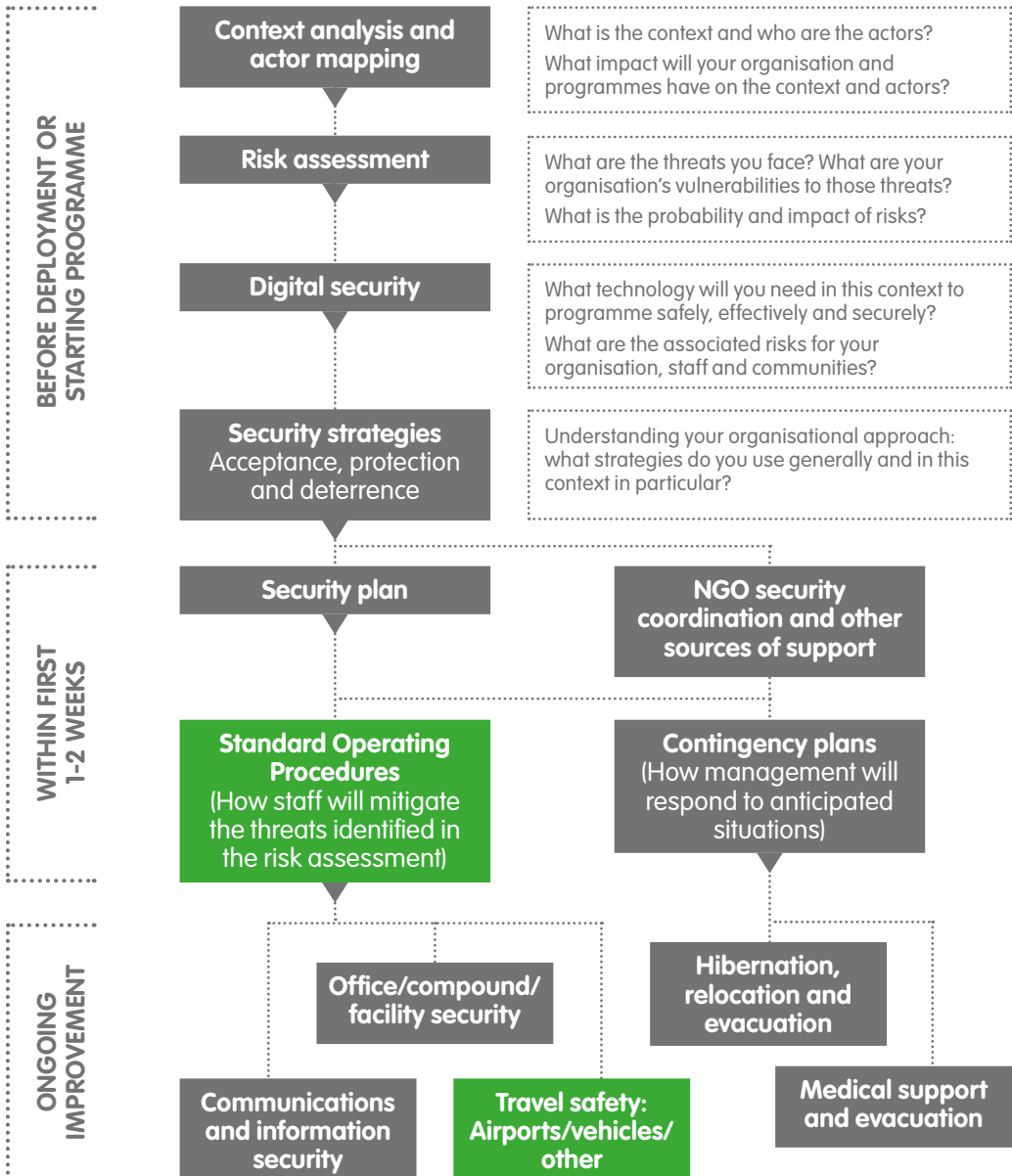


10

Travel safety: airports, vehicles and other means of transport



According to the *Aid Worker Security Annual Report 2014*, of 795 aid workers killed between 2006 and 2013, 263 (33%) were killed in road ambushes. Travel is the time when NGO staff are most vulnerable to robbery, assault, kidnap, corruption, injury or death. This includes air travel between countries, travel by road from the airport to the office or accommodation, from office to residence, to and from field projects and meetings, and anywhere else that staff find themselves moving between secure locations.



Good practice:

- Make sure that you can be contacted as much as possible when travelling.
- Leave a copy of your travel itinerary, key documents and local contact details in case direct communication cannot be established.
- Confirm all visas, invitation letters, local currency, addresses and phone numbers prior to departure.
- Make copies of all important documents with you, such as passport, visa, insurance card and credit card, and leave them with the point of contact in your department. In certain cases, it may be useful to carry a copy of your passport (including any visa pages) and to keep the original in a safe.
- Email yourself a copy of important documents so you can easily access them online from any computer.
- Obtain an international driving licence, if required.
- Take your vaccination records with you.
- Consider whether you need medical/evacuation/other insurance.
- Investigate whether there are any health preparations you should take (such as medications, first aid kit, water purifier).

It can be useful to run scenario-planning exercises before any trip, particularly when travelling to a new area or a fluid context with a changing environment. All staff involved can discuss possible scenarios and responses to them, and be better prepared if something happens.



When travelling on business, you should ideally be given a personal organisation identity card. With this ID card, you are quickly able to show that you are travelling on behalf of the organisation. The card is not a formal means of identification, but can be very useful in making known the purpose of your visit and, if necessary, providing you with a specific status for your visit. Always carry the ID card with you. If necessary, you can also take a letter of guarantee with you. This letter should outline the purpose of your visit and who you will be visiting.

Travelling by air

When crossing long distances, air travel is often unavoidable. For air travel, especially regional and national travel, it is important to consider the safety record of the airline selected and whether they are IATA, EU and FAA certified, otherwise your insurance coverage may not be valid. Some websites that can be used to consult airline safety records are FlightSafe, SkyTrax and AirlineRating.

Good practice:

- Choose aircraft with more than 30 seats where possible. Normally, these must adhere to stricter safety regulations and more stringent manufacturing standards.
- Choose non-stop flights as most accidents occur during take off and landing.
- Sit near an exit and memorise the location.
- Choose aisle seats when possible so that you can get up and move faster in an emergency. This is also better for circulation, so that you can get up and stretch when possible.
- Do not drink alcohol (or minimise intake) as cabin pressure increases the effect of alcohol on the body.
- Know what is and is not allowed in carry-on baggage and be prepared to have it searched.
- Never leave carry-on or checked baggage unattended.
- Pack your carry-on bag with all the key items you will need to survive if your checked baggage is lost, damaged or delayed.

On arrival to the airport, travellers should have a contact list for key people and know what to do if a driver is not immediately apparent – where does the traveller wait? Should you then get a taxi or not? And if so, what type of taxi? Travellers should have a way to contact headquarters and local staff at their destination in case of a problem, such as a flight delay or missed connection. Details of the meeting point and transport from the airport need to be agreed before travel, and be part of the security brief any staff should have prior to departure.

Depending on the context, travellers should be provided with the name and photo of the driver or a way to identify the correct driver. Drivers should display a card with the organisation's logo rather than the name of the traveller. Displaying the name makes it easier for others to approach the traveller, and the name can also be easily duplicated on a fake card or sign.

Travellers should receive an updated security briefing as soon as possible after arrival and be given a card with key phone numbers and locations on it.

Travelling by road

If purchasing or hiring your own vehicles, ensure they are the right type for the work you will be doing. Consider your risk assessment regarding branding, visibility, theft rates per vehicle type, road and terrain conditions, spare parts availability and other logistical issues.

When hiring vehicles, you should consider whether to hire the vehicle with a driver or use instead the organisation's own staff drivers. In the latter case, all staff members operating a vehicle should be able to perform basic maintenance, such as changing a tyre and checking engine, brake, battery and radiator fluids. If planning to travel in local partner vehicles, ensure you review their driver training and supervision policies, vehicle maintenance records and travel security procedures. Drivers should observe local driving laws and regulations, and drive at speeds suitable for the conditions. Passengers are also responsible for ensuring this is the case.

All staff – both national and international – should also be briefed about the policy concerning unauthorised passengers, especially soldiers or armed militia. Similarly, a clear policy concerning the use of vehicles for personal use during and after the workday, weekends, and holidays should be in place and all staff members briefed on it. National and international staff should all have proper travel documentation, including driver licences.



When travelling, all occupants of the vehicle (including the driver) should know the same basic information about the organisation in case they are stopped and questioned separately. Additionally, make sure a spokesperson has been identified prior to departure.

When possible, staff should travel with at least one other person. Travellers need to notify others of travel time and destination according to the established procedures. A communications plan details check in times and missed call actions, and vehicle accident procedures are also in place and all staff briefed. If staff do not arrive as scheduled, the agreed communications policy should be consistently implemented.

► *Module 9 – Communications and information security*

To ensure timely reporting during travel, it is key that all mobile phones are fully charged and work in the area where the mission is going to be conducted. If that is not the case, alternate communications equipment and protocols should be considered. When evaluating different systems and protocols, it should be kept in mind that these may vary depending on the route chosen. If there are route options, select primary and alternate travel routes to avoid danger areas and adapt to changing security conditions. It is helpful to keep an updated country or regional roadmap in the office with dangerous areas marked as well as areas where mobile phone signal is unavailable.

Good practice:

- Vehicles are equipped with basic tools, spare tyre, tyre changing equipment, first aid kit, blankets, emergency drinking water (2 litres per person per day), emergency triangles, torch, fire extinguisher and anything else needed given the local geographical/climatic conditions.
- Seat belts/shoulder harnesses should be fitted and working, and always worn in both front and rear seats.
- Vehicles are checked daily. Someone has been designated as responsible for maintenance and correction of discrepancies.
- Essential vehicle registration and documentation is in each vehicle.
- Helmets are worn by anyone on a motorcycle at all times.
- Vehicle fuel tanks are maintained above half full if possible.
- Spare vehicle keys are kept under strict control in each office.
- Vehicle doors are kept locked while driving and the minimum number of windows opened.
- Vehicles do not have darkened or tinted windows that may obscure visibility.
- The use of travel forms, trip tickets or a vehicle tracking system is in place to help track vehicle movement.
- The appropriate emergency contact details for all relevant individuals, organisations, hospitals and police stations in the area are posted in each vehicle.

It is also good practice to maintain logbooks for each vehicle and keep a copy on the vehicle of the checklist and maintenance schedule, trip tickets, communication procedures, documentation, maps, etc. However, consider how this information may be received if it is discovered when a vehicle is searched at checkpoints.

Other transport modes

In some contexts it will be necessary, or cost-convenient, to use alternate forms of travel. These can include boats, trains, helicopters, public transport and taxis. For each mode of travel, do a short risk assessment, including researching the risks and developing mitigation strategies for each.

For boat travel especially, organisations may need to take extra precautions. It is important to make sure that either the boat operator or the organisation supplies items such as life preservers and Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) units. The organisation may also need to provide swimming or lifesaving training.

For public transport consider the needs of national staff as well as international staff for to and from office, during and after working hours, and for R&R and/or leave.