conducted in accordance with the National General Assembly's decisions.

Volunteers in the Swedish Red Cross are persons who occasionally or regularly perform unpaid tasks organised by branches or paid staff. A volunteer within the Swedish Red Cross should, but need not, be a member of the National Society. **Elected representatives** are also volunteers and are covered by the volunteering policy. Elected representatives must be members of the Swedish Red Cross.

2. Responsibilities and roles

The Central Board is responsible for providing support to the Local Branch Board. The Central Board is ultimately responsible for all the programmes conducted in the name of the Swedish Red Cross. Within the Swedish Red Cross, volunteers perform all volunteer tasks. The volunteers are primarily led by volunteer managers. The volunteer managers are appointed by branch boards or paid staff responsible for the programmes.

** Focus of the Swedish Red Cross guidelines for Red Cross programmes during the years 2006–2011, page 4ff; "In order to stimulate development, the paid staff is also given the opportunity, when justified and with the support of the branch, to assume certain duties that normally do not belong to the role of paid staff. However, as soon as it is possible, the branch should assume such duties.*

3. The Branch Board

3.1 Recruitment

The Branch Board is responsible for

- recruiting volunteers for programmes based on needs
- recruiting volunteers based on their motivation and abilities
- actively recruiting volunteers of different backgrounds, affiliations, skills, experiences, knowledge and characters*
- ensuring that volunteers know the volunteering policy before starting a task and that they abide by it.

3.2 Introduction and competence development

The Branch Board is responsible for

- providing volunteers with suitable introduction, training, support and opportunities for personal development
- giving volunteers encouragement and acknowledgement.

3.3 Planning, performance and follow-up

The Branch Board is responsible for

- considering the views and experiences of the volunteers when designing, developing, implementing and evaluating programmes
- ensuring that volunteers are reimbursed for approved expenses connected to the task
- giving volunteers appropriate equipment for the task
- ensuring that volunteers, who prove to be unsuitable, who mishandle their tasks, or violate the volunteering policy, and who do not change after discussion and support, are separated from their tasks.

3.4 Definition between voluntary and paid work

The Branch Board is responsible for

- ensuring that a person who is paid for performing a task is acknowledged as paid staff.

3.5 Cooperation

The Branch Board is responsible for

- promoting cooperation among players in the private, non-profit and public sectors, so that, through cooperation, we can reach vulnerable people.

* See the Swedish Red Cross' Diversity Policy.

4. Volunteers

4.1 Rights

Volunteers expect the Swedish Red Cross to provide them with

- clear information about what the volunteer task entails and what requirements apply
- basic Red Cross training and any other training required for the volunteer task
- compensation for approved reimbursement
- necessary support for performing the volunteer task
- the right equipment/tools for the performance of the agreed volunteer task
- the option to refuse a volunteer task
- appropriate insurance protection
- the opportunity to complain about anything related to their relationship with or their tasks within the Swedish Red Cross.

4.2 Responsibilities

The Swedish Red Cross expects that all volunteers

- act in accordance with the Red Cross fundamental principles and promote their dissemination
- respect the regulations on the use of the emblem and prevent its misuse
- respond to the needs of beneficiaries and strengthen their capacity for self-help
- refuse any money or gifts for personal use
- participate in necessary training
- strive and work for the highest standards of quality in their work
- participate in the Red Cross disaster preparedness programmes and, based on skills, abilities and experience, make themselves available in times of emergency or disaster
- maintain confidentiality and sign a Red Cross volunteer agreement
- are able to prove their identity during the volunteer task
- follow the volunteering policy and the respective programme guidelines.

4.3 Conduct

Volunteers meet people who participate in various activities or who receive help or support in difficult situations. In meeting with people, volunteers become privy to many confidences and obtain an insight into the lives of others.

Volunteers shall therefore

- never use their position as a volunteer in an inappropriate manner
- never discriminate against any individual person or group, irrespective of gender, age, ethnic background, religion, sexual orientation or disability
- behave in a manner that does not insult people or damage their own or the organisation's credibility
- treat people with respect and humbleness
- follow the regulations of the Red Cross regarding confidentiality and also refrain, after the completion of the task, from disclosing anything learned about an individual's situation.