



STATUTORY INSTRUMENTS.

**S.I. No. 371 of 2023**

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CIVIL DEFENCE ACT 2023 (CODE OF PRACTICE) REGULATIONS 2023

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I, MICHEÁL MARTIN, Minister for Defence, in exercise of the powers conferred on me by section 10(1) of the Civil Defence Act 2023 (No. 17 of 2023) hereby make the following regulations:

1. These regulations may be cited as the Civil Defence Act 2023 (Code of Practice) Regulations 2023.
2. The code of practice set out in the schedule shall be a code of practice for the purposes of the Civil Defence Act 2023 (No. 17 of 2023).
3. These regulations come into operation on 19 July 2023.

## SCHEDULE

### 1. INTRODUCTION

1. Civil Defence is a volunteer based organisation that supports the Principal Response Agencies, Government departments and State agencies during national, regional and local emergency and non-emergency events. Civil Defence also assists at a wide range of community, local authority, sporting and charitable events. Civil Defence recognises that volunteers are its most important resource and it is committed to promoting an effective, meaningful and rewarding volunteering experience.

2. Civil Defence is a respected organisation with highly trained volunteers providing a valued and appreciated support to the emergency services and the community. The strength of the Civil Defence organisation lies in its voluntary ethos and with its volunteers who willingly and freely give of their time and expertise.

### 2. GENERAL

1. The purpose of this Code of Practice is to set out the standards of Practice and integrity expected of Civil Defence Volunteers. It also sets out the general guidelines which apply in the operation of grievance and disciplinary procedures for Local Authorities and Civil Defence Volunteers in the context of Civil Defence operations.

The Code:

- Applies to all volunteers;
- Reinforces the importance of volunteering to Civil Defence;
- Sets out basic values of volunteering;
- Sets out the responsibilities of Civil Defence towards its volunteers; and
- Sets out the rights and responsibilities of people who volunteer for Civil Defence.

### 3. IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURES

1. Procedures are necessary to ensure discipline operates within Civil Defence and disciplinary measures are applied in a fair and consistent manner. The principles of fair procedures and natural justice in any grievance or disciplinary process will apply. The maintenance of good relations within Civil Defence requires such processes be observed.

2. Such procedures serve a dual purpose in that they provide a framework which enables local authorities to maintain satisfactory standards within their Civil Defence Unit and volunteers to have access to procedures whereby alleged failures to comply with these standards may be fairly and sensitively addressed. It is important that procedures of this kind exist and that the purpose, function and terms of such procedures are clearly understood by all concerned.

3. Copies of the procedures should be given to all volunteers and should be included in the volunteer induction programme. Copies of these procedures should be made available on the Civil Defence website.

#### **4. GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

1. The aim of this Code of Practice is to promote a positive environment based on mutual respect and professionalism. All volunteers are entitled to expect professionalism and impartiality and to be treated with respect and dignity by their fellow volunteers regardless of rank, and should also operate with professionalism, impartiality, respect and dignity towards others.

The Code shall apply to all volunteers:

- When engaged in any Civil Defence activities;
- When travelling to and from such activities;
- When in Civil Defence uniform;
- On any other occasion where their actions or words can be interpreted as representing the Civil Defence organisation.

The Civil Defence organisation requires its' volunteers to have certain qualities and skills, and to:

- Understand and adopt the organisation ethos; and
- Complete Tasks in accordance with operational procedures and guidelines and within prescribed timeframes.

All volunteers are expected to:

- strive and work for the highest standards of quality;
- to recognise and obey Civil Defence rules and procedures
- to comply with all reasonable instructions and lawful orders, particularly those regarding Health & Safety medical standards, to the best of their ability;
- be available to assist in emergencies and in community events according to their skills and abilities;
- attend essential training and support sessions;
- participate actively in the work of Civil Defence;
- respect the values and aims of Civil Defence;
- be committed to Civil Defence;
- be punctual, reliable and give sufficient notice if unable to turn up for duty or training; and
- operate with honesty and integrity.

All Civil Defence volunteers shall comply with the following standards:

- Report for Civil Defence activities in a timely manner;
- Report for Civil Defence activities free from the influence of alcohol or drugs;
- Comply with all reasonable instructions and lawful orders received during Civil Defence activities and training to the best of your ability;
- Act within the law at all times. This includes complying with the Road Traffic Act, adhering to drink/drug driving regulations and speed limits even when responding to a call out.
- Maintain strict confidentiality in relation to all dealings with members of the public and Civil Defence.
- Do not engage in any activity which could be considered detrimental to the organisation or which could result in personal injury to any volunteer or member of the public;
- Show respect and consideration at all times for fellow volunteers, members of the public, other Voluntary and Statutory Bodies;
- Wear the Civil Defence uniform and working dress in accordance with the current regulations governing the wearing of such uniforms;
- Ensure you are aware of Health and Safety notices and seek clarification if you are unclear about the content of the notice. All volunteers must wear any protective clothing/equipment provided for their volunteer role. All volunteers must comply with any health and safety rules in force and must immediately report all injuries, incidents and accidents occurring whilst volunteering for the organisation to the most senior officer available. Please refer to Section 2 – Medical Fitness.
- Maintain Civil Defence property, equipment and vehicles to a high standard. Use is restricted to the purpose for which they are intended;
- Portray a positive and professional image of Civil Defence and refrain from unacceptable forms of behaviour;
- Return all property belonging to Civil Defence on or before the last date of service in Civil Defence.
- Follow local authority and Civil Defence media and social media policies. Copies of these policies should be provided to all volunteers.

To ensure that volunteers have the requisite level of physical and mental fitness for training and duties, and to ensure that volunteer hours are not excessive, it is generally not appropriate that Civil Defence volunteers are also members of other volunteer based emergency response organisations.

2. A volunteer is a person who has been enrolled in the Civil Defence organisation and carries out volunteering activities for Civil Defence. Each volunteer engages in volunteering for personal, humanitarian or charitable

reasons, freely and without expectation of financial gain, contributing time, service and skills to assist Civil Defence in accomplishing its mission.

### **Categories of volunteers**

- Probationary. This is a new volunteer who has been Garda vetted and is undergoing initial training for a minimum period of 12 months;
- Active volunteer. This is a volunteer who has completed their probationary period. They are Garda vetted, regularly attending training and making themselves available for Civil Defence activities. A volunteer who has not attended any Civil Defence activities in the past six months will not be regarded as active;
- Reserve. This is a formerly active volunteer who has up to date basic training and is Garda vetted. They have notified the Civil Defence Officer (CDO) or Assistant Civil Defence Officer (ACDO) that they are temporarily unavailable for training or duties, but they are available to assist in an emergency; and
- Former volunteer. Any volunteer who does not fit into the above categories.

### **Volunteer Rights**

Volunteers have the following rights:

- Know what is expected from them;
- Be offered appropriate training, direction and suitable equipment;
- Receive supervision and support;
- Know who to go to if there is a problem;
- Learn in a supportive environment;
- Be made aware of complaint and grievance procedures;
- Be made aware of how issues or difficulties will be dealt with;
- Be treated fairly and not experience discrimination;
- Have safe working conditions;
- Be informed about, and given the opportunity to play an active part in the organisation as a whole;
- Be able to decline taskings or to leave without feeling guilty; and
- To have their voluntary contribution recognised.

### **Induction and Training**

Civil Defence volunteers carry out a wide variety of activities and it is essential that our volunteers are appropriately skilled to carry out their specific role/s. Civil Defence offers volunteers a wide variety of training and development opportunities.

All new volunteers will be subject to a probationary period of 12 months, subject to extension. Full membership will not be issued until appropriate screening and initial training has been satisfactorily completed.

During the probation period, a range of suitable training and activities will be available to new volunteers. This will include an Induction Programme which may take the form of face-to-face meetings, group training and/or receiving relevant information online or by post. This will allow new members to fully understand the work of Civil Defence and how their work as a volunteer contributes to the goals of the organisation.

### **Garda Vetting and Child Protection**

The safety of volunteers and the people we serve is of paramount importance. All Civil Defence volunteers shall undergo Garda Vetting as per the Civil Defence Garda Vetting Policy. Civil Defence provides Child Protection Awareness training which is mandatory for all volunteers.

### **Medical Fitness**

Civil Defence undertakes a wide range of activities, some of which require a high level of physical and mental fitness.

- Volunteers should not undertake any activities which are beyond their level of fitness;
- Volunteers should not attend for duties and/or training if medically unfit;
- Where volunteers are signed off sick from their normal employment, volunteers should not attend for duties and/or training;
- Civil Defence may require that volunteers or potential volunteers obtain certificates of medical fitness from a doctor;
- Volunteers should advise their Civil Defence Officer (CDO) or Assistant CDO if an illness or medical condition places themselves or anyone else at risk. The CDO/ACDO will deal sympathetically and discreetly with any information received;
- A volunteer may be asked to retire on health grounds, or be put on restricted duties, where their illness or condition might, in the view of a doctor, put the volunteer or other persons at risk and/or affect their ability to perform their duties; and
- If a volunteer becomes pregnant, she is advised to discuss her Civil Defence activities with her doctor. Any safeguards suggested by the doctor/medical staff must be strictly adhered to by the volunteer. When appropriate, she shall inform her CDO or ACDO of the pregnancy.

### **Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM)**

In the course of their Civil Defence duties volunteers may be exposed to distressing scenes. Civil Defence has a comprehensive CISM system in place. All volunteers are required to attend CISM awareness training.

### **Screening / References**

References will be sought and verified for all persons seeking to join Civil Defence.

### **Recognition**

Volunteers will be recognised through the awarding of long service medals and through the holding of appropriate social events.

#### **3. Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Bullying**

Unacceptable forms of behaviour such as discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment and bullying will not be tolerated. Such behaviour contravenes the voluntary ethos and professionalism of the organisation.

Maintaining a positive environment not only places an obligation on the command structure of the organisation, but is also the responsibility of all volunteers. Volunteers must always treat their fellow volunteers with respect and ensure that their own actions and behaviour do not cause offence to others or contribute in any way to a discriminatory environment.

Volunteers are expected to support this code on discrimination, sexual harassment, harassment or bullying by bringing any instances where such behaviour has occurred to the attention of their unit Officer, Commander, Assistant Civil Defence Officer (ACDO) or Civil Defence Officer (CDO) at an early stage and by co-operating with any ensuing investigation whether as a complainant, the person complained of or as a witness.

It is important to make every effort to ensure that volunteers involved in an investigation into discrimination, harassment, sexual harassment or bullying observe confidentiality and that witnesses to an investigation respect the privacy of the parties involved and refrain from discussing any matters pertaining to the investigations.

This Code governs practice and disciplinary procedures within the Civil Defence organisation only. It does not have any bearing on a volunteer's legal or statutory rights and obligations.

For the purposes of this code, the definitions of discrimination, harassment and sexual harassment have been taken from the Equal Status Acts 2000-2018 and the Employment Equality Acts 1998-2015. The definition of bullying is taken from the 2021 Code of Practice for Employers and Employees on the Prevention and Resolution of Bullying at Work by the Health & Safety Authority and the Workplace Relations Commission. As it represents current best practice, it is the intention of the Civil Defence to apply these definitions notwithstanding the fact that volunteers are not deemed to be employees of the local authority.

## **Discrimination**

Discrimination is defined as the treatment of a person in a less favourable way than another person is, has been or would be treated in a comparable situation on any of the nine grounds which exists, existed, may exist in the future or is imputed to the person concerned. The nine grounds are gender, civil status, family status, age, disability, sexual orientation, race, religion, and membership of the Traveller community. There are different types of discrimination covered including indirect discrimination, discrimination by imputation and by association.

## **Harassment**

Harassment takes place where an individual subjects another individual to any unwelcome act, request or Practice including spoken words, gestures, or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material that could reasonably be regarded as offensive, humiliating or intimidating. The harassment must be based on one or more of the eight non-gender discriminatory grounds outlined above. Harassment extends to situations where the person does not have the relevant characteristic but the harasser believes that he/she has that characteristic.

The list is not exhaustive but some examples of harassment are:

- Verbal harassment including jokes, comments, ridicule or songs;
- Written harassment including graffiti, emails, texts, social media or internet posts;
- Physical harassment – jostling, shoving or any form of assault;
- Intimidatory harassment – gestures, posturing or threatening poses;
- Visual displays - posters, emblems or badges; and
- Isolation or exclusion from social activities.

## **Sexual Harassment**

Sexual Harassment is defined under the Employment Equality Acts as any form of unwanted verbal, non-verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature which has the purpose or effect of violating a person's dignity and creating an intimidating, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person.

Such unwanted conduct may consist of acts, requests, spoken words, gestures or the production, display or circulation of written words, pictures or other material.

The list is not exhaustive but some examples of sexual harassment are as follows:

- Physical conduct of a sexual nature - this may include unwanted physical contact such as unnecessary touching, patting or pinching or brushing against another employee's body, assault and coercive sexual intercourse;
- Verbal conduct of a sexual nature - this includes unwelcome sexual advances, propositions or pressure for sexual contact, continued suggestions

for social contact outside the work place after it has been made clear that such suggestions are unwelcome, unwanted or offensive, suggestive remarks, innuendo or lewd comments, graffiti, written materials, emails, text messages or social media posts;

- Non-verbal conduct of a sexual nature - this may include the display of pornographic or sexually suggestive pictures or objects. It may also include stalking, indecent exposure, leering, whistling or making sexually suggestive gestures; and
- Gender-based conduct - this includes conduct that denigrates or is abusive of an employee for reasons related to his or her sex such as derogatory or degrading abuse or insults which are gender-based. This might include conduct that insults or degrades an employee because she is pregnant or because s/he is transgender

## Bullying

Bullying can be defined as repeated inappropriate behaviour, direct or indirect, whether verbal, physical or otherwise practiced by one or more persons against another or others in the course of their Civil Defence duties which could reasonably be regarded as undermining the individual's right to dignity. An isolated incident of the behaviour described in this definition is undesirable but as a once-off incident is not considered to be bullying.

On occasion you may receive feedback regarding your performance. Bullying does not arise where negative feedback is given constructively and honestly and relates to issues relevant to your official duties within the organisation.

The list is not exhaustive but some examples of bullying are:

- Exclusion with negative consequences
- Verbal abuse/insults
- Belittling a person's opinion
- Disseminating malicious rumours, gossip or innuendo
- Socially excluding or isolating a person within the Civil Defence sphere
- Intrusion – pestering, spying or stalking
- Intimidation/aggressive interactions
- Withholding information necessary for proper performance of a person's role
- Blaming a person for things beyond their control
- Use of aggressive and obscene language
- Other menacing behaviour

#### 4. Grievance Procedures

##### **General Grievance Procedure**

A volunteer wishing to raise any matter directly affecting their duty or training should take the following steps. The matter should progress from step to step until it has been resolved. At any stage, the volunteer may choose to have an independent observer present:

1. The volunteer should discuss the issue with the Unit Officer; then
2. If necessary, the volunteer should seek a meeting with the Commander; then
3. If necessary, the volunteer or the Commander should refer the matter to the ACDO or the CDO; then
4. If necessary, the volunteer or the CDO or the ACDO should refer the matter to the Director of Services (or equivalent) for the local authority; then
5. If necessary, the volunteer or the Director of Services (or equivalent) should refer the matter to the Chief Executive of the local authority.

Volunteers at Instructor level should begin the above procedure at step 2.

In the case of a group grievance the above steps should also be followed. The group may not be represented by more than 3 volunteers at any stage.

##### **Grievance Procedures in respect of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment or Bullying**

If a volunteer feels that they have been a victim of Discrimination, Sexual Harassment, Harassment or Bullying, they should;

- Avoid being alone with the harasser; and
- Document all incidents including date, time and details of the offending behaviour, including the names of any witnesses; and
- Seek advice from the Unit Officer, Commander, ACDO, CDO, Director of Services (or equivalent) for the local authority.

##### **Resolution**

Complaints of unacceptable behaviour should where possible be dealt with at the lowest possible level.

- In the case of less serious offences a complaint may be most easily resolved by the complainant making it clear to the offender that their behaviour is offensive and unwelcome. An informal discussion may be enough to alert the person to the effects of his or her behaviour.
- A formal complaint can be made through the Duty Officer, Unit Officer, Commander, ACDO, CDO or the Director of Services (or equivalent) with responsibility for Civil Defence in the relevant local authority. The

complaint should be made in writing outlining the specific nature of the complaint, together with any accompanying details.

- o One possible method of resolution is mediation, which is a voluntary process. If both parties are willing, it provides an opportunity for the person who feels that he or she is being harassed or bullied to discuss the matter with their alleged harasser in private and to agree a way forward which will allow both parties to work together in the future. The CDO, ACDO or Director of Services (or equivalent) for the local authority will arrange a meeting and will appoint an independent mediator, who will be acceptable to both parties. The mediator should keep a written record of the meeting. If the matter is resolved by mediation, then disciplinary action will not be taken.
- o If mediation fails to resolve the matter or either party is unwilling to go through the mediation process then an investigation into the allegations may be carried out by the CDO, ACDO, or other local authority appointee. The results of the investigation including the nature and detail of the complaint will be forwarded to the Director of Services (or equivalent) in a written report. The complainant and the alleged offender will receive a copy of this report.
  - If the investigation upholds the complaint, then action will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.
  - If the complaint is not upheld, and the complainant is judged to have acted in good faith, then no further action will take place.
  - If the complaint is not upheld and the complainant is judged to have acted maliciously then action against the complainant will be taken in accordance with the disciplinary procedures.

## 5. Disciplinary Procedures

On rare occasions, when volunteers breach this code of Practice, the following disciplinary procedures will apply. These disciplinary procedures are structured to assist the Civil Defence volunteer, whose performance or Practice falls below the required standards, to achieve those standards. In all cases where a person's membership of the organisation has been terminated, a full report must be submitted to the relevant Chief Executive and also to the Principal of the Civil Defence Branch.

Notwithstanding the procedures set out below, in the event of a potential conflict of interest the Civil Defence Officer or the local authority may nominate an independent person in place of the Duty Officer, Unit Officer, Commander, ACDO or CDO.

### 1. Informal Verbal Warning

Informal cautions or warnings may be issued by a Duty Officer, Unit Officer, Commander, ACDO or CDO affording a volunteer an opportunity to explain his or her actions.

## 2. Formal Verbal Warning

When informal cautions have failed to bring about the desired improvements in Practice or performance or in certain circumstances of unsatisfactory behaviour, the CDO or ACDO will caution the volunteer verbally of the specific aspect of the breach of the Code of Practice. The CDO or ACDO will state clearly that this is a verbal warning and will advise the volunteer of improvements which must be made. This formal warning should be issued in the presence of the volunteer's Unit Officer (or local equivalent if applicable) and duly recorded by the CDO or ACDO. The volunteer will be advised that further breaches of discipline will result in a written warning. A record of this warning will be retained by the CDO or ACDO for 6 months.

## 3. Written Warning

When a formal verbal warning has failed to bring about the desired improvements in Practice or performance or in certain circumstances of unsatisfactory behaviour the CDO or ACDO, with the concurrence of the local authority, will issue a written warning in the presence of the volunteer's Unit Officer (or local equivalent if applicable). The volunteer will be advised that further breaches of discipline will result in a final written warning. A copy of this warning will be retained on the volunteer's file for 6 months.

## 4. Final Written Warning

When a written warning has failed to bring about the desired improvements in Practice or performance the CDO or the ACDO with the concurrence of the local authority, will issue a final written warning in the presence of the volunteer's Unit Officer (or local equivalent if applicable). The volunteer will be advised that further breaches of discipline will result in suspension. A copy of this warning will be retained on the volunteer's file for 12 months.

## 5. Suspension

If the desired improvements have not been made or further breaches of discipline occur, or in cases of gross misconduct the volunteer will be suspended from the Civil Defence organisation by an appropriate officer of the local authority with the knowledge of the CDO or ACDO. Formal written notification of this suspension will be forwarded to the volunteer involved and a full report will be forwarded to the Director of Services (or local equivalent if applicable).

The term of the suspension will be determined by the nature/severity of the offence and is at the discretion of the local authority. Suspension as a result of serious offences or cases of gross misconduct may progress to termination of membership. A copy of the suspension notice will be retained on the volunteer's file for 2 years.

Gross misconduct may include, theft, physical violence, serious sexual harassment and bullying, deliberate damage to property, serious insubordination, misuse of the Civil Defence property or name, bringing Civil Defence into disrepute, serious incapacity whilst on duty brought on by alcohol or illegal drugs, serious negligence which causes or might cause unacceptable loss, damage or injury, serious infringement of health and safety rules. This list is not exhaustive.

Civil Defence reserves the right to ask volunteers to leave the organisation if their involvement hinders the organisation achieving its goals.

#### 6. Termination of Membership

On return from suspension, further breaches of discipline will warrant immediate termination of membership from the organisation by the local authority. Formal written notice of termination of membership will be forwarded to the volunteer involved and a full written report will be forwarded to the local authority and the Civil Defence Branch.

A copy of the termination notice will be retained permanently on the volunteer's file.

#### 7. Appeals

At any stage during the disciplinary procedures the volunteer can appeal the action. An appeal must be submitted in writing, stating the reasons for the appeal, within 30 days of the disciplinary action. The appeal can be submitted to the CDO, the ACDO, the Director of Services (or equivalent) or to the Chief Executive of the local authority. The appeal will be considered by an independent person not previously involved with the disciplinary action. An appeal may be partially allowed, e.g. the independent person may lift a suspension but impose restrictions on an individual's membership.

#### 8. Criminal Acts

If a volunteer has been charged with or convicted of a criminal offence, the CDO or ACDO will fully consider the circumstances surrounding this occurrence. Based on the nature of the offence, the potential impact on the Civil Defence organisation and the totality of the circumstances surrounding the event/s involved, including the application of this Code of Practice, the CDO or ACDO may immediately suspend the volunteer involved from the organisation.

If an individual is being investigated by An Garda Siochana for an alleged offence which may impact on their Civil Defence activities the CDO or ACDO, with the concurrence of the local authority, may suspend the volunteer from the organisation.

At the conclusion of any judicial proceedings that may arise from the said occurrence an independent person, appointed for this purpose by the local authority, will review the situation, including the appropriateness of any continuing suspension, or the need for further disciplinary action including

termination of membership. In carrying out such a review, the independent person will consider the totality of the factual situation involved, including any acquittal of criminal charges, possible civil proceedings and the potential impact on the Civil Defence organisation.

## 9. Other matters

### **Equal Status Act**

Civil Defence acknowledges and respects the cultural and religious diversity that exists within Ireland and seeks to ensure that its volunteer base reflects the diversity of the local communities in which it operates. Any person over the age of 18 and resident in Ireland may apply to join the organisation regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, race, marital status, disability, membership of the traveller community, family status, religion, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, gender non-conformity, political opinion, residence status or social origin.

### **Insurance**

The Department of Defence has a Public Liability policy in place that protects Civil Defence in respect of claims being made against Civil Defence volunteers whilst participating in Civil Defence activities, subject to the terms conditions and exclusions of that policy. The Department also has insurance policies in place to compensate volunteers who suffer injury during the course of their Civil Defence activities.

### **Expenses**

Civil Defence recognises that some financial expense may be incurred during the course of volunteering. Reasonable out of pocket expenses may be reimbursed in accordance with approved rates and with the prior approval of the CDO or ACDO.

### **Acceptance of Gifts, Rewards, Hospitality and Fund Raising**

Although outside organisations may regard offers of hospitality as normal business practice, Civil Defence volunteers must exercise the utmost discretion in deciding whether or not to accept such offers.

#### **Gifts, Rewards, Hospitality**

In line with this code, a volunteer is prohibited from seeking, exacting or accepting any remuneration, fee, reward or other favour for any act done or not done by virtue of his or her Civil Defence activities. The overriding concern in all cases is that the actions of volunteer should be above suspicion and not give rise to any conflict of interest and that their dealings with the public should bear the closest possible scrutiny and avoid any risk of damage to public confidence in Civil Defence.

The following practice must be followed in relation to gifts: -

- a volunteer should not solicit gifts directly or indirectly;
- any gift other than a modest token should be courteously but firmly declined;
- in all cases the offer or receipt of any gift (other than what is clearly a modest token) should be reported to the volunteer's CDA or ACDO supervisor

However, the normal presentation of modest gifts or tokens exchanged or given would not be precluded. A volunteer approached with an offer or an award or prize by an outside organisation which is in any way connected with your official duty must consult their CDO or ACDO.

### **Fund Raising**

Civil Defence is funded by the Department of Defence and the local authority. It is not a charitable organization. Fund raising for Civil Defence is not acceptable. Small fund raising activities for recognised charitable purposes are acceptable. If the CDO or ACDO is in any doubt regarding these activities they should contact their Director of Services, or equivalent.

### **Political Activities**

Civil Defence is a State organisation. It is important that personal views are not reflected in the discharge of your Civil Defence activities. All volunteers are barred from any form of political activity whilst in uniform or engaged in any Civil Defence activities.

If you wish to take part in an outside activity, which involves the disclosure of official information, or use of official experience, you must obtain prior authority from your CDO or ACDO. The request must be made in sufficient time to allow proper consideration. The following principles cover all activities in which official information or experience is used. This includes the publication of books or articles, contacts with the press, broadcasts, speeches or lectures, and participation in outside conferences.

They are that you must not:

- Discuss matters of current or potential political controversy in respect of Civil Defence Code;
- Comment on individuals or organisations in terms that Civil Defence would find objectionable; and
- Take part in activities, which conflict with the interests of Civil Defence or bring the good name of the organisation into disrepute.

Queries relating to any element of this Code should be discussed with the CDO or ACDO in the first instance.



GIVEN under my Official Seal,  
12 July, 2023.

MICHEÁL MARTIN,  
Minister for Defence.

#### EXPLANATORY NOTE

*(This note is not part of the Instrument and does not purport to be a legal interpretation.)*

The purpose of these regulations, which apply to civil defence volunteers, is to prescribe a code of practice for the purposes of the Civil Defence Act 2023 (No. 17 of 2023). Among other matters, the code of practice prescribed in these regulations sets out grievance and disciplinary procedures as well as standards of conduct and integrity.

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