

# SAFETY AND HEALTH POLICY

We endeavour to avoid negligence  
through our Health and safety  
management system to ensure a safe  
workplace for our employees and  
volunteers.

(Revised on 20/05/2021 due to COVID).

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## Introduction

Humanitarian staff especially volunteers are increasingly exposed to more violence and personal danger during their work with NGOs. The legal obligations of organisations towards their volunteers with regard to health and safety are less clear than they are for employees. Nevertheless, organisations do have legal obligations towards their volunteers, and it is good practice to treat volunteers with equal consideration when it comes to health and safety.

Although volunteers are not included in Health and Safety legislation in the same way as paid staff, any organisation involving volunteers has a legal responsibility and a 'duty of care' towards their volunteers. Having a policy demonstrates a clear commitment to implement in good health and safety standards and is the foundation for any related procedures and practices. Volunteers should be referenced in the policy.

**At JRP, we believe that sustainable success in a NGO can be reached only through people and volunteers associated with that organisation.** Therefore, we devote all the necessary energy and attention to protect our employees, volunteers and any other people involved with our organisation along the value chain, including villagers, customers and the public.

**Jeevan Rekha Parishad has been ensuring our staff and volunteers preservation in adverse circumstances through several tools for security training, incident reporting and analysis and policy and procedures frameworks and assistance (Security Management Guide).**

We commit to perform systematic identification of hazards and to manage them with appropriate risk assessments and subsequent actions to minimise danger. We establish emergency and contingency plans to deal with residual risks. This approach also minimises threats to the volunteers activities of JRP, protecting our villagers' interests.

## About JRP



**Jeevan Rekha Parishad** is a Non-profit making voluntary organisation working on sustainable development by promoting human rights and peace education, free primary education, gender equality, social and economic justice, cultural diversity and intercultural exchanges. Founded in 1993 JRP is run and managed by a team of social workers.

JRP brings rural and tribal communities together to educate them on environmental justice, human rights and sustainable development. Mobilize community responsibility for environmental improvement and low carbon lifestyles across all major towns and cities of India.

## Our organisation's objectives with EVS/ Youth Exchange

“Our organization is a youth centred, youth volunteers led non profit making organization working in coastal Orissa, India. Established by a group of women youth volunteers and social workers in 1993, our organisation (Jeevan Rekha Parishad (JRP) otherwise known as Life Line Council) is committed to undertake youth and cultural exchange programme between EU countries and India. Our organisation with the technical support of many other European and Asian Organisations has established Euro Asia Youth Network for sustainable youth and cultural exchange programme, Job shadowing to document good practices on racism, human rights violation, peace, discrimination, and sustainable education and development.. We adopt the non-formal method as one of our strategic intervention for our youth programmes.

**We strongly believe in the philosophy of EVS and youth Exchange.** Also we have interested youth volunteers with our organisation to live in EU countries under EVS and other volunteers exchange programme and also ERASMUS+ programme.

## Overview of the organization and background on hosting volunteers

JRP works in Odisha state, one of the poorest state of India covering four districts namely Khurda, Puri, Bhadrak and Nayagarh. JRP brings rural and tribal communities together to educate them on environmental justice, Humanrights and sustainable development.

The role of the volunteers within our organization is to act as support person and as execution agent to the activities and initiatives that already exist in the community or our NGO. They will have to bring their own motivation and plans in order to fill in the frame of these actions with meaningful, efficient content. The EVS activity of each volunteer is constructed as follows: they will have to allocate 60-70% of their time on activity, to work on this main activity, which they choose in the selection phase. 20-30% of the time, their task will be to do common activities with the other volunteers, activities which are done around the yearly community traditions, events, happenings and holidays of the community. 10% of their time will be spent to create and do visibility materials and promotion activities for the NGO and especially for their own EVS activity.

## Overview of the context where the organization works, including the context for volunteers.

### Implementation

#### Why is good health and safety practice important?

Having the right Health and Safety practices can reduce the risk of accidents, damage to property or incidents of physical, emotional or financial harm including saving a person from COVID virus.. It will also make the volunteers experience more enjoyable as a result and they'll appreciate that you have considered their safety during COVID pandemic. By highlighting your commitment to the safety of volunteers you are more likely to be viewed positively externally, especially by potential volunteers

Safety and security are achieved through relevant security policies, trainings on Safety measures, following COVID protocols, security briefings

and assistance. All staff has a responsibility in the development of safety and security culture.

There will always be varying degrees of risk to staff and volunteers. Risk reduction is achieved by the following guiding principles including following COVID protocols.:

1. Health and safety policy and security management plan is being introduced to all staff members and they are informed about the updates.
2. Safety and security is everyone's responsibility. During COVID, all the staff and volunteers will maintain following rules in India-
  - If they are coming from Europe they have to stay at least for 7 days quarantine before going for volunteering.
  - They will use face mask, sanitise hands from time to time and maintain distance while working in the office or in field with community.
  - If they suffer from fever, they need to have antigen or rapid covid test to confirm that they are negative.
3. Program decisions will always be taken taking into account safety considerations.
4. Clear lines of authority and procedures for decision making are maintained at all times.
5. All staff and volunteers will be trained and supported in the area of safety and security including COVID protocols..

**JRP builds a proactive safety culture by:** – driving the implementation and continual improvement of the JRP organisational staff and volunteers Safety and Health Management System through communication with employees, villagers and other stakeholders; – educating, training and equipping volunteers to ensure that they are empowered to avoid unsafe situations including going to night club to avoid mass contact, going to mass public meeting etc and to respond rapidly to unexpected events; – influencing training and education of volunteers and community.

## **Improving prevention, Health & Safety especially During COVID period.**

JRP is well aware improving its employees' and volunteers health and safety at work benefits both our performance and employee well-being. JRP has adopted Prevention, Health and Safety as a major ongoing goal for its organisation. The aim is to strengthen the initiative, support the efforts already underway and involve all employees and volunteers at every level of the organization as well as outside stakeholders, in order to ensure their physical safety and mental well-being. More than just a strategy, Prevention, Health and Safety is an integral part of all the JRP fundamental activities and processes.

For smooth functioning of our organization, the employer has to ensure safety and security of its employees. Health and safety form an integral part of work environment.

The terms health, safety and security are closely related to each other. Health is the general state of well being. It not only includes physical well being, but also emotional and mental well being. Safety refers to the act of protecting the physical well being of an employee. It will include the risk of accidents caused due to machinery, fire or diseases and risk of infection from COVID.. Security refers to protecting facilities and equipments from unauthorized access and protecting.

### **First Aid**

All employers have a legal duty to make a first aid assessment. How much first aid you need to provide will depend on what activities you run. At a minimum, an organisation with employees must provide at least one first aid box and display a notice that tell staff.

- The location of the first aid box;
- Who the first aid appointed person is(see below);and
- Where the first aid appointed person can be found.

An appointed person is someone who has basic first aid knowledge. They can take charge in an emergency and are responsible for calling the emergency services.

# Fire Safety and Risk Assessment

All public and community buildings, even if owned or operated by an organisation without employees, must meet minimum levels of standards so that the risk of fire is reduced. You should consult your local fire brigade for advice.

## Risk Assessment

Risk assessment is a procedure for identifying potential hazards, assessing the degree of harm they could cause against the likelihood of the hazard occurring. The assessment then determines what measures should be put in place, if any, to reduce the risk to an acceptable level

To create a culture of accountability you might feel it is helpful to promote the rights and responsibilities for the organisation and the volunteers in relation to health and safety. This could form part of your volunteer agreement. For example:

Rights of organization	Rights of the volunteers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expect volunteers to act responsibly following COVID protocol..</li> <li>- Work within the boundaries that have been agreed.</li> <li>- Expect volunteers to be alert to potential hazards including COVID.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To be informed of guidelines.</li> <li>- To be informed of boundaries.</li> <li>- To be informed of potential / identified risks including COVID protocols..</li> <li>- To be insured appropriately.</li> <li>- To know that the organisation recognizes its duty of care to volunteers.</li> </ul>
Responsibilities of the organisation	Responsibilities of the volunteers

- To have appropriate insurance.
- Carry out risk assessment.
- Have a risk management plan.
- Inform volunteers of identified risks/hazards.
- Agree boundaries with volunteers.
- Agree the role of volunteers and ensure the use, or introduction of, volunteer agreements.

- To adhere to guidelines and policies.
- To ask questions.
- To avoid difficult situations where possible.
- Make organisation aware of potential hazards including COVID.



# Responsibility

Who is responsible for the following?

## **Dr. Manoranjan Mishra, Director of JRP**

- Final decisions in all crisis situations including COVID situation:
- Disciplinary or dismissive action when lapses occur in security management:
- Ensure the fundamental elements of safety and security management are fulfilled, including a basic level of training for all staff:
- Responsible for incident reporting:
- Monitoring of operational contexts and updating contingency planning:
- Responsible for training for personnel:
- Responsible for updating the security policy and what is the frequency

## **Responsibility of each volunteer and staff member:**

- Changes in lifestyle and habits during covid period depending on host country or regions cultural expectations in order to minimize security risks.
- Choices in dress, living arrangements, and means of travel, entertainment, and companionship may have a direct impact on how staff/volunteers are viewed and treated by their communities.
- Every staff member and volunteer has an obligation to learn and understand the context and security issues of the place where they are located.

## Responsibilities of coordinators and mentors:

- Monitor health and safety of employees and volunteers
- Coach employees and volunteers to be safety conscious
- Investigate accidents
- Communicate about safety policy to employees and volunteers
- Assist in health services, treatment in case of a volunteer found COVID positive

## Responsibilities of Director

- Provide technical training regarding prevention of accidents
- Coordinate health and safety programs
- Train employees and volunteers on different aspects of safety and security
- Develop safety reporting systems
- Maintaining safe working condition

## 2. Level of risk

To make effective decisions about security, we must define our risk levels. We define risk by four categories, as shown in the table below.

Categories of Risk
LOW: Normal security precautions

<b>Categories of Risk</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Odisha state essentially Bhubaneswar is stable and free of political, economic and social unrest.</li> <li>• Crime is generally very low in Bhubaneswar and organized anti-government or moist groups, are present, 200 kms from Bhubaneswar.</li> <li>• Threats of natural disasters and disease like Super Cyclone, Philine, Flood and Earth Quack still exist.COVID is still prevailing in our Country and region.</li> <li>• Sexual abuse and Trafficking of women and girls is also possible if a volunteer mingles with strangers.</li> <li>• Eve teasing is also observed in crowd area</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE: Increased safety and security precautions</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• India especially Odisha region has low-level political, economic, and social unrest and/or where safety and security infrastructure is poorly developed.</li> <li>• Organized anti-government or Moist groups may be active but not strong enough to threaten government stability.</li> <li>• Our state is also involved in some regional disputes, exhibit low crime rates, or prone to natural disasters or disease epidemic like Malaria and Dengue.</li> </ul>
<b>HIGH: Stringent security precautions</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are areas in Odisha where there are extremist naxals where the volunteers will not be allowed to visit.</li> <li>• The naxals are in control of a significant area where it is not advisable for volunteers and staff to travel.</li> <li>• There may be prejudicial treatment of foreigners or specific threats to NGOs in naxal areas.</li> <li>• Civil unrest and crime are present but these may also reflect increased threats from disease epidemics or natural disaster.</li> </ul>
<b>SEVERE: Temporary suspension of operations, relocation of international staff, and/or additional precautions for national staff and volunteers.</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poison wine, Drugs and many cheap narcotics available in India is a direct threat to the safety and well-being of humanitarian aid workers and volunteers. So the volunteers will be educated about this very strictly.</li> <li>• Gun fire and land mines are used in the naxal area of Odisha and are very hazardous.</li> </ul>

The level of acceptable risk for volunteer deployment.....**MODERATE SAFETY AND SECURITY PRECAUTIONS**

## 3. Tools

JRP has following Security Management Documents for the organisation and volunteers

- Security Management Plan
- Risk analysis
- ContingencePlanning
- Evacuation plan

***The hierarchy of key security documents is the following:***

- Security policy – giving overall policy for the organization
- Security management plan – giving detailed procedures

The security policy describes the organization's approach to security and sets out general rules for security management.

Security plans are normally written by staff members who will be responsible for security management in a particular field location.

**Promoting health and well being at work**

Good practice suggests that organisations involving volunteers should try to promote a holistic, proactive approach to managing health and well being issues for volunteers. This may mean:

- continuing to protect volunteers from work related health and safety risks including covid;
- helping volunteers who have common minor health conditions to return to, or remain in,
- Volunteering: This might include reviewing their role description, reducing tasks, providing specialist equipment, offering a mentor or buddy or perhaps providing additional one to one support;
- Encourage volunteers to look after their own health and wellbeing and provide opportunities that enable them to do. This may include health and wellbeing weeks, increased flexibility in work practices, support networks, introducing a volunteer forum, discount membership at health clubs, cycle mileage, encouraging discussion and feedback, healthy canteen options, access to counselling service, training to deal with difficult situations like covid..

**Stress**

Even though volunteering is intended to be an enjoyable experience, sometimes stress can occur. Symptoms can include anger, anxiety, food

craving, lack of appetite, feeling tired, difficulty concentrating, chest pain, constipation, diarrhea, dizziness, sweating and difficulty sleeping.

To overcome this, it is important to facilitate an environment where volunteers understand their role and its boundaries, feel they have the right skills and information to carry out their role, feel able to raise concerns, know that they are able to make a complaint and feel supported and confident to chat about any challenges they are having with their role or the people they work alongside.

Volunteers may have solutions to the problems so be sure to ask them what could help and support them to develop the techniques to take control and cope.

## **Working off site**

Managing off site volunteering is very important as many people are volunteering away from the office. Off site working can have many advantages including greater flexibility for client support and different volunteering opportunities. Organisations with volunteers who are off site need policies and procedures to make sure that they manage hazards around lone working, access to first aid, personal safety, data protection, travelling, use of equipment, the volunteering environment and risk assessment.

Institution of Occupational Safety and Health has produced a useful guide on supporting those working off site, [Out of site, out of mind?](#) Many of the issues discussed can apply to volunteers.

## **Lone working**

Similar to working off site, lone working for volunteers carries many of the same health and safety issues. Volunteers may be working in your office premises alone, visiting clients in their homes, running a stall at an event or even visiting other organisations.

Many organisations have a range of policies and procedures to protect volunteers in these circumstances such as a specific lone working policy, signing in and out policy or use of mobiles or personal safety policy.

## **Work related violence**

Volunteers should never feel threatened in their volunteering environment by the public, staff or other volunteers. Having a code of conduct can help, so everyone understands what is acceptable with clear guidance of the measures that will be taken should they be breached. It is good practice to provide training to volunteers on dealing with difficult situations or aggressive behaviour and provide an emergency code or alarm system in case of an emergency. This should all be supported by clear policies on how to make a complaint or whistle blowing.

## **Equipment**

There are many health and safety issues when working with equipment. It may help to show volunteers the relevant role risk assessment. You may want to conduct training on safe operation of equipment and run regular refresher talks. You may provide protective clothing for volunteers carrying out specific tasks.

## **Driving**

Many people provide their time and service as volunteer drivers. Volunteer involving organisations have a duty of care under health and safety law to ensure the safety of their staff, volunteers, passengers and anyone else (such as other road users) who may be affected by their activities.

Things to check are that the volunteers are legally entitled to drive the vehicle and that they are using a vehicle that is safe and road legal. You may wish to hold on file a copy of their driving licence, MOT certificate, service record and insurance document. These need to be checked at regular intervals. You will also want to make volunteers aware that they need to inform you of any cautions, summons or convictions.

Volunteers need to be trained and competent to drive and carry occupants safely including using seat belts, child seats, head restraints and entering and leaving the vehicle. You may carry out a test to ensure volunteer drivers are respectful on the road and to occupants, follow speed limits and

are not distracted by mobile phones or other equipment.

It is important that you have procedures in place for accidents, emergencies and breakdowns.

You may implement a fitness to drive policy so that volunteers are aware they need to be fit to drive at all times and not under the affects of alcohol, drugs, medicine or too ill or tired to drive. It is advised that volunteers have their eye sight tested every two years and if they wear contact lenses or glasses, then they must be worn when driving.