**Scope**

* General procedure at a road checkpoint

**What do I need to do?**

**BEFORE**

* There is not all that much you can do to avoid checkpoints if they are widely present, other than not to travel. There may be certain times of day when there are more or fewer checkpoints in operation. Know the local situation and what is considered appropriate behaviour, which may depend on the actor analysis and be different in different locations.
* Trip planners should get up to date information about the road from other NGOs or UN agencies.
* There should be a staff member in the vehicle who can speak the local language.
* Ensure that those in the vehicle have a clear and coherent explanation for who you are, where you are going and why, if necessary discuss this in the vehicle before you reach the checkpoint.
* Ideally do not travel with cash/valuables and hide/be discreet about valuable equipment you are carrying in the vehicle.
* Make sure you have all the documentation you should have with you.
* Do not carry sensitive documents if you can avoid it. If you must carry them, keep documents out of sight.
* Ensure you have up to date documentation for the vehicle, licences etc. and any communication equipment you might need to carry with you.
* As for all journeys, ensure good communication with base / stick to agreed movement tracking calls / communication schedule.

**DURING**

* When approaching or leaving a checkpoint, inform base. Do so in a discreet way, far enough from the checkpoint to avoid them seeing that you are using communications equipment.
* Observe the checkpoint from a distance, without stopping, to understand what is happening there.
* Turn any radio to low volume or off, to avoid it attracting attention at the checkpoint.
* If you suspect that there is a risk of violence or other serious problems, turn round and drive steadily away, if it is safe to do so.
* All passengers should remove sunglasses before arriving at the checkpoint.
* If it is at night, switch off headlights, leaving sidelights on, and switch on the interior light so that the checkpoint can see the vehicle occupants.
* Approach the checkpoint slowly and stop several metres before the barrier.
* Remain inside the vehicle unless you are ordered to get out.
* Make no sudden movements.
* If one person is asked to come away from the vehicle, for example to an office to check papers, consider whether it is safer for another person to accompany them.
* Be ready to answer questions about the occupants, your journey, the vehicle and anything in it.
* One person should be nominated to do the talking, on behalf of all the occupants, unless questions are put directly to other occupants.
* Your manner and style are very important: be courteous, friendly and calm but not over-familiar.
* Be ready to show any relevant documents including vehicle documents, authorisations, copies of passports and ID cards. If possible, avoid showing the original of your passport, to avoid it being stolen – but in some cases the original may be required. It may be helpful to keep your ID card on a chain around your neck so that you can show it without surrendering it.
* If you suspect that the checkpoint may have a hostile intention, depending on the circumstances it may be sensible to keep all doors including the cargo door locked, with windows more than half-way up. But in some circumstances this may anger soldiers or police, so use your judgement as to which is best.
* Allow the car to be searched if they insist on it.
* If threatened with a weapon, comply calmly with their instructions.
* If not allowed to pass through, return to your base and report to your team leader. They are then likely to negotiate with relevant authorities for a resumption of free movement in the area.
* Stick to the policy of no lifts to armed or military personnel.
* Humanitarian staff may be asked to give lifts to soldiers at checkpoints, armed or unarmed. This must not be permitted as that would be in conflict with XXX policies on weapons and neutrality.

**AFTER**

* Keep a normal speed, do not suddenly speed up or look back at the checkpoint, as this may be considered suspicious behaviour.
* When you have left the checkpoint and are out of sight, call to inform base that you have passed the checkpoint.