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**Security and resilience — Community  
resilience — Guidelines for planning  
the involvement of spontaneous  
volunteers**

*Sécurité et résilience — Résilience des communautés — Lignes  
directrices pour la planification de la participation des bénévoles  
spontanés*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation on the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html). (standards.iteh.ai)

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## Introduction

This document provides guidance on the involvement of spontaneous volunteers in the response to, and recovery from, incidents and events. A spontaneous volunteer (SV) is an individual who is not affiliated with existing incident response organizations but who is motivated to contribute unpaid work during and following incidents.

SVs might have expressed their interest in volunteering before or during an incident and might therefore be called upon to participate depending on the incident's needs and their specific skills. SVs can volunteer as individuals or as groups, they can arrive at the incident to volunteer in person or contribute remotely, and they can be self-deployed professionals (e.g. retired emergency responders), digital volunteers, or any other skilled or unskilled members of the public.

Spontaneous offers of help during and following incidents are a growing phenomenon. While many people are willing to join a voluntary organization, they are now also likely to make short-term offers to assist without committing to an individual agency. In addition, as a result of media attention, the widespread use of social media and the desire to help those in need, an increasing number of SVs are coming forward in all regions of the world.

SVs can provide a significant resource of timely labour, skills and abilities to enhance the capacity of incident response organizations, provide valuable local knowledge and personalize the response and recovery in an area by members of its local community. However, in large numbers, SVs can overwhelm incident response organizations, interfere with operations and create additional risks. SVs who provide relief outside of the official operations can put themselves in danger, as well as those they aim to help. It is important to understand and implement best practices for involving and mobilizing SVs, and the integration of SVs into response and recovery activities needs to be carefully managed.

This document provides guidance for the involvement of SVs in incident response and recovery, so that both official and unofficial resources are used effectively. It considers the preparatory measures for organizing the involvement of SVs in the different stages of an incident, including planning for the selection of SVs, safely involving SVs in an operational response, and continuing the involvement of SVs over the longer-term.

[Annex A](#) contains a checklist of tasks to plan SV involvement.

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# Security and resilience — Community resilience — Guidelines for planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers

## 1 Scope

This document provides guidelines for planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers (SVs) in incident response and recovery. It is intended to help organizations to establish a plan to consider whether, how and when SVs can provide relief to a coordinated response and recovery for all identified hazards. It helps identify issues to ensure the plan is risk-based and can be shown to prioritize the safety of SVs, the public they seek to assist and incident response staff.

This document is intended for use by organizations with responsibility for, or involvement in, part or all of the planning for working with SVs. It is applicable to all types and sizes of organizations that are involved in the planning for, and management of, SVs (e.g. local, regional, and national governments, statutory bodies, international and non-governmental organizations, businesses and public and community groups).

The range of tasks performed by SVs can require only basic planning (e.g. for people who are first on the scene), or a plan that is more complex (e.g. for people who travel to the affected area to volunteer).

Coordinating the participation of volunteers who are affiliated to voluntary or professional organizations to provide relief is not within the scope of this document.

## 2 Normative references

ISO 22319:2017

<https://www.iso.org/standards/catalog/standards/sist/90c841bc-c1a2-400e-a1ab-f517588d9adf/iso-22319-2017>

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 22300, *Societal security — Terminology*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 22300 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <http://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

### 3.1

#### spontaneous volunteer

#### SV

individual who is not affiliated with an existing incident response organization or voluntary organization but who, without extensive preplanning, offers support to the response to, and recovery from, an incident

Note 1 to entry: A spontaneous volunteer can also be referred to as a convergent volunteer, a walk-in volunteer, an occasional volunteer, an episodic volunteer, or a non-affiliated volunteer.

### 3.2 organization

person or group of people that has its own functions with responsibilities, authorities and relationships to achieve its objectives

Note 1 to entry: The concept of organization includes, but is not limited to, sole trader, company, corporation, firm, enterprise, authority, partnership, charity or institution, or part or combination thereof, whether incorporated or not, public or private.

## 4 Preparatory measures

### 4.1 General

This clause describes the general aspects to be resolved before involving SVs in response and recovery activities. These general aspects are to:

- assign responsibility to lead, manage and coordinate SVs (see 4.2);
- understand the motivations of SVs (see 4.3);
- clarify issues of liability (see 4.4).

An organization may implement all clauses of this document, or only some clauses. Partial implementation of this document will still improve the organization's performance when involving SVs.

### 4.2 Assigning responsibility to lead, manage and coordinate SVs

The agency in charge of incident response and recovery should designate an organization (identified in this document as "the organization") to take responsibility for leading, managing and coordinating SVs.

### 4.3 Understanding the motivations of SVs

When planning how to deal with SVs, the organization should:

- understand the motivations of SVs (e.g. meeting new friends; relieving their anxiety about the incident by taking control of their life back through volunteering);
- collect information on the motivation of SVs throughout their involvement (e.g. during the registration process, debriefings, via social media or during conversations);
- recognize that SVs may volunteer for only part of the emergency until their motivation dwindles or personal aims have been satisfied;
- collect information on those who offered to volunteer but were not accepted by the response organizations;
- use this information when accepting, leading, managing and coordinating SVs.

The organization should consider that SVs may want to:

- help communities to recover and enhance resilience;
- build community participation;
- support existing activities where the demand for help exceeds official capacity;
- deliver new activities that are not part of emergency plans.



#### 4.4 Clarifying issues of liability

The organization should:

- clarify pre-conditions for the involvement of SVs regarding insurance and liability;
- confirm the responsibility for the health and safety of SVs;
- identify tasks that SVs may be asked to perform but that carry a personal liability for the SV (e.g. if SVs do not follow official instructions).

### 5 Planning for the involvement of SVs

#### 5.1 General

The organization should develop a plan for involving SVs. The plan should consider the effort, resource and information required, and provide guidance on how to:

- define the relationship with SVs (see 5.2);
- understand the concerns of stakeholders (see 5.3);
- identify risks associated with tasks that are suitable for SVs (see 5.4);
- reduce risks associated with tasks that are suitable for SVs (see 5.5);
- select SVs (see 5.6);
- coordinate SVs (see 5.7);
- set expectations of SVs (see 5.8);
- monitor the tasks performed by SVs (see 5.9);
- identify needs for training or instruction (see 5.10);
- recognize and reward SVs (see 5.11).

#### 5.2 Defining the relationship with SVs

The organization should:

- evaluate the need to engage SVs for different types of emergencies;
- plan for the type of relationships to be established with SVs (e.g. assess the risk associated with the relationship, identify how they can be made more effective);
- consider the ways in which SVs can be managed and integrated into the response and recovery;
- recognize that the nature of the relationship to SVs may change during an incident, as well as across different incidents (e.g. SVs are often first on the scene providing immediate support but may leave soon afterwards);

[Table 1](#) identifies working relationships to be used to determine if and how to integrate SVs into the official response and recovery.

**Table 1 — Types of relationships and activities between SVs and official responders**

Types of SVs	SV reliance on the organization	Management and procedures	SV purpose	SV decision making	Tasking
SVs working for official responders, i.e. providing additional resources such as local knowledge or manpower	SVs have high reliance on the organization. SVs are viewed as being a resource to official responders	Provided by the official responders, e.g. monitoring tasks, dispute resolution, training	Extend capability and capacity of official responders with additional resource; complement existing work structures	Very low	Done by official responders according to the need; low-skilled tasks; tasks should meet SVs expectations
SVs as autonomous workers operating side-by-side with official responders	SVs have medium reliance on the organization. SVs are dependent on official responders to work side-by-side	Provided by the official responders, e.g. monitoring of tasks, dispute resolution, training	Expand capacity of official responders	SVs are autonomous decision makers on delivering allocated tasks	Done by the SV, coordinated with official responders
SVs working independently of official responders	SVs have low reliance on the organization. SVs have little engagement with official responders	SVs form groups with their own management structure and procedures	Perform tasks not done by official responders	SVs are autonomous decision makers	Done by the SV

With respect to SVs working independently of official responders, the organization should:

- designate a point of contact to facilitate liaison among these SVs;
- provide support to increase the effectiveness of these SVs (e.g. official responders assisting to resolve disputes within or across groups of SVs that work independently).

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### 5.3 Understanding the concerns of stakeholders

The organization should:

- determine the concerns of stakeholders (e.g. official responders, elected officials, citizens potentially in need of assistance) regarding the involvement of SVs in response and recovery operations;
- respond to these concerns in order for them to make informed decisions regarding the involvement of SVs and determining the suitability of SVs for the tasks to be performed;

### 5.4 Identifying risks associated with tasks that are suitable for SVs

The organization should:

- identify which tasks, if any, may benefit from the support of SVs;
- develop and implement processes for risk assessment of those tasks, including potential risks to the SVs, the persons affected by the incident, other official responders and the reputation of the organizations involved, as well as other risks;
- review risk assessments periodically with the objective of further reducing risks;
- establish a process to continually assess the risks of additional tasks that are identified during an incident;
- develop an inventory of approved response and recovery tasks suitable to be performed by SVs.

The organization should identify the potential reputational risks posed by the involvement of SVs including:

- breaches of confidentiality by releasing sensitive information;
- misrepresentation of the organization to the public or media;
- misuse of private information on citizens obtained by SVs;
- reports of incidents causing harm to SVs or those they helped;
- release of misleading information.

## 5.5 Reducing risks associated with tasks that are suitable for SVs

The organization should reduce risks to SVs by including information in the plan on:

- developing a selection and induction process to choose SVs who are willing to follow direction from incident responders;
- preparing and distributing information on a code of conduct for SVs, including risk reduction and safety (e.g. through briefings/debriefings);
- confirming the understanding of SVs of the risk associated with tasks and the importance of working safely;
- determining where SVs could perform tasks that require specialist skills or training;
- assigning tasks to SVs appropriate to their level of competence;
- providing SVs with the appropriate personal protective equipment and resources to safely perform an assigned task;
- adopting suitable work practices for SVs (e.g. providing work processes for typical tasks, supervising SVs, restricting SVs work to daylight hours, removing SVs when danger is identified and requiring them to work in groups, such as with trained community response teams or other voluntary bodies);
- identify ways to control SVs who are unaware of, or act in ways that ignore, the risk;
- matching SV capability with the demands of the task to ensure individuals are working within their capabilities;
- procedures for declining offers of help from SVs if the risk to SVs is too high;
- when tasks that SVs are asked to perform carry a personal liability for the SV (e.g. if SVs do not follow official instruction);
- limiting the sharing of confidential information with SVs.

The organization should also perform risk assessments for tasks being conducted independently by members of the public who are working without being registered as SVs.

## 5.6 Selecting SVs

The organization should:

- put a strategy in place to make the best use of the SVs that are selected;
- develop and implement a structured approach for screening, accepting, inducting and training SVs to conduct assigned tasks;
- accept SVs for the tasks for which they are suited;