

**SAFE
SECURE
WELL**

**Standards to facilitate
the safety, security and
well-being of volunteers.**

IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies is the world's largest volunteer-based humanitarian network. With our member National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies worldwide, we are in virtually every community reaching more than 160 million people annually through long-term services and development programmes and 110 million people through disaster response and early recovery programmes.

We act before, during and after disasters and health emergencies to meet the needs and improve vulnerable people's lives. We do so with impartiality as to nationality, race, gender, religious beliefs, class and political opinions.

Guided by Strategy 2030 – our collective plan of action to tackle this decade's humanitarian and development challenges – we are committed to saving lives and changing minds. Our strength lies in our volunteer network, our community-based expertise and our independence and neutrality. We work to improve humanitarian standards as partners in development and response to disasters. We persuade decision-makers to act at all times in the interests of vulnerable people. The result: we enable healthy and safe communities, reduce vulnerabilities, strengthen resilience and foster a culture of peace around the world.

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IFRC Volunteering Alliance Working Group on Volunteering in Dangerous Situations.

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Graphic design: Heed & Heed AB, helene@heedaheed.se, Stockholm, Sweden.

The IFRC Volunteering Alliance and its working group on volunteering in dangerous situations developed this implementation guide.

International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

P.O. Box 372
CH-1211 Geneva 19 Switzerland

Telephone:
+41 22 730 4222

Telefax:
+41 22 733 0395

E-mail:
secretariat@ifrc.org

Web site:
<http://www.ifrc.org>

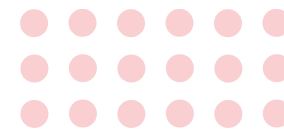


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INTRODUCTION

“A global network that nurtures voluntary action to deliver dynamic, flexible, and value-based humanitarian services and to serve people and communities in need, locally, globally and across generations, in line with our Fundamental Principles. Supported by a leadership that creates and measures the enabling conditions for inclusive, safe and secure, and innovative engagement, and provides opportunities for a diverse group of volunteers, representing the diversity of their own countries, to learn from each other and act together, locally and across the globe.”

*Vision for volunteering adopted by the
IFRC Governing Board, May 2021.*

National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (National Societies) support people and communities through an extensive network of volunteers reaching almost every corner of the world. Individuals across all contexts are interested in contributing to improving their living conditions. National Societies can support and enhance this interest. To respond to this interest means opening up for people to join as volunteers and invest in expanding the volunteer base's diversity. Perhaps it also means re-imagining volunteering and how people participate in society and develop flexible, open and complementary approaches that create a more effective network of humanitarians working for the global good.

National Societies recruit, manage and support most volunteers in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (the Movement). In turn, the capacity and effectiveness of a National Society are directly related to mobilising, maintaining, supporting, and empowering volunteers. The global Strategy 2030 of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) envisions several changes in the coming years for National Societies to remain dynamic and fit for purpose to accompany people and communities. Through this strategy, National Societies reinforce the commitment to strengthen the volunteer management approaches and develop more accessible and inclusive pathways to participation and ever more effective support and recognition for volunteers' work.

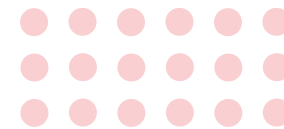
Nurturing the volunteer base is vital to ensure that a range of essential services can be provided, particularly in complex environments. National Societies, being leading humanitarian volunteer organisations working in such environments and situations, must also prioritise their duty of care towards volunteers. It means to ensure the well-being, safety and protection of volunteers. One of the signals of success is strengthened mechanisms to prevent casualties, injury and trauma to volunteers, promote mental well-being and provide support to those injured or, in extreme cases, to the families of those killed in the line of duty.

Volunteers safety, security and well-being – essential but under-resourced

Prioritising the safety and well-being of humanitarian volunteers is at the top of the Movement's agenda. However, many National Societies face significant challenges in implementing this vision at the national and local levels. Current statistics reflect this reality: from 2016 to 2019, the Movement reported 93 staff and volunteers' deaths. This global data does not reflect the much larger number of injured, mentally traumatised or stigmatised, in addition to possible unreported cases of employees and volunteers killed in the line of duty.

This Movement's commitment is vital for protecting local volunteers who usually do not have the option of a safe exit when crises escalate, unlike international humanitarian actors. On the one hand, being local can facilitate access; on the other hand, it can also expose volunteers to increased risks and vulnerability.

There is an obvious need for advancing the safety, security and well-being of volunteers, and many National Societies lack the appropriate systems and resources to do so. This gap can result in systemic deficiencies in the volunteers' access to essential rights, such as proper insurance, other safety nets, and psychosocial support. Despite these challenges, many National Societies have embraced the concept of duty of care. Therefore, they invest in the constant improvement of organisational capacities to protect, promote and recognise their volunteers.



A challenging ethical and moral task to keep volunteers safe and motivated

Keeping volunteers safe and well is one of the most challenging ethical and moral tasks of volunteer-involving organisations. It is essential that the National Society leadership champion and advocate for their duty of care toward volunteers through consistent actions and solutions and encouraging partners to support. Implementing measures to provide support, systems, and tools allow volunteers to thrive and foster their resilience. When organisations systematically implement their duty of care, they strengthen the volunteers' resilience and reinforce their motivation to provide life-saving services and continuously drive community development.

Factor in the external and internal hazards and risks.

Volunteering exposes volunteers to many risks and hazards such as robbery, mental, sexual and physical assault. In addition, emergencies and conflicts often increase and worsen existing societal gender inequalities, violent behaviours and the incidence of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Incidents can happen in the volunteer activity with beneficiaries and people reached by volunteer services. However, it can also be violence, bullying, or sexual assault by other volunteers and staff. This "volunteer workplace" violence and abuse does not only happen when carrying out volunteer services but can also occur at, e.g. training, team-building activities, social events, through phone calls, and social media.

The Movement calls upon National Societies to adopt and enforce zero-tolerance policies on sexual exploitation and abuse of beneficiaries by staff and volunteers and subject these individuals to sanctions for their actions. Therefore, the Movement calls on to make every possible effort to make capacity-building on preventing and responding to sexual and gender-based violence one of their priorities, including explicitly training staff and volunteers at all levels.

Volunteers can expect the same zero-tolerance within the organisation. Both staff and volunteers have vital roles to play to keep volunteer spaces free of all types of violence. However, addressing their security, safety, and well-being requires needs-based tailoring of efforts based on volunteers sex, gender, and other factors, including age, disability, sexual orientation, health status, legal status and ethnicity.

Volunteers spend many hours in the National Society, and if they feel it and activities are unsafe, it builds distrust, fear, conflict and limited productivity. Instead, a safe and friendly environment nurtures respect, creativity, commitment, and productivity. Therefore, do not forget to work with both the internal and external perspectives when looking at the thirteen standards.

A guide facilitating the security, safety and well-being of volunteers

The IFRC commits to ensuring the well-being, safety and protection of volunteers, and one concrete action is the formulation of these standards. The IFRC Volunteering Alliance developed this implementation

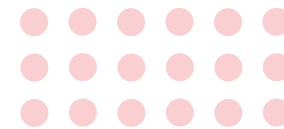
guide to facilitate and support developing agile, vibrant and contemporary volunteer-based National Societies.

The guide sets out the minimum standards for volunteer management to keep volunteers safe, secure and well. The thirteen standards are developed based on the IFRC volunteering policy and other Movement decisions and recommendations adopted by the International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

These standards describe the essential elements of principled, accountable and high-quality volunteer management that safeguard and care for the volunteer's safety, security and well-being. It is a practical tool for National Societies and their partners seeking to develop volunteering capacity and effectiveness.

These standards aim to guide and align the organisation's policies, procedures, and systems and serve as a basis for benchmarking performance, prioritise focus areas, and track the volunteering development progress. Ultimately, volunteers are at the centre of the standards, promoting the importance of external volunteer enabling environments.

Although primarily intended for the Movement, any volunteer-involving or volunteering provider can use the standards to enhance quality and promote greater accountability to different aspects of the work with volunteers.



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Each National Society identifies its own volunteering development needs and set of priorities. The Movement has developed different assessment modalities where National Society representatives delve into where the organisation stands to agreed benchmarks. These assessment tools cover aspects of the safety, security and well-being of volunteers. This implementation guide focuses on factors relating to both regular and spontaneous volunteers' safety, security, and well-being compared to these other assessment tools.

This implementation guide aspires to be a useful resource in the day-to-day National Society volunteering development. There are many ways to work with this tool.

As a reference material, use it as a resource to see what exists and explore how to use them at work.

As a discussion opener, be the one that initiates discussions. Choose from thirteen topics. Pick one and bring it up for discussion at a break with colleagues, in a team meeting or, why not, at a governing board meeting.

As an assessment tool, bring together a diverse group of people and systematically work through the thirteen standards and determine where the organisation stands.

As a learning resource, standards place the volunteers at the centre, so use it as a foundation for volunteers, governance and staff to learn more about improving the safety, security and well-being of volunteers.

As a planning and evaluation tool, the guide is a comprehensive set of indicators describing different levels. Choose the levels to strive for and evaluate how the organisation succeeded in reaching them.

As an advocacy tool, these standards' roots lie in the Movement policies and resolutions adopted at the global level. Use this when advocating for a volunteer-enabling environment and promoting volunteer-friendly organisations.

ORGANIZE A STUDY-CIRCLE

Why not organise study-circles to create a space for learning on how to implement the standards in your National Society?

Bring together a group of people and explore the volunteering standards. The idea behind a study-circle is that everyone involved shares their knowledge, experience, and learns together. The goal is to deepen the participant's understanding of an issue.

Find more inspiration on how to run a study circle in the toolbox.



Photo: Corrie Butler, IFRC

THE THIRTEEN STANDARDS



1 DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEERING

The National Society defines a volunteer within the organisation, their roles, and differentiates between staff and volunteers.



2 CODE OF CONDUCT

The National Society ensures that all volunteers can comply with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.



3 DATA ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

The National Society collects data about all volunteers, including their sex, age and disability, relevant to safety, security and management.



4 RISK MANAGEMENT

The National Society continuously reviews potential threats to their volunteers to ensure that plans, programmes and activities include measures to reduce and mitigate these risks.



5 SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

The National Society trains all volunteers in relevant safety procedures and protocols, including using any necessary protective equipment.



6 INCIDENT MONITORING

The National Society develops and maintains a national system to collect and disseminate data relevant to the volunteers' safety, security, and well-being.



7 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The National Society provides all volunteers with adequate safety and security-related information and guidance.



8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The National Society provides all volunteers with protective equipment and training on its correct use.



9 SECURITY AND SAFETY TRAINING

The National Society provides all volunteers with the necessary security and safety-related training.



10 SAFETY NETS AND INSURANCE

The National Society ensures that all volunteers have an adequate "safety net" regarding death, injury, sickness and trauma.



11 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The National Society give all volunteers psychosocial support and equips them with the necessary skills, tools and supervision.



12 WORKING TIME

The National Society has policies and procedures that guide working hours for volunteers to ensure that they are supported and adequately managed.



13 COMPENSATION AND ALLOWANCES

The National Society reimburses volunteers for reasonable expenditure required for the volunteering.

TIER A

The compliance is not meeting the minimum standards and requires immediate attention.

TIER B

Performance meets some of the expected compliance with the minimum standards.

TIER C

Performance is complying with the minimum standards expressed in the Movement's policies, decisions, and frameworks.

TIER D

Performance exceeds expected compliance with the minimum standards, and the practice in the National Society can add value to other sister societies.

TIER E

Compliance and practice exceed set expectations, and the National Society is encouraged to share experiences and knowledge with the Movement and other volunteer-involving organisations.

The thirteen standards consist of indicators at different levels describing the situation and performance of the National Society. There are five levels;

Tiers A and B describe a situation or performance that does not meet the expected compliance.

Tier C describes the organisation complying with the minimum standards expressed in existing policies and frameworks in the Movement.

Tiers D and E display that the organisation exceeds the minimum expectations. These levels also recognise that the organisation has valuable experiences shareable with other National Societies or volunteer-involving organisations.

In other words, meeting Tier B is needed before advancing to Tier C. Tier D assumes reaching both Tier B and Tier C.



Photo: The American National Red Cross



TIER A

TIER B

The National Society uses the IFRC definition of a volunteer and volunteering.

TIER C

The National Society has a Volunteering Policy or equivalent, based on that of the IFRC and adapted to the local context and legislation. The policy clarifies the roles, rights, and responsibilities of volunteers.

TIER D

The National Society has specific policies regarding different categories of volunteers and clarifies staff and volunteers' roles.

TIER E

The National Society works with other volunteer-involving organisations and other external actors to create and promote conducive national volunteering legislation.

1 DEFINITION OF VOLUNTEER AND VOLUNTEERING



The National Society defines a volunteer within the organisation, their roles, and differentiates between staff and volunteers.

Volunteerism is often deeply rooted in cultural motivations, and in Society, there is generally a positive attitude towards volunteers and volunteering. Volunteerism embeds in the web of Society and usually takes place through traditional concepts.

Community volunteerism plays a crucial role and often represents a safety net where the state does not provide the required social services and social protection mechanisms. The Red Cross and Red Crescent volunteering builds on this traditional local volunteering and complements it with new mechanisms and tools to add value to communities.

The Movement globally agreed on a volunteering definition, which sometimes National Societies face challenges in adapting to a national context. However, for volunteers' security, safety, and well-being, a National Society needs to define and explain who a volunteer is and what volunteering is.

The National Society statutes often outline the volunteer definition, the requirements to become a volunteer, and maintain this condition. Official documentation of the National Society typically outlines volunteers' rights and responsibilities and is easily accessible to anyone interested in joining the organisation. The rights and duties present an ethical rather than contractual commitment between the organisation and the volunteers. However, it reinforces the volunteers' commitment to serving in the communities when they clearly understand their role and functions within the organisation.

The Statutes must define the organisation's membership in a way that distinguishes members from staff and volunteers. This separation does not imply that members cannot be volunteers or staff, but these roles are distinct. In addition to the National Society Statutes, other documents that can define a volunteer's definition are a Volunteer Service Policy, a Volunteering Policy, a Volunteer Charter, or an applicable National Volunteering Law.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?



2 CODE OF CONDUCT

The National Society ensures that all volunteers can comply with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Movement expects National Societies to provide the volunteers with a contextualised Code of Conduct. It is a guiding principle that keeps the relationships balanced between the National Society and the volunteers by ensuring mutual respect. It also helps to ensure a commitment to developing and supporting volunteer involvement that benefits both the organisation and the volunteers.

The Movement is committed to creating safe environments free of harm or threat to the dignity of the volunteers, staff, and the people served. The National Society Code of Conduct for Volunteers reflects this commitment allowing everyone who volunteers and works with volunteers to be aware of their responsibilities. It is an essential part of safeguarding and allowing for a volunteer-friendly organisation. Given the specific country contexts, the Code of Conduct must explain how to carry out the Fundamental Principles and use the Emblem correctly in the volunteering activities.

A useful Code of Conduct explains in simple language, what the National Society commits to doing for its volunteers, and what the volunteers, in turn, commit to doing for their organisation. National Societies must be sensitive to different levels of literacy among the volunteers. Volunteers need to understand what the Code of Conduct means in practice and illustrated examples can help understand what it means. Volunteers formally sign and accept the Code of Conduct as a gesture that they have recognised and promise to act per the code.

The National Society is taking responsibility for volunteers seriously when revisiting and adopting the Code of Conduct. In return, the National Society expects volunteers to take their responsibilities seriously. The IFRC Volunteering Policy, Volunteer Charter and Code of Conduct are valuable references for developing and refining behaviour codes. However, a contemporary Volunteer Code of Conduct also incorporates relevant and emerging in-country developments and volunteers' feedback.

Some countries have National Volunteering Standards and Code of Conduct set collectively by volunteer organisations. These standards and codes can be helpful benchmarks for a National Society.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The IFRC Volunteer Charter is accessible to all volunteers and presented to volunteers during the induction to their roles.

TIER C

The National Society has a Code of Conduct or equivalent and includes the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and a Child Protection aspect. All volunteers understand the Code of Conduct, and the National Society document their agreement to comply with it.

TIER D

The National Society revise the Code of Conduct or equivalent according to emerging relevant developments and volunteers' feedback.

TIER E

The National Society has compliance mechanisms and regularly revises the Code of Conduct in cooperation with the Movement and external stakeholders.

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society branches keep and updates at least once a year a list of volunteers.

TIER C

The National Society consolidates at least once a year at the national level a list of all volunteers.

TIER D

The National Society consolidates the volunteers' list at least twice a year, including their sex, age, and disability, including additional information such as skills and the security and safety training background.

TIER E

The National Society has a volunteer database system updated and accessible in real-time. The database system provides statistics on volunteers, disaggregated by sex, age and disability.

3 DATA ABOUT VOLUNTEERS

The National Society collects data about all volunteers, including their sex, age and disability, relevant to safety, security and management.



The Movement expects National Societies to collect and manage essential data about volunteers. Systematic management of volunteer data facilitates safety and security management and provides data on how many volunteers the safety net should cover. Registering a volunteer in the National Society records is also one of the primary ways of giving recognition.

The volunteers' information is necessary for the National Society volunteer managers, the governance and management to understand who volunteers are and how to support them and their voluntary actions. The minimum data covered is the name, age, disability, sex, physical address, contact information, and whom to contact in case of emergency.

Some National Societies use analogue approaches and have standardised paper forms. This approach is instrumental when internet connectivity is not working well or unavailable. Other National Societies have invested in digitalised volunteer data management. Combining analogue and digital volunteer data management provides a National Society with an opportunity to be agile and flexible, particularly in an emergency or disaster situation when internet access can be difficult.

The volunteers' information and data must be regularly updated, considering the dynamic nature of volunteer engagement. Volunteers must always have access to their data and request the National Society to delete or edit personal information. A priority for a National Society is to protect and keep the data confidential.

It is possible to add more data about the volunteers and their activities such as special skills, the type of volunteer activity they are interested in, training records, number of hours given as a volunteer and much more. Manage and analyse the volunteer data combined with other data, e.g. geographical data such as hazard risks, population density, rainfall frequency, and topography, to facilitate more informed humanitarian relief and activities planning.

General online volunteer and volunteering management systems are available on the public market, and some are also available to download for offline usage. These systems are accessible for annual fees, and the price is often related to the number of volunteers registered in the database.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?



TIER A

TIER B

The National Society identifies threats and risks to the volunteers due to occurring incidents/ accidents.

TIER C

The National Society has standardised systematic procedures to analyse threats and risks to volunteers and implements preventive actions accordingly.

TIER D

The National Society monitors and documents the potential threats and risks to the volunteers and implements risk-mitigating actions.

TIER E

The National Society shares information on their analysis of threats and risks with relevant authorities, the Movement and other volunteer-involving organisations working in similar contexts.

4 RISK MANAGEMENT

The National Society continuously reviews potential threats to their volunteers to ensure that plans, programmes and activities include measures to reduce and mitigate these risks.

The Movement expects the National Societies to carry out continuous volunteer risk management, identifying and minimising risk factors. Integrating a method for managing these risks in volunteer management is a concrete and practical step to create positive opportunities for the volunteers and the National Society. The process is often to identify, analyse, evaluate, treat, and monitor risk factors. One of the challenging aspects of the process is identifying potential risks.

Volunteers in the Movement work in different environments and face risks like any other humanitarian actors. These and other risks increase in disasters and health emergencies. However, in armed conflicts and situations of violence are these risks significantly elevated. By managing risks, a National Society can increase the safety, security and well-being of volunteers, improve retention rates, and advance the reputation and public perception.

A National Society must explore, understand, and monitor the security situation to minimise risks and improve volunteers' resilience. Ultimately, in the day-to-day volunteer activities, the local volunteer leader's responsibility is to assess and monitor the security situation and manage risks. However, for volunteer leaders and volunteers to fulfil their roles, the National Society is responsible for systematically supporting and providing guidance.

Risk management information is time-sensitive, and the longer it goes unnoticed and unmanaged, the more

dangerous it can become. Therefore, to manage this effectively, the National Society continuously collects, tracks and analyses information and communicates this throughout the organisation. Likewise, volunteer leaders and volunteers are encouraged to report and share information with this central function.

National Societies can access several security and safety resources within and outside the Movement. Most of these resources need to be adapted and localised to develop a security awareness culture and promote a "security-first" approach before, during and after volunteer activities. Some National Societies have developed local security and safety guidance and training as a prevention tool to enhance the security and well-being of volunteers and staff and those receiving the support. They distribute and explain such resources to active and new volunteers and staff as part of their introduction.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?





5 SAFETY PROCEDURES AND PROTOCOLS

The National Society trains all volunteers in relevant safety procedures and protocols, including using any necessary protective equipment.

The Movement expects the National Societies to train volunteers in the safety procedures and protocols to promote a culture of safety and provide operational support to volunteers.

A prerequisite for this is that each National Society has and provides the volunteers with procedures and protocols, accounting for three different security scenarios.

Reasonable risk – a low-intensity situation during regular activities

Increased risk – an emergency, crisis or disaster situation

Highly elevated risk – a high-intensity situation such as an armed conflict, internal disturbances, escalating violence, lawlessness and assaults against National Society staff and volunteers

Most National Societies work in situations or scenarios of reasonable or increased risk. However, given the Red Cross and Red Crescent mandate, a National Society similarly has to establish easy-to-understand procedures for all possible scenarios.

Appropriate safety and security procedures equip volunteers with the capability to provide services without compromising their and fellow volunteers' physical and mental well-being. A National Society introduces all volunteers to these procedures and protocols through briefings, basic training and regular refresher training. These opportunities increase the volunteers' ability to respond appropriately to risks.

The safety and security protocol also defines and standardises what protective equipment volunteers use in different activities to ensure equal access throughout the organisation according to tasks and functions. Through the regular revision of the protocol and procedures and involving volunteers, a National Society learns from experiences and systematically manages the risk in a changing context.

The Movement has several resources to inform and support the National Society development of the safety and security strategy, protocol and procedures. The Safer Access Framework is a lens to examine the National Society and the external environment to understand access, perception, acceptance and security. The Stay Safe guide for volunteers and security managers is a tool to implement and maintain a security framework adapted to a specific context.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides volunteer leaders and volunteers with basic safety procedures.

TIER C

The National Society has documented basic safety procedures and protocols, building on recommended Movement practice, which is part of all volunteers' basic training.

TIER D

The National Society has detailed documented safety procedures and protocols systematically revised according to institutional standards, including feedback from volunteers.

TIER E

The safety procedures and protocols are in line with Movement standards. The National Society shares its practices within the Movement and with external actors.

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society collects information about incidents regarding death and physical injury to volunteers.

TIER C

The National Society has a standardised incident reporting system and procedures to collect, record and report detailed information regarding volunteer incidents. The National Society has adequate data protection mechanisms in line with applicable national law.

TIER D

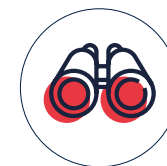
The National Society implements mechanisms to annually analyse safety, security and well-being incident data to inform risk mitigation actions. The National Society consolidates data and regularly shares it with Movement partners.

TIER E

The National Society shares consolidated incident data with external stakeholders.

6 INCIDENT REPORTING

The National Society develops and maintains a national system to collect and disseminate data relevant to the volunteers' safety, security, and well-being.



National Societies have an essential task to collect and analyse data relevant to incidents about their volunteers. This management of volunteer incident information is a vital part of the broader risk management of the National Society, which aims to support organisational security to improve access to populations in need.

The Movement also encourages the States to develop and maintain national systems to collect and disseminate comprehensive data relevant to humanitarian volunteers' safety and security. In this work, National Societies can contribute by sharing volunteer incident data to create a protective and volunteer-enabling environment.

Proactively mapping, tracking, and analysing volunteer incidents helps understand where to best place energy and resources to minimise volunteers' risks. However, even if using this information to inform immediate reaction and response to an incident, equally important is to implement lessons learned after it.

A systematic National Society uses the data to understand the shifting and evolving nature of the context. The National Society develops some of the incident data and uses other external data in this work. Giving access and sharing the analysis widely throughout the National Society can facilitate strategic decision-making and include volunteer leaders and volunteers in general in the processes.

Different functions in the National Society work together with the incident data. A team in the National Society with joint ownership of the data can take stock of the changing nature of incidents and understand the overall risk exposure. Cross-organisational analysis and self-reflection help to understand what happened in an incident and if changes and procedures are required to reduce risks and avoid similar future events.

Several security management resources exist in the Movement, and other volunteer-involving organisations often share their materials. Most of these resources describe similar data to be collected and used for reporting and monitoring systems, both internally and externally, across the organisation and the humanitarian volunteering sector.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?



7 ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

The National Society provides all volunteers with adequate safety and security-related information and guidance.

The Movement expects the National Societies to make information about safety and security freely available for volunteers to use in their day-to-day decision-making. Smooth and timely access to updated information can prove crucial for the individual volunteer. Appropriate communication channels must be set in place for volunteers to access information and, if necessary, request additional information and resources.

A valuable and inexpensive tool is a weekly security update sent via e-mail, SMS or voice message to volunteers and volunteer leaders. Similarly, the IFRC Global Security Unit distributes a weekly global e-mail update and makes it available at the IFRC Fed Net.

A briefing or welcome pack for new volunteers can include a summary of the security situation, the main threats and risks, any rules and regulations, whom to contact in case of an incident and where to find current information.

All volunteers require some form of training. Providing security-related information and guidelines is critical to prepare volunteers for all potential risk scenarios, regardless of their preferred role.

The security situation can change rapidly, and that requires adjustments in how volunteers act and mobilise. When such cases happen, specific guidelines can help volunteers cope with the situation and respond more safely and securely. Prepare in advance and share the practical guidelines with volunteers when security situations change.

Include the information and guidelines in a briefing or welcome pack. It may be unreasonable for new volunteers to be fully aware of everything, notably spontaneous, and in these cases, ensure to match new volunteers with experienced volunteers.

The Movement has developed practical, helpful guidance for National Societies when supporting and guiding volunteers. Two valuable materials are the IFRC guide – Stay Safe for Security Managers and the ICRC Staying Alive – Safety and Security Guidelines for Humanitarian Volunteers in Conflict Areas.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides contextual information and safety and security guidance to their regular volunteers.

TIER C

The National Society provides open and freely accessible sources of information and guidance to all volunteers.

TIER D

The National Society has standardised communications and support channels and mechanisms, transparent and knowledgeable of all volunteers.

TIER E

The National Society has systematic approaches to peer-to-peer support and multilevel, multidirectional feedback mechanisms. The National Society shares this information within the Movement and external actors working in similar contexts.



Photo: Victor Lacken, IFRC



8 PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

The National Society provides all volunteers with protective equipment and training on its correct use.

The Movement calls upon National Societies to provide their volunteers with the best protective equipment. This call originates from the fact that many volunteers work in challenging situations and often lack appropriate protective equipment. Providing access to adequate equipment and training on how to use it can positively impact the volunteers' well-being. It can foster a sense among volunteers that the National Society cares for them at the same time as it minimises risks.

As hazards and risks exist in every volunteer activity and come in many forms, incidents are likely to happen, especially in the context of conflicts or emergencies. Even though risks can be mitigated or prevented through appropriate risk assessments and mechanisms, activities can represent significant hazards to volunteers. These situations require the use of proper protective equipment defined for each volunteer assignment considering the context and the duty of care. The volunteers should, without exception, have access to the right equipment. Consider redesigning the volunteer activity if it is not feasible to support the volunteer with the right equipment.

Finding the right equipment is necessary. Too much equipment or the use of expensive material can expose the volunteer to robbery, theft or even increased risk-taking behaviour. On the other hand, the use of low-grade protective equipment, for example, in epidemics, can result in volunteers catching or spreading disease.

Personal protective equipment is necessary to keep the volunteers safe and to avoid injury or infection.

Protective gear can include items as Red Cross Red Crescent identification-card, apron or bib with the National Society logo or protective Emblem, gloves, rubber-boots with toe-protection, eye-protection (safety-goggles), protective hearing devices (earplugs, muffs) hard hats/caps, respirators/face masks, work-wear (uniform), life-jackets and much more.

Many different standards exist regulating personal protective equipment, and the government often regulates the minimum. However, all clothing and equipment should be of safe design, comfortable and easy to maintain.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides basic protective equipment to its volunteers when the capacity allows for it.

TIER C

According to the different volunteering roles, the National Society develops internal standards for personal protective equipment and provides the minimum equipment and handling training for all volunteers.

TIER D

The National Society has feedback mechanisms for volunteers regarding access to protective equipment to improve the standards.

TIER E

The National Society systematically revises and aligns the national standards with international protective equipment standards and shares their best practices with the Movement and volunteer-involving organisations working in similar contexts.

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides safety and security training to volunteers before deploying them.

TIER C

The National Society provides all volunteers with standardised generic safety and security training during the induction process.

TIER D

The National Society contextualises and gives all volunteers safety and security training and refreshers training at least every three years.

TIER E

The National Society provides volunteers with feedback mechanisms to improve safety and security training contents according to identified needs, community perception of the organisation and engagement with external actors.

9 SECURITY AND SAFETY TRAINING

The National Society provides all volunteers with the necessary security and safety-related training.

The Movement expects the National Societies to train their volunteers. It is a critical step in diminishing potential risks and provides necessary information on the principles and procedures of the Movement. Some national laws even make orientation and training events mandatory for the volunteers.

Providing volunteers with appropriate training enables them to meet their responsibilities towards the Movement and the role recruited for and work in potential emergency response activities. Organising ongoing training for volunteers also facilitates the National Society assessment of their ability to undertake functions and roles.

Standardising the National Society training curriculum gives a possibility to ensure the same quality for all volunteers. Many National Societies provide an introductory induction course to all volunteers, including the Fundamental Principles, Protection Gender/Diversity Inclusion (PGI), Basic First Aid, and knowledge about the Movement. This course is delivered either in person or as a virtual online course.

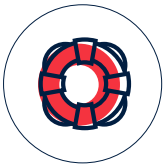
Before volunteers take up their duties, volunteers should also receive security and safety training. The basic level can be through an online course. The IFRC Learning Platform gives access to many different pieces of training in several languages. Unfortunately, there is still a sizeable digital gap in many countries, and the IFRC is working to find alternative means to reach out with such training.



Still, in-person training allows the volunteer to learn how to react consciously, rely on self-awareness and use personal experiences. The context must define what kind of training the volunteer access. Volunteers might, therefore, benefit from learning about landmines and how to behave at a checkpoint.

Even if the Movement provides access to generic training, many National Societies develop contextualised materials and training to adapt the language level to ensure that volunteers fully can benefit and make use of the learning. Do not forget that some training requires constant refreshment to guarantee the volunteer's appropriate knowledge and skills.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?



10 SAFETY NETS AND INSURANCE

The National Society ensures that all volunteers have an adequate “safety net” regarding death, injury, sickness and trauma.

The Movement urges the National Societies to acknowledge and uphold their duty of care towards volunteers, especially if something should happen to them while carrying out their duties. However, not all volunteers are insured or covered by a “safety net” despite the risks they face. The National Society must define the kind of coverage they will provide for the volunteers within the duty of care.

Volunteers rely on their National Societies to take the duty of care responsibly. A National Society may have to compensate volunteers or their families if they are injured or killed while providing humanitarian services.

“Safety net” models within National Societies vary according to contexts. In some countries can National Societies choose between a wide range of insurance schemes and safety net modalities. In other countries, finding one solution is a difficult task. In one National Society, it can mean providing the volunteers with national volunteer accident insurance. Another National Society can find it difficult to access local insurances, and the IFRC, therefore, provides access to a global volunteer accident insurance scheme. The testimonies of volunteers and their National Societies highlights that prompt payment of compensation and reimbursement is essential. Paying for acute medical care is often a challenge for many volunteers, and it is necessary to find a solution for this when designing the “safety net.”

Some National Societies develop their local solutions and cover additional needs such as disability, sickness

and mental health. It can be useful to include preventive functions as necessary health checks, medical advice and vaccinations. Financial compensation and legal costs might also be paid to other than volunteers if they suffer harm due to volunteer actions.

Some National Societies establish national volunteer solidarity funds. It is a mechanism that functions as an insurance scheme, and the National Society decide the regulations for use and governs the support given. The involvement of volunteers and external partners as part of the solidarity funds’ governance safeguards accountability and equal treatment.

The level of liability and the compensation given depend on the legal system in each country. Seek local specialist advice when designing the volunteer safety net to ensure the sustainability of the scheme.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides financial reimbursement or compensation to volunteers who have been injured or died while carrying out their volunteering activities.

TIER C

The National Society has standardised a local mechanism to provide all volunteers with timely support in case of injury or death while carrying out their volunteering activities.

TIER D

The National Society has a mechanism covering disability, sickness, and mental health due to volunteers’ service incidents.

TIER E

The National Society has complemented its coverage mechanisms with external insurance to ensure independent management of claims and transfer of risks.





11 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

The National Society give all volunteers psychosocial support and equips them with the necessary skills, tools and supervision.

The Movement calls upon National Societies to protect and promote the mental health and psychosocial well-being of volunteers responding to humanitarian needs. These measures equip the volunteers with the necessary skills, tools and supervision to cope with stressful situations and respond to their specific mental health and psychosocial needs.

The mental health and psychosocial well-being of volunteers responding to humanitarian needs are often affected as they are exposed to risks and potentially traumatic events and work under stressful conditions. The well-being of volunteers is vital to providing sustainable and quality services.

Through volunteering activities, volunteers can be exposed to trauma and suffering and find themselves comforting people with significant needs. Volunteers work in challenging situations. When doing that, they often put aside their own needs even though they may experience the same losses and grief in their families and communities as the people they support. Evidence suggests that stress and trauma impact volunteers more than some of their paid staff counterparts. The emotional effects of volunteering can live on, but volunteers rarely have access to the psychosocial support that paid, and particularly international aid workers, can access.

Psychosocial support to volunteers evolved as a critical intervention area for many National Societies, mainly after evidence gathered on the experiences of volunteers who worked in pandemics, with displaced

communities and in armed conflicts or emergency response operations. Many National Societies take crucial action to institutionalise support and combined learning opportunities for volunteers with external referral mechanisms and internal follow-up. Psychological first aid training for all volunteers is a fundamental building block of the National Society's psychosocial support system.

The Movement and the IFRC's Psychosocial Centre developed several resources to help National Societies establish and institutionalise psychosocial support systems. National Societies use the Caring for Volunteers: A Psychosocial Support Toolkit since it contains practical tools and information on preparing for crises, communication and psychological first aid, peer support and monitoring and evaluation.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society provides psychosocial first aid to volunteers affected by an incident.

TIER C

The National Society has implemented a standardised psychosocial support mechanism providing volunteers with psychosocial support and training for peer-to-peer support.

TIER D

The National Society psychosocial support mechanisms are sustainable in the long-term and regularly revised according to volunteers' feedback.

TIER E

The National Society assists with the psychosocial support within the Movement and other organisations working in similar contexts. Specialised psychosocial services are also available for volunteers through an established referral system.

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society has mechanisms in place to track volunteers' invested hours.

TIER C

According to relevant national legislation, the National Society practice and procedures ensure that volunteers are aware of and have adequate rest time and do not engage more than a full-time employee's working time.

TIER D

The National Society has procedures to ensure that when a volunteer is requested to work as many hours as a full-time employee according to national laws, it formalises a change in the volunteer's status and complies with the national legislation.

TIER E

The National Society systematically shares its volunteer working time regulations with stakeholders and external actors working in similar contexts.

12 WORKING TIME

The National Society has policies and procedures that guide working hours for volunteers to ensure that they are supported and adequately managed.



The National Society needs to limit each volunteer's time investment to a few hours a week to ensure that the volunteering balance family life and work commitments. The time people volunteer might increase in a disaster and emergency, and the conditions can be risky and stressful. The duty of care of the National Society to the volunteers includes actions as time-management to promote well-being and avoid long-term exhaustion and burnout.

Volunteers in the Movement work on average three-four hours per week, occasionally increasing during limited periods. Different motivational factors can drive volunteers to work many hours and place unintended competing demands on the individual's time. The intention is that volunteering experiences are positive and fulfilling rather than preventing volunteers from investing time in employment or education. Together National Societies and volunteers can define time-investment expectations and agree on monitoring and managing the working hours. The National Society safeguard that partner organisations working with their volunteers respect this.

Most people want to volunteer in their local communities and give time regularly. The essence of successful volunteer programmes is creating simple, rewarding tasks that require a little time commitment. When designing a local volunteer programme or activity in the Movement, set a maximum volunteering time per volunteer per week. In exceptional situations, such as in emergencies, volunteer programmes may need volunteers to invest more time for a limited period.

The national legislation sometimes regulates the number of working hours of volunteers and prescribes the rest time required between volunteering shifts. Many National Societies invest in having un-paid local volunteers to lead other volunteers in the activities.

Hire casual or contracted workers in activities when requiring part-time or full-time commitment over an extended period. This approach reduces the risk of using volunteers as underpaid labour. Some volunteers might want to step in as casual or contracted workers, and the change of status from volunteers to a paid position ensures compliance with the country's relevant laws. In some countries, employment's contractual nature carries legal implications such as a minimum wage, rights to the end of contract payments, and tax obligations. National Societies must fulfil these obligations and not waive them by the change in "employee" status to "volunteer."

Clear guidance, developed together with the volunteers, helps the National Society establish a sustainable model to manage volunteer teams and invest.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?



13 COMPENSATION AND ALLOWANCES

The National Society reimburses volunteers for reasonable expenditure required for the volunteering.

The Movement expects volunteers not to gain or lose out economically when carrying out volunteering for the National Society. Volunteers often set aside their own needs and priorities and those of their families who may be equally vulnerable. The legitimacy and assumed advantages that come with the label of being a volunteer in many ways disguise their sufferings and vulnerabilities, whose coping capacity and ability to recover may be as fragile as the people that they assist.

Volunteers often have to pay for expenses out of their own pockets. When this is the case, National Societies should clearly define the conditions, acceptable costs and procedures to refund these pre-approved expenses if the volunteer so wishes. This reimbursement mechanism also helps remove financial barriers to volunteering for those who, otherwise, might not be able to afford it.

Transparent procedures facilitate a positive relationship between the National Society and the volunteer. A National Society must have clear guidelines and procedures for handling expenses claims. Any payments made to volunteers above actual costs incurred may be subject to national employment and tax legislation.

In some situations, this reimbursement might compensate for lost earnings if the volunteer's regular employer is not paying the wage as a goodwill gesture. When asking a volunteer to engage on a full-time basis in such a situation period, such compensation must not be mistaken for a salary and employment. In these cases, it is vital to comply with the laws in the country.

WHAT IS YOUR PRESENT SITUATION?

TIER A

TIER B

The National Society compensates expenditures of volunteers, according to its capacities.

TIER C

The National Society has standardised procedures for compensation of expenditures and allowances for volunteers.

TIER D

The National Society has feedback mechanisms in place for volunteers regarding compensations and allowances and, according to this, systematically implements adjustments in the procedures.

TIER E

The National Society systematically revises its procedures to ensure the best possible practices and shares these with the Movement and external actors working in similar contexts.



Photo: Jose Manuel Jiménez, IFRC

THE TOOLBOX

Organise a study-circle on the standards

There are many different methods to use for adult learning, and one approach is study-circle. It is inexpensive, flexible and often called a self-study group. It is useful when you want a group of people to increase their knowledge and skills or tackle a specific problem or issue. The study-circle method assumes that every participant can contribute with their knowledge, experience and opinion.

The goal of the study circle is to deepen the participant's understanding of an issue. The model is useful when exploring subjects and topics where dialogue and discussion are more important than providing the "right" answer. One benefit of this approach is that you do not need a teacher or expert to facilitate the study-circle.

How does it work? A small group of people meet regularly, five to seven meetings over a period. They set aside two study-hours per session and include a short break in the middle.

The leader organising the study-circle can be one of the participants or from outside the group. It is not a teaching role; instead, it is about making sure that all participants in the study circle can contribute.

POSSIBLE STUDY CIRCLE PLAN

Session 1 Introduce the topic. Share experiences and decide the objectives – what do we as a group want to achieve? How do we want to work together? Draft a study plan and determine what material to use. Divide responsibilities and agree on the social rules in the group.

Session 2-3 Go deeper into the standards and assess the National Society's situation. Prioritise what to explore more and understand better.

Session 4-5 Select 2-3 standards to work more on and make plans for changing how the group works with these issues.

Session 6 Conclude the study-circle and evaluate how it worked out. What did we learn? Do we want to work on something new and perhaps plan a new study-circle?



Photo: S



Photo: Stefan Agerhem, SRC

Assess the situation in the National Society

How is the National Society doing when compared to these standards? Find out and carry out an assessment. It helps analyse the National Society's capacity, performance, quality and identify weaknesses or obstacles.

Before getting started, consider what the purpose and aim of the assessment are. This activity is the start of a process – plan for a follow-up of any action points. Invite a diverse group of staff and volunteers and encourage them to speak freely and contribute with many perspectives and experiences.

The participants must understand the need for assessment and be committed to and have a buy-in to the outcome. Do not forget to use the result of previous evaluations and lessons learned to inform this work.

After the assessment, agree on how to take forward the result. Develop a plan and share the outcomes with different stakeholders. Engage the National Society partners to support the development or adaptation of plans and existing capacities.

The idea with the standards and the assessment is to bring better quality and greater accountability to different aspects of the work with volunteers.

MORE ASSESSMENT TOOLS

OCAC The Organizational Capacity Assessment and Certification is a comprehensive assessment process. It is a diagnostic tool that helps National Societies assess the overall strengths and weaknesses and inform, prioritise and strengthen development efforts.

BOCA The Branch Organizational Capacity Assessment is a self-assessment tool developed for National Society branches. It helps identify and assess strengths and weaknesses concerning a wide range of organisational capacities, leading to strengthening relevant, focused and sustainable local services.

PER The Preparedness for Effective Response Capacity Assessment examines a National Society's response system components and identifies development areas.

SAF The Safer Access Framework Assessment and Planning tool provides a practical means to record the gaps, barriers, risks and challenges facing National Societies in carrying out their humanitarian work. It explores the existing context, recent experience and possible future scenarios and identifies the actions required to address them.

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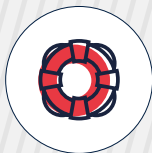
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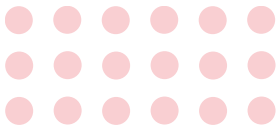


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RESOURCES AND FEEDBACK

This implementation guide relates to many different resources. Access these through the IFRC Volunteering Alliance webpage:

<https://media.ifrc.org/ifrc/what-we-do/volunteers/the-volunteering-alliance/>

and more resources at the webpage of the Initiative on Volunteering in Conflicts and Emergencies www.rcrcvice.org

If you want to get in contact and give feedback on this material, please send an e-mail to: volunteering@ifrc.org

The seven Fundamental Principles provide an ethical, operational and institutional framework for the work of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement around the world. They are at the core of the Movement's approach to helping people in need during armed conflict, natural disasters and other emergencies.

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 continue 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 one 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.