

# Disability Considerations in Security Risk Management

In June 2020, the Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) approved guidelines on Disability Considerations in Security Risk Management (SRM). The guidelines offer practical advice for security professionals on how to incorporate disability concerns into their work. Persons with disabilities may face specific threats and hazards due to their disability, and may be impacted differently by the risks and risk management measures identified in the SRM.



*Facilities and management staff remove a chair in the Security Council chamber to make way for a delegate who uses a wheelchair./UN Photo*

Disability is an **evolving** concept, which results from the **interaction** between persons with impairments and attitudinal and environmental barriers that hinders full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others. Persons with disabilities **include** “those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which, in interaction with various barriers, may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others”.

## DISCLOSURE

There is no obligation for UNSMS personnel to formally disclose any disability to security personnel. Medical information including those pertaining to disabilities may be requested by the employing organization so that appropriate medical clearance can be granted, in line with HR policies.

*These guidelines are aligned with the system-wide United Nations Disability Inclusion Strategy launched in 2019. The Strategy was initiated to strengthen system-wide accessibility for persons with disabilities and the mainstreaming of their rights.*

## Main Provisions

Disability considerations should be included in the SRM (including in the SRM measures), as well as in premises security, security plans and movement planning.

### In SRM

The SRM process must include analysis on security threats, threat scenarios and resulting risks to all UN personnel, including those with possible disabilities. When the SRM measures are being identified, disability-related vulnerabilities must also be considered. For instance, when a communications system is being developed for a particular location where personnel may be deaf or hard of hearing, the use of vibrating devices or flashing lights should be explored.

### Premises security

While carrying out a survey of facilities or premises, the UNSMS should consider disability-related issues, including the following:

- **Access control systems:** Entrances and exits, including emergency exits, to office buildings should be disability-inclusive.

- **Access to meeting rooms and other common areas:** Common areas must be accessible to allow for easy passage in case of evacuation.
- **Fire safety systems:** Deaf, hard-of-hearing and other personnel and visitors with disabilities must be clearly aware of a fire alarm's signals, and fire systems must be tailored accordingly. This may include a combination of equipment such as use of text messaging in accessible formats, vibrating pagers, and appointed buddies, among others. Fire doors should cater for persons with disabilities; alternatively, Floor Wardens should be specially focused on any personnel with disabilities.
- **Building evacuation SOPs:** The SOPs should include procedures related to the evacuation of personnel with disabilities.
- **Emergency exit staircases:** The staircases should accommodate persons with disabilities, and could include additional tools such as evacuation chairs.
- **Safety and security signage (visual):** All signage must be visible and accessible. It should be in plain language, culturally appropriate, and consider level of literacy of users of premises. Pictograms are generally message neutral and easy to obtain.
- **Safety and security signage (tactile):** The design and location of braille or 3D signage for those who are blind or have low vision should be determined with the help of any local organizations of persons with such disabilities and in consultation with personnel who are blind or have low vision. Rehearsals should be encouraged to ensure that personnel are familiar with evacuation routes.



## Security plans

All security plans should include disability considerations, including:

- **All scenarios detailed in security plans, guidance and SOPs.** For instance, premises should have several accessible safe locations to hide in the case of an active shooter incident.
- **Concentration points and evacuation/relocation.** The selection of concentration points and the system of transport for personnel, in case of evacuation or relocation, should consider personnel with disabilities.
- **Routine rehearsals.** All security plans and related SOPs should be routinely rehearsed, particularly where specific personnel with disabilities may need additional support.
- **Review of national guidelines and health guidelines.** UNSMS security personnel should review such guidance, and use advisory experts if appropriate.
- **Security briefings.** All security briefings should include references to measures tailored to UN personnel with disabilities. Augmented training on security plans and SRM measures should be offered for persons with disabilities.
- **Accessible format.** Security briefings should be provided in accessible formats using universal design elements and additional formats such as the use of sign language, Easy Read, plain language, captioned media, Braille or other accessible means, when possible.

## Movement

Considerations for persons with disabilities should be made when determining SRM measures during movements, including mission, duty travel, travel to/from residences, relocation/evacuation and medical movement requirements.