

KANTAMA

Duties First – the Path to a Sustainable Society



**In Finland, the
emergency number
is 112**

**Safety at a summer
cottage begins with small
choices**

Women Involved

Ukrainian-language preparedness event brought the community together in Vallila

Editorial: Ultimately, Attitude
Makes the Difference

Recognising
Information
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"TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER, TOGETHER WE ARE SAFE"

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BUILDING A SAFE FINLAND TOGETHER

**SHAHO JAFF**

Executive Director

Maahanmuuttajien Varautumis- ja Maanpuolustusyhdistys (MVM)

Helsingin suojeluskuntatalo, Döbelninkatu 2, Helsinki

Successful and crisis-resilient societies are always built on two fundamental pillars: an unwavering balance between rights and duties. In Finland, the law protects the dignity and fundamental rights of every person, regardless of their background, language or beliefs.

This foundation of the rule of law is a value that we at MVM Association must respect and safeguard with all our strength.

At the same time, every one of us, as a member of society, must have the courage to say something fundamental out loud: no society can thrive on rights alone. Our democracy and security also require responsibility, active participation and the fulfilment of duties.

Rights do not exist in isolation. They are protected and sustained by a society in which each of us contributes to the common good and our shared security.

The logic of everyday life is clear: an employee contributes through their work, and a student makes an effort to complete their studies. The same principle of participation and responsibility applies to our role as members of society. This is not about diminishing anyone's established rights, but about recognising that rights and responsibilities support one another.

Duties First – the Path to a Sustainable Society

A resilient and engaged member of society does not ask only: "What support do I receive from society?"

They also ask: "How can I contribute to my community?" Genuine inclusion and social progress are strengthened when everyone has the opportunity to be an active participant, contribute to security and help build the community – rather than being seen only as a recipient of services.

“*The ultimate strength of our society is measured not only by what it provides for us, but also by how we are prepared to contribute to the common good.*”

This is why it is important to help future generations understand this balance. Respect for the law, commitment, a sense of community, helping one's neighbours and a willingness to contribute to the country's security are values that strengthen trust, safety and solidarity in Finland.

I want to emphasise that diversity becomes a shared strength when we are united by common goals, mutual respect and fair rules that apply to everyone. When each of us takes responsibility and contributes in our own way, together we build a stronger, fairer and safer Finland.

Ultimately, Attitude Makes the *difference*

How can we bring values, attitudes and action together under the umbrella of comprehensive security?

Ari Pakarinen, Executive Director of MPKL

Research supports the view that Finland has a strong willingness to defend the country and that public authorities enjoy a high level of trust. The willingness to defend the country is a complex concept and difficult to explain in a simple way.

The willingness to defend the country forms the foundation of Finland's entire defence system. By international and European standards, Finns' willingness to defend their country is among the highest. In Finland, it is maintained in several different ways.

GENERAL CONSCRIPTION



General conscription is one of its basic pillars, as is the constitutional duty that applies to everyone to participate in the defence of the country.

VOLUNTARY ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF NATIONAL DEFENSE



The second pillar is voluntary national defence and related leisure activities. For many Finns, national defence has become an active and varied interest. It offers opportunities to train through the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK) and to participate in organisations such as national defence guilds and the local associations of the Finnish Reservists' Association and the Finnish Reserve Officers' Federation.

COMPREHENSIVE SECURITY MODEL



The third pillar – or rather the umbrella above them – is Finland's comprehensive security model. It emphasises that security is a shared responsibility of society and all its members. In Finland, national defence is not solely the task of the Finnish Defence Forces. It involves cooperation between public authorities, businesses, organisations and citizens.

Bringing Values and Attitudes Together



Values are principles that guide our lives, actions and choices. They show what is important to us and what kind of people we want to be. In everyday life, they act as an inner compass when we make meaningful choices.



Finnish society and everyday life place particular emphasis on equality, trust, honesty and respect for nature. These values strongly guide Finnish legislation, culture and interaction between people.



I recognise these values, but through my travels I have also become familiar with the values of other nations. I have learned to live with them in different cultures, and I have also brought some of them into my own life.



Attitude means the way we approach matters, situations and other people. It directly influences our behaviour, motivation and ability to overcome challenges.



A conscious attitude is an effective tool for personal growth and for approaching new things.



Where do we learn our values, and where are our attitudes formed? They are shaped by our homes, friends, schools, workplaces and the shared rules of society. Ultimately, however, each person makes their own choices about values.



One of the important tasks of MVM Association is to increase awareness of comprehensive security and communicate the values on which it is based.

We are all in the same boat – and by working together, we will get through difficulties!

INFORMATION EVENT FOR UKRAINIANS

Ukrainian-language preparedness event brought the community together in Vallila.

Security information strengthens trust and the ability to act in a new home country



Work to strengthen preparedness and security awareness among people with immigrant backgrounds continued in May, when MVM Association organised a Ukrainian-language information event in Helsinki together with the Help Center for Ukrainians. The event brought together a large group of Ukrainians who wanted clear and reliable information about security, preparedness and civil defence in Finland.

The aim was to make it easier for people to ask questions, learn, and participate. For many participants, the subjects were not merely theoretical; they were also connected to personal experiences of war, uncertainty in everyday life and acting in crisis situations. This is precisely why clear information about Finland's security system, the role of public authorities and personal preparedness was considered especially important.



The event was hosted by Iryna Mysko. A separate interpreter conveyed the messages of public authorities and experts in Ukrainian.

The programme included expert presentations by representatives of different public authorities and security organisations. The speakers included Shaho Jaff, Executive Director of MVM Association; Lieutenant Colonel Ilkka Ikonen of the Finnish Defence Forces; Nina Järvenkylä and Annukka Saine-Kottonen of Helsinki City Rescue Department; Vesa Sundqvist of the National Defence Training Association of Finland (MPK); and Antti Pekko Puhakka of the Ministry of the Interior.



It was especially important that the information was provided to participants in their own language

The presentations covered Finland's comprehensive security, the role of public authorities, civil defence, personal preparedness, disruptions to everyday life and ways in which everyone can strengthen their own safety and that of their loved ones.

The participants' feedback was warm and appreciative. For many, the event offered not only practical information but also the experience of being seen and of having their safety taken seriously. It also strengthened the feeling that the Ukrainian community is an active part of Finnish society.

The event once again showed that preparedness is not solely the responsibility of public authorities. It is also about shared understanding, trust, and the ability to act together when everyday life changes.

Shared Knowledge Builds Security

The Ukrainian-language information event was an important continuation of MVM Association's work to make security information accessible to different language and cultural groups. When people receive information in their own language and can ask questions in a safe environment, their trust in public authorities and confidence in their own ability to act are also strengthened.

The event was a reminder that preparedness does not begin with a crisis. It begins when people know where to get help, how to act, and that they are not alone.

In May, MVM Association's trainers completed an advanced course for the operating personnel of a rock civil defence shelter. In addition, we organised an information event in Ukrainian on preparedness and civil defence.

For the Ukrainian community, preparedness is an especially important and understandably very personal subject.

“

We asked two of our trainers, Iryna Mysko and Mariia Holovynska, why they want to do this work for Finland and the Ukrainian community, and what has motivated them to learn more about preparedness and civil defence.



MY STORY AND MOTIVATION FOR WORKING WITH MVM FOR THE UKRAINIAN COMMUNITY IN FINLAND



Iryna Mysko

When I arrived in Finland in 2022, it was not a choice – it was a necessity. The war forced me to leave my home country with my children, even though I had never imagined living anywhere other than Ukraine. But fate brought me here, to Finland, a country where security, trust and care for people's well-being are part of everyday life. I am grateful for that every day.

From the very first weeks, I knew that I wanted to help. I became an active member of the Ukrainian Association in Finland and was one of the three organisers who established the Ukrainian Help Center in Espoo in 2022.

Today, I am a member of MVM Association, and this work has become deeply meaningful to me. Because of my own experience of crisis, I do not want anyone in Finland to face an emergency unprepared. I want everyone to receive important information in their own language, to know how to act and to feel that they belong to Finnish society.

That is why I write and translate articles for KANTAMA magazine and take part in MPK (National Defence Training Association of Finland) courses, so that I can provide Ukrainians with accurate information about security and preparedness in Finland.

I want to continue this work wholeheartedly so that every Ukrainian in Finland can be informed, prepared and confident. This is my mission, and I carry it out with deep gratitude and faith in our community!

WHY I BECAME INTERESTED IN PREPAREDNESS AND CIVIL DEFENCE



Mariia Holovynska

To be honest, before the war I was not interested in civil defence at all. We had related courses at university, but they felt like dull theory, far removed from real life. A war in the 21st century? Who would have believed it?

The war in Ukraine and my move to Finland changed the way I thought about security and preparedness.

One day, I suddenly realised how close I lived to the Russian border. I remember the strange feeling: everything around me was calm and safe, but questions kept circling in my mind. How does civil defence work in Finland? Where can I find the information? What should an ordinary person know? At the time, I could not find the answers, and gradually the subject faded into the background.

Later, I read a Yle news article about updated household preparedness recommendations for prolonged power and water outages. I began to wonder again: if the recommendations have been updated, where can they actually be found?

A few months later, Tanja Jaff called me and invited me to join a preparedness-related project. I accepted the opportunity immediately.

Now I have the opportunity to learn and to share this knowledge with my own community.

Preparedness is not about fear. It is about responsibility, awareness, and caring for others.

Safety at a Summer Cottage Begins with Small Choices

Daily life often becomes more relaxed in summer. People travel more, spend time outdoors, barbecue, use the sauna, swim, go boating and gather with family or friends. At the same time, the risks also change. Help may be farther away, not everyone may know the address, and conditions can change quickly.

Being prepared at a summer cottage does not mean spoiling the holiday atmosphere. It means making sure that the basics are in order before they are truly needed. When the surroundings are safe, everyone can enjoy the summer with greater peace of mind.

1. Check the cottage at the beginning of the season

It is a good idea to begin the cottage season with a safety check. Make sure that the smoke alarm and carbon monoxide alarm work, fire-extinguishing equipment is in good condition and first aid supplies are easy to find.

At the same time, check that there are no loose boards, nails, broken equipment or other hazards in the yard that could cause someone to trip or be injured. Even small risks left behind after the winter should be removed before summer guests arrive.

2. Protect your home and cottage while you are away

Check the doors, windows and locks. Do not leave valuables visible through windows or unattended on the terrace or in the yard. An outdoor light with a motion sensor, an indoor light on a timer or a functioning security camera can improve safety. Also make sure that any alarms are sent to the correct phone.

3. Take care of fire safety

In addition to a smoke alarm, a cottage should have a portable fire extinguisher, a fire blanket or water readily available. If you use a fireplace, sauna stove or gas appliance, also check the carbon monoxide alarm.

Heat a fireplace that has not been used for a long time gradually. Check electrical cables, extension leads and old sockets. Never leave a barbecue, campfire or other open flame unattended, and do not light an open fire when a wildfire warning is in force.

4. Make the yard safe for children and guests

Keep tools, fuels, fertilisers, pesticides and medicines out of children's reach, preferably in a locked place. Check stairs, terraces, jetties, railings and walking routes. If there is a well, pond, swimming pool or other body of water in the yard, make sure that a child or animal cannot reach it unnoticed.

5. Prepare for summer accidents

At the cottage, on a boat and on excursions, it is useful to have a well-stocked and up-to-date first aid kit. It should contain at least plasters, dressings, wound-cleansing solution, a cold pack and supplies for treating burns, allergy medicine, painkillers and fever-reducing medicine.

Remember to bring your regular medication as well, and check that none of the medicines have expired.

6. Remember water and swimming safety

Assess your swimming ability honestly and never go swimming or boating while under the influence of alcohol or other intoxicants. Everyone on a boat must have a suitable life jacket.

Children must never be left unsupervised on the shore or in the water. Drowning can happen quickly and silently. A lifebuoy or another floating rescue device should be kept within easy reach at the cottage shore, for example a canister attached to a rope.

7. Make sure help can find you

Write the cottage's exact address, driving directions and possible coordinates in a clearly visible place.

In an emergency, explaining your location can be surprisingly difficult. Download the 112 Suomi app and keep your phone charged.

Also make sure that all cottage guests know where to find the first aid supplies, fire-extinguishing equipment, torch and important contact details.

8. Remember other everyday preparedness measures as well

The 72-hour preparedness recommendation is also useful at a cottage, on a boat and on excursions: bring water, food, medicines, lighting, warmth, backup power and hygiene supplies.

When basic supplies and a plan of action are in place, even unexpected situations can be handled more calmly.

A good summer is built on a safe foundation

You do not need to prepare for every possible situation in summer. It is enough to make sure that the most important things are in order:

alarms work, first aid supplies are available, and everyone knows what to do in an emergency.

Preparedness does not take the joy out of summer – it brings peace of mind. It is a way of caring for yourself, your loved ones and the summer you share.

THE VOICE OF *young people*

Through our own experiences and backgrounds, we know many young people who have grown up between two cultures. This time, we decided to interview one of them.

Public authorities, decision-makers and adults: listen carefully to what it feels like to grow up between two cultures. At the same time, consider what each of us can do to help young people feel at home here. They are the future of this country.

Living between two cultures can be a source of strength and richness

I have seen many different ways in which people navigate this experience, and I have followed some of these paths myself.

At school, students from the same cultural background often formed their own group. Some looked suspiciously at anyone who did not join them, while those outside the group responded in the same way.

Others want so strongly to become part of the majority that they may feel pressure to hide or reject part of themselves. Finding a balance can be difficult.

Both responses can be rooted in fear. Human beings are social by nature, and exclusion can be deeply painful. People need a sense of belonging in order to feel safe. At the same time, pressure to fit in can grow from the fear of not meeting society's expectations of who is accepted.

It begins at school. If you have shoes and a backpack of a particular brand, you may be accepted by those who have the same shoes and backpack.



The interviewee is a minor. To protect their privacy, their name and photograph will not be published. The initials HJ are used in the article.

This can be seen in many forms around the world. When differences are used to separate people from one another, communities become weaker.

Division can take hold because it is natural for people to seek the safety and strength of a group. While chasing an illusion of strength and security in these troubled times, we forget what matters most.

The real danger arises when we lose our sense of shared belonging

I was fortunate to learn about voluntary national defence through people close to me. That is why I believe schools should already provide information about it. Otherwise, not everyone has an opportunity to discover these activities.

I believe it is very important to tell school-aged young people about voluntary national defence courses. These activities can offer a setting where people learn together, meet as equals and build a stronger sense of belonging.

This can proactively address many future problems and return our attention to what matters: a sense of belonging regardless of cultural background, important skills that everyone should know, and Finland – a country that is home to everyone who lives here.

To young people with immigrant backgrounds in particular, I want to say this: you do not have to choose which culture you belong to. You can be part of both

Finland is your home too

Through MVM's activities, you can learn how to contribute to its safety and how to help others in an emergency. :)

Come and join us!

HJ.

RECOGNISING INFORMATION INFLUENCE ACTIVITIES

Author: Nina Järvenkylä, Helsinki City Rescue Department

- *Does something appear to be true, yet still feel somehow wrong?*
- *This is common in information influence activities: a small element*
- *of truth may be combined with distorted or false information.*



Information influence activities are widespread today. Particular care is needed when assessing content shared on social media.

When you read a news item on social media, always check its background: who shared the link, who originally produced the news item, and whether other news outlets are reporting the same issue. It is also important to remember that social media is not itself a news outlet; it is a channel through which content is shared.

From the perspective of public authorities, recognising and responding to information influence activities is extremely important. In an accident or emergency, for example, authorities should communicate the known facts as quickly as possible.

Those seeking to manipulate information can use a wide range of methods. Authorities must take this into account in emergency communications and understand how such actors think and operate. Their response requires speed, flexibility and, above all, accurate information. An information vacuum will always be filled, so it is essential to fill it with timely and reliable facts.



Through information influence activities, an actor – often a hostile one – systematically seeks to shape public opinion, people's behaviour and decision-making, and ultimately to affect the functioning of society. Methods include spreading false or misleading information, applying pressure and presenting accurate information selectively or out of context.

The aim is to influence the target into making decisions that may be harmful or contrary to their own interests.

112 SUOMI APP

In Finland, the emergency number is 112.

Call 112 if you urgently need an ambulance, the fire and rescue services or the police.

Calls to 112 are free of charge.

You can call from any phone, including a locked mobile phone.

Call 112 only in a genuine emergency.

For example, call if someone is seriously ill, unconscious or badly injured.

You should also call if you see a fire, notice a serious danger or urgently need the police.

The emergency number is intended only for urgent assistance.

Do not call 112 about non-urgent matters or simply to ask for advice.

You can also download the free 112 Suomi app to your phone. When you make an emergency call through the app, the Emergency Response Centre automatically receives your location. This helps emergency services find the correct place more quickly.

HOW TO CALL?

- When you call, speak calmly.
- Explain what has happened and where you are.
- Give the exact address and municipality.
- Answer the emergency response operator's questions.
- These questions do not delay help.
- Do not end the call yourself.
- End the call only when the operator tells you that you may do so.

SERVICE LANGUAGES

- Emergency Response Centres provide service in Finnish, Swedish and English.
- If you do not speak these languages, an interpreter can be connected to the call.
- At the beginning of the call, say the name of your language, for example "Arabic", "Ukrainian" or "Somali".
- Remain calmly on the line even if connecting the interpreter takes a moment.
- Do not end the call.

EMERGENCY CENTER

- Emergency Response Centres operate around the clock, every day.
- Finland's Emergency Response Centres use a shared system, so a call can quickly be transferred to another operator or another region when necessary.



Security Belongs to Everyone - Join Us!

MVM Association is a guild-like community focused on preparedness and national defence. It strengthens the crisis preparedness and information security awareness of people with immigrant backgrounds and supports their participation in Finnish voluntary national defence.

Together, we build knowledge, trust, and preparedness.

As a member, you are not merely following our activities – you can learn, participate and help build a safer Finland together with others.



As a member, you receive:



Knowledge and practical skills

You receive current and reliable information about preparedness, information security, crisis preparedness, and how to help others in an emergency.



Training and events

You can participate in information events, training courses, excursions and other events organised by MVM Association.



Information about further training

You receive information about MPK courses and the opportunities offered by Finnish voluntary national defence.



New networks

You meet people who want to help others, take responsibility and contribute to Finland's security.



An opportunity to have an influence

As a full member, you can take part in planning the association's activities and in decision-making.



A place in a shared community

You can use your own skills, participate in voluntary work and be part of a community where different languages, cultures, and backgrounds are seen as strengths.

Join Us in Building a Safer Finland



Complete the membership application by scanning the **QR code**.

Further information:

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Maanpuolustuksen
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