
InterAction Security Planning Guidelines

Importance of Security Plans

Each agency operating in an area should develop and implement a security plan. A security plan is a single document containing information, standard operating procedures and contingency plans relating to the security of NGO staff and property. The purpose of a plan is to enable staff to act effectively to prevent and mitigate the effects of security problems in a manner appropriate to the agency.

Need for Individualized Security Plans

A security plan is based upon an individual agency's security strategy which reflects its overall approach to security. Each agency is likely to take a different approach based upon the agency mission, mandate (if applicable), principles, policies and programs, as well as on their understanding of the context.

Planning Process

The process of developing, implementing and updating a plan is as important as the plan itself. An individual should be designated responsibility for leading the development of the plan as well as for the periodic review and updating of the plan. Staff expected to implement the plan should be involved its development. This helps to foster consistent implementation through ensuring that (1) the plan is realistic in its assumption about the situation, threats, and staff willingness and ability to implement it, (2) the staff understands all aspects of the plan, and (3) the staff feels ownership of the plan, thereby promoting adherence to the plan. All new staff members should be given a briefing on the situation and threats, a copy of the plan, and any training required to implement the plan.

The plan should be tested and updated at regular intervals and whenever there is a change in the situation or threats faced by the NGO.

Components of a Security Plan

I. Introduction:

- Purpose of the plan
- Identification of the person(s) responsible for security and for leading the development, review and updating of the plan
- Intended users of the plan (which staff, locations, etc. are covered)
- Location of master plan and distribution list

II. Background:

- Articulation of agency mission, mandate (if applicable), principles and policies related to security.
- Summary of the situation (political, economic, historical, military, etc.)
- Threat assessment (indicating most likely types of threats NGOs will face)

3. Standard Operating Procedures:

Outline procedures for daily operations and routines as well as individual responses to incidents. For all procedures include (1) what to do/what not to do, (2) how to do it, as appropriate, (3) who does it/with whom, (4) when it is to be done; frequency and sequence, and (5) where it is to be done.

- Site selection and management (offices, residences, etc.)
- Movement and transport (vehicles, convoys, etc.)
- Telecommunications (regular use and during emergencies)
- Post incident actions (reporting, analysis, etc.)

III. Contingency Plans:

Outline procedures for incidents requiring complex, multi-personnel responses. Include the same information as for standard operating procedures. Include also lines of communication and of authority. Articulate alternative options.

- Evacuation
- Medical evacuation
- Death of staff
- Other high risk, foreseeable events

IV. Supporting Information:

- Warden system with contact information and instructions to locations
- Cooperating agencies, contact persons and information (phone numbers, radio frequencies, etc.)
- Contact information for government officials, airport, hospital, etc.
- Maps with assembly points, routes, borders
- Emergency supply inventory
- Incident reporting forms