

**RULES TO BE OBSERVED
BY INDIVIDUALS WHO WORK
FOR THE ICRC**



Preamble

The conduct of the individuals who work for the ICRC must be consistent with the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement at all times. Moreover, their handling of resources, information and security must comply with internal policies and guidelines.

The rules set out in the present document are to be understood within that framework. They apply to all individuals at headquarters or in the field (see Introduction, paragraph 1.5) who work for the ICRC in some capacity, whether under an employment contract or on another basis (in particular, under an agreement for secondment of National Society or other staff, under a consultancy contract, or as volunteers). In the delegations, these rules are supplemented by security rules and codes of conduct which everyone must be aware of and comply with.

The purpose of the present rules is constantly to ensure that the ICRC can discharge its mandate, give the organization a positive image, promote respect for the dignity of individuals, and protect the individuals who work for the organization. Consequently, the obligations they impose go beyond the framework of an ordinary employment relationship. Particularly in the field, they have a restrictive impact on the private lives of staff members and their families.

This document is not addressed to delegation employees, to whom the same principles nevertheless apply (see staff regulations applicable in each delegation).

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. General rules of conduct
3. Pledge of discretion
4. Safety and security in the field / Warning / Discharge from liability
5. Use of ICRC IT facilities
6. Compliance
7. Place of jurisdiction and applicable law

ANNEX

Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross
and Red Crescent Movement

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The ICRC is an organization whose mission is exclusively humanitarian. Among the factors that underpin its credibility and its ability to gain acceptance for its operations are observance of the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (annexed to this document) and the trust vouchsafed it by governments, all parties to armed conflicts and other situations of violence, and the victims it seeks to protect and assist.
- 1.2. The ICRC's offers of services contain a pledge of discretion that is an essential element of its work. Confidential dialogue with the authorities concerned is a key factor in enabling it to gain access to the victims of armed conflicts and other situations of violence. Where the law is violated, the aim of the ICRC's representations is to convince the authorities responsible to change their behaviour and fulfil their obligations.
- 1.3. As the ICRC often operates in situations of armed conflict and other forms of violence, the individuals who work for it run risks that should not be underestimated. It therefore demands of those individuals that they demonstrate such self-restraint and discipline as the circumstances require.
- 1.4. The individuals who work for the ICRC have to build up relationships and use working methods that strengthen the trust vested in the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. They must be aware that any fault they commit in the performance of their assignments can have an impact on the fate of a large number of people.
- 1.5. Whether or not they are acting in the course of their duties, the individuals who work for the ICRC must respect the principles¹ on which the very existence of the organization rests and the dignity of the people they come into contact with, and in so doing help to project a positive image of the ICRC.
- 1.6. The rules and guidelines below concern four areas:
 - General conduct;
 - The pledge of discretion;
 - Safety and security in the field;
 - Use of ICRC IT facilities.

With the exception of delegation employees who are governed by the internal rules of their delegations, these rules and guidelines apply to all those who work for the ICRC in any capacity. However, some of the rules concern only staff on a field assignment, including short assignments.

¹ See Annex: Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

Moreover, when in the field, expatriate staff members are responsible for ensuring that the principles on which these rules are based are also applied by those accompanying them.

- 1.7. Supervisory staff and managers have a particular responsibility for ensuring that these rules are observed. By their conduct, they should set an example to all their colleagues, whatever their status.

2. GENERAL RULES OF CONDUCT

By signing these rules, you undertake to:

- 2.1. Comply with the laws and regulations of the country in which you find yourself, including those dealing with security, drugs, the rules governing road traffic, and currency transactions.
- 2.2. Know and comply with the rules that govern the use of the red cross, red crescent and red crystal emblems.
- 2.3. Refrain from wearing the ICRC insignia when you are not officially on duty.
- 2.4. Ensure that your conduct and dress do not adversely affect the ICRC's image, in particular as regards local mores and customs.

Abuse of power and sexual exploitation

- 2.5. Be aware of the position upheld by the ICRC to the effect that the purchase of sexual services is contrary to the values associated with respect for human dignity which are one of the foundations of the ICRC, and that such purchase is tantamount to a form of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation is understood as abuse of authority, trust or a situation of vulnerability for sexual ends in exchange for money, work, goods or services.
- 2.6. Comply with the prohibition on buying sexual services (or any other form of degrading act) in return for money, work, goods or services.
- 2.7. Comply with the prohibition on entering into a sexual relationship, irrespective of consent, with a direct beneficiary of the ICRC assistance and protection programmes and on using your position to obtain sexual services, particularly in exchange for assistance or protection provided by the ICRC.

- 2.8. Comply with the absolute prohibition on entering into a sexual relationship with a child or inciting or forcing a child to take part in activities of a sexual nature, whether or not he or she is aware of the act committed and irrespective of consent. Any relationship with a child for sexual ends constitutes abuse and is a form of exploitation. This prohibition also covers pornographic activities (photos, videos, games, etc.) that do not involve sexual contact with the child. A child is to be understood as a person under the age of 18 years (Convention on the Rights of the Child, Article 1.). These prohibitions apply irrespective of the locally accepted age of sexual majority.
- 2.9. Comply with the prohibition on acquiring, conserving or circulating documents of a paedophile nature, irrespective of the medium used (Internet, film, etc.).

Outside activities

- 2.10. Refrain from engaging in outside activities, whether paid or unpaid, except where such activities are in no way prejudicial to the work or interests of the ICRC. Cases in dispute shall be decided by the head of the Human Resources Department.²
- 2.11. Refrain from standing for public office without obtaining prior clearance from the head of the Human Resources Department and unless you have satisfied yourself that the office is compatible with the specific nature of the ICRC.

Financial administration and commitments³

- 2.12. Refrain from using your position to obtain advantages or favours and from accepting any gift in cash or kind, including promises of gifts or other advantages, other than token presents in keeping with accepted custom.
- 2.13. Refrain from committing the ICRC financially unless expressly authorized to do so.
- 2.14. Administer with strict accuracy and the utmost care the funds and supplies entrusted to you and be prepared to account for the use to which they are put.

² Director or deputy director of Human Resources.

³ In this connection, please consult the ICRC Code of Conduct for Purchasing available in the "Logistics field manual" database.

When on a field assignment, you also undertake to:

- 2.15. Show due respect for the religious beliefs, customs and habits of the people of the country you are in and behave accordingly; each delegation has its code of conduct which must be complied with by every individual carrying out a field assignment for the ICRC.
- 2.16. Know and comply with the delegation's safety and security rules and comply with the instructions of the head of your delegation and, in particular, any security instructions he or she may issue as the situation evolves.
- 2.17. Comply with instructions concerning currency exchange.
- 2.18. Refrain from using or carrying about your person or in your luggage any weapon or ammunition.
- 2.19. Keep the head of your delegation informed of your movements and refrain from leaving your country of assignment or taking leave locally without his or her prior authorization.
- 2.20. Refrain from exporting archaeological objects or other items of value for the heritage of your country of assignment in violation of the rules applicable in that country.

Serious violation

- 2.21. In the event of a serious violation, the ICRC reserves the right to lift your immunity and to take legal action in Switzerland or in the country to which you are assigned. In all cases, sanctions will be taken internally.

3. PLEDGE OF DISCRETION

By signing this document, you undertake to:

- 3.1. Maintain the utmost discretion, both inside and outside the ICRC (including towards National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies) with regard to matters that you are called upon to deal with or that come to your knowledge in the course of your activity at the ICRC, and consider yourself bound by an obligation analogous to that of professional secrecy.
- 3.2. Refrain from referring to political or military situations in your private and public communications where it may or is to be expected that to do so could prejudice the ICRC. This applies to conversations, telephone calls, radio messages, telegrams, e-mails and any other electronic or paper communication medium.
- 3.3. Comply with the instructions of your hierarchical superiors at headquarters and in the field as regards contacts with the media.
- 3.4. Refrain from producing or publishing in your private capacity writings, electronic documents (e-mail, blogs, Internet sites), images, photographs, films or recordings not in the public domain relating to information on your field assignments or the circumstances surrounding them.
- 3.5. Comply with the ICRC's instructions concerning the use of cameras, video cameras, binoculars, sound and image recorders of all kinds, PCs and mobile telephones. You also undertake to check the instructions of the Region concerned before leaving on a field assignment and, while in the field, to regularly consult the safety and security rules in force at the delegation to which you are assigned.
- 3.6. Refrain from associating any political positions you may take after leaving the ICRC with your duties while employed by the ICRC.

4. SAFETY AND SECURITY IN THE FIELD / WARNING / DISCHARGE FROM LIABILITY

When you leave on a **field assignment**, you are aware that:

- 4.1. The nature of the ICRC's mandate in conflict areas means that danger is not an exceptional occurrence: the risks associated with armed conflict are compounded by the risk of criminal acts, hostage taking, serious illness or accident. You accept that the unavoidable residual risks include psychological or physical harm with possible fatal consequences. In the event of abduction, the ICRC steadfastly adheres to its policy of not paying a ransom.

You further undertake to:

- 4.2. Familiarize yourself with the content of the "Sécurité terrain & Stress" database and to refer to it whenever you are faced with a question relating to safety and security. The instructions it contains must be applied. Chapter 1.2.2. "Security in delegations", in particular, and the instructions specific to the delegation to which you are assigned, must be consulted regularly and scrupulously complied with at all times.
- 4.3. Make a contribution at your own level to preserving your own safety and security and that of your delegation. It is part of the duty of everyone working for the ICRC in the field to gather, pass on and analyze information, contact the parties concerned, and assess the risks.
- 4.4. Seek the support and advice of the head of your delegation⁴ if you have doubts concerning the risks that you can accept. You have the right to request to be repatriated at any time.
- 4.5. Give the ICRC a list of people to contact as soon as you join the organization and inform your personnel management unit of any subsequent changes. The ICRC reserves the right to communicate only with those people in the case of a serious incident.
- 4.6. Expressly accept the risks involved in your humanitarian work, having taken cognizance of the above.

⁴ In addition and where appropriate, you may also seek the support of services specifically concerned with staff health and security such as the Health Unit (RH/SAN), the Security and Stress Unit and the Ombudsperson.

5. USE OF ICRC IT FACILITIES⁵

By signing this document, you undertake to:

- 5.1. Comply with the rule to the effect that ICRC IT facilities are meant to be used for professional purposes and that the accesses granted are personal and non-transferable.
- 5.2. Use the professional messaging system for all electronic correspondence that commits the ICRC.
- 5.3. Refrain from making any change to an existing configuration or adding any software or other equipment not defined in the ICRC standards and from using software in such a way as to violate copyright rules.
- 5.4. Remain within the framework laid down by the ICRC for the use of its IT facilities for private purposes, namely to ensure that such use:
 - does not affect professional activities or imply any additional cost for the ICRC, and takes place outside working hours;
 - does not contravene the prohibition on downloading software, images, sound or video;
 - does not involve storage of private data or messages or management of private files on ICRC systems.

Please note in addition that:

- 5.5. In exceptional cases, the director of human resources or his or her deputy may grant access to your files and e-mails in your absence following a written request from your hierarchical superior(s) stating valid reasons for such access.
- 5.6. The origin, addressee, time stamp and nature of every operation carried out by means of ICRC IT facilities are automatically recorded in log files. Moreover, the ICRC takes the protective measures recommended by the IT profession (firewall, filtering and tracing software, etc.).
- 5.7. The ICRC is the owner of the systems and data managed by it and carries out anonymous spot checks on its log files. In the event of flagrant violation of the Code of Conduct for Users of ICRC IT Facilities or of serious disruptions to its IT systems, it reserves the right to carry out IT checks on named individuals when authorized to do so by the head of the Human Resources Department.

⁵ In this connection, please consult the Code of Conduct for Users of ICRC IT Facilities available in the "FINE3 DOC" database.

6. COMPLIANCE

- 6.1. The rules set out in the present document remain in force for the duration of your work at the ICRC. For all aspects relating to the obligation of discretion, they remain in force after the end of the employment relationship.
- 6.2. Should you fail to comply with these rules, the ICRC can take measures ranging from a verbal warning to termination of your contract. The ICRC further reserves the right to charge you for all or part of the costs (travel costs, etc.) it has incurred.
- 6.3. In case of doubt as to the application of these rules, you undertake to seek the relevant information from your hierarchical superiors.

7. PLACE OF JURISDICTION AND APPLICABLE LAW

These rules are an integral part of your employment contract with the ICRC.

For persons not party to an employment contract with the ICRC, these rules are governed by Swiss law and are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of the Geneva courts or to arbitration if the main contract is subject to arbitration.

Accepted at: **on:**

Surname, name: **Signature:**

**THE FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES
OF THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS
AND RED CRESCENT MOVEMENT**

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, co-operation 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.

* * * * *

Products with a 100% FSC label come
from forests certified as meeting the
environmental and social standards of the
Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).
© 1996 Forest Stewardship Council

