

Safety in the Finnish Red Cross's operations

Red Cross operators work in various environments from public spaces to closed institutions. Understanding the current safety level of a specific location is important in order to minimise the risks and increase the chance of completing an aid task.

The vast majority of the FRC's operations take place in low-risk environments, where the risks encountered are the same as in any ordinary setting. The FRC's local branches conduct a lot of aid work domestically. They provide emergency assistance during an evacuation and emotional support to accident victims and their loved ones, search for missing people and support the authorities during or immediately after accidents. In a local branch, the contact person for domestic aid is in charge of this service. Every FRC district has a preparedness leader, whose duties include the coordination of preparedness operations within the district.

The Red Cross must ensure a safe work environment for all its volunteers, aid recipients and employees. The organisation's operations are based on equality and the Data Protection Act, and no racism, bullying, corruption or sexual harassment is tolerated.

Every Red Cross volunteer should be able to:

- care for the safety of themselves and others around them,
- avoid dangerous situations while working for the Red Cross,
- react appropriately in a dangerous situation,
- be aware of the elements that the safety of Red Cross operators is based on,
- understand how safety routines can prevent accidents.

Furthermore, volunteers with special responsibilities must:

- ensure the safety of work and instruct the other volunteers to act safely,
- prevent dangerous situations from forming during work conducted for the Red Cross,
- create a safe operating culture and plan safe activities and events,
- be familiar with the Red Cross's instructions on promoting safe conduct (sexual harassment, safe environments for underaged children, filing a child welfare notification, data protection, Code of Ethics).

The basic principles of safety in the FRC

- You are the most important person when it comes to your safety. You have the main responsibility for your own safety.
- Always behave according to the values and principles of the Red Cross. Remember that while working for the Red Cross, you represent the entire organisation.
- Make sure that you have the latest instructions for your duties, as well as adequate and appropriate equipment.
- Leave the scene if a situation becomes threatening or dangerous. Seek help, if necessary.

- Adjust your actions according to the situation, behave calmly and be polite to everyone. Give other volunteers encouragement. Act in a way appropriate for the situation. Do not provoke others or allow yourself to become provoked.
- Monitor your surroundings for potential risks. Report any dangerous situations and safety issues you have encountered.
- Use the Red Cross symbol when working. Make sure you can be easily identified. Dress appropriately. Use the Red Cross protection symbol appropriately.
- Remember to look after yourself – helpers who have been working for too long without adequate rest will not be able to offer proper help.
- Confidential information must not be disclosed to third parties or the recipients of help. Wait for the right time and place to discuss difficult things. Contact the person in charge of the operation, if necessary.
- Remember the values and principles of the Red Cross in all your communications and make sure to protect the privacy of people in pictures. Particular care must be taken with minors and asylum seekers.