



Photo: GRC

GRC Headquarters
Tracing Service Head Office
National Information Bureau



Voluntary Work with the GRC Tracing Service

KAB in action

Scenario: Persistent heavy rain across Germany results in widespread flooding. Rivers break their banks and a state of emergency is declared in many towns and districts. Mobile networks and Internet connections are down, with the result that many people in need of immediate evacuation or medical supplies are no longer able to tell relatives or friends where they are. Relatives desperately try to find out the location of their missing loved ones.

In such exceptional situations the staff of the District Office for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (KAB) remain calm. There's not much time for coordination, so work flows must be fully rehearsed. For this reason, many regional branches of the German Red Cross regularly use a major exercise to test coordination between individual KAB.

This involves responding to tracing inquiries (made on the phone and in person), collecting data of volunteer helpers who are out on operations, checking off lists of individuals provided by the police and hospitals, entering data in the Xenios Tracing Service software and, in a best case scenario, providing those searching a relative with information about the whereabouts of their loved ones. This way thousands of items of data relating to those concerned can be recorded in a very short time and hundreds of tracing inquiries dealt with. Each item of positive information is also a cause for delight among the many volunteer helpers. Delight that they can reassure families about the fate of their loved ones.

Contact

German Red Cross district branch with a District Office for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (KAB) near you



Are you interested in voluntary work in a District Office for Disaster Tracing Inquiries near you? We look forward to hearing from you!

For more information, go to www.drk-suchdienst.de



Information service during conflicts and disasters
District Office for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (KAB)

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What we do

The Tracing Service of the German Red Cross (GRC) helps people trace those who have become separated from their family as a result of armed conflict, disasters or flight, expulsion or migration from their homeland.

On top of that, it provides support in all matters relating to family reunification. Countless individual odysseys dating from the Second World War have also been occupying the GRC Tracing Service for decades.

National Information Bureau

In the event of an armed conflict in which Germany is involved, the GRC Tracing Service is also authorised by the federal government to set up a National Information Bureau with the aim of supporting those affected by the conflict in tracing their family members.

The GRC Tracing Service also plays an active role in the event of disasters and major relief scenarios in Germany: throughout Germany it has a network of what are known as “missing persons information points” aimed at family relatives. The GRC Regional and District Offices for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (LAB/KAB) deployed in these cases record information on injured people as well as missing persons and share this information with concerned relatives.

How we work

The District Offices for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (KAB) in the GRC district branches play an important role at the site of disasters and major relief events.

Their duties include:

- Recording and analysing information about those involved as well as those injured
- Responding to tracing inquiries received by telephone and in person from members of the general public
- Providing information to relatives about the whereabouts of those they are searching

Paper and PC

The data obtained during a response mission is forwarded to the relevant KAB. It is recorded manually in a file index and then electronically via the Xenios Tracing Service software. This method ensures that all information is always readily available.

Here are some of the missions involving KAB where the GRC Tracing Service has been an important point of contact for the general public:

- Floods of 2013
- Papal visit of 2011
- Love Parade crowd disaster of 2010
- Winnenden school shooting of 2009

How can I get involved?

Do you want to act as a volunteer in a District Office for Disaster Tracing Inquiries (KAB)? Here are some answers to central questions relating to volunteering.

What personal attributes do I need?

You should be able to empathise with people, work as a member of a team and remain calm in situations which are of an exceptional nature.

Do I need any specific education or training?

Once you have completed a general volunteer course with the GRC, we will provide you with a specialized training RFL in national disasters (a total of five modules) and will ensure you have all the knowledge needed for volunteer work in a KAB.

Must I already have IT skills?

Basic skills are desirable but not absolutely necessary. Work in a KAB involves many different roles

What demands will there be on my time?

This depends on the KAB in question. Generally, volunteer helpers meet once or twice a month in order to prepare for a potential emergency.

Do you speak English?

We particularly welcome volunteers who speak languages other than German. Foreign language skills are also particularly important in the work undertaken by a KAB, but they are not of course an absolute necessity.