SARA Volunteer Handbook

Foreword:

Welcome to the Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) Volunteer Handbook, your guide to volunteering with us; and if you are a new member, then a very warm welcome to the organisation as a whole!

From a small but dedicated cohort of volunteers operating out of a shed in Tutshill (Chepstow), we have grown into an organisation of over 200 highly skilled members, actively saving lives and making a genuine difference to the communities across our region, and beyond. We are highly regarded by our tasking authorities, valued by the people we serve, and respected by the wider search and rescue community.

SARA is truly a unique organisation in terms of the scope of the services that it provides and the voluntary nature of its membership. Indeed, it is useful to remember that every member, be that Trustee, Committee Member, Crewmember or Fundraiser, is a volunteer; there are no employees in SARA. No paid persons to address the essential administration of a charity of this size, no persons paid to undertake maintenance or to raise funds.

We all give our time voluntarily to this great organisation and it is what it is, only because of that spirit of dedication and a 'can do' attitude. When something needs doing, we ask how we can help and when someone contributes, we are grateful.

We recognise that our journey is not over; there is always more to do. We constantly strive to improve standards and we will need your help. We are the stronger because you are involved.

Be proud of where we are, but step forward to the challenges we face.

I look forward to working with you!

Mark Carwardine

Chief Executive Officer

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Document Control

This document will be reviewed every 6 months by the Executive Committee and will be regularly updated. The most up to date version will always be available to members as an on-line document through the SARA Sharepoint – this version may therefore be invalid if printed. If you have any suggested edits, amendments or additions for inclusion please email these through to info@sara-rescue.org.uk with the title of your email 'Volunteer Handbook Suggestions'.

Document History

This section highlights the main changes from the preceding version.

Issue	Status	Date	Reason
1	Live	4/10/19	Development and implementation
2			
3			

References

This section provides details of relevant external documentation

Ref	Title	Issue	Date	Author

Approvals

For this version of the document

Name	Role	Date
Mark Carwardine	Chief Executive Officer	4/10/19

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The SARA Vision and Values

The vision for Severn Area Rescue Association (SARA) is to be known by the wider community as a centre of excellence for maritime lifeboat operations and all-terrain, all-weather land search and rescue**.**

The following are the key values:

- We value the vocational nature of the Charity, providing a vital service to the general public without personal recompense.
- We value the democratic nature of the Charity's decision making processes.
- We value the work of the Charity's officers and the contribution they make to the overall management of the organisation.
- We value our relationship with the statutory emergency agencies especially the Police, Fire, Ambulance and Coastguard Services.
- We value our relationship with associated voluntary Search and Rescue Agencies.
- Most of all we value our volunteers and their hard earned reputation for dedication, professionalism, integrity and public service.

ENDS.

The SARA Volunteer Commitment

SARA WILL:

- carry out its activities in accordance with SARA's Purpose, Vision and Values
- create a welcoming environment where everyone is treated equally, fairly and with respect
- provide you with appropriate training, opportunities and equipment for your volunteer role
- give guidance and support your development in your volunteer role
- ensure you are volunteering in a safe environment so far as is reasonably practicable
- listen to your concerns if things aren't going well
- recognise that you are a volunteer and have other commitments
- be inclusive and value everyone for their individual contribution
- respect people's views, interests and uniqueness
- comply with agreed standards, policies and processes
- not tolerate disrespectful behaviour towards each other, supporters or members of the public.

IN RETURN WE ASK YOU TO:

- carry out your volunteering activities, as agreed, in accordance with the SARA's Purpose, Vision and Values
- promote a welcoming environment and treat everybody equally, fairly and with respect
- respect people's views, interests and uniqueness
- give us your time willingly and participate in any training required for your role
- comply with agreed standards, policies and processes including the Volunteer Commitment and the Volunteer Code of Conduct
- represent SARA in a professional, trustworthy and loyal way
- not tolerate disrespectful behaviour towards each other, supporters or members of the public
- talk to your station General manager first, if you have a problem.

ENDS.

Volunteer Code of Conduct Policy

Purpose

To provide a Code of Conduct which is applicable to all SARA volunteers, whatever their role. It is not an exhaustive list, but sets out clear expectations of the conduct required of all volunteers by the SARA.

Who does this policy apply to?

All persons engaged in volunteering for the SARA in any voluntary role.

Who uses this policy?

All volunteers must be aware of the Code of Conduct.

When does this Code of Conduct apply?

This Code of Conduct applies to all volunteers when:

- carrying out volunteering activities (including when attending events, training and other SARA volunteer activities over multiple days) for the duration of the event, including socialising in the evening where applicable.
- travelling to and from any SARA volunteering activity, including when responding to a call-out.
- identifiable as a SARA volunteer; this includes:
  - when carrying out volunteering activity
  - when wearing SARA branded clothing
  - when known in the community as a SARA volunteer.

Code of Conduct

At the heart of our policies is the '***Volunteer Commitment***'. This statement outlines the spirit in which SARA and our volunteers will act together to achieve SARA's objectives.

All volunteers must:

Role and Policy

- Have read, understood and agree with the ***Volunteer Commitment.***
- Have read and be familiar with their volunteer role description.
- Have read and be familiar with the generic ***Volunteer Handbook*** (and related induction materials).
- Accept SARA policy and the authority of those entrusted by the SARA to manage SARA

activities and accept decisions that are taken.

- Follow all reasonable requests by staff or volunteers who support and manage their volunteer role activities.

- Participate in any necessary training related to the role and maintain any relevant competency based training.

- When reporting SARA activities via social media, ensure the ***Guide to Social Media for SARA Volunteers*** has been read and understood, any appropriate training has been undertaken and at all times, that social media content promotes and protects the reputation of SARA.

SARA Property and assets (resources)

- Recognise that all monies received belong to SARA and must be processed in line with issued policy and guidance.

- Report any loss or damage to personal or SARA property to their volunteer manager whilst volunteering.

- Return all property belonging to SARA on or before the last date of their volunteering.

- Respect, maintain and care for any property belonging to or paid for by SARA.

Safety, Health and Environment

- Carry out their volunteer role activities with due care and diligence for themselves and others.

- Be aware of Safety, Health and Environment (SHE) guidance seeking clarification if necessary.

- Wear any protective clothing/equipment provided for their volunteer role.

- Immediately report all injuries, incidents, near misses and accidents which occur whilst volunteering for SARA, by updating the relevant database or reporting to their station General Manager.

- Notify the organisation immediately of any illness or change in health relevant to the role, by advising their station General Manager.

- Comply with any health assessment/s and or health surveillance activities required in line with their voluntary role/s.

- Ensure the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults at all times making sure

they are adequately supervised within their area of responsibility – see ***Working with Young People – Crew Guidance***

- Only bring young people, vulnerable adults and other people when participating in volunteer activities at locations, including lifeboat stations, with the specific authorisation from their station General Manager.
- Seek approval from their station General Manager before bringing pets to volunteer activities and locations, including lifeboat stations.
- Minimise waste production and disposal by using SARA resources responsibly.

Behaviour

- Uphold the SARA Values and Behaviours.
- Act within the law at all times. This includes complying with the Road Traffic Act, including adhering to drink or drug related regulations and speed limits. In relation to operational volunteers, these are equally applicable when responding to a call out.
- Maintain the trust and confidence of the SARA and their colleagues at all times.
- Uphold the reputation of the SARA and set a positive example to other volunteers.
- Be courteous and respect other people's views, interests and uniqueness.
- Behave in ways that value diversity and promote inclusion – see the ***Equal Opportunity Policy***.
- Challenge inappropriate behaviour, discrimination and/or unfair treatment appropriately.
- Discuss any problems or issues in a reasonable, constructive manner without aggression.
- Ask for guidance and support when they don't understand.
- Be reliable and considerate to their team.
- Take responsibility for their own actions and acknowledge when mistakes are made.
- Speak up and use appropriate channels when providing feedback and views.

Volunteers must not:

- Act outside the spirit of the ***Code of Conduct*** and the ***Volunteer Commitment***.
- Participate in any form of inappropriate behaviour or act in any way that brings the organisation into disrepute when volunteering, when wearing SARA clothing or when

identifiable as a SARA volunteer.

- Put the health, safety or wellbeing of themselves or others at unnecessary or unassessed risk.
- Ignore policies, procedures or standards.
- Bully, harass or unlawfully discriminate against anyone.
- Tolerate disrespectful behaviour towards each other, supporters or members of the public. (This is underpinned by equality legislation and SARA Policy.)
- Falsify records, expenses or defraud or attempt to defraud SARA in any manner.
- Smoke within SARA owned or occupied property, afloat, ashore or when actively involved in incidents, training or events.
- Carry out volunteer duties when in an unfit state due to the influence of alcohol, or other drugs or substances.
- Be in possession of firearms or any offensive weapon whilst undertaking volunteer activities.
- Carry out private trading on SARA premises or use the SARA 'brand' or equipment to promote private trading.
- Participate in SARA volunteering activities whilst signed off sick from paid employment, unless express permission from the SARA has been given.
- Damage or misuse SARA property, money or assets.

Breaches of the Code of Conduct and Volunteer Commitment

Breaches of the ***Code of Conduct*** and/or the ***Volunteer Commitment*** will be addressed using the ***Volunteer Problem Solving Policy*** at either stage 1 or stage 2 depending upon the nature and seriousness of the breach.

A serious breach will go straight to stage 2 of the ***Problem Solving Policy;*** this may be as a result of one significant incident which in itself requires formal action to be taken, or, this stage can be invoked following a number of incidents which together make it necessary to take formal action. A serious breach can result in an immediate end to the volunteer agreement.

Responsibility

All volunteers referred to within the scope of this policy are required to be familiar with the terms of this policy.

It is the responsibility of the station General Manager to ensure that this policy is included within the SARA induction when a volunteer first commences with SARA.

Individual volunteers and managers are required to keep within the spirit and intent of the policy. Any queries on the application or interpretation of this policy must be discussed first with the relevant station General Manager in the area concerned.

Who can change or adapt this policy?

The SARA Executive Committee has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and supporting appendices can only be implemented following consideration and approval by the SARA Executive Committee in close liaison with Trustees.

ENDS.

SARA Membership

The categories of SARA membership are defined in the SARA Constitution. These consist of the following categories:

- Operational Members
- Specialist Members
- Fundraising Members
- Probationary Members

Operational and Specialist Members

General

- Must be aged 18 or over
- Shall be suitably qualified and experienced to the organization's, and MCA and/or MREW, standards as appropriate.
- Will show suitable commitment to the organization (see below).
- Shall be able to perform reasonable tasks required of them.
- Must have adequate and reliable transport.
- Must have a home and mobile telephone.
- Must be a holder of a current First Aid Certificate.
- Must complete a Driving Licence declaration form annually.
- Must complete a medical self-declaration form annually. Any new physical disability must be reported immediately.
- Must wear suitable clothing and safety equipment for the expected conditions or operations.

Commitment Levels - Training

Operational crew are required to attend training. A minimum of one Sunday morning and one Thursday night per month will be deemed to be the compulsory training together with other notified dates and times for required specialist training. Should attendance fall below this minimum requirement for a period of 3 months, then operational status will be revoked and any pager returned, unless prior agreement has been made with the station committee. If a crew member consistently only reaches the minimum standard of attendance, confirmed operational status will be at the discretion of the station committee.

All operational members shall be required to attend a minimum of twelve Sunday training sessions and twelve Thursday nights per year plus nominated specialist training.

Commitment Levels - Operations

Operational crew are required to make themselves available for callout as much as possible, and to attend callouts as much as possible. SARA is not 'an adventure training club'.

Crew who are on-call are expected to carry their pager (or Smartphone for SARCALL) and be able to respond accordingly. Their On-call status must be notified via D4H. The procedure for crew callouts is described in the SOP on General Operational Procedures.

If crew are away from the operational area for more than 21 days they should notify the boat manager, land manager or Station GM who may then re-allocate the pager during the absence (where appropriate).

Commitment Levels – Non-operational Tasks

Crew members are expected to contribute to maintenance, fund-raising activities and other non-operational tasks outside of normal training times. Such tasks include:

- Fundraising Collections
- Attending Fundraising Events
- Maintenance Activities
- Administration and Paperwork activities

All operational members shall be required to contribute a minimum of six half-days per year to non-operational tasks

Fundraising Members

Fundraising Members will show suitable commitment to SARA, and knowledge of SARA. It is a new Fundraising Member's duty to acquire a working knowledge of SARA's operational work, and an outline of its history, such that they can answer questions from the public.

- Shall be able to perform reasonable tasks required of them.
- Must have adequate and reliable transport.
- Must have a home and mobile telephone.
- Must declare any physical disability.

Recruiting and New Recruits

In general SARA will recruit members with a view to fulfilling the following roles:

- Operational Boat Crew
- Operational Land Crew
- Specialist Crew
- Fundraising Members

Once qualified as Operational for Boats or Land, crew may then train for SRT and/or Rope Rescue. Exceptions may be made, for example where an already qualified instructor seeks to join.

The Committee may, from time to time, conduct a recruiting campaign aimed at one or more of the above roles

Prospective new members must complete an application form and forward this to the Station Training Manager, along with a Statement of Motivation.

The Station Training Manager will liaise with the relevant department manager to process the application, if appropriate conduct interviews, and plan for new joiner training.

Probationary Members

All Members are accepted on a six-month probationary status. This period commences on the date on which they formally commence training. In general this probationary period will coincide with their period of training, during which they are 'Trainees'.

Probationary and Trainee Crew should work towards operational status. Trainees who have completed their training before the end of their probationary period may become operational. New members shall require a minimum of fifteen hours boating experience (either within SARA or credited prior experience) to qualify as an operational crew member.

At the conclusion and passing their training, they are proposed to the Committee for Operational Status.

Ending Membership

As an entirely voluntary service, we appreciate that people's circumstances change and you may find that you may no longer be able to / willing to maintain membership. There are no obligations upon you and you are free to end your membership at any point. However, in such circumstances, we would be very grateful if you could make that known to your Station General Manager who will ensure that your data is subsequently managed in accordance with our Data Policy and that any SARA property is received.

We would of course welcome your re-application at any point in the future – your efforts will have been appreciated and we hope when circumstances change you can re-engage.

However, if we do not hear from you:

- As detailed earlier, after a period of non-attendance for Operational members, the station General Manager will attempt to discuss this with you; your Operational status will be reviewed and may be temporarily revoked.
- Where non-operational members do not attend for a period of 3 months, a letter will be sent querying the intention to remain as a member.
- Where this is responded to the General Manager will discuss your membership and agreements will be reached about how this will be managed.
- If no response is received, after a further 3 months it will be assumed that membership is no longer appropriate and you will be removed from our membership list and all data will be handled in accordance with our data policy.

ENDS.

Accessing Support:

An open and respectful conversation
Where possible it's always best to begin by having a respectful conversation with the person or persons involved before escalating a problem. Find out first if it is something that can be resolved through an open conversation.

Your Station General Manager
We encourage you to raise any issues or concerns with your Station General Manager as soon as possible. They will help you to clarify the nature of the issue and work with you on suggested solutions to rectify problems, rather than remain silent and risk the issue or problem escalating. Your station General Manager is your day to day point of contact and best placed to listen and respond to you, helping you or signposting others who are best placed to progress your ideas or concerns.

Any other member of the Executive Management Team
We always encourage you to speak to your Station General Manager in the first instance. However, if this is not appropriate, you could contact any other member of the Executive Management Team.

Wellbeing Officer
Sometimes we want to talk about things that are personal to us, or to seek guidance, advice and support from people who are experienced at helping others so that we can thrive, be ourselves and support others to do the same. We have a number of people that you can contact and talk to and who are on hand to help. The Wellbeing Officers will:

- Provide advice and support to all volunteers about mental health issues, stress management, emotional wellbeing and resilience.
- Signpost to other areas of specialist advice information and support, wherever required.
- Maintain confidentiality wherever possible.*
- Not act as an advocate in areas such as grievance, discipline or harassment; nor offer ongoing counselling.
- Contact: welfare.officer@sara-rescue.org.uk

The common law duty of confidence:

The common law duty of confidence requires that where there is an established expectation of confidentiality between parties, for example a Wellbeing officer and the Team Member, information imparted by the subject will not be further disclosed by the recipient without the consent of the subject. The duty is not absolute and information may be disclosed without consent where it is required or permitted by law, or in exceptional circumstances where the public interest outweighs the individual's right to confidentiality.

This can, however, only be considered depending on the individual circumstances of each case, and after weighing up all the relevant factors.

Where such disclosure / information sharing is deemed required, this will be carried out with the utmost discretion.

Volunteer Problem Solving Process

Occasionally, a volunteer may have a problem or concern which needs to be addressed. Similarly, SARA may need to raise concerns and take action with a volunteer over their conduct, approach, suitability or availability for a role or other issue. This process is there to provide a clear approach and explains what to expect. Talk to your Station General Manager who can help put you in touch.

Raising Organisational Concerns Process (Whistleblowing)

Organisational Concerns are different to workplace concerns. They are about issues or incidents that are so serious to the running of our organisation that we have a duty to take action. These can include situations such as someone's health and/or safety has been put in danger due to an action or inaction, a criminal offence being committed, a failure to obey the law, or a malpractice or wrongdoing that has been covered up. We have a whistleblowing process and procedure in place which you will find details of within the Volunteer Handbook.

ENDS.

SARA Members' Data Privacy.

Introduction

SARA is registered as a data controller with the Information Commissioner's Office for the purposes of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

This Privacy Notice is our commitment to you that we will handle your personal data in accordance with the principles set out in the GDPR

Personal Data

Personal data is data relating to a living individual who can be identified from that information or from that data and other information in SARA's possession (for example: name, address, telephone number, membership number / callsign). It can also include expressions of opinions about an individual.

Sensitive Personal Data

Sensitive Data relates to data consisting of racial or ethnic origin, political opinions, religious or philosophical beliefs, trade union membership, data concerning health and data concerning a person's sexual orientation.

What information do we hold?

SARA holds and processes personal data about its current, past and prospective members.

This information is normally initially provided to SARA by a prospective member on an Application Form and is added to by SARA over the course of membership.

Information about members and prospective members is retained and disposed of in accordance with the retention principles of GDPR.

Why do we process personal data?

SARA needs to process certain personal data about its members for a number of administrative purposes:

- Managing Human Resources processes, such as recruitment, training and development
- Providing facilities and resources, such as SARA email accounts and ID Badges
- Providing communications about SARA news and events, such as by email or text message
- Fundraising and marketing
- Provision of wellbeing and support services
- Provision of member development and training courses
- Compliance with legal obligations and monitoring equal opportunities
- Maintaining contact with past members

SARA processes sensitive personal data for a number of administrative purposes:

- Managing Human Resources processes;
- Managing a safe environment and ensuring fitness for work
- Managing obligations under Equal Opportunities legislation
- Provision of occupational health and wellbeing services to individuals.

General Principles

SARA will process your information in accordance with the GDPR and our own Data Protection Policy. To comply with the law the information that SARA collects about individuals must be:

- Collected and used fairly
- Stored safely and securely
- Be adequate, relevant and not excessive
- Be kept accurate and up to date
- Held only as long as necessary
- Not disclosed to any third party unlawfully.

Any breach of the GDPR or SARA's Data Protection Policy is considered to be an offence and in that event, SARA's disciplinary procedures will apply.

How do we use your information within SARA?

Within SARA, personal data may be shared between members who legitimately need the information to carry out their duties. The amount of personal information shared within SARA will be no more than is reasonably necessary.

Personal data is stored in each member's personnel file which is stored securely in both paper and electronic form through D4H.

A member's name, email address and telephone number will appear on SARA's internal system D4H, and be available to all other members.

Members photographs are used on staff ID badges, Registration Forms and Personal Details Forms, for the purposes of identification and security. SARA may occasionally commission photographs around its sites or at specific events, which could include images of staff for inclusion in promotional material.

SARA is required to obtain information about past criminal convictions as a condition of membership.

Sensitive Personal Data

In general a member's Sensitive Personal Data will be stored such that it is only available to the Station General Manager and Station Secretary.

There are occasions when SARA members will need to share your sensitive personal data with colleagues within SARA. For example, seeking information from or share information with the Managers / Team Leaders or the Administration Team about fitness to work. SARA will only do so with your explicit consent. This means that you will be asked to respond either orally or in writing to any particular disclosure of your sensitive personal data.

Circumstances may also arise where sensitive personal data is shared with colleagues within SARA without first obtaining your explicit consent. This will only occur if the processing is necessary:

- To protect your vital interests and you cannot give your consent or your consent cannot be reasonable obtained
- To protect another person's vital interest and you have unreasonably withheld your consent
- For the discharge of any function which is designed for the provision of confidential counselling, advice, support or any other service and your consent cannot be given, we cannot reasonably obtain your explicit consent, or requiring your explicit consent would prejudice the provision of that counselling, advice support or other service
- The disclosure is made for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and we have received a notice from the police confirming that the disclosure is required for these purposes
- Pursuant to a Court Order requiring disclosure.

How do we share your data with third parties?

SARA may need to share your personal data with third parties outside of the charity who are contracted to work on its behalf, for example: insurers, legal consultants or training providers. SARA may also disclose data to auditors undertaking investigations or to selected individuals acting on behalf of the charity, such as organisations undertaking Quality Assurance research, providing no personal data is published.

SARA will confirm the dates and nature of an individual's membership to a prospective employer in a reference where requested.

SARA has a statutory requirement to disclose staff personal data to inspecting bodies - including Police / HMCG / HSE .

SARA may also have to share your personal data with third parties outside the charity for other purposes with your consent. However, there may be circumstances where information is shared without your consent. This will only be if:

- The disclosure is in the legitimate interests of SARA or the third party to whom the information is being disclosed

- There is a statutory obligation to share the data; for example making returns to the local authority
- Disclosure is required for the performance of a contract
- Disclosure is necessary to protect your vital interest; for example in medical emergency situations
- Disclosure is made to assist with the prevention or detection of crime, or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders
- Disclosure is required by Court Order
- Disclosure is necessary to assist SARA to obtain legal advice.

Sharing Sensitive Data with Third Parties

SARA may occasionally need to share your sensitive personal data outside of the Charity, although it will try to do so only with your explicit consent. This means that you will be asked to respond actively either orally or in writing to any particular disclosure of your sensitive personal data.

Circumstances may also arise where sensitive personal data is shared outside of the Charity without first obtaining your explicit consent. This will only occur where one of the following conditions has been met:

- The processing is necessary to: protect your vital interests and you cannot give your consent; or your consent cannot be reasonably obtained; or to protect another person's vital interest and you have unreasonably withheld your consent
- The processing is necessary for the discharge of any function which is designed for the provision of confidential counselling, advice, support or any other service and your consent cannot be given, we cannot reasonably obtain your explicit consent or requiring your explicit consent would prejudice the provision to that counselling, advice, support or other service
- The processing is necessary to meet our statutory obligations in relation to equality and diversity monitoring
- The disclosure is made for the purpose of prevention or detection of crime and/or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders and we have received a notice from the Police confirming that the disclosure is required for these purposes
- Pursuant to a Court Order requiring disclosure; or
- In order for SARA to obtain legal advice for the purposes of any legal proceedings.

How long do we keep your information?

SARA will retain members' personal and sensitive personal information for the duration of their membership of the organisation, and a further two years from the time that they leave the organisation. However, operational records need to be retained for a significant period of time and, consequently, if you have been involved operationally during your time with SARA, it is inevitable that record and your involvement will be retained.

Records of members' names, callsigns and dates of membership will be retained indefinitely. This is to allow a full record of all operations to be maintained.

Your rights in relation to your data

You have certain rights with respect to the data held about you by SARA. You have the right to obtain:

- Confirmation that your data is being processed;
- Access to your personal data and other supplementary information.

SARA will usually provide a copy of the information free of charge. However, we may charge a reasonable fee when a request is manifestly unfounded or excessive, particularly if it is repetitive. Any fee will be based on the administrative cost of providing the information.

If you request information, this will be provided to you without delay and usually within one month of receipt of your request.

Where requests are complex or numerous, we may need to extend the period for providing you with the information by up to a further two months. We will inform you of this within one month of receiving your request and will explain why the extension is necessary.

If a request for information is manifestly unfounded or excessive, and in particular if it is repetitive, we may refuse to respond to a request. In these circumstances we will explain why we have refused to respond and will inform you of how to complain to the supervisory authority, if you should wish to do so.

SARA The Lifeboat and Rescue Station Beachley, ChepstowNP16 7HH
Telephone: 0344 8460226 **Email:** info@sara-rescue.org.uk **Website:** www.sara-rescue.org.uk

ENDS.

Equal Opportunities Policy

Introduction

SARA recognises that it is essential to provide equal opportunities to all persons without discrimination. This policy sets out the organisation's position on equal opportunity in all aspects of membership, including recruitment and training, giving guidance and encouragement to members at all levels to act fairly and prevent discrimination on the grounds of their Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity Status.

Statement of policy

It is the policy of SARA to ensure that no member receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of their Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity Status, or is disadvantaged by conditions or requirements that cannot be shown to be justifiable. The organisation is committed not only to its legal obligations but also to the positive promotion of equality of opportunity in all aspects of membership.

The organisation recognises that adhering to this Equal Opportunities Policy, combined with other relevant policies and practices, maximises the effective use of individuals in both the organisation's and members´ best interests. SARA recognises the great benefits in having a diverse membership with different backgrounds.

The application of recruitment, training, and promotion policies to all individuals will be on the basis of job requirements and the individual's ability and merits.

All members of the organisation will be made aware of the provisions of this policy.

Recruitment and promotion

Advertisements for membership will give sufficiently clear and accurate information to enable potential applicants to assess their own suitability for membership. Information about membership will be provided in such a manner that does not restrict its audience in terms of Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity Status.

SARA literature will not imply a preference for one group of applicants unless there is a genuine occupational qualification which limits the post to particular skills, in which case this must be clearly stated.

All selection will be conducted against defined criteria and will deal only with the applicant's suitability for membership. Where it is necessary to ask questions relating to personal circumstances, these will be related purely to volunteering commitment and asked of all candidates.

Engagement

SARA will not discriminate on the basis of Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity Status in the allocation of duties between members at any level with comparable volunteer role descriptions.

SARA will put in place any reasonable measures and/or adjustments within the voluntary workplace for those members who become disabled during employment or for disabled appointees.

All members will be considered solely on their merits for a position of additional responsibility with equal opportunities for all.

Training

Members will be provided with appropriate training regardless of Age, Disability, Gender, Gender Reassignment, Race, Religion or Belief, Sexual Orientation, Marriage and Civil Partnership or Pregnancy and Maternity Status.
All members will be encouraged to discuss their training needs with the Station Training Manager.

Grievances and victimisation

SARA emphasises that discrimination is unacceptable conduct which may lead to withdrawal of membership.
Any complaints of discrimination will be pursued through the organisation's Problem Solving Procedure.

ENDS.

SARA Clothing and Uniform

Whilst on Station and on all other SARA duties, members must wear appropriate SARA uniform on at least the outer layer. This can include generic MREW branded clothing as well as that with 'Severn Rescue' or similar wording adjoining the MREW logo.

Only current crewmembers can wear SARA / lifeboat insignia that relates to them being 'crew'. Members representing the organization are only permitted to wear or display qualifications to which they are entitled. On occasions where 'medals are to be worn', all medals should be worn, whether awarded for service in SARA or otherwise (eg military medals).

Members must maintain a high standard for their clothing, and should always look smart when wearing items of organization clothing. Members should never wear uniform in such a manner or situation that may prejudice the good name of the organization.

Crew members should always look after their own uniform and PPE.

ENDS.

SARA Whistleblowing Policy

Having a clear approach to whistleblowing is critical to enabling any organisational concerns to be raised effectively and handled appropriately.

The purpose of this policy is to set out the grounds for raising organisational concerns and the principles by which they will be responded to by SARA.

Whistleblowing – the passing on of information concerning organisational wrongdoing.

Introduction

SARA is committed to conducting its business with honesty and integrity, and to high standards. However, every organisation faces the risk that something will go wrong from time to time, or unknowingly harbouring malpractice or unethical conduct. SARA welcomes the opportunity to address these situations as early as possible, and this policy describes its approach to managing concerns raised by individuals. SARA is committed to creating an open, transparent and safe working environment where individuals feel able to speak up, and wishes to create an understanding in all workers and volunteers that they demonstrate support and encouragement of whistleblowing.

The arrangements described in this policy fulfils SARA's legal obligations relating to the Public Interest Disclosure Act (1998), and satisfies the requirements outlined in the UK Fundraising Regulator's Code of Fundraising Practice (2017).

This policy describes:

- the type of issues that can be raised and the process for doing so
- how the person raising a concern will not suffer detriment for having done so
- how and what the organisation will do in response to receiving such information
- how an individual can escalate their concern to an external body, such as the Charity Commission.

Policy

A volunteer who passes information concerning wrongdoing must reasonably believe that:

- they are acting in the public interest - personal grievances and complaints should be raised under the SARA Volunteer Problem Solving Policy
- the disclosure tends to show past, present or likely future wrongdoing in one of the following:
    - criminal offences
    - failure to comply with legal obligations
    - miscarriages of justice
    - dangers to health and safety
    - dangers to the environment

- deliberate concealment of any of the above categories.

The expectation is that individuals do not make a declaration for the purposes of personal gain and only raise concerns where it is reasonable to do so in the circumstances. The law provides protection for workers who raise legitimate concerns about specified matters ("qualifying disclosures"), and whilst not afforded statutory protection, volunteers who raise concerns internally will be supported by SARA.

The worker or volunteer will not suffer a detriment* for having raised a concern made in good faith - if they believe that have suffered detriment for having raised a concern, they should report this. SARA will sanction those who are found to have subjected an individual to detriment according to its disciplinary / problem solving procedures.

** A detriment is a disadvantage such as: failure to promote; denial of training; blocking access to resources; disciplinary sanction; bullying or harassment; victimisation; demotion; dismissal; failure to investigate a subsequent concern.*

Any matter raised under this policy should be forwarded by email or telephone, in the first place, to the Deputy CEO or, if it involves the Deputy CEO, to the CEO.

Any matter raised under this policy will be investigated thoroughly, promptly and fairly. Where possible and appropriate, the individual raising the concern will be informed of the progress of the investigation and its likely timescale. Recommendations for change may be made to minimise the risk of future wrongdoing.

Individuals should not suffer any detrimental treatment as a result of legitimately raising a concern, including dismissal / ceasing of the volunteer arrangement, disciplinary / formal action, threats or other unfavourable treatment. If the whistleblower believes they have suffered any such treatment, they should inform the SARA CEO.

If it is found that an individual has maliciously made false allegations or with a view to personal gain, they will be subject to action under the SARA Volunteer Problem Solving Policy.

If an individual is concerned or has complaints relating to their own personal circumstances and the way they have been treated, they should use the organisation's Problem Solving Procedure.

ENDS.

SARA Safeguarding Policy

This policy provides details of our safeguarding commitment and principles for the protection of all young people and vulnerable adults who come into contact with SARA activities.

The term young person has the specific legal meaning of anyone below the age of 18 years.

A vulnerable adult is someone who has needs for care and support, and/or is experiencing or is at risk of harm, abuse or neglect and is unable to protect themselves.

We may refer to the term vulnerable people throughout the document to incorporate both young people and vulnerable adults.

This policy applies to all volunteers and all associated persons.

The above will be referred to as SARA representatives throughout this document.

See also the document 'Working with Young People – Crew Guidance'

Principles

All SARA representatives working with vulnerable people must promote their welfare, health, wellbeing and development and take every reasonable precaution to protect them.

SARA seeks to provide an environment where all, and specifically those who are vulnerable, are kept safe from harm, abuse and neglect while they are involved with the organisation in any way. We take every reasonable precaution to minimise such risks.

SARA representatives have a personal responsibility for safeguarding the welfare and wellbeing of all young people and vulnerable adults by protecting them from harm, abuse and neglect and will report this and support them wherever this happens.

Our Commitment

SARA will:

- Ensure the welfare of the young person and vulnerable adult is paramount
- Stop harm, abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Prevent and reduce the risk of harm, abuse or neglect wherever possible
- Protect, maintain and uphold the human rights of young people and vulnerable adults
- Ensure all young people and vulnerable adults, regardless of age, disability, gender, racial heritage, religious or other belief and sexual orientation or identity have the right to protection from all types of harm, abuse and neglect

In order to meet our commitments, SARA will ensure that:

- All volunteers are familiar with and have access to the safeguarding policy
- Measures are taken to continue to review and improve our safeguarding policy and practices
- Effective procedures are in place for responding to safeguarding incidents

- Everyone knows how to report and respond to a safeguarding incident or concern
- Appropriate level of recruitment and screening checks are followed for each volunteer. These checks will minimise the risk of appointing anyone who may be unsuitable to work with young people and vulnerable adults.
- All suspicions and allegations of harm, abuse and neglect will be taken seriously and responded to swiftly and appropriately

Responsibility

Station General Managers are responsible for ensuring that this policy and procedure is applied within their own are, also taking into account the document 'Working with Young People – Crew Guidance'.

Any queries on the application or interpretation of policy and/or procedure must be discussed with the Station General Manager prior to any action being taken.

The Executive Committee has the responsibility for ensuring the maintenance, regular review and updating of this policy.

The policy and procedure does not form part of any contract and maybe subject to change. Revisions, amendments or alterations to the policy and/or procedure can only be implemented following approval by the Executive Committee.

ENDS.

Problem Solving Procedure for Volunteers

Whilst we hope that volunteering with SARA will be a positive experience for all our volunteers, we are aware that sometimes things can go wrong. As an organisation, SARA is committed to ensuring that volunteers are treated fairly and are not discriminated against.

This procedure will ensure consistency in our response to problems and resolving them, and will set out what should happen if a problem arises or if you have a complaint to make, or if someone makes a complaint against you.

Please note that any complaints will be treated confidentially, and will only be discussed amongst those who are directly involved in trying to resolve the issue. SARA will keep confidential records of what happens and who is involved at each stage. You are entitled to ask for copies of these records at any stage.

PART A - What to do if you need to make a complaint / raise a concern

Stage 1 | Informal Complaint

Initial complaints, whether concerning the organisation or another volunteer, should first be discussed informally. Many issues can be resolved this way.

Where this is not possible, complaints should initially be raised with your Station General Manager. If the complaint concerns this person, you should contact the Deputy Chief Executive (Deputy CEO)

In both cases please advise that you would like to have an informal discussion about an issue. An informal meeting will then be arranged. Ideally this stage will result in mutually agreed actions to resolve the issue.

Stage 2 | Formal Complaint

If you are not satisfied with the outcome at Stage 1, you should make a formal complaint in writing, within 7 days following the informal discussion, to the Deputy CEO.

SARA is committed to acknowledging this complaint within a reasonable timeframe, and to investigating it and providing a response within 60 days. As part of this process, you will be offered an opportunity for a meeting with the Deputy CEO or the Association Scretary. You will have the option to bring someone with you.

Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal

If you are still not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal to the CEO. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations / evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing within a further 28 days.

PART B - What will happen if someone complains about you, or an issue arises that concerns you. This may include concerns about your suitability for your particular volunteer role.

Stage 1 | Informal discussion

If someone makes a formal complaint about you, the first step will be an informal discussion about the complaint/issue. This is an opportunity for you to hear about the complaint/issue and offer your comment. It may also seek to identify some solutions, if required and appropriate. If you refuse this step, you may be asked to discontinue volunteering at this point. However, if you in turn feel that you have been unfairly treated you will have the opportunity to initiate a complaint as in PART A.

Stage 2 | Written Statement

If the issue has not been or cannot be resolved at Stage 1, you may be issued with a written statement outlining the reason for the complaint / the concerns that have been raised, and offering you the opportunity to attend a formal meeting.

You will be given the opportunity to state your case formally to the Deputy CEO (as in Part A), and to be accompanied to any meetings by a person of your choice.

Depending on the nature of the complaint or the concerns, further objectives may be set or offered. However, if you are asked to discontinue volunteering, you will have the opportunity to appeal.

Stage 3 | Opportunity to Appeal

If you are not satisfied with the outcome, you have the right to appeal to the CEO. The CEO will respond within 28 days, and their decision will be final. At this stage the evidence and processes followed will be reviewed. No further representations/evidence will be considered. A final decision will be made and communicated to you in writing.

Exceptions

In some cases volunteers may be asked to stop volunteering immediately while the matter is explored. For example, if the volunteer is accused of harassment, theft, aggressive behaviour, ignoring a request from a supervising staff member or where SARA is notified that the volunteer is the subject of a safeguarding investigation. The decision to ask you to stop volunteering will be confirmed by SARA in writing.

In any case where the volunteer has been asked to discontinue their volunteering, and the volunteer feels they have been treated unfairly they have the right to initiate a complaint as in Part A of this procedure.

ENDS.

Tours and Visits

Tours of the Station are encouraged. Where possible, they should be agreed in advance with the General Manager. The following guidelines apply to the management of tours of the station:

The guidelines for general visitors apply. In addition:

Refer to the document 'Working with Young People – Crew Guidance'.

There should be a maximum ratio of 8 visitors per crew member, to provide adequate supervision.

Where under-16s are involved, there must be a responsible adult with the visiting party and there must be a minimum of two adults with each group of visitors at any time.

Any incidents, or suspected incidents, should be reported to both the adult leader of the visiting party and the Station General Manager without delay.

It is NOT required for crew conducting a tour of the Station to have a DBS (formerly CRB) certificate providing the above guidelines are followed.

Children and Juniors

In general, those aged under 18 are not allowed on a SARA station or at SARA events unless as part of a tour or formal visit. The SARA policy regarding the attendance of the children of SARA members is as follows:

Acceptable Instances

Short visits to show new babies to fellow members are restricted to the office areas. However, the duration of such visits should be kept to a minimum and are subject to Station General Manager approval.

Short visits to give the child an understanding of what the member does as a SARA volunteer.

Attendance with a member at some Fundraising Events may be acceptable, subject to Station General Manager approval.

What is not acceptable:

Regular attendance with a member at training sessions.

Leaving the child unsupervised at any time.The transport of any child in a SARA vehicle.

A child attending any call-out.

ENDS.

Training and Evaluation

Training shall only be carried out under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified and experienced person, and planned training shall be published on the station calendar, maintained on D4H.

Whilst exercising or practising techniques, crew members should be aware that safety is always the first priority. Whilst undertaking any waterborne activities, all crewmembers will have due regard to the inherent risks associated with water activities.

Training standards will be those appropriate at the time, but in any event will be to nationally agreed and recognized standards. Training will include any 'related' subjects and topics.

Records of crew training, crew attendance and standards achieved are to be maintained on the D4H system.

The Station Training Manger is to undertake periodic examination and testing of knowledge and understanding, to ensure crew are fully aware of the requirements of current techniques, methods and legislation in relation to the operation of the lifeboat and associated functions.

Boat Crew, Helmsmen and Coxswains

The Boat Manager shall be responsible for the evaluation of the suitability of persons to become boat crew members, as described in the Lifeboat Operations SOP. A valid VHF Certificate, First Aid Certificate and a PB2 certificate are the minimum professional qualifications.

Should the Boat Manager deem it necessary, he may require any member of the crew (whatever position or responsibility the crew member holds) to be re-classified or re-trained at any time.

A coxswain may be reclassified if necessary by the Station or Executive Committee.

Land Crew

The Station Land Search Manager shall be responsible for the evaluation of the suitability of persons to become land crew members. A valid NNAS Bronze certificate (or higher qualification) or suitable prior experience, and a First Aid Certificate is the minimum professional qualification.

All land crew are to be trained to the level of Swift Water & Flood First responder ('DEFRA Module 2'). Beachley and Tewkesbury land team members should also be trained to Rope Rescue Awareness standard, able to assist rope rescue operations from within the Warm Zone.

ENDS.

Health and Safety:

SARA recognises that 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.

Duty of care

'Duty of care' is a common law duty to take reasonable care to avoid causing harm to others.

If an organisation such as SARA has no employees, it must be accepted that they may not be able to achieve the same standards of health and safety as are required for employees. However, by aiming to accomplish this, we demonstrate to our volunteers and the outside world the value it places on them and their efforts to support your organisation.

Health and Safety Policy

Introduction

The SARA Board of Trustees has overall responsibility for health and safety in the organisation, and for ensuring that it fulfils all its legal responsibilities. It recognises that it is the duty of Executive Committee members and volunteers to uphold this policy and to provide the necessary funds and resources to put it into practice.

The SARA Executive Committee is committed to ensuring that all its activities are safe and it will do whatever it can to provide for the health, safety and welfare of all volunteers, members and visitors ensuring that risks to volunteers, members and visitors are minimised at all times.

It will observe as far as practicable the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 ("HASAWA") and all relevant regulations and codes of practice made under it.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Committee.

Responsibilities

The Executive Committee member responsible for the implementation and monitoring of health and safety policies and recommending changes where necessary is the **Chief Executive Officer.**

All accidents or unsafe incidents will be investigated by the **Deputy Chief Executive Officer** on behalf of the Executive Committee as soon as possible and then to be reported to the committee at the next available committee meeting.

The **Station General Managers** are responsible for:

- Assessing the risk to the health and safety of volunteers, members and visitors and identifying what measures are needed to comply with its health and safety obligations;
- Ensuring that venues or vehicles used for trips are safe and without risk to health including safe ways of entering and leaving;
- Ensuring that equipment is safe and well maintained;
- Providing information, instruction, training and supervision to volunteers in safe working methods and procedures as required;
- Encouraging volunteers and members to co-operate in ensuring safe and healthy conditions and systems by effective joint consultation
- Establishing emergency procedures as required;

All SARA Volunteers must ensure that:

- They are aware of the contents of this safety policy
- They comply with this policy
- They take care of themselves and others who may be affected by their actions or omissions
- They report all accidents, or unsafe situations, and any near misses (things which could have led to an accident), to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer, or another Committee member at once.
- They record accidents or near misses at work in the accident book kept at each Station.
- They are aware of all fire procedures for the area in which they are working
- If they identify anything which they think could be in any way unsafe, they report it.

Risk Assessment Responsibility

The Station General Managers will ensure that their premises and tasks are assessed in line with the current relevant legislation. Assessments will be repeated when there is a

- change in legislation
- change of premises
- significant change in work carried out

- transfer to new technology

or any other reason which makes original assessment not valid.

Training

To comply with legislation and to promote the health, safety and welfare of volunteers, health and safety training will be provided as follows:

- at inductions
- on the introduction of new technology
- when changes are made to venues
- when training needs are identified during risk assessments.

Resolving health and safety problems

Any volunteer with a health and safety concern must first tell the Station General Manager.

If, after investigation, the problem is not corrected in a reasonable time, or the Station General Manager decides that no action is required but the volunteer is not satisfied with this, the volunteer may then refer the matter in writing to the Deputy Chief Executive Officer.

If the volunteer is still dissatisfied, the matter will be entered on the agenda for the both the next meeting of the Executive Committee and Trustees.

Risk Assessments:

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. Risk assessments can really help prevent harm occurring. Risk assessments have been conducted for many tasks / activities that are undertaken by volunteers within SARA. Station General Managers shall make station members aware of these risk assessments.

However, not all activities or operations of a voluntary rescue team have been, or can be risk assessed and volunteers are advised to approach all activities with caution.

First aid:

SARA requires all crew members to maintain a basic First Aid certification as a minimum. This means that there should always be at least one first aider available. First Aid kits are supplied and maintained, and all members should acquaint themselves with the location of these kits within the relevant station.

Personal Protective Equipment:

Personal protective equipment (PPE) will either be issued to members, or they will be advised what PPE you require to purchase, through induction / training. It is the team member's responsibility not to undertake any task without the relevant PPE.

Any items issued should be maintained and stored correctly. Any damage must be reported immediately to the Station General Manager.

Procedure when involved in an accident whilst volunteering:

The Station General Manager should be told immediately about any accidents. All injuries, however trivial, should be treated by a qualified first aider without delay. A small wound can be just as dangerous as a large one.

The Station General Manager should make sure that your accident is reported as soon as possible to SARA Executive Committee and an appropriate entry is made in the Accident Book. Serious accidents must be reported to the enforcement authorities as soon as possible. The Executive team will do this, once informed of the accident. Even if an accident does not seem serious, members must make sure it is reported to the Station General Manager.

Lone Worker Procedure

Members arriving and remaining in the Station on their own for longer than 5 minutes must report to the Station Manager (or in their absence the General Manager) by phone, on arrival and departure. They may be asked to report in ('do Ops Normals') every 30 or 60 minutes.

Dangerous Occurrences

Dangerous occurrences are incidents that involve potential hazards but may not have caused injury. Some kinds of dangerous occurrences should be reported to the authorities.

If members see or are involved in a dangerous occurrence, report the facts as soon as possible. This might save someone from being seriously injured or killed. The Reporting of Injuries and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995 extends the list of incidents that must be reported to the appropriate enforcement authorities.

Maternity

Any volunteer who is pregnant, has given birth in the last 6 months or is breast-feeding should inform her manager as soon as possible so that a risk assessment can be carried out into the duties she carries out.

Electricity

Under regulations relating to electricity at work, any work on electrical installations or equipment must be carried out by a qualified electrician. Unqualified people should not undertake work of this nature.

No electrical equipment is introduced for use on SARA premises without first being checked and certified as safe to use. This will be carried out by a SARA-approved electrician.

- Never overload electrical equipment.
- If a fuse blows, report it. Don't fit a replacement.
- Switch off and disconnect any equipment that sparks, stalls or appears to be faulty.
- Don't let cables trail across the floor.
- Disconnect electrical equipment when not in use. Don't pull the cable to disconnect, pull the plug.
- Avoid twisting or crushing cables.
- Keep all electrical equipment clean and dry.
- Don't use portable tools near flammable liquids or gases.
- Don't stand on a wet area when using electrical equipment.
- Ensure that all electrical equipment is obtained from a reputable manufacturer, is sufficiently robust for the use intended and is checked by a competent person prior to use.
- Extension leads should be completely uncoiled. Don't use one with only a small amount of the lead pulled out.
- All electrical appliances and equipment should be tested periodically, generally on an annual basis.

It is very dangerous to touch any equipment or machine with an electrical fault. Report any suspected faults immediately and label the equipment or machine with a note saying it is faulty.

Remember: electrical repairs or alterations should only be done by a qualified electrician.

Manual Handling

As part of your role, you may from time to time be required to move items from place to place. If you don't handle these correctly, you could hurt yourself.

You should organise the task to minimise the amount of manual lifting necessary. When lifting heavy or awkward loads, get someone to help but make sure only one person gives clear, unhurried instruction.

Basic guidance for lifting:

- Establish the load's weight and stability and check the route you plan to take for hazards.
- Grip loads with the palms of your hands, not your fingertips. Don't change your grip while carrying.
- Hold weights close to your body, lift with your legs and keep your back straight.
- Lift in two stages: from floor to knee and from knee to carrying position. Reverse this lifting method when setting the load down.
- Don't jerk or shove as twisting the body may cause injury.

- Don’t let the load obstruct your view. Make sure your route is clear before you start moving.
- If you have a condition or a disability that may limit your ability to carry out manual handling tasks, report the matter to your Station General Manager.
- When pushing a load keep your arms straight and one foot in front of the other. When pulling a load keep your arms straight and your chin in. Place your weight on your forward foot, ready to move to your rear foot when the load starts moving.
- Don’t strain. If you think you can’t manage a load get assistance.

Machinery

All volunteers must receive training before being allowed to operate machinery. Make sure you understand the instructions you have been given. Guarding is not a convenience, but a legal requirement. Moving parts of machines have to be guarded. Guards are in place to protect you, not the machines. When they have been removed for repairs or essential maintenance a qualified person who has authorised their removal must personally check their replacement before the machine is restarted.

Everything possible is done to enable you to undertake your tasks safely, but your cooperation is essential.

Wear suitable clothing. Avoid loose clothing, ties or belts, which can get caught in machinery. For some jobs safety shoes with steel toecaps should be worn.

When operating machinery, ensure long hair is tied up. Wristwatches and rings have been known to cause severe cuts. You are advised not to wear them when working with machinery. Make sure you know how to stop a machine in case of emergency.

Personal hygiene

Washing with soap and water will reduce the risk of dermatitis and similar skin troubles.

All traces of oil must be removed from your skin when your tasks are complete. Washing with soap and water at the work place does this best.

Special attention should be given to washing clothing that has become soiled as a result of your work. This applies particularly to trousers and underwear. Wearing clothing soaked with oil greatly increases the risk of skin damage.

Moving Vehicles

Members that drive during their activities for SARA are responsible for the safe operation of their vehicles and should ensure that they comply with all relevant road traffic legislation.

Pedestrians must stay on footpaths and remain vigilant at all times.

Plant Machinery

Only those trained and authorised to do so should operate plant, trucks and other specialist vehicles or mechanised lifting equipment.

Chemicals

Selection
To prevent exposure, selection must first consider the elimination or substitution of hazardous substances. Hazardous substance inventories should be minimised by standardising substances used wherever possible.

Supply

No substance may be introduced into the workplace without a risk assessment being completed beforehand and any exposure to the substance reduced to a minimum. Substances identified as not having a risk assessment must be quarantined until an assessment can be completed and control measures implemented.

Handling and Storage

Hazardous substances should be stored in accordance with information provided in the Safety Data Sheet. As a minimum substances must be:

- segregated from incompatible materials & substances
- held in suitable, closed and clearly labelled containers
- within a bunded area or appropriate cabinet

Exposure Control

Where exposure cannot be eliminated, it must be adequately controlled in accordance with the following hierarchy:

- Design process/engineering control e.g. enclosed automatic dosing
- Control at source e.g. use of Local Exhaust Ventilation
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) used in conjunction with other controls e.g. nitrile gloves

If you are working in an area where chemicals are used / re-fueling boats etc you should make sure personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks and goggles are used where indicated or advised.

You should check that this equipment is in good condition. If it is damaged, speak to your Station General Manager, who will replace it.

Emergency Planning and Preparedness

Emergency procedures must be displayed in a prominent position at each site and must be available to the relevant emergency services. Appropriate emergency arrangements must be in place for spills, fire and first aid incidents.

Health surveillance

Before using chemicals you should inform your Station General Manager of any conditions that may become aggravated through using the substance, such as asthma or dermatitis.

Warning symbols

To warn users of the hazards of some chemicals, symbols are displayed on their containers.

The following symbols denote that a substance can cause harm:

If you get splashed, wash with plenty of cold water at once and notify a colleague who can help you get the appropriate treatment.

Be sure that you are aware of the nature of the chemical you are handling.

Compressed Air

Compressed air can be dangerous if applied to the body. Don't play about with compressed air. It is not a toy and it can be very dangerous.

Eye Protection

Safety goggles are provided and must be worn by anyone carrying out activities that may cause particles or substances to become airborne and hit the eye. Such activities include grinding, paint chipping, handling acids or corrosive materials, painting, drilling, welding and using equipment like pressure washers and blowtorches.

Every person provided with eye protection must ensure it is clean and free from damage and wear it when appropriate.

Working at Height (NB this section is not to be confused with Rope Rescue training & operations)

Risk Assessment and Planning

Where possible, work at height will be avoided and activities carried out from ground level or a safe area on the same level (e.g. working on the first floor of a building).

Where work at height cannot be avoided, a suitable and sufficient assessment of the risks and associated equipment is to be undertaken by a competent person in accordance with the Health Safety and Environment Policy.

The risk assessment should consider the following hierarchy:

- avoid working at height (e.g. use extendable tools)
- take measures required to prevent falls (e.g. trestle with guardrail system)
- measures to minimise the distance and consequence of a fall (e.g. safety nets)

Emergency and Rescue

Planning of Work at Height activities must consider how a person (volunteer or contractor) can be recovered from the work at height location in the event of an incident or accident. Rescue plans must not place the casualty or rescuers at risk and should not solely rely on the public emergency services.

Equipment Selection and use

Access equipment must be suitable and appropriate to the nature of the work being undertaken. Work at height equipment (e.g. ladders & personal fall protection) must only be issued to competent persons. Under no circumstances are volunteers permitted to use privately owned equipment for work at height activities.

Ladders

Ladders and stepladders can be used for work at height when the use of other work equipment is not justified because of the low risk, light duty and short duration (max 30 minutes) of the activity. Ladders and stepladders must be suitable for the intended use and meet British Standards (BS) Class 1 'Industrial' or BS EN 131 ladders for use at work.

A significant number of people have been injured or killed through the incorrect use of ladders.

It is essential that you understand:

- the extent of your own competence
- how and where to report problems with the use or transport of ladders
- safe working loads and work methods
- common causes of accidents and how to avoid them
- manual handling of ladders
- recognition of defects in ladders
- the use of fixed ladders as means of access

- how to secure ladders and the circumstances in which another person should be stationed at the foot of a ladder
- the dangers of using metal ladders near electrical systems
- that wooden ladders should never be painted
- how to store and transport ladders correctly
- the correct placement of ladders
- the need for three points of contact with a ladder at all times
- the ladder should be angled so that for every 4m in vertical height the base moves out 1m.

No volunteer is to use a ladder unless he or she has been trained.

Scaffolding Towers

Scaffolding should only be erected by suitably trained and appointed people. When working on scaffolding make sure that guard rails and toe boards are in place. Make sure that adequate foundation is provided on level, firm ground with base plates and soil plates where necessary.

Information, Instruction and Training

Information, instruction and training including refreshers, will be provided to volunteers in a manner that is appropriate to the type of work at height and associated risks. Where appropriate, specialist training will be provided to volunteers for the use of work equipment (e.g. ladder safety, personal fall protection, Mobile Elevated Work Platforms) and those involved in Rope Rescue.

Inspection and Maintenance

Work at height equipment must be inspected and maintained to ensure it remains safe for use. All work equipment should be inspected as follows:

- before and after use
- after events liable to affect stability and safety
- at suitable intervals to ensure any deterioration can be detected and remedied in good time

Work at height equipment must not be used beyond the due date of its inspection or thorough examination. An equipment register must be kept containing unique identification of each items and records of inspection.

Fragile Surfaces

Work on fragile surfaces should be avoided where possible. Where work cannot be avoided, the fragile surface must be assessed and Safe System of Work established by a competent person.

Falling Objects

Materials and equipment used during work at height activities must be handled and stored so as not to present a risk of falling objects. The throwing or tipping of material or objects from height is not permitted.

Where falling objects cannot be prevented, an exclusion zone must be established to prevent persons working or passing underneath the work at height activity.

Working near or over water

Suitable rescue equipment (e.g. a boat, boathook, lifebelt or lifeline) is to be in position and checked as serviceable before works are permitted to commence.

Additional good housekeeping:

- Don't leave rubbish lying around.
- Keep all corridors, gangways and stairways clear.
- Wipe up any spills.
- Use metal containers for oily rags and waste.
- Stack goods clear of gangways.
- Stow your tools safely when not in use.
- Keep benches and worktops uncluttered.
- Don't leave loose tools on running machines.
- Remember: a clean work place means fewer accidents.

The advice in this Handbook is given for one reason only: to keep you safe. ENDS

Environment

Our environmental mission:

We aim to be universally recognised as a charity that balances our vital lifesaving work with our environmental responsibilities.

Our environmental objective:

Through the operation of our environmental management system, we will assess, monitor and document the significant environmental aspects and impacts of our operations. We will set objectives and/or targets and take action in order to continually improve our environmental performance and to reduce our carbon footprint, without compromising our operational effectiveness.

SARA will:

- commit to prevent pollution, to protect the habitats and biodiversity under our control, and to promote responsibility for the environment throughout all of our activities
- comply with all relevant environmental legislation and regulations
- strive to reduce the use of energy, water, fuel and other resources where practical
- increase the use of renewable energy sources where it is cost effective to do so
- minimise waste disposal by adopting the principles of the waste hierarchy: to eliminate, reduce, reuse, recycle or recover before disposal
- communicate and implement this policy at all levels throughout SARA and make it available to the public
- review this policy on a regular basis.

ENDS.

Driving Policy

SARA is committed to reducing risks to Volunteers engaged in driving activities and recognises the duty of care we have to other road users and members of the public. It is implicit throughout that all persons driving on behalf of SARA will be aware of and comply with standards of road safety which are defined in road traffic law. This policy sets out SARA's arrangements for driving activities.

Scope

This policy is applicable to all persons who drive on behalf of SARA and applies to driving activities on Public Highways. The requirements of this policy are not imposed for commuting to the place of volunteering activity but may provide good practice reference to all vehicle users.

Responsibility

Chief Executive & Executive Committee are responsible for:

- Committing to the implementation of the Driving Policy and its effective communication throughout SARA.

Station General Managers are responsible for:

- Ensuring communication and implementation of the Driving Policy.
- Authorising Volunteers to drive and tow on behalf of SARA.
- Risk assessment of driving activities, implementing risk control measures and review.
- Ensuring provision of information, instruction & applicable training for Volunteers.
- Undertaking an annual check of members' driving licenses for any changes in the last 12 months

Volunteers are responsible for:

- Ensuring they have authorisation to drive and tow, and have appropriate categories on their licence, where applicable.
- Declaring to SARA any issues which may impact on their ability to drive.
- Complying with the requirements of this policy

Driving offences & fines

All fines, fixed penalty notices, parking tickets, congestion charges and administration fees will be the responsibility of the driver. Where a SARA-supplied vehicle user incurs a fine they must report to their Station General Manager.

Vehicle Insurance

SARA provides motor vehicle insurance for all SARA supplied vehicles.

Volunteers who use their own vehicles should check their insurance policy covers voluntary driving.

Volunteers agreeing to tow SARA trailers with privately owned vehicles must ensure they have adequate insurance cover. SARA will not meet the costs for any additional insurance premiums.

Insurance Declarations

The SARA insurance cover will apply to anyone who is driving a SARA supplied vehicle. Volunteers must inform their Station General Manager if they have:

- Been convicted of any driving offence connected with drinking and/or drugs
- Been convicted of any dangerous or reckless driving offences
- Committed more than one offence relating to driving without due care and attention
- More than 6 points on their licence.

In the event of a person losing their licence, they must notify their Station General Manager immediately to assess the impact on their role.

Insurance Claims

SARA reserves the right to claim for damage to SARA property against a 3rd party who causes an accident. The SARA driver is required to obtain and submit the details of the 3rd parties involved.

In certain circumstances, where there is evidence of negligent actions by a driver of a SARA supplied vehicle resulting in damage to the SARA supplied vehicle, the driver may be requested to make a financial contribution (maximum £250) towards the excess.

Reporting Accidents

Any road traffic incident occurring while driving on behalf of SARA, regardless of fault, must be reported to the Station General Manager immediately. Incidents involving SARA supplied vehicles must also be reported to the SARA Insurer within 12 hours.

Drivers must also inform their own insurer in the event of an incident in a SARA supplied vehicle. Repairs to privately owned vehicles will be the responsibility of the driver through their own insurer.

Vehicle Tax & MOT

The Station General Manager is responsible for ensuring that all vehicles on their station are appropriately taxed (or exemptions have been processed) and MOT'd.

Persons driving their own private car, as essential or casual users, must ensure that they have a valid MOT and Road Tax.

Risk Assessment

Driving activities, whether using SARA supplied or privately-owned vehicles, must be subject to risk assessment.

Driver Training & Awareness

Volunteers agreeing to drive on behalf of the SARA will be provided information, instruction and training as identified by the risk assessment.

Information and instructions will be provided for pre-use vehicle checks and further training may include:

- Level 1 Awareness
- Level 2 Driving Peer Assessments

Station General Managers must review the Drivers Checklist to ensure the Volunteer holds a valid licence prior to attending driver training.

Driving Distractions

A distracted driver can present danger and may be prosecuted for careless driving. Distractions include but are not limited to: using mobile phones, satellite navigation, map reading, operating car stereos, eating and drinking.

Mobile Phones

In line with legislation, members must not use their handheld mobile phone whilst driving. Calls using a hands free phone system are allowable under certain circumstances. Provided the road conditions are safe, drivers may answer or make a call without removing the phone from a cradle. Where the conversation is likely to be prolonged, the driver should arrange to either return the call at a later stage or pull over to a safe place in which the call can be continued.

Driving alone

Lone drivers should ensure they have emergency contact information and an appropriate means of communication available to report to a point of contact on safe arrival at their destination.

Passengers

The number of passengers must not exceed the manufacturer's specification on the vehicle. Volunteers travelling as passengers should intervene to ensure that the driver and fellow passengers comply with the provisions of the policy.

Seatbelts

All vehicle occupants must use seat belts, front and rear.

Loads

Drivers must not exceed manufacturer's recommended loading and towing capacities. Loaded materials must be properly contained in and restrained to the vehicle so there is no possibility of injury, obstruction or loss of vehicle control. Loads that project over the sides, rear, or front of the vehicle, must be appropriately marked and where applicable attendant and police notice arranged. The driver is responsible for ensuring that a load is secure and is safe to transport on the public highway.

Dangerous goods

Drivers may be permitted to transport fuel or petrol. Drivers who carry fuel must have read and understood the guidance provided by SARA.

Reversing

Drivers of vehicles with restricted vision to the rear, who are accompanied by a passenger must be guided back when reversing.

Towing

Drivers towing SARA trailers will require the appropriate licence category. This may be dependent on when they passed their driving test but will generally require a Category +E entitlement or C1E for towing trailers over 3,500Kg.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in any SARA supplied vehicle.

Fit to drive

Drivers who have any medical condition or are taking medication that may affect their ability to drive should seek advice from their GP.

Drivers should not commence or proceed on a journey if they:

- Feel they are not fit to do so
- Have been advised by their doctor not to drive
- Are on medication that may affect their ability to drive safely

Drivers should inform their Station General Manager about any medical condition, health issue or personal circumstances that may affect their driving.

Medicals & Eyesight Tests

It is recommended that all drivers have their eyesight tested every two years or more regularly if advised. Drivers should be reminded it is an offence to drive with uncorrected defective eyesight.

Driver Conduct

All drivers should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner, observing all relevant legislation, and treating other road users with respect and courtesy as is required under the Road Traffic Act. Failure to do so risks damage to the reputation of SARA and will be treated as a breach of the organisation's Code of Conduct.

Use of Blue Lights / Sirens on vehicles

The legislation which governs the installation and use of emergency blue lights and sirens is currently being reviewed by Government. There is scope within the existing legislation for the use of blue lights / sirens when operating in an emergency, in a Mountain Rescue capacity and at the request of the Police.

There is not currently any provision within the legislation for the use of blue lights and sirens when responding to a water rescue (towing a rescue boat/ lifeboat), and when towing. This is being reviewed and SARA are actively lobbying to amend the legislation because we recognise how this may severely impact upon our ability to affect a timely response to various urgent incidents.

Policy for use of Blue Lights / Sirens on vehicles:

Many SARA vehicles are equipped with Blue Lights and warning sirens. The use of these is reserved only for emergency situations when responding to Land Based call outs under the auspice of Mountain Rescue, and only for crew members that have undertaken an internal driving (peer) assessment, or have in-date emergency driving authority from one of the statutory emergency services.

The use of Blue Lights / sirens does not confer any authority on the driver and there are no exemptions to the Highway Code bestowed upon any SARA driver through their use (speed limits, red lights and stop signs must always be observed etc). Liability remains with the driver to anticipate the impact on others of use of blue lights / sirens and act accordingly.

Off-Road Driving:

Many SARA vehicles are equipped for use off-road. The majority of the driving that members will undertake within SARA vehicles will not constitute 'Off-road' and no additional training above the standard peer assessment is required for flat grassland, stone forestry fire roads or access tracks.

Again, for incidental exposure to ice and snow on roads, additional driver training is not required, but all members are to adhere to cautious driving practice; reduced speed, increased braking distances, avoid sharp changes of direction etc. For deliberate deployment for the purpose of providing an 'off-road' or '4x4' response only those members who have completed the MREW Off Road Vehicle Driving Course are to assume control of a vehicle.

Use of winches:

Many SARA vehicles are equipped with recovery winches. These are high risk pieces of equipment and are only to be used by members who have had training in their appropriate application, and safe use.

REMEMBER! The fact that we are trying to save lives does not give us the right to endanger others!

ENDS.

SARA Fire Policy

The purpose of this policy is to have consistent processes within all SARA premises to manage fire safety and have procedures in place if fire occurs.

Station General Managers (or in their absence other members of the Station Committee, or Coxswain, or Team Leader) are responsible for :

- helping those on the premises to leave,
- assisting persons if a PEEP is in place (see below),
- checking the premises to ensure everyone has left,
- fighting the fire, if safe to do so,
- performing a supervisory/managing role in any fire situation,
- liaising with the emergency services,
- calling the Emergency Services
- when required, testing the emergency lighting and fire alarm system,
- when required, organise the fire drills for the premises.
- resetting the fire alarm after confirmation from the fire service that it is safe to do so.

All volunteers must co-operate to ensure the station is safe from fire and its effects, and must not do anything that knowingly will place themselves or other people at risk

We will ensure that each SARA premise (owned, shared or rented) has a current fire risk assessment based on current best practice.

Hot Works (Welding etc):

All hot works processes are to be assessed before work begins to see if there is an alternative method of work that can be carried out without the need to generate a source of ignition. Where this is not possible, Hot Works are only to be undertaken by volunteers who are competent and have clearly been assigned authority to do so.

Fire Stopping:

When work is carried out on premises which involves breaching fire compartmentation, any gaps must be filled and sealed with a fire retardant material immediately the work is finished.

Fire Doors:

Fire doors will be checked as part of the fire inspection to ensure they close correctly, smoke seals are maintained and the doors are not warped or twisted. They are not to be propped open.

Fire detection and alarm systems:
Each SARA station will have unique fire detection and alarm systems in place. Within stations owned by the local Fire Service these will be automated, whereas within SARA owned properties these will be manual systems. It is vitally important that each volunteer familiarise themselves with the Fire detection and alarm systems for each Station through induction, or when they first visit.

Means of escape:
Adequate means of escape are provided so people can immediately, or within a short distance of travel, turn their back on any fire and move away to a final exit along smoke-free escape routes.

Escape route signing:
All escape route signs should be suitable positioned and be adequately illuminated to ensure they are conspicuous and legible within the environment. An escape route sign should be positioned at every change of direction, every change of level and at any decision point.

Firefighting equipment and facilities:
Fire extinguishers will be installed in all premises owned and managed by SARA. Fire blankets shall be provided in appropriate locations and should be used for smothering fires involving flammable liquids or burning clothing.

SARA volunteers must know:

1) the location of the firefighting equipment in their area of work,

2) on which type of fire each piece of equipment can be used and how each it should be used.

Instructions for the use of fire extinguishers can be obtained from the label on the extinguisher.

The person discovering a fire must promptly initiate the emergency procedures:

Raise the alarm, Get out, Get the Fire Service out and Stay out!

Instruction and Training:
Station General Managers are to ensure, through induction, that all members of the station have received instruction and training on the action to be taken should a fire break out.

Fire Assembly Point:
All premises will have at least one Fire Assembly Point. It will be at a safe location, far enough from the premise, so as not to present a significant fire risk to persons at the point, but also close enough and accessible enough so as volunteers can reach it without difficulty.

Persons who require assistance:

The SARA procedures for evacuating persons who require assistance from premises will be agreed between the individual and the Station General Manager, and a documented Personal Emergency Evacuation Plan (PEEP) produced. The PEEP will detail the specific needs of the person requiring assistance and what measures are to be put in place to ensure safe evacuation in the event of a fire (such as the provision of an emergency evacuation chair / visual alerting etc)

Fire Drills:

Fire evacuation drills enable management and volunteers to rehearse the evacuation plans and procedures. Such drills test the adequacy of all aspects of the plans. Managers must ensure that fire drills are held at least every 6 months (an unplanned evacuation can be taken as a fire drill).

ENDS.

Financial Policies & Procedures

Members Expenses Claims - Policy & Procedures

Approvals. The procedure for signing off expenses will be as follows:

- Non-committee members: one Station Committee member + Station General Manager
- Station Committee member (excluding the GM): another Station Committee member + Station General Manager
- Station General Manager: One other Exec member + CEO

Travel

Mileage will be paid at the rate of 25p per mile for travel on SARA business – to be authorised by the above structure.

Transport by any other mode must be approved by the CEO.

Overnight accommodation to be booked in advance by the General Manager.

Members using their personal vehicles on SARA business must ensure that they carry correct insurance (usually cover for 'business use' but confirm with your insurer).

Notes:

1. Failing to follow stated procedures will result in a delayed payment of expenses.
2. The above process only applies to expenses up to £100 and prior approval MUST be sought as detailed above.
3. Any expenses over £100 will require a Purchase Order Number and must not be procured by an individual.

Crew Expenditure on Behalf of SARA

Although the SARA Executive Committee appreciates members using their own funds to purchase items to be used for the good of the organisation and then claiming funds back, we advise that on every available occasion an invoice is to be submitted and payment can then be made from a SARA account. Any single item over £100.00 MUST have a Purchase Order No. prior to purchasing and items warranting such expenditure should not be bought using this system. (excluding boat engine servicing or where item is an essential emergency replacement piece of operational kit.)

Fundraising

Fundraising is vital, without it SARA cannot operate.

There are many forms of possible fundraising. No-one will give money to a cause they have not heard of, or do not believe in. The main purpose of the SARA Public Relations (PR), or 'marketing', or 'external communications', is to create the environment for successful fundraising.

Restricted & Unrestricted Funds

A fundamental difference exists and must be recognised, between 'Restricted' and 'Unrestricted' funds. The former must be spent for the specific purpose for which it was allocated, the latter can be spent as SARA needs and wishes. Restricted Funds have paid for many of SARA's assets, and there is nothing wrong with raising money for things we need. However care must be taken not to simply 'invent projects just to get money' – the money then has to be spent on that project, and the main operation of SARA is no better off than it was to start with.

We should always seek to raise unrestricted funds as far as is practically possible. This may include encouraging donors who wish to make a restricted donation only restricting part of their gift when this is possible - for example 80% restricted and 20% unrestricted.

Cash collections should always be for unrestricted purposes so that funds are raised to meet overhead costs. It is important to appreciate that charities are able to go bust with money in the bank account when this is all restricted money.

The Executive Committee may either instigate or receive and discuss proposals to designate unrestricted funds for particular purposes. This will include geographic designations.

A list of expenditure priorities will be compiled on an annual basis and agreed by the Executive. This "shopping list" will inform the activities of the fundraising teams

A restricted fund can be created to fund items on the list of expenditure priorities provided that any funding offered or secured meets either the full cost or a substantial element of it and there is well placed confidence in the ability to meet the funding gap in the short term. This will avoid holding orphaned funds.

Restricted funds for items not on the expenditure priorities list must be approved by the Executive Committee in advance of any fundraising activity commencing. A written proposal to create a restricted fund must be presented to the Executive Committee Meeting for discussion and decision.

It should be noted that a restriction can be created by the wording of posters and other fundraising publications be they on paper or in a digital form. Care should be exercised at all times to avoid creating such restrictions unless they have been approved in advance.

SARA has four Priority Restricted Funds with the boundaries of each fund being broadly defined as:

1.	Lifeboat Fund	Replacement and maintenance costs
2.	Equipment Fund	New equipment and maintenance costs
3.	Training Fund	Provision of training to SARA volunteers
4.	Vehicles Fund	Replacement and maintenance costs

In addition to the four Priority Restricted funds, restricted funds will be created for the management of significant grant funding for which we have applied. The contractual terms of such funding typically requires the use of a restricted fund.

Geographic restrictions will not be placed on funds other than where required for specific grant funding income. SARA needs to manage its finances on a one charity basis

Where a donor wishes to restrict a donation we should encourage them to select one of the four Priority Funds

If a donor is unwilling to select one of these funds then there are two courses of action:

A: A written request is made to the next Executive Committee meeting to establish a separate restricted fund in accordance with the donor's wishes as in item 6 above.

NB. This is only likely to be approved if the donation substantially meets all of the required expenditure, where business priorities are achieved or where there is a strong basis for confidence in the ability to raise the additional funds required.

B. SARA will have to politely decline (or return) the donation.

Direct Fundraising from the Public

Collecting Tins

Collecting tins should be placed in as many locations as possible. The permission of the establishment owner should be sought.

Collecting tins should be checked at appropriate intervals, depending on the establishment, and replaced before they are full.

The collecting tin should be sealed, and marked with the location, start date and the callsign of the member who will 'service' it.

Use of Boats

Boats provide an instant visual attraction. They must be prepared with kill cords removed to prevent engines from being started and all sharp objects and pyrotechnics removed.

Children may be allowed to get into the boat, and 'steer' etc. Permission must be gained from the parent / guardian before a child is allowed into the boat, and before the child is lifted in or out. Ideally the parent should manhandle the child, though this is often impractical.

Use of Dogs

Like boats, a 'Search Dog' is also an instant visually attraction. The use of search dogs (not pets) on fundraising stands is encouraged. Their welfare must also be considered. They must not be retained in a single location for too long, and comfort breaks will be needed.

Officially SARA has no dogs, and uses SARDA support on operations. If questioned, SARA members must be honest about this. It must be clear that fundraising is for SARA, no SARDA logos or equivalent may be used.

Organising Fundraising Events

When SARA organises an event, or it is organised specifically for SARA, then SARA stands to gain from the entire profit, or surplus. This can be extremely beneficial. However the risks can also be high, and the effort involved can be significant.

Events should only be organised with the early approval of the Station Committee.

Accepting Donations

Criminals may exploit charities by misappropriating charitable funds through fraud, theft, money laundering or diverting charitable funds from legitimate charitable work. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the activities and reputation of the charity are not compromised by such fraudulent activity.

Whilst it is impossible to be prescriptive and to cover every situation there are some areas where we can operate clear and effective control. One such area is with the acceptance of donations. Before accepting a donation we should be as clear as we possibly can be of the veracity of the source of funds. In short we should 'know our donor' and have good grounds to believe that the source of funds from where the donation arises from is legitimate. If we have any doubts then the donation should not be accepted.

SARA should not accept a donation of any value when we have any grounds to be suspicious of its origin without conducting appropriate due diligence having full regard to the potential for serious reputational damage to SARA.

SARA should not accept a donation where there is a requirement to spend the money by buying products from a defined supplier. We should always be free to procure goods and services on the open market. Such an arrangement may well be a money laundering exercise.

SARA should be prepared to return a donation when subsequent events identify that the fund came from an illegal or inappropriate source and that this would have a negative impact upon the charity and its reputation.

SARA should not accept a donation where there is a condition that SARA pay part of it on to another organisation or charity - for example "please accept ¬£20,000 on condition that you pay ¬£10,000 to xyz charity at this bank account ....." Again this may be a money laundering exercise and the bank account is unlikely to be what it is purported to be.

For "large" donations SARA should conduct and document our own due diligence to satisfy ourselves that the funds are legitimate. This due diligence may be more formal in some situations than others. This is very much about us knowing who our donor is and to having heightened senses of awareness around such donations. The definition of "large" is not a rigid one for it is conceivable that a series of smaller donations could be made to avoid the arousal of suspicion.

Size and Type of Gift	Action to Approve
Donation between £1,000 and £5,000	Local General Manager or Fundraiser to conduct due diligence and to document this
Donation greater than £5,000	Local General Manager or Fundraiser to conduct due diligence and present to Executive Meeting for approval prior to acceptance
Cash donations greater than £1,000	Local General Manager or Fundraiser to conduct due diligence and present to Executive Meeting for approval prior to acceptance

Press and Traditional Media

The media are a valuable tool for SARA because they:

• Advertise our services and help us recruit and retain administrators and volunteers.

• Attract interest and raise SARA's profile and community support.

• Keep the public informed and may prompt people to come forward with information on a missing party.

NOTE: During an operation no personnel are allowed to talk to the media without the approval of the Incident Controller. SARA members must refer to the Incident Controller.

Any article should almost always include a 'call to action' with instructions – usually a way of making a donation, but it could also be to sign up for something, or express interest in recruitment.

Organising a 'Bucket Collection'

Step 1 – Let the Station Fundraising Manager know

Let them know that you would want to organise a collection for your station. They will get back to you with the required documentation (if any).

Step 2 – We may need to get permission

To raise money on the street or a public space, SARA must obtain a licence from the local town, city or district council. A street licence must be applied for by the first day of the month before the collection is due to take place. A copy of this licence must be available for inspection at the event. The authority will need to know how many collectors you plan to have and may require a copy of your risk assessment. After your collection, they will also want to know how much was raised and you will need to complete the local authority paperwork within three months of the event.

There are specific limitations on what you can and cannot do when street collecting, such as:

- Collectors must be 25m apart.

- Collectors must remain within the designated area.
- Collectors cannot walk up or down the street.
- Collectors must wear Identity tags.
- You cannot have animals with you. (If you have a search dog this must be agreed in advance)
- You may not shake or rattle the collection buckets or tins.

If you are raising money on private property (e.g. in a Supermarket car park or motorway services) you must ask the company/owners directly for permission. The best person to approach is often the Manager or 'Charity Champion'. Make sure you get confirmation in writing and have this with you on the day.

Step 3 – Get your collectors together

Get your collectors together – friends and family and persuade them to get involved. Collectors should wear a distinctive tabard, sash, Polo Top or Sweat Shirt (We have a limited stock of these produced in Red with the embroidered "SARA Support" logo to distinguish fundraiser from crew) and MUST HAVE a "Collectors" Identity Tag or Badge.

Step 4 – Collecting Buckets and Pots

These must be the 'official' Collecting Buckets and pots. They must be sealed with the official security seals. Labels must comply with the "official" SARA registered design with SARA's registered address and charity number.

Step 5 – Planning the day

Plan in advance where you would like your collectors to stand and create a rota for them to make sure you have everywhere covered. Remember, people shop when it is convenient for them. There will be people visiting supermarkets at all opening times with certain peak periods

Using your risk assessment, consider how you will manage the money raised, including counting, bagging and banking.

Step 6 – The day itself and banking

Supermarkets will probably require collectors to 'sign in' and 'sign out' of the premises. Both SARA and Individual vehicles may need to be registered with security to avoid penalties under the company's parking rules. (It can be difficult to avoid a fixed-penalty fine in retrospect)

Make sure you give collectors a full brief at the beginning of the day and thank them for their support. Keep your collectors enthusiasm up by talking to them and providing comfort breaks.

NB Groups of crew standing around ignoring the public whilst discussing the latest callout creates totally the wrong impression.

Collectors do not need to have a thorough working knowledge of SARA but it makes sense

to have a couple of “experts” in the group to answer specific questions on Boats, Rescue Techniques, Joining SARA, etc. Collectors dressed in Rescue PPE are a huge attraction but they do need to be trained crew; people may have questions about the equipment. Beware!

Don’t forget to thank the venue before you leave.

Things to remember:

- Make sure you have the correct permissions to hold your collection
- Create a great impression with everyone, even if they don’t donate – they may next time!
- Send a ‘thank you’ letter to the venue and let them know how much you raised. They will be more inclined to let you in again!
- Do not open your collection bucket unless you are authorised to do so.
- Do not shake your bucket or put any pressure on people to donate – it is illegal.
- Make sure you do not cause an obstruction– it is illegal too.
- Stay happy and enthusiastic on the day, ‘keep smiling’: a smile goes a long way!
- Do not smoke or consume alcohol while collecting on our behalf.

Lotteries

SARA is registered under the Gambling Act 2005 to hold ‘Small Society Lotteries’, to hold any number of raffles, lotteries, and collections selling to the general public, on premises we don't own, at open events run by other agents, at any time. As such SARA holds an annually renewed licence and complies with national legislation governing such activities.

Registration is with the Forest of Dean District Council as the Association's registered address (NP16 7HH) is within their administrative jurisdiction. Raffle application and completion documentation must, therefore, go through them.

Use of Charity Number

The Charity Number must be included on all printed publicity material. In full ‘SARA is a Registered Charity in England and Wales, Number 505504’. This wording can be abbreviated as long as the charity number is present.

ENDS.

Social Media Guidelines

Many of SARA's volunteers use social media in a personal capacity, using a Facebook profile, for example, to stay in touch with friends or share photos.

Increasingly, many lifeboat stations, fundraising branches and other SARA volunteers are also creating their own social media profiles to help raise awareness of the charity.

SARA encourages the responsible use of social media. The purpose of this guide is to set out what SARA expects from its volunteers when using social media – from what is appropriate to mention when talking about a lifeboat / land shout on your own media feeds to what can be posted on and commented on official feeds.

It is important to remember that we are all ambassadors for SARA and any social media activity that we engage in reflects on our charity. Even with the most stringent privacy settings in place, by its very nature, social media activity is never private.

You'll find a list of useful terms and phrases relating to social media at the end of this guide.

REMEMBER: If you would not say or not allowed to say it to the TV, radio or Newspapers then don't say it on any media feed.

If any inappropriate comments or pictures etc are posted the SARA Executive have the right to ask you to remove them ASAP.

Breach of these Guidelines may result in disciplinary action.

Mentioning SARA on personal social media

All of SARA's volunteers are individuals with their own opinions, tastes and views, which they are free to express.

Volunteers should, however, think carefully about who has access to their social media profiles. Some social networks offer extensive privacy settings, such as Facebook, while others are entirely public, such as Twitter.

Even with the most robust privacy settings in place, social media is never private.

Who's listening?

Journalists trawl social media for stories, photographs and other content.

Ardent SARA supporters and lifeboat enthusiasts, who admire the work of SARA volunteers, may be keen to connect with you on a personal level through social media.

You may also receive 'friend requests' or have your profile 'followed' or 'subscribed to' by work colleagues.

Choose carefully what information you share and who you share it with. It could be that you choose to be more open on your Facebook profile, for example, because you have only

selected friends and family with whom you are well acquainted in the offline world; while you may choose only to share interesting web links and observations on your Twitter account because it can be viewed by anyone in the world with an internet connection.

Can I talk about SARA?

Volunteers should feel free to talk about their association with SARA and the volunteer work that they take part in, for example sharing photos of lifeboat / land exercises (not operations) and fundraising events. Please make sure it is appropriate and not an official statement sounding comment.

What should I avoid?

Volunteers should remember not to discuss confidential or sensitive SARA information on their social media profiles and should never criticise those we rescue or their families. SARA is a non-judgemental and non-political organisation and depends on its volunteers to respect and uphold this position.

Volunteers should never air grievances with other volunteers or SARA officers on their social media profiles but always through the correct and official channels designed for such purposes. If a legal process is underway, it is highly inadvisable to discuss the details through social media, and it may well prejudice the outcome or even create further evidence for one side or the other

Employ a common-sense approach when using adult humour or colourful language and ensure that it is appropriate for your audience, remembering again that they may share it with a wider audience.

Posting offensive content, such as racist comments, is not acceptable and will damage our charity's reputation – it also reflects on those who work alongside you, such as fellow crew members, so consider the impact on your colleagues of what you publish before posting.

What do I need to think about before uploading photos or videos?

Whenever the SARA name or logo is featured in a picture or video, think carefully about how the charity will be perceived.

Never upload photos or video of operationally incorrect procedures, such as sponson-riding, and ensure that all crew featured in a photo or piece of footage are wearing the correct kit. This applies whether you have taken the photos or footage with SARA camera equipment or your own.

You can find operational and copyright usage guidelines for photos at the end of this guide.

I've been thinking about setting up a social media profile – where do I start?

Only official pages (or other presence on social media) may be set up to represent SARA. These are to be done via the Executive Committee approval. If you wish to set up a page about SARA please contact the Executive before doing so.

Please note that there is a specific policy relating to the reporting of callouts and operations on SARA Social Media.

SARA has control of any official comments / press releases. If you do post any photos, videos etc, then SARA may use these in their official posts.

Any pictures posted on your own media pages showing SARA logos, crew and equipment may be used by SARA.

Notes:

Only one SARA page or presence on each social media platform is allowed for or each station, these can be controlled by one person selected by the Executive Committee and who has been given training and guidance by the SARA media lead.

If any inappropriate comments or pictures etc about SARA are posted, SARA has the right to ask you to remove them ASAP.

Someone else has got there first – what should I do?

If you can, find out who created this profile – there's a good chance it's a SARA supporter. You may be happy for them to continue, in which case you might want to ask if you can collaborate and so get access to the account – this means that they can continue with their hobby and you can ensure that content is accurate, timely and appropriate.

If there's a conflict of opinion, or you're concerned about what's being posted on the account and/or you cannot contact its moderator, contact your station PR Manager or another Committee Member to raise your concerns.

Now I've created a profile, what content should I post?

Think about who you want to reach – what is your intended audience? Are they existing SARA supporters? If so, what is it that they love about SARA? What will they be most interested to see and read? If you're hoping to attract new supporters, think about who they might be and what type of content is most likely to appeal to them.

Post content that your subscribers will feel compelled to share and spread the word around their own social networks – dramatic footage captured on the helmet camera, for example.

Ideas for content:

- Training exercises
- Fundraising events and open day details
- Photos and videos
- Safety information, tide times and local weather information – ensure it's accurate as people expect SARA to be a trusted source.

How can I make it more interesting and engaging?

Show your supporters that you're listening and that you value their comments and feedback – ask the odd question, rather than just posting statements; make a comment among supporters' posts; reply to their questions in a timely fashion. Think about adding a web link to further online content.

What tone of voice should I adopt?

Make sure that your tone and approach have the 'human touch' – people like to feel as if they're talking to other people on social networks, not to a faceless organisation. Talk in the first person - for example: 'We're holding our open day next week', not: 'Beachley Lifeboat Station will be holding its open day next week'. If you feel comfortable doing so, let your online supporters know who moderates the account by name.

What should I avoid?

Never publish confidential information on the internet. In particular do not publish anything about a callout until it has been published on an official SARA page. Please refer to the separate specific policy concerning posting about operational callouts.

Never criticise rescuees – gripes like this are for the crew room, not the internet. SARA (in common with other volunteer rescue organisations in the UK) prides itself on being a non-judgemental organisation; those in need of rescue are less likely to call for help if they think they're likely to be ridiculed on Facebook afterwards.

Never criticise other organisations – it's inappropriate and unprofessional. It's always sensible to consider how a journalist could interpret your words, pictures or footage before posting them.

How do I let people know we're here?

There are lots of ways to promote your online profile: add links to your social media profiles on your website, if you have one, and to your email signature; promote it in newsletters and on event posters ('You can keep up to date with SARA news on Facebook').

Joining groups and supporting causes

You'll find on many social networks that you have the opportunity to join groups or support causes: this is a fantastic way to broaden your online following. Something to bear in mind, however, when joining groups on Facebook, for example, is that you are representing SARA, not your own personal tastes and opinions. As an example, it would not be advisable for a SARA page to join or like a 'xx politician for PM' fanpage because SARA is an apolitical organisation (while, of course, it would be perfectly appropriate for you to join such a group on your own personal social media profile if you so choose).

There is a wealth of groups and profiles on social networking sites that it makes perfect sense to connect with – for example other lifeboat stations; coastguard profiles; air ambulance and

other search and rescue agencies; local authorities; businesses in the community that show support; local yacht and angling clubs; and the tourist information centre.

What do I do when someone posts an unfavourable comment?

Don't discredit an occasional negative comment – people are entitled to their opinions. See it as an opportunity to start a dialogue and convert new supporters. If factually incorrect information about SARA is posted by others, use your judgement to decide whether or not to correct it. There is a balance between being helpful to the discussion and being seen as a 'nitpicker'. We recommend you contact a member of the Executive to look in to this rather than comment yourself

What do I do when someone posts an offensive comment?

If someone has written something offensive or abusive on your profile, however, you are well within your rights to remove it – in fact, you probably should. Most social networks have their own terms and conditions, which take a firm stance against offensive language and behaviour. Post an explanation as to why the comment was deleted.

A fellow volunteer or colleague has posted something inappropriate – what do I do?

Under no circumstances should you attempt to address the problem online. Remove the offending post and explain (privately) to your colleague why you've done so. Hopefully they will understand your reasoning and the implications for our charity's reputation.

If there is conflict of opinion, however, you may need to raise the matter with someone senior who can help you, such as your station's lifeboat manager, a Committee member or the Executive committee.

Remember: you and your colleagues are representing SARA, not just your station. This reflects on everyone who volunteers and works for the charity.

Always endeavour to show the SARA in the very best light

Communicating with children online

Communication between children and adults, by whatever method, should take place within clear and explicit professional boundaries.

UK Government guidance states:

'Adults should not share any personal information with a child or young person. They should not request, or respond to, any personal information from the child/young person. Adults should ensure that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny.' [Source: *Guidance for Safer Working Practice for Adults Working with Children and Young People* – January 2009]

How should I communicate with children on Facebook?

It is not advisable to become 'friends' with children through your personal Facebook profile or exchange private messages (don't, for example, talk to children on Facebook Messenger).

Try to keep all conversations on a Facebook page, group or event 'wall', where they can be seen by other users

A common-sense approach should be adopted at all times when communicating with children online. To avoid any possible misinterpretation of your motives, be careful with your wording when talking to children – be clear and avoid sarcasm.

On the internet, you don't always know whether you're talking to a child or not – so treat all interactions as if you were. This doesn't mean addressing everyone as if they were 8 years old, but ensuring that all communications are transparent and open to scrutiny, and that no personal information is exchanged, such as your home address, for example.

What if a child contacts me?

If a child or young person asks to make contact with you outside of Facebook (for example, to enquire about a visit to the lifeboat station), ask them to get a parent to make contact through an official SARA number or email address (for example, the lifeboat station).

What about photos and videos of children?

Consent from parents or guardians and agreement from the child or young person should always be sought before a photo or video is taken for any purpose. When seeking this agreement, be clear about how the photo will be used – parents may be happy to see their child's picture in a fundraising leaflet, but perhaps not on the internet.

Care should be taken to make sure that both child and parent understand the implications of the image or footage being taken, if it's to be used on the internet (on social media sites, for example).

Unless you have clear written consent from a parent or guardian, don't upload photos or videos of children to the internet.

You must ensure that children are appropriately dressed in any photo or video that is uploaded – never upload a picture of a child in their swimming costume without clear written consent from a parent.

SARA does not encourage you to use your personal mobile phone to take photos or video, especially when taking photographs or video of children and young people. If you have access to a SARA camera then please use that.

Social media

Social media are the digital tools that people use to tell and share their stories – such as text messaging, blogs, videos and social networking sites like Facebook.

These tools have brought about a revolution in communication: a shift from one - way communication (for example TV and newspapers) to two-way, peer-to-peer communication online.

Blog

Short for 'web log', a blog is a platform that allows an author (a blogger) to publish content online – this might be in the form of a diary entry or similar to a traditional newspaper column. Other people can leave comments on these blog posts. Millions of blogs exist on the internet, on topics from gardening to Hollywood gossip – this section of social media is often called the 'blogosphere'. You can search for blogs using blog search engines such as Technorati or create your own blog using tools like Blogger.

Forum

Forums can be thought of as online message boards where participants can post discussion topics and others can reply or comment. Forums exist across the internet to serve a wealth of interests. The Scuttlebutt forum on Yachting Monthly's website is popular with sailors – they share advice and anecdotes and debate topics of interest.

Microblog

Microblogs are similar to blogs but content is restricted to a very small number of characters. A well-known microblog is Twitter, which only allows users to publish posts of up to 280 characters.

Multimedia

Multimedia simply means more than one digital medium. For example, a multimedia blog could be a blog with video and photos as well as text-based content. Multimedia content tends to be a lot more engaging than just text on its own. Online video sharing sites include YouTube; online photo sharing sites include Flickr.

RSS

RSS stands for Real Simple Syndication and is a way of subscribing to updates from specific websites. For example, you could subscribe to updates from the BBC News website and the website would let you know automatically every time new content had been published, rather than you having to check the website frequently to find out.

Search engine

Search engines index and rank websites to help internet users find relevant content through keyword searches – for example Google.

Social network

A social network is an online community of individuals who are connected to one another – sometimes through a shared interest; sometimes because they already know

each other offline; sometimes as a business connection. The larger social networks, such as Facebook and LinkedIn, serve a wide variety of interests and geographic areas; other social networks can be very.

URL

URL stands for Uniform Resource Locator and is another term for a web address, www.SARA.org.uk for example. You may also hear a URL referred to as a link.

Viral

You may have heard the expression 'That video went viral!' This means the organic and rapid spread of online content caused by word of mouth. If a friend sends you a link to a funny video on YouTube via email, you may then email it on to your own friends and family via email.

Wiki

A wiki is a website that can be easily edited by many people simultaneously. Wikipedia is an online encyclopaedia that is edited in this way – anyone can publish or edit content on the site (subject to Wikipedia's terms and conditions).

Guidelines for using photos

Operational guidelines

It is important that photos used online represent SARA in the best light. They may often be interpreted or used out of context.

Questions you should ask yourself before using any image include:

- Does the picture of the lifeboat or other asset actually relate to the station in question?
- Are the crew wearing appropriate PPE as required by the apparent situation? Are they looking alert and focused?
- Is the name and branding of the rescue asset correct? Lifeboats should always be referred to as 'SARA Lifeboats' with the name of the boat in single quote marks, eg: SARA Lifeboat 1 'The Jim Hewitt'
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Copyright guidelines

Please credit the photographer in all uses where possible. If no information is held, when used on personal social media please credit SARA. If in any doubt whatsoever, please contact the Association Secretary or PR lead.

Any pictures posted on your own media pages showing SARA logos, crew and equipment may be used by SARA.

Contacts for support and advice

If you wish to have any activity, news, fundraising events publicised officially on the SARA media pages please contact the Station or Association PR Managers or Officer, directly or via your station General Manager or the Association Secretary on 0844 846 0226 or info@sara-rescue.org.uk

Posts Concerning Operational Callouts

SARA is a voluntary organisation that depends on donations. As a Search and Rescue organisation it is vital that we explain what we do, and share such details of our operations as is prudent. Social media can be a valuable tool for such publicity. That said, many operations involve a degree of sensitivity and it is vital to be mindful of this in deciding what to write and post, and the timing of those posts.

Timing

No reference should be made on social media to a callout until it is over, at least for the day and ideally until it is completely over. By this time we will know if the person or other target has been found and in what state, and how all other personnel involved in the operation are. We must not post that we are off on a callout – this is a change from pre-2019 policy and brings SARA into line with most MR Teams and MREW recommendations.

Crew involved in the shout should ideally not be doing the posting - they are too close to it and an external view is better. If they are to do the post themselves, this should be done several hours after the end of the operation or the next day.

Callout Descriptions

It is almost always acceptable to say that we were called out to support the Police / Coastguard etc. This can be done without reference to the outcome, for example “The team was subsequently stood down by the Police”. However this does leave open the question of what happened, and should only rarely be done. Generally we should include the outcome, even if this means delaying the post a little.

Where there is a fatality involved, SARA should wait for the Police / Coastguard to publish the outcome of an operational callout, and ONLY THEN publish the outcome ourselves - either by sharing that 'post' with a comment, or writing something directly to refer to it. [From a SARA PR perspective, esp on Facebook, it can be preferable to write it directly, so that if people 'share' the post the original the SARA name is still visible - this is a judgement call depending on the delicacy of the outcome.]

SARA should avoid publicising any details where a person has gained some kind of illegal access, eg by climbing up a bridge support, in case of encouraging copy-cat or dare-devil activities. This applies even when details have already been published by the Police or other emergency service agency.

Where the person is injured or deceased, there should always be some comment along the lines of 'our thoughts are with the family', also '…. with all involved' if it was a traumatic operation.

Where the person is injured, no information about the extent or type of their injuries should be included. "The injured person" will almost always suffice.

Under no circumstances should a social media post convey judgement about the person or persons involved. If there are lessons to be learned and publicised, that can be handled later in a considered press release – and any subsequent coverage can then be shared.

Posts about callouts should be informational only. There should not be any attempt to fundraise as part of reporting or describing a callout, and there should not be a 'donate button' or suchlike added to these posts.

Photos

Photos from callouts can be very useful PR assets, but generally should not be used in social media reporting of an incident (rather, kept for presentations and suchlike).

Photos used to illustrate a callout must be appropriate. Where a fatality is involved, there should in general not be any photos used; the report should be text only.

Care must be taken with any photos showing the location of the search or search control if the outcome of the operation is not in the public domain.

Photos which show the faces of emergency service personnel or casualties should be used only with the permissions of the individuals concerned.

Other Notes

- SARA Stations should generally be referred to in full, eg 'Sharpness Lifeboat Station'. Beachley is 'Beachley Lifeboat and Rescue Station'.
- Lifeboats should always be referred to as 'SARA Lifeboats'
- The names of boats, and other terms, get single quotes (not double) eg: SARA Lifeboat 1 'The Jim Hewitt'.

ENDS