

POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

As a result of growing security risks for humanitarian field staff, CARE International adopted the Policy Statement on Safety and Security in 1999. The statement recognizes that effective safety and security policies and procedures are essential to promoting the safest possible working environment for CARE staff. Additionally, to ensure a viable safety and security program there must be clear delineation of responsibility at every level within the organization. Staff members at every level have the responsibility and authority to take appropriate corrective action to address deficiencies in security procedures.

This chapter gives policy guidance for general safety and security issues and assigns responsibility for the various facets of the CARE Safety and Security program. Topics include:

General Safety and Security Policies

Staff Health and Personnel Issues

Media Relations

Responsibilities for each level –

CARE International

National Headquarters

Regional Management Unit

Country Office

Individual Staff Member

CHAPTER 1: POLICIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1.1 GENERAL SAFETY AND SECURITY POLICIES

ABDUCTION/KIDNAPPING

CARE does not pay ransom or provide goods under duress, but will use all other appropriate means to secure the release of the hostage. It will intervene in every reasonable way with governmental, non-governmental and international organizations to secure the rapid and safe release of CARE staff. The kidnapped person should have one goal...survival. It is vital to obey the captor's instructions and not attempt escape. CARE and the staff member's government will undertake securing a staff member's release. CARE also will provide all possible support to the hostage's family members.

ALCOHOL

Unauthorized use, possession, sale or distribution of alcohol while on CARE property is prohibited. Being under the influence of alcohol while working for CARE is also prohibited. Additional restrictions may be imposed when working in certain areas.

ARMED GUARDS AND ESCORTS

In some situations it may be necessary to employ guards around residences, offices, storage facilities and vehicle parking lots. The use of armed guards will be considered primarily when there is a potential for violence against staff. Although situations vary, in most cases it is preferable to use an established security firm rather than the local police or military. The use of armed escorts, including military, will be used only when there is no alternative, such as in cases of widespread armed banditry or ongoing civil conflict.

LANDMINES, UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO) AND BOOBY TRAPS

When there is a risk of landmines, UXO, or booby traps in an area, CARE policy is very specific. *No one will work in areas with known or suspected landmine/UXO contamination without first receiving appropriate training.*

LOCAL LAWS

CARE staff should obey local laws at all times. As much as possible, staff should avoid transacting business or carrying on personal relationships with those suspected of violating local laws. Doing so can negatively affect the reputation of CARE in the local area and increase the risk for CARE staff.

PERSONAL CONDUCT

CARE staff must not engage in conduct that interferes with operations, discredits CARE or is offensive to co-workers, donors, beneficiaries, vendors or visitors. CARE staff must avoid conduct that may lead to their becoming a victim of a security incident. Personnel should avoid lack of sleep, poor stress management and drug or alcohol abuse since they can impair judgment and the ability to react appropriately in a potential safety or security incident.

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

The use, presence, sale, distribution, manufacture or possession of illegal drugs or controlled substances while on CARE property (including in a CARE vehicle), or on CARE business, is prohibited. In many countries, the possession or use of illegal substances, even in minute amounts, can result in immediate incarceration. The judicial system in many countries does not give the accused the right to post bail or communicate with anyone, and pre-trial detention may last for months. All prescription pharmaceuticals should be kept in their original containers with the patient's and doctor's names clearly identified.

THEFT

No material possessions are worth risking the life of a CARE staff member. When faced with a demand for CARE property, such as a vehicle or computer equipment, do not resist.

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THREATS

All threats directed at CARE staff and/or operations must be taken seriously. The CARE Country Director (CD) should initiate all security precautions within his/her scope and report the threat immediately to appropriate authorities. Confidentiality is recommended when reporting threats or intimidation.

TRANSPORTATION

Vehicle accidents are the main cause of injury and fatality among humanitarian aid workers. Seat belts front and rear, if available, will be worn at all times by all CARE staff. All travelers will comply with the Country Office transportation safety guidelines for their area.

WEAPONS

Under no circumstances will CARE employees carry weapons or have weapons or ammunition while on assignment with CARE. To do so would undermine CARE's humanitarian imperatives and endanger the well-being of all humanitarian workers. CARE offices should adopt a "No Weapons" policy, prohibiting weapons in CARE offices or vehicles.

1.2 STAFF HEALTH AND PERSONNEL POLICIES

ORIENTATION

All newly reporting personnel should receive an area-specific orientation from the National Headquarters, the RMU or Human Resources office as appropriate. This discussion should include security conditions, area orientation, and Country Office policies and procedures regarding health and safety.

COMPENSATORY TIME OFF

CARE recognizes that humanitarian aid personnel are subject to increased stress and possible “burn out.” Generally, staff tend to do “whatever it takes” to get the job done, often working seven-day weeks and fifteen-hour days. To assist with the reduction of stress and potential burnout, in exceptional situations it is recommended that the Country Office provide time away from the area for rest and relaxation. It is impossible to establish exact criteria for every situation, but each Country Director or team leader should ensure that a system is in place to provide sufficient time for rest.

INSURANCE

The National Headquarters or Country Office must ensure that new hires or contractors have the appropriate personal life, health, injury, and medical repatriation/evacuation insurance. All personnel must have full access to the conditions of their insurance coverage.

MEDICAL EVACUATION

Medical evacuation (medevac) is used when there is an emergency illness or injury in an area where local medical assistance or emergency/hospital care is unavailable or inadequate. It is appropriate when failure to obtain immediate care will likely place the patient's life in jeopardy or lead to serious physical impairment. If a medevac is required, the Country Office should arrange passage through an in-country medevac system, a scheduled commercial flight, or through any one of the private international evacuation programs, such as S.O.S. International.

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS AND IMMUNIZATIONS

All CARE international staff assigned to an overseas office should receive a thorough medical and dental examination before departure. Concurrently, the staff member should receive all required and recommended immunizations for diseases prevalent in the country of assignment.

STRESS

Everyone, regardless of age, background or experience, will experience stress in dangerous or insecure environments. Fear is a natural response to danger and, if ignored or suppressed by individual staff or managers, may lead to psychological and/or physiological damage. It is recognized that responses to stress vary according to surroundings, perceptions and sensitivities. The Country Director and National Headquarters, if required, will review any situation involving an employee's reaction to extraordinary stress on an individual basis. This will be done without prejudice to that person's professional continuance with CARE. At the conclusion of fieldwork, or earlier if necessary, the Country Director may recommend that staff individually or as a group receive psychological counseling and assessment. Additionally, any staff member can request counseling and assessment. The National Headquarters will support short- and long-term treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder when diagnosed by qualified medical authorities.

1.3 MEDIA RELATIONS

CARE's media objective is to inform the common debate and policy decisions on issues of concern to CARE, and increase public awareness and understanding of issues facing the communities with which CARE works. CARE Country Offices, when in the midst of an emergency or ongoing conditions that invite media attention should have an information officer assigned as a collateral responsibility. The information officer will serve as the primary point of contact between the CARE office and the media. In addition, he or she will support field operations, help gather information with regard to safety and security, and provide media training for CARE staff as necessary.

1.4 SAFETY AND SECURITY RESPONSIBILITIES

Safety and security cannot be assured by simply drafting and distributing policies and procedures. Creating a safe working environment requires commitment and action at every level of CARE's organization. Each level, including the individual staff member, has specific roles and responsibilities, some of which were mentioned in the Policy section. This section outlines at which level certain responsibilities lie and where the staff member should look for guidance or action concerning safety and security issues.

CARE INTERNATIONAL (CI)

- **Analysis.** *While recognizing that a certain degree of risk is acceptable, when justified by the moral and physical imperatives of an intervention, CI will guide appropriate analysis to ensure a balance between risk and anticipated benefits.*
- **Flexibility.** *CI furnishes National Headquarters and Country Offices with the latitude to shape interventions in a manner that is sensitive to what is prudent and most likely to be safe and effective in the local context.*
- **Human rights.** *Worldwide, CI is committed to assisting vulnerable populations with their ability to defend their collective and individual rights, to participate in relevant decision-making processes, and to shape their own development.*
- **Leadership.** *CI provides appropriate support and leadership to its members to ensure the highest possible conditions of security.*
- **Monitoring and evaluation.** *CI monitors the actions of CARE members, governmental entities, and other non-governmental organizations, assessing the impact of their actions on the safety and security of CARE staff.*

THE NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

- **Evacuation.** *The National Headquarters will coordinate with CARE International Secretariat and other concerned members on evacuations and other actions in emergency situations. Unless time or communication problems prevent proper coordination, the National Headquarters has the final decision on whether to evacuate.*
- **Incident reports.** *The National Headquarters will coordinate with Regional Management Units (RMU) during assessment of security incident reports forwarded from the Country Offices, and suggest appropriate corrective measures.*

Kidnapping and hostage taking. *The National Headquarters is the senior authority during hostage negotiations. The National Headquarters of the detainee, in conjunction with the RMU and Country Director, will lead the coordination with the appropriate authorities, such as local police and others, to facilitate release.*

Risk levels. *The National Headquarters will determine, in consultation with the RMU and Country Offices, a risk level for every country or area in which CARE operates. It will monitor significant political, social, economic, meteorological and other natural disasters, and military events worldwide, particularly in high-risk countries, that might affect ongoing programs. It will coordinate with the RMU and Country Office during crisis management to determine when, in the interest of staff safety, it may be appropriate to suspend programs and evacuate or relocate staff.*

Safety. *The National Headquarters will develop and implement procedures to ensure a safe and secure environment for its staff. Upon request from the RMU or Country Office, key National Headquarters staff will review security/contingency plans and suggest amendments and modifications as appropriate.*

Support. *The National Headquarters will provide assets and support as appropriate to ensure effective security-related systems for field staff. It also will provide security guidelines, training, and implementation assistance to Country Offices as the situation requires.*

Work environment. *The National Headquarters will promote a productive work environment with zero tolerance for verbal or physical conduct that harasses, disrupts, or interferes with another person's work. It will prevent creation of an intimidating, offensive or hostile environment, prohibiting discrimination against another person on the basis of his or her race, ethnic group, color, sex, or creed. This includes putting procedures in place to allow an employee to bring job-related safety and security issues to management's attention with the assurance that the matter will be given serious consideration and without fear of retribution.*

REGIONAL MANAGEMENT UNIT (RMU)

Analysis. *The RMU will review the effectiveness and value of each Country Office safety and security program and recommend appropriate modifications. It will coordinate with the appropriate staff at all levels on decisions concerning actions during emergency situations.*

Incident reports. *The RMU will receive, analyze, and coordinate with the appropriate National Headquarters staff all security incident reports forwarded from Country Offices, assisting the Country Director in developing appropriate changes in security measures.*

Information. *The RMU will assist the Country Office in preparing up-to-date, area-specific safety and security briefs profiles for CARE staff within the RMU area of responsibility. The RMU will ensure that newly assigned staff members are thoroughly briefed on the political and safety situation and health risks at their destination. Upon departure, staff members will be debriefed on their experiences, observations and recommendations.*

THE COUNTRY OFFICE

Security decisions. *Everyone in the operational line of authority has responsibility for implementing CARE International and National Headquarters safety and security policies. However, most security measures are actually implemented by the Country Office and are the responsibility of the Country Director (CD). The CD may make final decisions in a crisis situation, take disciplinary or dismissive action when security lapses occur, and make other necessary decisions based on his/her assessment of the current situation.*

Emergency evacuations. *Country Offices must provide a written policy statement with regard to CARE's policies, procedures, and responsibilities during an emergency evacuation. These may differ for international and national staff. The Country Office evacuation procedures must be clearly understood by all staff and updated as required. Ordinarily, the final authority for an evacuation rests with the lead member National Headquarters. If time does not permit full coordination or communications are severed, the Country Director has the authority to order and conduct an evacuation.*

Incident reports. *The Country Office will immediately report all security, safety, and serious health incidents to the RMU and National Headquarters. Original incident reports should be kept at the Country Office with access controlled to ensure confidentiality.*

Record of Emergency Data. Country Offices should obtain and update annually or as required a Record of Emergency Data (RED) for all staff members. The RED should be kept either in the personnel folder or in a separate notebook to facilitate access in the event of an emergency.

Sharing information. Security-related information can be shared with other members of the aid community working in the country or region as appropriate. In conflict situations, use caution when choosing communication methods, since transmissions could be monitored. If appropriate, the Country Office can join or form a network for information-sharing with other local organizations and agencies.

Staff meetings. Country Directors should hold regular meetings for both senior management and field staff to provide an opportunity for staff to voice safety and security concerns.

Staff orientation. On hire or upon arrival into a country, all new staff — regardless of position — must be given an updated briefing on threats in the area and the Country Office's safety and security policies and procedures.

THE INDIVIDUAL CARE STAFF MEMBER

Situational awareness. Every CARE staff member, national and international, has an obligation to learn and understand the security situation where they are located. International staff members, in particular, have a responsibility to become familiar with the political, social and cultural features of their assigned country. Inappropriate or offensive behavior can put CARE in a difficult position, impair operations, and jeopardize the staff of CARE and of other aid organizations.

Safety and security policies and procedures. Each CARE staff member should adhere to all pertinent policies concerning safety and security. Lapses in safe conduct can jeopardize the health and welfare of all staff.