

## WELCOME TO THE AMERICAN RED CROSS!

Thank you for joining our cadre of over five 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 the Central Maryland Chapter. 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 Department of Human Resources and Volunteers if you have any questions about the content of this handbook. Please take the time to read through it and refer back to it as questions arise.

Central Maryland Chapter 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 (“the 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.
- ◆ **Neutrality:** In order to continue to enjoy the confidence of all, the Movement may not take sides in hostilities or engage at any time in controversies of a political, racial, religious or ideological nature.
- ◆ **Independence:** The Movement is independent. The National Societies, while auxiliaries in the humanitarian services of their governments and subject to the laws of their respective countries, must always maintain their autonomy so that they may be able at all times to act in accordance with the principles of the Movement.
- ◆ **Voluntary service:** The Movement 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 and
- Humanitarianism.

### **Ethics Every Day**

As American Red Cross volunteers, each of us is responsible, every day, for our own behavior and decisions. 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 standards of ethics... every day.

### **The Concern Connection Line**

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, 1-888-309-9679.

### **Red Cross History**

Clara Barton founded the American Red Cross in 1881. In 1905, the United States Congress gave Red Cross a charter that mandates it to provide relief for domestic and international disaster victims and communication services for members of the Armed Forces. Every Red Cross chapter must do these two things, although many provide a much greater variety of community services.

Facts about the Red Cross -

- The International Red Cross was founded by Henry Dunant in 1863. Its headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland.
- The American Red Cross was founded by Clara Barton in 1881 and is part of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.
- The United States Congress has mandated that all Red Cross chapters must provide services for the military and their families and provide relief assistance during all disasters, domestic and international.
- The American Red Cross Headquarters is in Washington, DC.
- There are over 800 chapters and 35 blood services regions in the United States; we also have Armed Forces Emergency Services stations serving members of the military and their families in the US and overseas.
- All Red Cross disaster assistance is an outright gift. It is funded by voluntary contributions from the American people.
- The International Red Cross has been awarded the Nobel Peace Prize four times.

The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement is an international organization with societies in more than 170 countries. It is unique among voluntary service organizations because it was founded on a set of seven Fundamental Principles.

### **About Our Chapter**

The Central Maryland Chapter serves people in Anne Arundel, Baltimore, Carroll, Harford, and Howard Counties and Baltimore City. Our headquarters is located at 4800 Mt. Hope Drive, Baltimore. The chapter's web site address is [www.redcross-cmd.org](http://www.redcross-cmd.org).

We are particularly proud of the services and achievements that are unique to our own community.

- Since 1990 we have housed the Holocaust and War Victims Tracing Center, a national Red Cross service that helps provide answers to people seeking the fate of loved ones lost during the World War II era.
- Our volunteers serve patients in local Veteran Administration hospitals, helping distribute comfort kits and talking to the hospitalized veterans
- For over 40 years, our volunteers have made it possible for people with multiple sclerosis to engage in therapeutic and recreational sports.
- Our youth volunteers in Red Cross Clubs and Corps support Red Cross in many activities, such as; teaching Community Disaster Education, participating in the Measles initiative and other service learning projects.

These are just a few of the many ways through which our volunteers, including you, touch the Central Maryland community.

The Central Maryland Chapter provides this wide range of services to the community:

**Emergency assistance** to victims of fires, storms, and other disasters, as well as community education to prevent and prepare for emergencies.

**Emergency communications** and assistance to members of the U.S. Armed Forces and their families.

**International tracing** services for people who have lost touch with family members due to war, natural disasters, and other calamities.

**Teach and certify people in lifesaving skills** such as CPR, first aid, and life guarding.

**Train people** in swimming, nursing assistance, crime avoidance, HIV and AIDS prevention, childcare, and other health and safety related areas.

**Youth Services** provides young people opportunities to develop leadership skills and positively impact the communities they live in through involvement in Red Cross Clubs and Corps and community outreach programs.

**Provision of safe blood** and blood products to more than 80 area hospitals for cancer patients, accident victims, and others in need. The Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Region provides nearly all of the blood needed in the Central Maryland area. The Central Maryland Chapter works together with the Region by recruiting, training, and scheduling volunteers and drivers to assist in the blood collection program. The Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Blood Services Region is located at 4700 Mt. Hope Drive. The Blood Services web site address is [www.my-redcross.org](http://www.my-redcross.org)

Information relating to Blood Services, such as blood drive locations, hosting a blood drive, or questions related to giving blood, can be obtained by calling the Greater Chesapeake and Potomac Region at 1-800-GIVE LIFE, (1-800-448-3543).