

# Finnish Red Cross: Volunteering Policy

Approved by the organisation board on 21 January 2023



# We matter!

Finnish Red Cross



*We help people with their daily lives, crises and accidents. Our help is needed more and more.*

*Our organisation needs competent, balanced and motivated volunteer helpers. We include everyone!*

## Easy to join

- It is easy to participate in our operations.
- Everyone committed to our values and principles can take part.
- Also people not regularly involved in our operations are welcome.
- We also offer volunteer roles that are easily accessible.

## We need everyone and we are diverse

- Our volunteers come from diverse backgrounds. This is the only way to effectively help people in all the different communities.
- We do not tolerate discrimination, racism or harassment.

## We are needed more and more

- The need for help in Finland is increasing.
- Volunteers from diverse backgrounds are in high demand.
- We are always ready to help. We mobilise and manage volunteers quickly in the event of a disaster or disturbance.



## We help online and face-to-face

- A volunteer can operate locally, regionally, nationally or online. You can help regardless of where you live.
- Online, people in need of help can get help quickly.

## Our aid is climate-friendly

- The climate crisis is creating new needs and forms of help and action.
- Our volunteer operations are sustainable in terms of the climate.

## We stand together in every situation

- Our volunteers are volunteers shared by the whole organisation, operating across the organisational and regional borders.
- Digital tools and the information received through them are utilised in our operations.
- We are able to adjust our operations quickly in exceptional situations and incidents requiring new kinds of aid operations.



- The most important task of the Red Cross is to help people in their everyday lives, life crises and disasters. One of the fundamental principles of the Red Cross is voluntary service. Our work is based on having a sufficient number of volunteers who are skilled, happy and motivated to help. Every volunteer is an important part of the chain of aid. We want our volunteers to experience joy and success in their volunteer activities.
- The Volunteering Policy sets the guidelines for volunteering with the Red Cross. More detailed actions are agreed upon in the action plans of Red Cross branches and districts and at national level.
- The Volunteering Policy is one of the many policies of the Finnish Red Cross. Other policies related to volunteering include those on environmental sustainability, digitalisation and the prevention of sexual harassment and abuse.

# The main points of the policy are the following:

- The need for Red Cross volunteers is growing, as today there are more and more different situations where people need help.
- Red Cross volunteers can help anywhere in Finland. In addition to face-to-face activities, volunteers can also help online.
- It is easy to get involved in Red Cross volunteering.
- We do not tolerate sexual harassment, discrimination or racism.
- Our operations are climate-friendly.

# Red Cross volunteer activities 1/2

- The volunteer activities are based on
  - people's need for help
  - the principles of the Red Cross
  - the Finnish Red Cross Strategic Programme
  - the willingness of volunteers to help.

The main objective of volunteer activities is to help people and create well-being in the community. The provision of paid services, for example to businesses and municipalities, is a secondary activity.

- The Red Cross's aid work is based on the work of volunteers. Volunteers help people. They plan and develop the activities of the Red Cross and ensure that the volunteer activities meet the needs.
- Red Cross volunteers are volunteers shared by the whole organisation. People can volunteer locally, regionally, nationally and online, across organisational structures.

# Red Cross volunteer activities 2/2

- The Red Cross also welcomes volunteers who are not regularly involved in the activities. This can happen in accidents and crises, for example.
- The Red Cross cooperates both within the organisation and with partners. The Red Cross has partners in Finland and around the world.
- The Red Cross actively uses digital tools and the information they provide in its volunteer activities. The use of digital tools allows us to adapt our activities quickly when necessary, even in exceptional situations that require a new response.
- The climate crisis is creating new needs and forms of help and action. Our volunteer activities must be sustainable in terms of the climate and nature. We take into account the climate impact of our operations.
- The employees of the Red Cross are there to enable volunteers to succeed in their work. The branches' elected officials and volunteers in charge, with the support of the employees, ensure that the volunteers have sufficient knowledge and skills for the task.



## Red Cross volunteer

- A Red Cross volunteer is a person who participates in the volunteer activities of the Red Cross. They participate of their own free will. They do not receive payment for their work. Red Cross aid activities also include acting in a position of trust, running a branch, donating blood and donating goods, clothes and money.
- Volunteers can help in the way that suits them best. The Red Cross offers volunteering opportunities that are easy to get involved in, as well as more challenging volunteering tasks. The challenging tasks require more experience and specific training. Special support is also offered for these tasks.
- Volunteers can help once or regularly, or be permanently involved in occasional activities.
- We recommend that all volunteers become members of the Finnish Red Cross. According to the rules of the Finnish Red Cross, only members can become elected officials of the organisation. Elected officials include the members of the branches', districts' and organisation's boards and members of the council.





Kuva: Sirpa Lehtimäki

## Volunteering is open to everyone

- Red Cross volunteer activities are open to everyone who is committed to the values and principles of our organisation.
- It is important to us that our volunteers include all kinds of people from different backgrounds. This makes us an effective helper in all communities.
- We want to make it easy for volunteers to get involved. Anyone who wants to help is welcome to participate in our activities.
- Every volunteer is needed. We help all volunteers find the right task for them.



# The Red Cross helps both face-to-face and online

- The Red Cross is a preparedness organisation. We mobilise and manage volunteers quickly in the event of a disaster or disturbance. We also support the authorities.
- The need for aid is growing in Finland. More volunteers are needed. When there are enough volunteers, the aid reaches the people who need it and the helpers are better able to cope.
- The Red Cross has a wide range of volunteering opportunities online. Online aid reaches those in need of help quickly when they need it. Furthermore, helping online also allows volunteers to be involved in aid activities regardless of where they live. In addition to helping online, it is also important to help face-to-face.
- It is important to us that all volunteers receive adequate training and support, also when working online.
- All of our volunteers are registered in the Oma Punainen Risti information system. We announce all of our activities on the system.



Kuva Joonas Brandt

## Red Cross volunteering is safe

It is important to us that volunteering is safe. Safe volunteering is important because volunteers help people in situations that are also physically and emotionally stressful for the volunteers themselves.

At the Red Cross, we take care of our volunteers.

- We make sure that our volunteers have the knowledge and skills to help safely.
- We offer the appropriate instructions, equipment and insurance for all activities.
- If the volunteers have had a particularly difficult task, we discuss the situation with them to help them deal with it.
- Volunteers can easily report any misconduct or harassment, sexual or otherwise, online. The Red Cross has an anonymous reporting channel for this purpose.
- We address any inappropriate behaviour immediately.

# The rights and obligations of a volunteer in the volunteer activities of the Finnish Red Cross

Every Red Cross volunteer has both rights and obligations.

## The volunteers have the right to

- enjoy and learn from their work.
- participate in the volunteer activities of the organisation for which they have the skills and interest.
- receive orientation, training, guidance and support for their tasks. Support also includes peer support, joint events, work supervision and mentoring.
- participate in the planning and development of the organisation's activities.
- take part in the organisation's statutory decision-making process if they are members.
- give and receive feedback and praise.
- feel appreciated for their work.
- develop as volunteers and receive a certificate for their activities if they wish
- receive reasonable compensation for the costs of their volunteering. Guidelines on which expenses are reimbursed are set out in the volunteer expense reimbursement recommendation.

## The volunteers are obligated to

- behave according to the values and principles of the Red Cross.
- behave according to the rules and Strategic Programme of the Red Cross.
- behave in a way that makes the activities safe for everyone. Racism, discrimination and harassment are not allowed in the activities.
- address discrimination and racism immediately if they notice any.
- commit to the activity for which they have signed up. Commitment is important to allow the Red Cross to plan and implement its activities in the best possible way.
- participate in orientation and training related to the task.
- report any shortcomings or dangers that they notice.
- commit to the confidentiality and data protection guidelines.

The organisation has the right to select volunteers who are suitable for the task in question.