

# INDUCTION HANDBOOK

## New Zealand Red Cross



### PART 2 Volunteering in New Zealand





# Table of Contents

## **PART 2** Volunteering in New Zealand

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Introduction	2-02
The Importance of Members as Volunteers	2-03
Members & Red Cross: Mutual Expectations	2-04
Support & Policies for Members Volunteering	2-06

# Introduction

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This section provides information to new members volunteering in any Red Cross programme. It includes information about development opportunities and policies specific to members.

Because anyone who works with Red Cross on an ongoing, voluntary basis is a member, this section uses the term ‘member’ to mean ‘volunteers and members’.

Don’t forget you can find more information about the organisation on our [website](#). You can also seek further information from your area council chair, branch executive, team leader or a Red Cross manager.

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# The Importance of Members as Volunteers

The importance of volunteering as a member of Red Cross cannot be overstated. Voluntary service is one of the Fundamental Principles of the Movement. You are the ‘Power of Humanity’ expressing humanitarian values through your work.

**Your willingness to give your time to the programmes and services makes a real difference in the lives of the most vulnerable.**

## Voluntary service

Members volunteering with Red Cross means that you give your time and skills freely (not from a desire for material or financial gain or because of external social, economic or political pressure) and in accordance with the seven Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, to benefit vulnerable people and their communities.

Your voluntary service is organised by Red Cross and can be given on a regular or occasional basis. As a member volunteering you do not have a legal employment relationship with Red Cross (although staff can become members).

## What members do

More detailed information on Red Cross programmes and services is available in Part 1 of this handbook (see **pages 17-21**). You can also find information about Red Cross members and their work on the [New Zealand Red Cross website](#).

## Membership card

To formalise and recognise your membership to the Red Cross family you will have a New Zealand Red Cross membership card. The membership card is provided to all people joining us as a member – whether they wish to provide active voluntary service in a branch, group or as an individual.

The card shows:

- the member’s name
- a unique membership number

- an expiry date, seven years from the date of issue
- for branch members, the name of their branch

for individual members or for those who are part of an activity group, their area (i.e. one of the 16 geographic areas covered by an area council) where the main voluntary activity they are involved in takes place.

An annual membership renewal process occurs where members are contacted to see if they want to opt out and to check their contact details. A non-reply is treated as confirmation of ongoing membership.

## Youth members

Red Cross recognises the substantial contribution young people can make and encourages them to bring their diverse skills and energy to Red Cross by volunteering as a member. If you are under the age of 18 you are required to have written consent of a parent or legal guardian, or have their signature on the membership form, before becoming a member.

## Honours and awards

Voluntary service is one of the Principles of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Honours and awards are granted by New Zealand Red Cross to appreciate and acknowledge the work of members and staff, especially in voluntary service. Full details of all honours and awards are available in the [Members’ Handbook](#).

## Members’ database

It is important for us to have current and accurate details so that we can communicate with you and keep you up to date with any news. Please let us know of any changes so we can update our database.

# Members & Red Cross: Mutual Expectations

To ensure that there is a satisfying and effective partnership between you as a member and Red Cross, it's important that everyone has a good understanding about their respective rights and responsibilities.

**Red Cross is committed to providing you with a rewarding experience by offering the opportunity to give something back to the community, opportunities for personal growth and development, and social contact with a diverse group of people.**

## What members can expect from Red Cross

- To be valued and respected as a member, whoever you are and whatever your background
- A clear explanation of your activities, as well as a role description and information on standards relating to the task
- A full New Zealand Red Cross induction, including information on all aspects of the organisation (local, area, national and international)
- An identified person responsible for providing guidance, supervision and support, who will keep in regular contact
- To have personal information you give us treated with care and discretion. Such information will be shared within the organisation only on a 'need to know' basis
- Our support in developing the skills relevant to your activity
- Agreed out-of-pocket expenses paid in accordance with policy
- To have problems or complaints dealt with sensitively
- The right to decline or change your mind regarding a voluntary activity without feeling guilty
- The opportunity to change or take on additional roles. Those wishing to be re-assigned will undertake a further interview and go through standard screening procedures for their new role(s).





## What Red Cross expects from members

- To reflect the Movement's Fundamental Principles in your day-to-day volunteering
- To abide by the [New Zealand Red Cross Code of Conduct](#) for members
- To welcome and maintain good relations with everyone you come into contact with as a member, whether they are other members, staff, service users, partners, donors or the general public
- To support and act in accordance with our policies, practices, procedures and management or governance decisions
- A willingness to learn about the organisation and the role you play within it, and a requirement that you meet specified standards in carrying out voluntary activity
- To let us know if you are unable to meet a commitment, with as much notice as possible, so that alternative arrangements can be made
- To safeguard the image, reputation and Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross. As ambassadors for the organisation, members should act and dress appropriately when involved in voluntary activity
- To follow health and safety guidelines – report defects in equipment, protective work wear or anything that could be detrimental to personal health or safety
- To respect the trust put in you as a member and use any information you are given with discretion, sharing only on a 'need to know' basis
- To let your branch executive or team leader know if you have a complaint or problem so they can make every effort to achieve a positive and amicable solution
- To let us know if your circumstances change – such as your address or health condition
- To agree to a criminal record check if relevant to your role. Please note: having a conviction need not be a bar to volunteering and we do checks only to ensure we maintain a high standard of service and protect our service users
- Members should not bring Red Cross into disrepute i.e. represent the organisation while under the influence of alcohol or drugs, be involved with the theft of property, or misuse equipment or materials.

# Support & Policies for Members Volunteering

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## Supervision

You will receive support and guidance from your team leader to assist you in your work. You are encouraged to actively seek assistance, guidance or information where necessary and provide relevant feedback to your team leader. They will also make sure that you get adequate rest periods and that your work arrangements comply with health and safety requirements.

## Performance feedback

You are encouraged to have informal, open and honest discussions with your team leader on a regular basis about your voluntary work. These discussions are an opportunity for both of you to examine and develop your relationship and to take action as needed. Where applicable your conversations will include discussions about work practices and training and development needs.

## Review

You will have the opportunity to review your role with your team leader at appropriate intervals so any adjustments needed can be made. If either you or your team leader think your appointment is not working out, a new position may be found. You might be asked to wait for reappointment until a suitable new position becomes available.

## Recognition

Red Cross values the contributions of members volunteering and recognises both formally and informally the valuable work you do. Informal recognition, including regular positive feedback for a job well done, is the responsibility of each team leader.

## Learning and development

Red Cross is committed to ensuring you have the necessary skills, experience and knowledge to do your voluntary work safely and effectively, by providing relevant training and development programmes. You will be actively encouraged to participate in relevant learning and development opportunities.

## Career paths

You are encouraged to develop your skills while volunteering with Red Cross and to assume additional responsibilities or to take on different roles where your preference, skills and knowledge allow.

## Change of volunteer position

If you are already a member of Red Cross and apply for a new volunteer position, you will be interviewed for that position. If you are appointed to the new position you will receive appropriate orientation and training before you start the new role. Any screening procedures required for a specific position must be completed even if you have already been working with Red Cross.

## Partner organisations

In a number of instances, Red Cross provides services in partnership with other community organisations such as hospitals and schools. These partnerships are often formalised by memorandums of understanding that outline the roles and expectations of Red Cross members. In particular, the memorandums of understanding cover joint agreements about matters such as how the service will be delivered, the role of the member, confidentiality, managing complaints and grievances and disciplinary action procedures. Members must comply with any such agreements.

## Reimbursement of expenses

Red Cross aims to ensure that no member incurs costs as they volunteer. Reimbursement is made for authorised expenses where relevant receipts and/or other documentation as required are produced.

## Leave of absence

A member who requires a temporary leave of absence should talk about it with their team leader. When a leave of absence is taken, records are kept for up to a year. On return to active volunteer work, every effort will be made to return the member to the same or a similar role if this is requested by the member.



## Absenteeism

Some roles require members to commit to a regular time for their volunteer activities. If you are unable to attend or are going to be late you should notify your team leader prior to your scheduled start time to enable a replacement to be found if required. Continued absenteeism adversely affects Red Cross services and may result in a review of your work role.

## Resolving issues

Red Cross wants to resolve behaviour and performance issues in the most informal and positive manner possible, such as through counselling, additional training or supervision, reassignments and/or verbal warnings.

## Unacceptable behaviour

When a member, as a representative of Red Cross, engages in behaviour that is unacceptable, disciplinary action, including termination, may be necessary. It is the responsibility of the team leader or branch executive to intervene when behaviour is seen to be inappropriate. The [Code of Conduct](#) and [Members' Handbook](#) are very helpful in clarifying what is deemed unacceptable behaviour. A member may be stood down or dismissed where:

conduct has failed to comply with the expectations and policies of the organisation, the Code of Conduct and/or the seven Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

- behaviour is likely to bring Red Cross into disrepute through fraud, theft or wilful disregard for the regulations of the organisation.

Where it appears there is cause for a member to be suspended or terminated, the member will be informed of the issue and given every opportunity to explain their actions in accordance with organisational policy or, in the case of branch members, in accordance with the Members' Handbook. However, in serious circumstances similar to serious misconduct in the case of a staff member, the services of a member may be terminated with immediate effect.

## Insurance for members

Members volunteering are covered by a Red Cross insurance policy. Please ask your team leader or branch executive for full details about what you are and are not covered for. As with all insurances, the decision about whether a claim is accepted or not is made by the insurer based on the terms and conditions of the policy and the specifics of the claim.

If you are injured while volunteering, you need to seek first aid if required and tell your team leader or branch executive immediately. They will ask you to provide details for an Incident and Hazard Report form so the incident can be reported and actions put in place to prevent a similar event happening.

## Conflict of interest

You should seek guidance if you think an activity you are involved with, or wish to undertake, may be classed as a conflict of interest. If in doubt, please ask your branch executive or team leader. Members should not have a high public profile in the political sphere, or in other fields that might reflect adversely on Red Cross. Members who are also Red Cross employees should be clear about the boundaries between the two roles.

## Volunteer records

Red Cross keeps personal records of each member which are the property of the organisation and are treated as confidential documents. It is the responsibility of the member to inform their team leader or branch executive of any changes in their personal details or circumstances that may affect their voluntary work. Members have the right to access their records. Red Cross will not disclose information to a third party without permission of the member unless required or permitted by law to do so.

## Leaving Red Cross

You may resign from your voluntary role at any time and for any reason. The intention to resign should be conveyed to your team leader or branch executive, giving as much notice as possible and preferably no less than two weeks.

If resigning from a particular programme or service, you are encouraged to discuss reasons for leaving with your team leader or branch executive. This will give you an opportunity to indicate if another activity or service would be of interest.

In some service areas, you may develop direct relations with clients or a partner community organisation, so notifying a client or partner organisation of your resignation must be handled sensitively. You and your team leader or branch executive can determine the best approach to take. Your team leader or branch executive can then formally notify a client or partner organisation.

You are obliged to return all Red Cross property before leaving the organisation.

## A Final Word

We hope that your membership and volunteering experience is joyful and positive!

Thank you for joining New Zealand Red Cross.

We look forward to your contribution as a member.

Thank  
you





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