

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **POLICY STATEMENT:**

The Canadian Red Cross Society expects the highest standards of professional and ethical conduct, in keeping with the Fundamental Principles, the Integrity Protection Policy, and all other Society's policies that address conduct that interferes with business operations, discredits the Society, or is offensive to clients or fellow personnel.

All employees, volunteers and delegates within the Society are obliged to sign this Code of Conduct, and must be familiar with and adhere to the provisions of this Code of Conduct as well as those of related policies referred to herein, which are incorporated into and form part of this Code of Conduct.

<p><b>The Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and the Society' Mission Statement provide the philosophy and foundation for the services provided to vulnerable people in Canada and around the world.</b></p>
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### **PURPOSE AND SCOPE:**

The purpose of the Society's Code of Conduct is to establish a common understanding of the standards of professional and ethical conduct expected of all employees, volunteers and delegates of the Society.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Please refer to 1.1-General Definitions for definitions of **client**, **employee**, **volunteer**, and **delegate**.

**Fundamental Principles** means the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;

**Implementing 'partner'** means an organization or corporation, whether part of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement or otherwise, that has agreed to provide personnel for Society's operations who will adhere to and be bound by the provisions of this Code of Conduct.

## **PROCEDURE AND APPLICATION:**

### **I. Principles**

Employees, volunteers and delegates are required to:

- a) Uphold the Fundamental Principles, and promote and support the work of the Society;
- b) Respect the regulations on the use of the Red Cross emblem and report its misuse according to reporting procedures;
- c) Respect and promote respect for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- d) At all times, while wearing official insignia or representing the Society in any way, adopt a strictly impartial attitude.

### **II. General Conduct**

Employees, volunteers and delegates will:

- a) At all times, act with honesty, integrity, diligence and transparency;
  - b) Contribute to a positive and healthy environment for employees, volunteers, delegates and clients, including interpersonal respect, appreciation of differences, and, at all times, respect for one another's human dignity;
  - c) At all times, maintain a standard of care which is in keeping with the policies and procedures of the Society and the Fundamental Principles, and which is aimed at the alleviation of suffering and the promotion of health and well-being;
  - d) Discharge all duties with integrity, observe all instructions and directions from their assigned supervisor, and strive towards attaining a high standard of professional responsibility and achievement;
  - e) Respect the confidentiality of all staff, client and third party personal information, disclosed personal health information and/or privileged information in accordance with applicable personal information protection laws and with Society policies and procedures;
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- f) Abide by the laws of Canada, as well as those of the province, territory and country in which they reside and/or operate, and expect no support from the Society if they willingly or recklessly contravene such laws;
- g) Refuse financial or material gifts, or promises of such gifts or advantages, while representing the Society, except with authorization and in compliance with Society's policy, as may be in place from time to time;
- h) Except with authorization, ensure that actions do not result in financial or other liability for the Society;
- i) At no time use or carry arms or ammunition or other objects in circumstances that call into question the neutrality of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- j) Ensure that all commitments are entered into in accordance with Society by-laws, policies and practices, including all appropriate consultations, tendering and approvals;
- k) Administer with care the funds and supplies entrusted to them and account for such use of funds and supplies;
- l) Work collaboratively with employees, volunteers, delegates and Red Cross management. This entails taking directions from supervisors/managers and cooperating to achieve the organization's goals;
- m) Not give out any information to the media or other external parties, unless within the scope of employment duties or otherwise authorized to do so;
- n) Avoid wearing garments supplied by the Society or other members of the Red Cross Movement bearing official distinguishing marks of the Red Cross/Red Crescent (such as Disaster Management vests) or using official Red Cross/Red Crescent vehicles when off duty, except by permission.

### III. Employee, Volunteer and Delegate – Client Relationship

The relationship between employee, volunteer, delegate and Society's clients requires employee, volunteer, and delegate to understand their unique position of authority and perceived power. Employees, volunteers and delegates have a duty of care to clients and a responsibility to ensure that clients are treated with dignity and respect.

When providing service, employees, volunteers and delegates are required to:

- a) Treat clients in a manner that maintains dignity and respects their religious beliefs, culture, customs and habits;

- b) Provide service and assistance within the organization's policies, procedures, directives and guidelines;
- c) Understand the client's vulnerability and dependency on the employee, volunteer or delegate to provide assistance, and to act accordingly. This includes the recognition that personal relationships outside the scope of a professional employee, volunteer, delegate-client relationship are not in the best interests of either party or the Society;
- d) Provide assistance regardless of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, language, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, disability, physical characteristics, philosophy, religion, political opinions or other ground of discrimination prohibited under applicable provincial, federal or international human rights law;
- e) Respect the client's privacy by adhering to the requirements of all applicable personal information protection laws with respect to the client's personal information, disclosed personal health information, image and property;
- f) Avoid having direct contact with vulnerable clients that is both solitary and isolated, unless specifically authorized by an immediate superior or in circumstances where the safety of the client is at risk and immediate contact is demonstrated to be in the best interests of the client.

#### IV. Breaches regarded as Serious Misconduct

The following behaviour or actions are considered serious acts of misconduct:

- a) Action or speech which is humiliating, neglectful, insubordinate, dishonest, threatening, degrading, bullying, exploitive, illegal or racist;
  - b) Sexual activity with clients, or with children or other vulnerable persons to whom is owed a duty of care;
  - c) Sexual relationships which are based on an unequal power dynamic or with a counterpart who can confer benefit. Examples of such misconduct, without limiting the foregoing, include the exchange of money, employment, goods or services for sex;
  - d) Use of sex trade workers;
  - e) Intentional misuse of the Red Cross emblem;
  - f) Acceptance of bribes;
  - g) Breach of applicable Canadian, foreign national or international law intended for the protection of children, the integrity and safety of the person, or property;
  - h) Exercising any professional activity without valid certification(s);
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- i) Engaging in, or being associated with, any business or activity which is, or may be, in conflict with the interests of the Society or the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement;
- j) Disclosing without authorization, directly or indirectly, to any person or organization, the private affairs of the Society including, but not limited to, trade secrets, supplier lists, or personal information of clients, delegates, volunteers or employees;
- k) Surfing/reading inappropriate websites and/or electronic message boards; sending inappropriate e-mail including, but not limited to, sites/subjects that advocate principles or beliefs not in keeping with the Fundamental Principles, that advocate illegal activities, or are sexual/pornographic in nature, using Red Cross computers/systems.

**Such behaviour, on or off duty, may result in dismissal and/or other sanctions.**

#### V. Reporting of Breaches

- a) Employees, volunteers and delegates are obliged to contribute to an environment which prevents misconduct and promotes the implementation of appropriate behaviour as defined in this Code of Conduct. Managers at all levels have particular responsibilities to support and develop systems which maintain this environment.
- b) Where an employee, volunteer or delegate develops concerns or suspicions regarding a breach that is a serious act of misconduct by a fellow employee, volunteer or delegate he/she is required to report such concerns to his/her immediate supervisor or to People Services.

If the closest supervisor/manager is suspected of involvement, the case can be brought up to the next management level. This reporting process provides the volunteer, delegate and employee with four different channels should he/she not wish to report a breach to a direct supervisor: next management level, Director, People Services or Chief of Staff.

Additional reporting channels may exist under other policies, for example those dealing specifically with fraud, and sexual exploitation and abuse, and those prescribed for international situations under paragraph d).

- c) An employee, volunteer or delegate who develops concerns or suspicions regarding a breach of the Code of Conduct that is not a serious act of misconduct is encouraged to report such concerns or suspicions by following the process described in paragraph b).
- d) Where the employee, volunteer or delegate is working in an international situation, whether on a bilateral, ICRC or IFRC project, reporting by the employee shall be to his/her immediate supervisor or the person named by the head of delegation to receive such reports

under this Code of Conduct or under a comparable Code of Conduct of another organization, where applicable.

If, in the opinion of the employee or volunteer, the matter has not been addressed satisfactorily in that context, he/she shall bring the matter to the attention of the Chief of Staff.

e) Employees, volunteers and delegates reporting a breach are encouraged to put their name to their reports. Allegations expressed anonymously are much less credible, but they will be considered in light of the seriousness of the alleged breach, and the likelihood of confirming the allegation from attributable sources.

f) Any serious breach in the Code of Conduct must be elevated to the Chief of Staff. A serious breach is described in the behaviour outlined in section IV above (“serious acts of misconduct”), as well as any breach that is complex or involves a number of people.

Supervisors/managers are encouraged to deal with reported breaches that do not involve serious acts of misconduct in accordance with the applicable HR policies and procedures in place at the time. When in doubt as to whether a reported breach involves a serious act of misconduct, supervisors/managers are encouraged to refer the matter to the Director, People Services who will consult with the Chief of Staff for direction.

g) Supervisors/managers are required to complete a report on every alleged breach of the Code that is reported to them, stating the nature of the allegation and how they have dealt with it, and forward the report to the Director, People Services.

A quarterly summary will be completed and forwarded to the Chief of Staff, with a copy to the provincial/program Vice President.

The Director, People Services will compile the information in a way that will identify national patterns in Code compliance and assist in Code evaluation and review, and help to develop a consistent approach nation-wide to compliance issues. See below:

### How to use the 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting service

Clearview Connects.

In order to use this service, employees simply need to identify themselves as Canadian Red Cross and report concerns in confidence at:

1. Online through a secure website at <http://www.clearviewconnects.com>
2. By telephone: Toll-free number 1-866- 284-7015, outside North America call collect to: 905-280-1510
3. By mail through the confidential post office box at:

P.O. Box 90505  
Toronto, Ontario  
M1J 3N7

<p><b>Note:</b> Employees, volunteers and delegates must report immediately any knowledge or observations of a child/youth being bullied, harassed or abused to his/her immediate supervisor and according to provincial/territorial Child Protection Acts.</p>
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### VI. Fair Treatment

A reported concern will be handled fairly with respect to any individual named, taking into account the seriousness of the issue raised, the credibility of the information or allegations, and the prospects of an effective investigation.

### VII. Protection from Retaliation

No one shall be penalized, discharged, suspended, threatened, harassed, transferred to an undesirable assignment or location or discriminated against for communicating information about a suspected breach of the Code of Conduct that the person reasonably believes is true and is not being reported either for personal gain or for any ulterior motive. Any such act of retaliation by any officer, employee, volunteer, delegate or member of the Society will be treated as serious misconduct and may result in disciplinary action. At the same time, in order to reinforce the integrity of employees, volunteers, and delegates all reports of incidents that are made maliciously or otherwise not in good faith will also be treated as serious misconduct warranting appropriate discipline.

### VIII. Confidentiality

All reported concerns will be treated as confidential to the fullest extent permitted by law. Persons are encouraged to give their names with any information they communicate, as this will usually assist in the investigation of the matter disclosed. However, consideration will also be given to information reported anonymously. Generally, information communicated will only be disclosed to those persons who have a need to know in order to properly respond to the reported concern.

#### **FRAUD:**

Where the misconduct also involves a breach of the Society's policy on fraud, the employee, volunteer or delegate may report in accordance with the Integrity Protection Policy.

#### **OFF DUTY CONDUCT:**

Employees and volunteers should remember that they may be seen as Red Cross representatives at any time, even when off duty. Off duty activities which, in the absence of reasonable justification, adversely affect employees, volunteers, delegates or clients of the Society, or which, when seen through the eyes of a reasonable observer, discredit Red Cross, are also breaches of the Code of Conduct.

#### **PROOF OF COMPLIANCE:**

All employees and active delegates are required to indicate acceptance to comply with the Code of Conduct on an annual basis. The annual acknowledgement will be recorded in the Society's files and in the employee's general records.

#### **OTHER INTERNATIONAL CONDUCT DOCUMENTS:**

Employees and volunteers may be asked to sign other documents concerning conduct related to international assignments (e.g. International Committee of the Red Cross, International Federation of Red Cross/Red Crescent Societies, United Nations).

#### **DISCIPLINARY ACTION:**

A breach of the Code of Conduct is subject to disciplinary action in accordance with applicable People Services policies and procedures. The nature of disciplinary action will take into account harm to the individual, harm to the Red Cross and its reputation, and whether there was an unequal power relationship. Disciplinary action includes dismissal, where circumstances warrant.

#### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

1. Employees, volunteers and delegates will sign the Code of Conduct, and act in keeping with the Code of Conduct of the Canadian Red Cross and the Fundamental Principles.



2. Supervisors/Managers are responsible for holding employees, volunteers or delegates accountable for reviewing and signing the Code of Conduct, and for dealing with non-compliance in collaboration with People Services.
3. Members of the Organizational Leadership Team (OLT) are responsible for applying and implementing the Code of Conduct in each of their respective areas.
4. The Chief of Staff is responsible for advising stakeholders, maintaining, monitoring, and revising this policy; and for authorizing exceptions.