

RE:ACT Code of Conduct

Introduction

RE:ACT's work is based on deeply held values and principles. It is essential that our commitment to humanitarian principles is supported and demonstrated by all members (staff, interns and volunteers).

In order to meet our objectives RE:ACT must retain its reputation as an organisation of integrity and respect. As a member of a team that brings assistance to vulnerable communities, you represent RE:ACT in your work and life. The code of conduct outlined below is designed for your guidance and protection to help you understand what RE:ACT considers to be acceptable professional and ethical behaviour. In joining RE:ACT, you undertake to discharge your duties and to regulate your conduct in line with the requirements of this Code.

Whilst recognising that local laws and cultures differ considerably from one country to another, RE:ACT is a UK based Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO), and therefore the Code is based on UK, European and International Legal standards. It has been written to reflect the organisation's fundamental beliefs and values, to support its mission and its commitment to supporting all its members and the beneficiaries we serve.

Scope of the Code

- This Code of Conduct forms part of your contract of employment or voluntary role with RE:ACT and failure to adhere to it could result in disciplinary action being taken. Any disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy.
- The Code of Conduct covers all full-time staff, part-time staff, interns and volunteers with RE:ACT, collectively known hereafter as members.
- All locations where RE:ACT works are covered by the Code.
- In circumstances where conditions relating to locally employed staff conflict with this Code, such circumstances must be discussed with the in-country Operations Team and Director of Humanitarian Operations.
- Where this Code relates to existing RE:ACT policy documents these connections will be noted. You are encouraged to also familiarise yourself with these policies.

Professional Ethics, Neutrality and Impartiality

- RE:ACT members are expected to perform their duties from a position of neutrality and impartiality.
- Where members are also members of professions with established professional ethical codes they are encouraged to continue to abide by those ethical codes, as well as the RE:ACT Code of Conduct.

- Members are encouraged to review significant international documents such as the UN Declaration of Human Rights and The Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability.
- RE:ACT is a signatory to The Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Relief and all standards of this code must be adhered to.

Principles of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

- The humanitarian imperative comes first.
- Aid is given regardless of the race, creed or nationality of the recipients and without adverse distinction of any kind. Aid priorities are calculated on the basis of need alone.
- Aid will not be used to further a particular political or religious standpoint.
- We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy.
- We shall respect culture and custom.
- We shall attempt to build disaster response on local capacities.
- Ways shall be found to involve programme beneficiaries in the management of relief aid.
- Aid must strive to reduce future vulnerabilities to disaster as well as meeting basic needs.
- We hold ourselves accountable to both those we seek to assist and those from whom we accept resources.
- In our information, publicity and advertising activities, we shall recognise disaster victims as dignified human beings, not hopeless objects.

General Conduct

- RE:ACT members should not operate outside the scope of their physical, mental, or emotional ability.
- Any pre-existing conditions, either mental or physical, must be raised with the relevant manager prior to an operation or activity if they have the capacity to impact on an individual's ability to discharge their duties.
- Members should represent themselves and RE:ACT with the highest standard of professional conduct; never violating the principles of their training or profession.
- Disaster response activity can be physically and emotionally tiring. It is important to take appropriate measures to manage wellbeing, attend daily debriefs and inform a Team Leader if you are struggling.
- Members should be on time for required activity and listen to all safety or operational briefings given.
- There are risks involved with disaster response activity, RE:ACT will provide appropriate training and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), which must be completed / used as directed.
- Up to date Next of Kin information must be given to RE:ACT prior to deploying.

Abuse of Power

Humanitarian work is a privilege and as a result of ongoing high standards RE:ACT continues to enjoy respect amongst our beneficiaries.

- Members are not to use the power of their position for their own benefit or for the benefit of family members or friends.
- Kickbacks, bribes or other forms of personal enrichment are not permitted in any circumstances. Members must adhere at all times to the RE:ACT Anti-Bribery Policy.
- Members are not permitted to receive personal gifts of money, materials, or services from beneficiaries or sub-contractors.
- In situations where contracts to provide services for RE:ACT are being facilitated by members, all such contracts are to be fair, equitable, written and signed by all parties.

Relationships with the local community

RE:ACT encourages members to develop comprehensive relationships with the local community. The overall success of our work will be significantly enhanced through positive local relationships. This policy is of particular relevance to RE:ACT members on operational activity.

- Where personal interest is present members are encouraged to join with local cultural, community and religious groups.
- Involvement in local political movements or leadership in community activities that might compromise RE:ACT's objectives in the field country should be avoided and must not be undertaken without written permission from RE:ACT.
- Considerable care should be exercised in the area of religious activities. Although RE:ACT will not restrict religious practice of any kind, members need to be aware of local sensitivities towards particular religious' practices, and take the appropriate actions.

Local workers are members of the community and will have relationships with many community activities.

- In the context of such relationships such workers are encouraged to ensure that their personal activities are not seen as being the official position of RE:ACT.
- Managers and Team Leaders will assist in this process if required. If in doubt about this, or any other aspect of this Code please consult your Manager or Team Leader.

Conflicts of Interest

Occasionally situations arise where a conflict of interest occurs between RE:ACT activities and personal activities. This can particularly occur in the areas of service provision and business contracts.

- Members are not permitted to form business relationships between members of their own extended family and RE:ACT.
- Members who also manage private businesses or have a financial interest in businesses are not permitted to sign contracts between RE:ACT and those businesses.
- Where members become aware of a potential conflict of interest they must immediately discuss this matter with their supervisor. RE:ACT will make every effort to ensure that members will not be disadvantaged by the process of enhancing neutrality and fairness.
- Where members continue to permit a conflict to remain, disciplinary processes may be invoked in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy.

Use of RE:ACT assets and institutional knowledge

- RE:ACT may provide equipment such as vehicles or computers in order to assist the local community recovery effort. RE:ACT recognises that in some circumstances this equipment is able to be used for private purposes.
- Where permission is granted to use equipment for personal use, discretion must be exercised in order to maintain the reputation of the organisation.
- RE:ACT has established a significant database of expertise and knowledge relating to our humanitarian work. This knowledge remains the property of RE:ACT and must be protected.
- Members are not permitted to use institutional knowledge for personal advancement.
- Expenditure of RE:ACT funds must be reasonable and maximise impact for every £ spent.
- All assets, finances and property must be accounted for at the end of an operation or activity.
- Expenses must be dealt with in accordance with the RE:ACT Operational Expenditure and Expenses Policy.

Media Relations

RE:ACT regards media coverage of our activities as being positive and pivotal to the success of our programmes and is strongly encouraged. Disaster response operations are expensive. While it is in no way required, fundraising for operations would be much appreciated. Sharing the story of your work with friends and family and involving them with RE:ACT allows us to continue to deploy members and equipment for operations.

- All media contact must be directed through the RE:ACT Comms Team.

- Any requests for personal interviews or comments must be referred to the RE:ACT Comms Team in the first instance.
- Do not post anything related to RE:ACT on social media without clearance from the RE:ACT Comms Team, to avoid reputational or personal damage. For more information, refer to the RE:ACT Social Media Policy.

Photography/Videography

- Photography/videography during working hours should only be undertaken by a photographer/videographer designated by the Team Leader or Comms Team.
- Informal photography/videography outside working hours is acceptable but anything published on social media or any other platform in the public domain must not bring RE:ACT into disrepute.
- Be conscientious if you pull out a mobile phone for a shot of properties / people/ damage, this may be necessary to deliver operational objectives, however it should never appear that we are chronicling the damage that occurred (disaster tourism). This should be cleared with a Team Leader and respect must be shown at all times.
- Consent should always be sought prior to photographing a person/ their property.
- Photographing government installations can be a security risk and may be illegal in many countries. Be aware of local legislation regarding taking of photos/videos and ensure you comply at all times.
- RE:ACT reserves the right to take photographs of training, operations and other activities which will feature staff, interns and volunteers and to copyright, use and publish the same in print and/or electronically. If you do not wish your photograph taken/used please ensure you inform Team Leader/Course Instructor/ Comms Team as soon as possible.
- Photographs may be used by RE:ACT with or without a member's name and for any lawful purpose, including for example such purposes as publicity, illustration, advertising, and Web content.

Relationships with Other Members

Members are encouraged to maintain open and professional relationships with each other. Differences in culture, religion and politics should be respected.

- Members must not take part in any form of discrimination, harassment, or abuse (physical, sexual or verbal), intimidation or exploitation, or in any other way infringe the rights of others inside or outside RE:ACT. Members must adhere to the RE:ACT Equality and Diversity Policy.
- Members must adhere to all legal and organisational health and safety requirements in force at the location of work, including any security guidelines. Members must adhere to the RE:ACT Health, Safety and Environment Policy.
- While it is to be expected that friendships will develop between members, such relationships must not interfere with operational objectives.

Sexual Conduct

RE:ACT strongly encourages careful consideration with regard to the development of any sexual relationships.

- Members must behave according to accepted UK and international standards and laws with regard to sexual conduct.
- Members must also comply with local laws and prohibitions in the country in which they are operating.
- Regardless of local laws, or lack of such laws, members must never engage in any sexual activity or form a sexual relationship with a child (under 18 years).
- Sexual relationships with programme beneficiaries, their family members, or persons employed by businesses contracted to RE:ACT, are never permitted.
- Members must never purchase, or seek to obtain through other influence, sexual relationships of any form.

Weapons

- RE:ACT prohibits any firearms or illegal weapons in any building owned or operated by RE:ACT, including operational accommodation.
- RE:ACT prohibits the carrying of any firearms or illegal weapons in vehicles operated by RE:ACT. Armed civilian and military personnel are not permitted in RE:ACT vehicles. If armed persons threaten violence, then the provisions of the RE:ACT Operations Safety and Security Policy are to be followed.
- RE:ACT members are not permitted to own or otherwise possess illegal firearms or weapons while on operation or training.

Alcohol and Drugs

- Members are never permitted to work whilst under the influence of any drug related substance, legal or illegal, that affects the ability to perform their duties.
- No such substances are permitted on RE:ACT property, offices, accommodation or in vehicles.
- Working under the influence of alcohol is considered gross misconduct and members affected by alcohol during work periods will be dealt with in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy.
- RE:ACT does not seek to restrict members' activities during private periods. However, please remember that whether you are undertaking RE:ACT tasks or enjoying private time you are likely to be viewed as a representative of RE:ACT. Therefore, you are encouraged to maintain self-control and limit the use of all substances, legal or otherwise.
- At all times members must comply with local laws and provisions, and with UK law.

- In environments where the possession and/or use of alcohol are illegal, members must not consume or store alcohol.
- Required prescription drugs that are to be continued during an operation should be communicated via the pre-deployment Occupational Health process before deploying.
- Behaviour that is illegal, or brings RE:ACT into disrepute, will be dealt with as appropriate in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy.

Criminal Records

- All members will be asked to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check in accordance with the RE:ACT DBS Policy.
- Any matters revealed on a DBS certificate will be discussed with the individual in a respectful and fair manner, and will not automatically prevent anyone from participating in RE:ACT activities.
- Members must notify RE:ACT of any criminal charges that arise during their period of employment or volunteering.

Enforcement of the Code of Conduct

RE:ACT Directors, Managers or Team Leaders when on operational duty, are responsible for administering the provision of the Code and acting to resolve issues under the Code. Any discipline action will be taken in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy. RE:ACT Directors, Managers, Team Leaders and the individual have the right to escalate any issue to RE:ACT CEO for resolution.

Members Declaration

By becoming a member of RE:ACT I agree to and intend to comply with the Code. I acknowledge that failure to comply with the Code may result in disciplinary action being taken against me in accordance with the RE:ACT Discipline Policy.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed annually, or sooner if there has been a breach. The review will ensure the policy remains up-to-date in line with UK legislation and best practice, as well as assessing the effectiveness of how the policy is working in practice and taking action to address any identified issues.