

Rules on sexual conduct for humanitarian workers

Humanitarian workers can be disciplined-even fired-for unacceptable behavior in relation to sex.

These are the rules they must comply with:

- Humanitarian workers are **not allowed to have sexual relationships with anyone under the age of 18, even if it is legal in their country.** Saying they do not know the person's true age is not a valid excuse.
- Humanitarian workers are **not allowed to pay for sex with money, employment, goods or services**-including goods and services intended as aid to people in need. They must not use promises of these things to make other people accept any kind of behavior that humiliates or exploits them. This includes paying of offering money for sex with a prostitute.
- Humanitarian workers have influence over who receives goods and services. This place them in a position of power in relation to people who need assistance. For that reason, humanitarian organizations **strongly encourages staff not to have sexual relationships with anyone affected** by a humanitarian emergency. Such relationships make humanitarian action seem less honest and credible.
- If a humanitarian worker is **worried or suspects** that anyone in their organization or another aid organizations may be breaking humanitarian rules on sexual conduct, they must report it, following procedures set up by their agency.
- Humanitarian workers **must create and maintain** a work environment which prevents unacceptable sexual behavior and encourages staff to behave as set out in their **code of conduct.** **All managers** are responsible for supporting and developing systems which maintain this environment.

