



INTERNATIONAL  
RANGER  
FEDERATION

# THE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA RANGERS CONVENTION

A global standard for ranger employment and working conditions

PROPOSED AND ENDORSED BY THE INTERNATIONAL RANGER  
FEDERATION AND THE UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE



Supported by



## THE UNIVERSAL RANGER SUPPORT ALLIANCE (URSA)

URSA is a coalition of conservation organisations supporting and promoting the International Ranger Federation to build a network of well-supported, professional, and capable rangers, who can act effectively as custodians of the natural world. We help them advocate for the creation of inclusive and effective teams at the forefront of protecting nature, people, and the planet. Our time-bound support prioritises recognition, resources and representation for rangers around the world.

[www.ursa4rangers.org](http://www.ursa4rangers.org)

## INTERNATIONAL RANGER FEDERATION (IRF)

The IRF was founded on 31 July 1992 in Peak National Park in the UK. The IRF provides a global forum for rangers from around the world to share their successes and failures in protecting the world's natural heritage and to promote the exchange of information and technology from countries in which protected area management enjoys broad public and government support, to countries in which it is less supported. 165 ranger associations from national, state and territorial entities have affiliated with the IRF. [www.internationalrangers.org](http://www.internationalrangers.org)

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# THE PROTECTED AND CONSERVED AREA RANGERS CONVENTION

A global standard for ranger employment and working conditions

The International Ranger Federation (IRF) and the Universal Ranger Support Alliance (URSA) have drafted the first International Labour Standard for ranger employment and working conditions. Development of the standard has been led by an expert on international labour rights, in collaboration with an URSA working group. It is based on recent assessments of the current working and employment conditions of rangers worldwide, and on the standards established globally by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) for other occupations.

The standard sets out the minimum generic conditions of work and employment that should apply for rangers working in any part of the world. While the standard is intended to be universal, it is understood that the specifics of implementing it will be influenced by local contexts, in particular the work of the rangers concerned, national labour laws and the systems and processes of the ranger employer.

The standard can be used in four main ways:

1. As a benchmark for rangers, ranger associations, governments, employers and NGOs to assess the adequacy of current working and employment conditions.
2. As an aid for employers and governments to upgrade working and employment conditions to a recognized standard.
3. As a basis for rangers and ranger associations worldwide to promote their work and advocate for better conditions.
4. As a basis for the IRF and other ranger representative organisations to make the case for an official ILO instrument to promote and ensure rangers' rights at work.

The full detailed text of the draft standard is set out in a format typical of ILO labour standards and is available at [www.ursa4rangers.org](http://www.ursa4rangers.org). This document is a brief overview and summary of the main areas covered. The full draft standard should be considered the authoritative text and should be consulted for details.

# Summary of the Standard

## I. AIMS, SCOPE AND RATIONALE

The standard recognises the work of rangers, affirms that ranger work is protected by international labour standards, and draws attention to a 2016 IUCN Congress recommendation, calling for more formal employment and improved career paths for rangers.

The standard outlines the scope and type of activities that constitute ranger work. It emphasises that the unique hazards faced by rangers warrant special protection at work.

While the standard's primary focus is on formally employed personnel, it also recognises that many rangers work 'informally' as volunteers and as community and Indigenous guardians. It makes specific reference to the need to ensure adequate working conditions, safety, health and welfare of the 'informal sector'.



## II. TRAINING

- All rangers should be provided with adequate training on basic competences and other relevant topics, including rights-based training, training on community engagement, rules of engagement, de-escalation techniques, minimum use of force, health and safety and use of firearms where applicable.
- Training should be regularly updated, and rangers should only be required to do work for which they are trained.



## III. RIGHTS AT WORK

- All rangers should be provided with a formal contract or statement of conditions of employment that clearly and accurately reflects their duties, responsibilities and terms of employment.
- All rangers should receive regular uninterrupted pay, no less than the national minimum, and broadly equivalent to other similar workforces in the country (e.g., firefighters, police, nursing). Pay rates should increase based on performance and length of service.
- All rangers should have access to paid annual leave (or wages in lieu should be provided), including where this is outstanding at the end of a contract.



#### IV. HARASSMENT AND DISCRIMINATION AT WORK

- All rangers should not be exposed to discriminatory treatment at work in terms of salary, training, duties or other factors.
- All rangers should be protected against abuse, violence and harassment.
- Reproductive rights of rangers should be respected.
- All rangers should have access to both internal and external work grievance procedures.



#### V. ACCOMMODATION, EQUIPMENT AND SUBSISTENCE

- All rangers should have access to adequate accommodation, facilities and means of subsistence and appropriate equipment as identified in consultation with them.
- All rangers should also have access to mechanisms for registering complaints and reporting non-compliance with this requirement.



#### VI. SAFETY, HEALTH AND SECURITY AT WORK

The standard outlines a comprehensive framework for improvement and protection of rangers' safety and health at work, taking into consideration that the work of many rangers regularly involves significant risks.

##### **STATES SHOULD (IN CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT ORGANISATIONS):**

- Prepare a national policy on ranger safety and health, covering accidents, disease, and work-related risks and training, and requiring safe processes of work.
- The policy should clearly outline what is appropriate ranger work and include commitments against inappropriate deployment of rangers as de facto combatants in conflict situations.
- Designate a State authority as responsible for safety and health of rangers. The authority should:
  - Ensure that employers adopt proper procedures, guidance and training.
  - Have powers to impose penalties and suspend work in cases of violation or severe risk.



### EMPLOYERS SHOULD:

- Carry out risk assessments, act to mitigate known risks, provide job orientation, safe equipment, and training on safety (including weapons training if appropriate). Rangers or their representatives must be included in risk assessments.
- Establish limits and controls on working hours to prevent risks and accidents.
- Minimise exposure to exceptional risks, stop operations in the case of imminent and severe danger, and ensure availability of first aid and other emergency support.
- Ensure that safety information is communicated to and understood by rangers, who must be briefed before operations.

### RANGERS SHOULD:

- Comply with safety and health measures, follow standard operating procedures and instructions from supervisors regarding health, safety and risk reduction. Establish limits and controls on working hours to prevent risks and accidents.
- Have the right to remove themselves from dangerous situations and excessive risks that go beyond their defined scope of expected duties, training and standard operating procedures.



## VII. INSURANCE AND COMPENSATION FOR ACCIDENT OR INJURY AT WORK

- All rangers should be covered by adequate insurance or social security for fatal and non-fatal occupational injuries, diseases and work-related health risks, equivalent to other similar workforces in the country (e.g. firefighters, police, nursing).
- All rangers should be enrolled in social security schemes at least equivalent to other workers in the country.



## VIII. LABOUR INSPECTION

- Responsible authorities should establish a system of labour inspection.



## IX. SOCIAL SECURITY

- All rangers should be enrolled in social security schemes at least equivalent to other workers in the country.