



**American  
Red Cross**

of Northeastern New York

100 years of service ▪ 1910-2010

# Volunteer Handbook

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# Introduction

Dear Red Cross Volunteer:

Welcome to the American Red Cross! We're grateful that you have decided to spend some of your valuable service time with our organization. You are part of a team of volunteers who help local residents prevent, prepare for and respond to emergencies. Along with nearly 1,000 other volunteers in our Chapter, you have embarked on a journey through which you will significantly impact lives in your community, your region, your country and in more than 170 countries around the world.

We want your experience with the Red Cross to be meaningful, engaging and fulfilling. Please feel free to contact the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department at (518) 458-8111, extension 5103 should you have questions or suggestions for improvement. We also encourage you to visit our website at [www.redcrossneny.org](http://www.redcrossneny.org)

This handbook was created to give you important information that will enhance your volunteer experience, and answer many of the questions you may have. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Once again, welcome to the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York. We wish you a rewarding experience as an American Red Cross volunteer.

### **About this handbook**

Welcome to the American Red Cross. Thank you for joining our cadre of over 5 million American Red Cross volunteers and volunteer blood donors.

This handbook was prepared to give you some essential information about the policies and expectations of American Red Cross of Northeastern New York. The handbook has been organized by topic to help you find information you need easily. You are also encouraged to talk with your supervisor and the director of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department if you have any questions about the content of this handbook.

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York reserves the right to modify the policies in this handbook without prior notice. The policies described in this handbook replace all prior policies, handbooks or policy guidance provided.

Thank you for giving your time and talents to help others. We hope that you find volunteering with the American Red Cross a positive and rewarding experience.

### **American Red Cross Mission**

The American Red Cross, a humanitarian organization led by volunteers and guided by its Congressional Charter and the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement, will provide relief to victims of disaster and help people prevent, prepare for, and respond to emergencies.

### **Fundamental Principles of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement**

Volunteers are expected to adhere to the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross Movement: humanity, impartiality, neutrality, independence, voluntary service, unity, and universality. Brief descriptions of each are provided below:

**Humanity:** The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, born of a desire to bring assistance without discrimination to the wounded on the battlefield, endeavors, 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, cooperation and lasting peace amongst all peoples.

**Impartiality:** The Movement makes no discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions. It endeavors to relieve the suffering of individuals, being guided solely by their needs, and to give priority to the most urgent cases of distress.

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**Neutrality:** In order to continue enjoying 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 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.

Our commitment to the Fundamental Principles brings us together with a common purpose and inspires us to excel and to behave in ways that inspire the trust of the American people. Each of us is responsible for upholding and living in accordance with these values every day.

### **Values**

Our American Red Cross values provide the foundation for the way we behave and the standard to which we hold ourselves. Each of us is responsible for upholding the values and living in accordance with them every day:

- Accountability
- Collaboration
- Commitment
- Results
- Trustworthiness
- Humanitarianism

**Ethics every day**

As volunteers at the American Red Cross, each of us is responsible, every day, for our own behavior and decisions we make. We affect the people and community around us. We make a difference.

We are committed to making a positive difference by:

- Improving the quality of human life
- Enhancing self-reliance and concern for others
- Helping people avoid, prepare for and cope with emergencies

In living out this mission, each of us is responsible for living up to the fundamental standards of our culture:

- Telling the truth
- Keeping promises
- Respecting individuals
- Being fair

Each of us is responsible for maintaining the highest standard of ethics... every day.

**The Concern Connection Line**

1-888-309-9679

It is your responsibility to be an active protector of the values that make us who we are. If a potential illegal, unsafe or unethical situation arises in the Red Cross workplace, speak up! If possible, notify your supervisor, volunteer resources representative or any manager with whom you feel comfortable. If attempts to resolve this at a local level are unsuccessful, call the Concern Connection Line.

**The History of our American Red Cross of Northeastern New York**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York was created in 1996 with the blending of seven counties – Albany, Columbia, Fulton, Greene, Rensselaer, Schenectady and Schoharie. Montgomery became the eighth county in 2001. The regional nature of this area had become increasingly apparent as people live in one community, work in another, and regularly travel throughout the area. The boundary lines that separate communities had blurred or completely disappeared as communities melded together across traditional divides. By creating a new larger chapter, the American Red Cross could better serve this community and lay the groundwork for growth and success in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

In 2009, we became known as a Regional Chapter with additional responsibilities to assist the Dutchess and Ulster County Chapters to our South, as well as the Adirondack–Saratoga and North Country Chapters to our North.

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York is a humanitarian organization responsive to local need, inclusive of all parts of the broader community. Our foundation is in local communities where we deliver services, encourage volunteerism, and the development of strong community alliances.

“The vision of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York, as a human service organization, is to be responsive to the communities we serve by providing high quality, cost-effective services. These services will be accessible to all and will be provided in a seamless and caring manner to all members of our diverse community. The American Red Cross is led by qualified local volunteers and professional staff.”

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Albany, New York 12205  
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1-800-831-0927  
[www.redcrossneny.org](http://www.redcrossneny.org)

# Volunteer Policies

## Commitment to volunteers, diversity and youth involvement

The achievement of the goals of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York is best served by the active participation of members of the community. To this end, the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York accepts and encourages the involvement of volunteers at all levels of the organization and within all appropriate programs and activities.

Volunteers are viewed as a valuable resource. They shall be extended the right to be given meaningful assignments, the right to be treated as equal co-workers, the right to effective supervision, the right to full involvement and participation and the right to recognition for work done. In return, volunteers shall agree to actively perform their duties to the best of their abilities and to remain loyal to the values, goals and procedures of the organization.

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York is committed to diversity and inclusiveness. Our employees; volunteers; governance; customers; blood, bone marrow and tissue donors; financial contributors; clients; suppliers and vendors should be representative of the diversity of the people residing in each local community the Red Cross serves. We are committed to people diversity, program diversity and service diversity.

Youth volunteers are welcomed! However, as volunteers who have not reached age 18, youth volunteers must have the written consent of a parent or guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer work assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with all appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

Youth are a vital link to the life of the American Red Cross and the future of this country. The American Red Cross is committed to developing youth involvement so that young people may better serve their community and become the leaders of tomorrow.

## Ten Principles of Volunteerism

1. We can broaden our nation's volunteer force by removing barriers to volunteering.
2. Volunteers are not "free."
3. Volunteers contribute more than meets the eye.
4. "Volunteer" does not mean "Amateur."
5. Volunteers and the organization they serve must meet each other's expectations.
6. Volunteers must never be exploited.
7. Volunteers make excellent middle and senior managers.
8. When recruiting volunteers, it is more important to place the right person in the right job than to attract volunteers at random.

9. We can help shape government policies on volunteerism.
10. Everyone benefits when nonprofit organizations collaborate.

### **Definition of an American Red Cross Volunteer**

A Red Cross volunteer is an individual who, beyond the responsibilities of paid employment, freely assists the American Red Cross in the accomplishment of its mission without expectation or receipt of compensation.

### **Role of the Board of Directors**

A Board of Directors provides governance to the American Red Cross of NENY. The Board, working with the Chief Executive Officer, establishes the chapter's overall policies and priorities. The Board's responsibilities include strategic planning, approval of budgets, development of donor support and community partnerships, monitoring chapter performance and providing oversight of the legal and ethical conduct of the chapter.

### **Volunteer and Employee Roles and Relationships**

The American Red Cross is an organization governed, supported and primarily staffed by volunteers. Employees are enablers of, and not substitutes for, volunteers. When possible, principal management roles are filled by teams of volunteer and employee management partnerships working together and sharing responsibility.

Volunteers serve in governance, management, direct service, support service, consulting and advisory roles. Volunteers may be involved in all programs and activities of the organization and serve at all levels of skill and decision making.

Consistent with the strategic direction of the American Red Cross to inspire a new generation of volunteers; volunteers and employees are considered to be partners in implementing the mission and programs of the American Red Cross. Volunteers and employees have equal and complementary roles to play. Volunteers are encouraged to understand and respect the needs and abilities of the employees.

### **What You Can Expect as a Red Cross Volunteer**

Your responsibility as a volunteer:

1. Be realistic and candid in accepting your assignment, taking into consideration your interests, skills and availability, as well as the needs of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York.
2. Learn your volunteer assignment as well as you can by completing all required training, asking questions and staying in touch with your supervisor.

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3. Contribute to the Red Cross by being reliable and dependable in doing your job and working with your co-workers.
4. Follow all policies and guidelines of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York, sign a Code of Conduct, observe confidentiality when needed, and engage in appropriate public behavior at all times.
5. Participate in the feedback process by letting the chapter know how you feel about your volunteer experience and by giving constructive suggestions for improvement in any area.
6. Develop your skills as a volunteer by participating in training and development opportunities. Learn as much as you can to do the best job possible.

### **What You Can Expect the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York to Provide for You**

1. A suitable assignment based upon your interests, skills and availability, as well as the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York's needs.
2. Orientation and training to help you perform your job.
3. The opportunity to work as part of a team, to contribute to the welfare of the community and the organization, and to be recognized for your contribution.
4. The support you need to do your job, including necessary equipment, supplies, work space and helpful supervision.
5. The opportunity to give feedback about your Red Cross volunteer experience.
6. The chance to grow and develop as a volunteer through participation in other American Red Cross of Northeastern New York activities, special training events, meetings and more responsible positions.

### **Insurance for Volunteers**

In general, the American Red Cross insurance covers volunteers while they are acting as agents for the Red Cross for –

- Liabilities they might incur while performing Red Cross duties
- Liabilities incurred as a result of accidents driving a Red Cross vehicle
- Medical expenses incurred in conjunction with Red Cross activities  
(This insurance is limited to a maximum of \$10,000 and injured volunteers should first turn to their personal health and medical insurance)
- Wrongful acts such as any breach of duty, error, misstatement, or misleading statement by any volunteer which is committed while performing official duties on behalf of Red Cross

At any time that you as a volunteer have any questions regarding insurance coverage, please contact the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department or the Executive Office.

**Dual Role of Red Cross Volunteers and Employees**

At times, employees of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York may desire to volunteer for the organization. Exempt employees may volunteer for the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York. However, because of the overtime requirements of the Fair Labor Standards Act, non-exempt employees may only volunteer for the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York in certain limited circumstances. Specifically, a non-exempt employee is not permitted to volunteer his or her time to the American Red Cross, except when *all* of the following conditions have been met:

(1) The service is entirely voluntary with no promise of advancement or penalty for not volunteering -- that is, it is not coerced;

(2) The volunteer work is sufficiently distinct from, and in a different capacity than, the work for which the non-exempt employee is paid. For example, a non-exempt employee who teaches any courses as part of his or her usual job functions may not "volunteer" to teach other courses; and

(3) The volunteer neither expects to receive pay for the volunteer work nor receives any wages for the work.

Any employee who wishes to volunteer services for the American Red Cross must speak to his or her supervisor. [Note: As an employee you will still need to complete a volunteer application form. )

## **Recruitment and Selection Policies**

### **Role of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department**

The productive involvement of volunteers requires a planned and organized effort. The function of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department is to provide a central coordinating point for effective volunteer placement within the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York, and to direct and assist volunteer and employee efforts jointly to provide more productive services. The Youth and Volunteer Resources Department shall also bear responsibility for maintaining liaison with other volunteer programs in the community and assisting in community-wide efforts to recognize and promote volunteering. The Youth and Volunteer Resources Department shall bear primary responsibility for planning for effective volunteer deployment, for assisting staff in identifying productive and creative volunteer roles, for recruiting suitable volunteers and for tracking and evaluating the contributions of volunteers to the organization.

### **Volunteer Records, References and Privacy**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York maintains personnel records for each volunteer. Records are the property of the Chapter and are confidential. Volunteers are required to notify the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department of any changes in contact information (*i.e.*, emergency contact notification, information, home address, telephone number(s), email address) and to report any additional educational and skill training acquired after joining the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York.

Volunteers may review their personnel records. Volunteers must notify the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department and schedule a time that is mutually convenient.

### **Volunteer position descriptions**

Every registered volunteer position in the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York has a volunteer position description summarizing the principal duties, responsibilities, qualifications and essential work functions of the volunteer assignment. Volunteer position descriptions should be periodically updated to reflect changes in title, assignment or essential work functions.

### **Recruitment and Equal Opportunity**

Volunteers are recruited by the Red Cross on a pro-active basis, with the intent of broadening and expanding volunteer involvement to assist in mobilizing communities to help people prevent, prepare for and respond to disasters and other life-threatening emergencies.

Volunteers are recruited without regard to gender, disability, age, race or other condition.

Volunteers are recruited based upon their skills, abilities and suitability to perform volunteer responsibilities.

The volunteer appointment process includes the following:

- Discussion of volunteer opportunities with this Chapter
- Background check
- Application once background check has cleared
- Applicant signs code of conduct and confidentiality/Intellectual Property agreement

Additionally, some volunteers such as nurses or disaster mental health volunteers will need to provide proof of current licensure.

Exceptions to these procedures may be made under some limited circumstances such as when the community is experiencing a larger-scale disaster.

Placement: in placing a volunteer in a position, attention shall be paid to the interests and capabilities of the volunteer and to the requirements of the volunteer position. No placement shall be made unless the requirements of both the volunteer and the supervising staff can be met; no volunteer should be assigned to a “make-work” position and no position should be given to an unqualified or uninterested volunteer.

### **Recruitment of minors (parent/guardian release form)**

Volunteers who have not reached the age 18 must have the written consent of a parent or legal guardian prior to volunteering. The volunteer services assigned to a minor should be performed in a non-hazardous environment and should comply with the appropriate requirements of child labor laws.

### **Service at the discretion of the organization**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York accepts the service of all volunteers with the understanding that such service is at the sole discretion of this Chapter. Volunteers agree that the organization may at any time, for whatever reason, decide to terminate the volunteer’s relationship with the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York or to make changes in the nature of their volunteer assignment.

### **Nepotism and Fraternization**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York permits the volunteer involvement of qualified relatives of employees as long as such volunteer involvement does not, in the opinion of the Chapter, create actual or perceived conflicts of interest. For purposes of this policy, “relative” is a spouse, domestic partner, significant other, child, parent, sibling, grandparent, grandchild, aunt, uncle, niece, nephew, in-law or “step” relation. The American Red Cross of

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Northeastern New York exercises sound business judgment in the placement of related volunteers in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Individuals who are relatives may work in the same Chapter facility, as long as no direct reporting or supervisory relationship exists. No volunteer is permitted to work within the “chain of command” of a relative such that the volunteer’s work responsibilities or career progress could be influenced by a relative.
- No relatives are permitted to work in any positions, in which this Chapter believes an inherent conflict of interest may exist.
- Volunteers who marry or enter into a romantic relationship while volunteering are treated in accordance with these guidelines. If, in the opinion of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York, an actual or apparent conflict arises as a result of marriage, one of the volunteers will be reassigned or volunteer involvement will end within 90 days if no reassignment is available.

This policy applies to all categories of volunteer assignments.

[Note: family members are frequently involved as volunteers especially during episodic volunteer events. Youth volunteers may depend on parental involvement as drivers or chaperones. Family volunteer involvement should be encouraged as long as it does not create a perceived conflict of interest].

### **Reference and Background Checks**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York strives to maintain a safe and productive workplace with honest, trustworthy, qualified, reliable, non-violent volunteers and employees who do not present a risk of harm to their co-workers or others. The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York may perform, or may request, that third parties perform, reference and background checks at any time in the application or volunteer management process. All reference and background checks will be performed in accordance with applicable federal and/or state law.

Reference and background checks may include volunteer history, education verification, criminal history, social security number verification and sex offender registry review, where available, and licensure and motor vehicle record if appropriate to the position. In conducting reference and background checks, the Chapter may use consumer reporting agencies to gather and report information in the form of consumer or investigative consumer reports. All reference and background check results will be maintained in a confidential file Director of Volunteers.

Potential and current volunteers are expected to cooperate fully with reference and background checks. Cooperation includes, among other things, providing written consent to conduct a reference and background check and responding with truthful and complete information to

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inquiries made by the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York or third party investigators during the reference and background check process. Failure to cooperate in these respects, or any attempt to interfere with implementation of this policy, or the Chapter's efforts to obtain relevant information, may result in discipline, up to and including termination of volunteer involvement.

### **Acceptance and appointment of volunteers**

Service as a registered volunteer with the American Red Cross of NENY will begin with an official notification of acceptance or appointment to a volunteer position. Notice may only be given by the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department. No volunteers will begin performance of any position until they have been officially accepted and have completed all necessary screening and paperwork.

### **Emergency contact information**

It is the responsibility of each volunteer to regularly update their personal and emergency contact information. This update can be made by contacting the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department.

### **Volunteer Classification**

*Registered and Registered for Credit Volunteers.* Registered volunteers have demonstrated an ongoing commitment to the Red Cross and whose names and addresses are on file at the chapter or station. Volunteers registered for credit receive a formalized quid pro quo from the Red Cross.

*Unregistered Volunteers.* Volunteers who participate only briefly for a single time or special event, for whom no paper work is completed.

*Leadership Volunteers.* Volunteers serving in governance, management or advisory positions in the chapter, blood services region or station, may be registered, registered for credit or unregistered.

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York also accepts as volunteers, individuals participating in student community service activities, service learning activities, student intern projects, employee volunteer programs, Americorps programs, and other volunteer referral programs. In each of these cases however, a special agreement may be in effect with the agency, school, company or program from which these "special case" volunteers originated and must identify responsibility for management and care of the volunteers.

**Clients and relatives as volunteers**

Clients may be accepted as volunteers, where such service does not constitute an obstruction to or conflict with provision of services to the client or others. Relatives of clients may also serve as volunteers, but will not be placed in a position of direct service or relationship to members of their family who are receiving services.

**Former employees as volunteers**

Employees who have terminated their employment with the American Red Cross of NENY may apply for volunteer positions. Only those employees who resigned or retired “in good standing” will be considered for volunteer opportunities.

# Supervision, Feedback, Training, and Miscellaneous Policies

## Role of Supervisors

Each volunteer has a clearly identified supervisor who is responsible for direct management of that volunteer. This supervisor may be a volunteer or employee.

This supervisor is responsible for the day-to-day management and guidance of the work of the volunteer and shall be available to the volunteer for consultation and assistance.

The supervisor has primary responsibility for developing suitable assignments for the volunteer, for involving the volunteer in the communication flow of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York and for providing feedback to the volunteer regarding their work.

A volunteer or employee who is assigned supervisory responsibility for volunteers shall have this responsibility delineated in their position/job description.

## Performance Feedback

Volunteers and their supervisors are encouraged to have informal, open and honest discussion on an ongoing basis about work performance and goals of the volunteer. A more formal performance review may be conducted at any time at the discretion of the volunteer's supervisor. Performance reviews are intended to reflect the volunteer's effectiveness on the job, and are a continuing record of work performance. They allow the supervisor to measure the volunteer's work against the requirements of their position, review results of negotiated business goals, and assess general performance behaviors.

As a result of performance feedback, volunteer development activities may be pursued. Volunteer development is a collaborative effort between the American Red Cross of NENY, supervisors, and volunteers to align individual goals with the overall direction of the chapter. Development efforts are focused on building the capabilities of all volunteers.

## Training for volunteers

Aside from gaining person satisfaction while performing meaningful work, Red Cross volunteers also acquire the skills, training and hands-on experience essential to profession growth in today's world. Volunteers develop and exercise their leadership and technical skills in conjunction with helping their community. Promotion or transfer to other types of duties is based upon qualifications as well as supervisor's evaluation. In addition, volunteers are encouraged to take advantage of an extensive variety of courses taught by Red Cross instructors. We offer an abundance of programs throughout the year in such subjects as health

& safety, emergency preparedness, data entry, etc. Many volunteer positions require very specific training – your immediate supervisor will discuss the training requirements necessary for you to participate in the role you have selected.

### **Communicating with the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department**

A supervisor is responsible for maintaining regular communications with the volunteer director regarding the status of the volunteers they are supervising, and are responsible for the timely provision of all necessary paperwork to the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department. The Youth and Volunteer Resources Department should be informed immediately of any substantial change in the work or status of a volunteer and should be consulted in advance before any corrective action is taken.

Each volunteer will be provided with contact information for the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department regarding queries or concerns.

### **Awards and Recognition**

The American Red Cross is committed to recognizing its volunteers and employees. As a Red Cross volunteer you are eligible for a number of awards, both locally and nationally. Service pins are awarded on your one-year and five year anniversaries and in five-year increments thereafter.

More information about The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York awards and recognition program is available from the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department.

### **Reimbursement for approved expenses**

Volunteers may be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable expenses incurred while performing business for the ARC/NENY. Volunteers should first check with their direct supervisor regarding specific reimbursements. Prior approval must be sought for any major expenditure.

### **Attendance**

The ARC/NENY expects all volunteers to honor their commitment for attendance and promptness. Volunteers who are unable to come to work or who will be late should notify their department within a reasonable amount of time prior to their scheduled work time. Frequent or excessive absenteeism or lateness may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation. Volunteers who have been absent for health reasons may be asked to provide a doctor's statement of suitable health prior to returning to their previous volunteer work.

### **Work Schedules**

The volunteer and department supervisor will determine the best work schedule for both parties.

**Inclement weather**

The volunteer will be expected to contact their supervisor and advise if they cannot work their assigned schedule due to weather conditions.

**Holidays**

The ARCENY observes 11 holidays each year.

The holidays observed are:

<b>Holiday</b>	<b>Date Observed</b>
New Year's Day	January 1
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday in January
President's Day	3 <sup>rd</sup> Monday in February
Memorial Day	Last Monday in May
Independence Day	July 4
Labor Day	First Monday in September
Veteran's Day	November 11
Thanksgiving Day	4 <sup>th</sup> Thursday in November
Day after Thanksgiving	Day after Thanksgiving
Christmas Day	December 25

Holidays that fall on Sunday will be observed the following Monday. Holidays that fall on Saturday will be observed on the preceding Friday.

In order to maintain adequate staffing and production levels, management reserves the right to request a volunteer to work on a holiday. Note: the volunteer may refuse this request.

An example of Holiday needs: Blood Collection Center is open on Thanksgiving morning and requires volunteers for donor registration and refreshment server.

## **Safety & Security Policies**

### **Workplace Safety and Security**

In order to provide a secure, safe and healthy work environment for volunteers, the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York periodically provides information to volunteers about workplace safety, health, and security issues through regular internal communication means such as meetings, memos or other written communications.

Volunteers are discouraged from bringing large amounts of cash or other personal valuables to work unless absolutely necessary. The Chapter is not responsible for volunteers' personal items that are lost or stolen.

Some of the best safety improvement ideas come from volunteers. Those with ideas, concerns or suggestions for improved safety and security in the workplace are encouraged to bring them to management's attention so that the safety and welfare of all volunteers can be improved. Volunteers should feel free to report, without fear of retaliation, any condition which they believe poses a safety, health or security risk in the workplace. The Chapter will investigate such reports promptly and thoroughly and take appropriate corrective action. Furthermore, any comments or jokes regarding threats of violence will be taken seriously and dealt with appropriately and promptly.

Each volunteer is expected to obey safety rules and to exercise caution in all work activities. Volunteers must immediately report any unsafe condition to their supervisor. Volunteers who violate safety standards, who cause hazardous or dangerous situations, or who fail to report or, where appropriate, remedy such situations, may be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

In the case of accidents that result in injury, regardless of how insignificant the injury may appear, volunteers should immediately notify their supervisor. Such reports are necessary to comply with laws and initiate insurance benefit procedures.

### **Injuries while volunteering**

All volunteers are expected to follow appropriate safety guidelines while volunteering. However, even under the best circumstances, an accident may occur.

If a volunteer is injured, even slightly, the volunteer is expected to immediately stop the activity that caused the injury and seek first aid or medical attention if necessary. The volunteer must inform his or her supervisor about the incident and complete an incident report form. If the volunteer is unable to reach the supervisor, then the volunteer must contact the Executive Office or the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department. The volunteer should not resume the

activity until treatment has been provided and/or he or she has been given the approval from a supervisor to continue the activity.

### **Use of American Red Cross Vehicles**

From time to time, volunteers may be required to travel as part of their responsibilities. Volunteers who drive as part of their responsibilities are required to do so in a friendly, courteous and safe manner. It is the policy of the Chapter to make sure its drivers are qualified and legally authorized to safely operate motor vehicles used in the course of company business. Only those volunteers who meet the qualifications of the Chapter vehicle policy are allowed to operate Red Cross vehicles or operate a personal vehicle on Red Cross business.

Drivers are responsible for the safe operation of their vehicle. At no time are they permitted to subject a Red Cross vehicle to abuse through careless or reckless operation.

Drivers are required to notify the Red Cross of license suspensions or revocations, and to report accidents or damage to company vehicles no matter how insignificant they appear within 24 hours. Drivers who fail to comply with these rules may face disciplinary action up to and including separation.

Seat belts must be used at all times, by both the driver and all occupants of the vehicle. Failure to properly use seat belts will also be cause for disciplinary action. No volunteer, while operating a Red Cross vehicle, or while driving his or her personal vehicle on Red Cross business, may use a hand-held cellular telephone. Smoking is prohibited in Red Cross vehicles.

No driver may operate a motor vehicle while the driver's ability or alertness is impaired, through fatigue, illness, taking medication or any other cause, as to make it unsafe for the driver to operate the vehicle. Volunteers who drive Red Cross vehicles while under such conditions, which could impair their driving ability, face disciplinary action up to and including separation.

Drivers can be disqualified from driving vehicles for a number of reasons, including involvement in a number of accidents, or a demonstration of disregard for the safety of the public, as evidence by excessive speeding, reckless driving, driving under the influence, driving while his/her license is suspended or revoked, other evidence of reckless driving, failure to report an accident and/or breaking any motor vehicle laws

Parking and traffic fines incurred while utilizing vehicles are the responsibility of the driver and will not be paid by the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York.

**Red Cross Property**

The ARCNEY works to prevent property loss of any kind. All property used to conduct business belongs to the ARCNEY. The ARCNEY assumes no liability for personal property brought into the workplace.

**Identification**

New volunteers will be issued photo ID badges which should be worn at all times on premises or when serving on Red Cross business off-site. Lost badges should be reported to your direct supervisor. Replacement badges are available at a cost to the individual.

**Handling Money**

Whenever possible, two or more volunteers and/or employees should be involved when handling money, fees and donations.

**Emergency evacuation procedures**

The ARCNEY has developed evacuations procedures from every room or office in this building – the diagram is next to every doorway. If you have specific questions regarding evacuation, please speak with your department supervisor, the Director of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department or the Executive Office.

# Conduct Policies

## Code of Conduct

All volunteers and employees of the American Red Cross, in delivering Red Cross services and in all other Red Cross activities, shall meet the following standards of conduct:

No volunteer or employee shall:

- a. Authorize the use of or use for the benefit or advantage of any person, the name, emblem, endorsement, services, or property of the American Red Cross, except in conformance with American Red Cross policy.
- b. Accept or seek on behalf of any person, any financial advantage or gain of other than nominal value offered as a result of the volunteer's or employee's affiliation with the American Red Cross.
- c. Publicly use any American Red Cross affiliation in connection with the promotion of partisan politics, religious matters, or positions on any issue not in conformity with the official position of the American Red Cross.
- d. Disclose or use any confidential American Red Cross information that is available solely as a result of the volunteer's or employee's affiliation with the American Red Cross to any person not authorized to receive such information or use to the disadvantage of the American Red Cross any such confidential information, without the express authorization of the American Red Cross.
- e. Knowingly take any action or make any statement intended to influence the conduct of the American Red Cross in such a way as to confer any financial benefit on any person, corporation, or entity in which the individual has a significant interest or affiliation.
- f. Operate or act in any manner that is contrary to the best interests of the American Red Cross.
- g. Operate or act in a manner that creates a conflict with the interests of the American Red Cross and any organization in which the individual has a personal, business, or financial interest. The individual shall disclose such conflict of interest to the American Red Cross chair of the appropriate governing board, the appropriate Chief Executive Officer, or the General Counsel, as applicable, upon becoming aware of it. Where required, the individual shall absent himself or herself during deliberations, and shall refrain from participating in any decisions or voting in connection with the matter.

**AMERICAN RED CROSS CODE OF CONDUCT  
CERTIFICATION AND DISCLOSURE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ certify that I have read and understand the Code of Conduct of the American Red Cross and agree to comply with it, as well as applicable laws that impact the organization, at all times.

**Disclosure of Actual or Potential Conflicts:**

I affirm that, except as listed below, I have no personal, business, or financial interest with any organization that conflict, or appear to conflict, with the best interests of the American Red Cross:

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**Future Actual or Potential Conflicts:**

At any time during the term of my employment or volunteer status with the American Red Cross, should an actual or potential conflict of interest arise between my personal, business, or financial interests and the interests of the Red Cross, I agree to:

- a. Disclose promptly the actual or potential conflict to the chair of my unit, the executive of my unit, my department head, or the General Counsel, as applicable; and
- b. Until Red Cross approves actions to mitigate or otherwise resolve the conflict, refrain from participating in any discussions, deliberations, decisions or voting related to the conflict of interest.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Confidential Information and Intellectual Property**

Red Cross has sole entitlement and copyrights to any intellectual property that is conceived or developed by volunteers, employees and its agents during the course of service to the American Red Cross. All registered volunteers and employees are required to sign a Confidential Information and Intellectual Property Agreement as a condition of volunteer involvement as required in the Board of Governors Manual.

Intellectual property includes inventions, discoveries, and original works of authorship as defined by US patent, trademark, and copyright law. Questions about this policy should be directed to Executive Office.

### **Harassment Free Workplace**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York is committed to a work environment free from unlawful harassment in which everyone is treated with respect and dignity while working, while on Red Cross premises, while traveling on Red Cross business, or at social functions. The Red Cross has zero tolerance for unlawful harassment.

Unlawful harassment is defined as harassment based on any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law including race, religion, color, sex, national origin, age, veteran or disability status, which is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to alter the working conditions of a volunteer or employee. Examples of conduct prohibited by this policy include, but are not limited to:

1) Verbal or physical conduct that harasses a volunteer on the basis of a category protected by applicable federal, state or local law and that is sufficiently severe or pervasive as to create an intimidating, threatening, offensive or hostile environment.

2) Sexual displays or publications, or other verbal or physical conduct, where an volunteer is told either explicitly or implicitly that he or she must submit to the conduct to remain involved as a volunteer or where his or her reaction to the conduct is used as a basis for a management decision, such as evaluation, advancement, assigned duties, disciplinary action, or any other condition of volunteer involvement or career development. Examples of prohibited verbal or physical conduct include:

- Unwelcome sexual advances;
- Stalking, dating violence, date rape, or sexual assault;
- Persisting with romantic advances despite the rejection of the advances;
- Requests for sexual favors, whether or not accompanied by promises or threats with regard to the employment or volunteer relationship;
- Sexual jokes and innuendo; verbal abuse of a sexual nature; comments about an individual's body, sexual prowess, sexual activity, or sexual attractiveness;
- Leering, whistling, or touching; insulting or obscene comments, sounds, or gestures; displays of sexually suggestive objects, cartoons or pictures.

3) Words, actions or visual matter that demean or show hostility toward an individual or group because of any characteristic protected by applicable federal, state or local law.

## **American Red Cross of Northeastern New York    Effective Date: July 2009**

Volunteers are responsible for reporting any concerns regarding unlawful harassment to management pursuant to the Dispute Resolution Policy. Volunteers who act in good faith to report or assist in the investigation of a possible violation of this policy will not be retaliated against. If, after investigating any claim of unlawful harassment, the ARCNEY concludes that a volunteer has filed a claim in bad faith, provided false information regarding a claim, or refused to cooperate in an investigation of a claim, disciplinary action, up to and including termination, may be taken.

Violations of this policy will be dealt with appropriately and promptly. Corrective action may include, but is not limited to, training, referral to counseling, and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination.

### **Violence Free Work Environment**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York promotes a safe work environment for all volunteers and does not tolerate any type of violent behavior committed by or against volunteers. All volunteers are expected to conduct themselves in a professional manner and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Threatening or violent behavior committed by anyone against volunteers, employees, vendors or clients during work or off-duty hours will not be tolerated. Such behavior may include but is not limited to the following:

- (1) Physical injury to another person;
- (2) Threats;
- (3) Behavior that creates a reasonable fear of injury in another person;
- (4) Intentionally causing damage to Red Cross property or property of another volunteer or employee;
- (5) Possession of weapons (for example, guns, knives, clubs, explosive devices, etc.) on property or while at Red Cross sponsored-activities; or
- (6) Committing acts motivated by, or related to, sexual harassment or domestic violence.

Statements or gestures which in any way suggest that the employee may engage in violent conduct will be taken seriously by management and responded to appropriately.

Volunteers have a responsibility to report any potentially dangerous situations or unauthorized individuals on Red Cross premises to management immediately. Reports of statements or behavior which may violate this policy will be investigated promptly and in as confidential a manner as possible. A volunteer suspected of violent behavior may be placed on leave during an investigation until a course of action is determined.

Incidents involving violent behavior by a volunteer may warrant removal of the individual from the workplace until further evaluation determines his or her suitability for return to the

workplace. An evaluation that finds a volunteer suitable to return to the workplace does not negate further disciplinary action up to and including separation.

### **Dispute Resolution**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York is committed to a work environment where all persons are treated with respect and dignity. The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York has therefore adopted the Dispute Resolution Policy to establish a comprehensive method of resolving volunteer concerns that builds trust and produces prompt and fair resolutions. The Dispute Resolution Policy may be used to resolve issues regarding any condition of volunteer involvement or the application, meaning or interpretation of any volunteer resource policy or procedure that affects the work activity of a volunteer.

Volunteers are strongly encouraged to follow the steps listed below to discuss any concerns with their supervisor.

#### **Step One**

The volunteer should promptly report a concern to his or her supervisor, who will investigate the matter and take appropriate action. Any supervisor who receives a concern alleging a violation of the Harassment Free policy will notify the Director of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department immediately.

If the concern the volunteer is having involves his or her supervisor, the volunteer should report his or her concern to the next level of management who will review the situation.

#### **Step Two**

If the problem is not resolved in Step One, the volunteer is encouraged to seek assistance from Director of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department. In an effort to resolve the problem, the Director of Youth and Volunteer Resources will consider the facts, conduct an investigation, review the findings and recommendations with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Chapter and respond back to the volunteer. The Director of Youth and Volunteer Resources may ask the volunteer to put the concern in writing and provide appropriate documentation.

#### **Step Three**

If the volunteer is not satisfied with the decision of the Director of Youth and Volunteer Resources, he or she may prepare a written summary of the concerns and request that the matter be reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York. In these instances, the decision of the CEO is final.

If the concern the volunteer is having involves the CEO, the volunteer should report his/her concern to the Chair of the Board of Director's Human Resources Committee who will undertake an investigation. The investigation will include a full examination of the facts (which may

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include a review of the written summary of the volunteer's statement, discussions with individuals concerned, and a further investigation if necessary) and will advise the volunteer of its decision. The decision of the Committee Chair is final.

No volunteer will be retaliated against for acting in good faith to report a potential issue or for assisting in the investigation of a possible issue. If at anytime during the process or investigation, the American Red Cross of Northeastern New York concludes that a volunteer has filed a claim in bad faith, has refused to cooperate in an investigation of an issue, or has provided false information regarding an issue, disciplinary action up to and including termination may be taken. The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York reserves the right to continue or suspend review of an issue if the volunteer raising the issue files a charge or complaint with an external agency or terminates volunteer involvement.

### **Progressive Discipline**

The American Red Cross of Northeastern New York has adopted rules and standards to ensure productive, harmonious operations. The best interest of the Red Cross lies in ensuring fair treatment of all volunteers and in making certain that discipline is prompt, fair and uniform.

The Red Cross endorses a philosophy of progressive discipline in which it attempts to provide volunteers with notice of deficiencies and an opportunity to improve whenever practical or reasonable. Volunteers' performance and conduct is evaluated on an ongoing basis, with feedback provided when necessary. Informal discussions may be used to ensure that volunteers know and follow rules and standards. These discussions should focus on clarifying expectations, providing appropriate training and development and coaching volunteers.

In some cases, formal disciplinary action may be deemed appropriate. Progressive discipline steps may include, but are not limited to, verbal warnings, written warnings, suspension and separation from service. The American Red Cross of NENY retains the right to administer discipline in any manner it deems suitable and any of the steps listed above may be skipped. Separation from service may occur at any time without any progressive discipline steps having been taken.

### **Red Cross Communication Systems**

All communication systems are the American Red Cross of NENY property and are to be used for business purposes. Because these communication systems are provided for business purposes, volunteers should have no expectation of privacy regarding their personal use of any Red Cross communication systems, and their communications and systems use may be audited by authorized management at any time without notice. Red Cross communication systems include, but are not limited to, e-mail, telephone, Internet, fax, voicemail, bulletin boards, and interoffice mail. Volunteers are to use proper discretion in the amount and length of non-business use of Red Cross communication systems.

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Volunteers must be mindful that their association with the Red Cross will be visible to any recipient of an electronic communication, and assure that their communications are consistent with the Red Cross mission and accepted community standards.

Prohibited uses of Red Cross communication systems include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Developing, accessing or distributing material which:
  - harasses or disparages others, or contains ethnic or racial stereotypes, epithets or slurs;
  - contains pornography, profanity, violent or sexually explicit images, messages, or cartoons;
  - solicits for commercial ventures or outside organizations;
  - advocates positions not officially endorsed by the Red Cross
  - violates any applicable law
- 2) Personal mass e-mail distribution (“spamming”), unauthorized computer access (“hacking”), obtaining pirated software, or violating copyright protections.
- 3) Distributing sensitive, proprietary, confidential, or private information of the Red Cross without appropriate authorization.
- 4) Obtaining unauthorized access to another volunteer’s or employee’s communication systems, or sending unauthorized communications under another colleague’s name.
- 5) Conducting Red Cross business on a hand held cellular telephone while driving a vehicle

The American Red Cross of NENY communication systems may not be used in situations that violate Federal, State or Local Law. Inappropriate use of any Red Cross communication systems may result in disciplinary action, up to and including separation.

### **Non-Solicitation/Distribution of Literature**

Approaching fellow volunteers or employees in the workplace regarding personal activities, organizations or causes, regardless of how worthwhile, important or benevolent, can create unnecessary apprehension and pressures for fellow colleagues.

In the interest of maintaining a proper business environment and preventing interference with work and inconvenience to others, volunteers may not distribute literature or printed materials of any kind, sell merchandise, solicit financial contributions, or solicit for any other cause in the workplace during working time. The workplace includes Red Cross buildings, parking lots and driveway areas and work areas in which Red Cross work is regularly performed. This policy also prohibits solicitations via the Red Cross E-mail or other telephonic communication systems. Furthermore volunteers may not distribute literature or printed material of any kind in work areas at any time.

Solicitation or distribution by non-staff is prohibited on any Red Cross property, including buildings and surrounding parking, patio, and driveway areas. Any requests from outside persons or organizations to sell merchandise, solicit contributions, distribute literature, arrange displays of utilize Red Cross facilities are to be referred to Executive Office.

### **Drugs and Alcohol**

The Red Cross maintains a workplace that is free from the effects of drug and alcohol abuse. The Red Cross will not tolerate any abuse of drugs or alcohol that imperils the health or well being of its staff or the customers it serves, threatens its operation, or compromises the safety of its products and services.

The Red Cross reserves the right to establish drug and alcohol search and screening procedures consistent with applicable laws, as deemed necessary. Implementation of search or screening procedures will be established only with the joint and prior approval of the CEO.

While on Red Cross property or while performing Red Cross business off premises, volunteers are prohibited from unlawful possession, use, manufacture, distribution, sale or dispensation of illegal drugs or alcohol. Such conduct is also prohibited during nonworking time to the extent that it violates laws, negatively affects Red Cross activities, or adversely affects the reputation of the American Red Cross.

Volunteers who use legally prescribed drugs during work, and have any reason to expect that such use may affect their ability to perform work, must report this fact to the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department.

Volunteers who are convicted of any drug- or alcohol-related offense, including pleas of no contest, are obligated to inform the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department within five days of said conviction or plea. Failure to comply with this regulation may result in disciplinary action up to and including separation.

### **Smoking**

The ARCNENY provides a smoke-free work environment. Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the property of the Chapter.

### **Representing Red Cross**

Prior to any action or statement, which might significantly affect or obligate the Red Cross, volunteers should seek prior consultation and approval from the Fund Development and Communications Department. These actions may include but are not limited to, public statements to the press, collaboration or joint initiatives or any agreements involving contractual or other financial obligations. Volunteers are authorized to act as representatives of the organization as specifically indicated within their position/job descriptions and only to the extent of such written specifications.

### **Media Inquires**

## **American Red Cross of Northeastern New York      Effective Date: July 2009**

The American public relies on the ARCNEY as a symbol of trust and as a powerful voice in providing lifesaving information. The Fund Development and Communications department will provide a response to media inquiries as soon as possible, generally within 24 hours. Selected staff and volunteers from our Fund Development department are charged with handling media calls and request for interviews with the news media.

### **Dress Code**

Appropriately dressed volunteers add to the overall credibility of the ARCNEY and display a sense of confidence to the American Public. The following guidelines describe grooming and attire appropriate for Red Cross business:

Volunteers are expected to maintain appropriate dress and personal hygiene. Staff is encouraged to discuss dress codes with their supervisor as requirements may vary with different departments and job assignments. On dress down days such as casual Fridays dress codes will be relaxed to include jeans, casual shirts and sneakers.

Examples of attire considered inappropriate in the workplace include the following (NOT all inclusive):

For **safety reasons**, no sandals, flip-flops or open-toed shoes without ankle straps are to be worn during your scheduled work shift. Shirts with logos, pictures or other symbols, other than Red Cross symbols are inappropriate, as are shorts, tank tops, halter tops and beach shoes. Shoes are required.

### **Personal Phone Calls**

The ARCNEY may limit the number of personal or cell phone calls received by volunteers while they are serving on Red Cross business.

## Acknowledgement and Receipt

### Receipt and Review of Policies Form

Signature on this receipt acknowledges that you have reviewed the ARCNEWY volunteer handbook. Please sign and date the receipt.

### Volunteer Handbook Statement of Certification

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have received and reviewed the ARCNEWY Youth and Volunteer Resources Department Handbook and understand its contents, or have discussed questions I have with the Director of the Youth and Volunteer Resources Department. I also realize that this statement will become a permanent part of my volunteer personnel file.

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Volunteer's Name (PLEASE PRINT)

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Signature

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Address

-----  
Date

\*Please return to the Office of Volunteer, American Red Cross NEWY, 33 Everett Road, Albany, New York 12205.