

Safety and Security Operating Guidelines for Physicians for Peace

Approved by the Executive Committee July, 2012

Foreword by Executive Leadership

For Physicians for Peace Staff and Volunteers there are times when the locations that we operate in have minimal risk. There are times that our operations may take our staff and volunteers into areas that have moderate risk. Sometimes, just like in the areas that you reside every day, the risk we experience may become great and extremely dangerous. That is the reason why "Safety and Security" is so important for Physicians for Peace and it will be a continued priority for all of our staff. We take every person's personal safety as seriously as any other issue within the organization.

Coverage of this Policy

This policy covers all staff and volunteers employed by Physicians for Peace including international and local staff and their dependents, independent contractors and official non-employee visitors.

Authority and Responsibility for Safety and Security

Staff members at all levels have the authority and responsibility to improve safety and security procedures wherever these are inadequate. In order to ensure that the security guidelines are successful there must be clear delimitation of responsibility at every level of the organization. All staff should comply with the Employee Manual and should not behave in any way that could present a risk to themselves, others or the organization.

Introduction

All work environment and daily-life activities carry a certain level of safety risk. While it is impossible to altogether eliminate safety risks from one's personal or professional work environment, it is usually possible to reduce and manage them. For example, by the simple act of getting into an automobile and deciding to drive, an individual takes the risk of being exposed to road hazards, including getting involved in a serious or even fatal accident. However, by deciding to wear a seatbelt and obey traffic signs and safety rules, the same person can reduce and manage his/her safety risks. Humanitarian work requiring individuals to travel to and work in unfamiliar and sometimes unsafe situations inherently increases their level of risk. Similar to the above example of an individual's decision to drive, staff and volunteers of an organization engaged in humanitarian work can never totally eliminate the risk that they may face, but various preparations, awareness and precautions can significantly reduce these risks. Ultimately, given the nature of their work, humanitarian organizations like Physicians for Peace must constantly balance safety risks to their staff and volunteers against the benefit derived by those in need.

Definition of Security for Physicians for Peace

Physicians for Peace follows a basic philosophy of security when deciding to take on a new humanitarian mission or carry on an existing one: if the likely benefit of the work is great, for example, Physicians for Peace's programs will improve many lives and the risk to Physicians for Peace staff and volunteers is comparatively small, then Physicians for Peace will proceed with the work. However, if the likely benefit is small and the safety risk to staff and volunteers is great, Physicians for Peace will decide against taking on or continuing such a mission.

To best manage the risk of Physicians for Peace volunteers and staff members traveling on overseas assignments, the designated Physicians for Peace staff and the Medical Operations Committee will review security and threat assessment information from multiple sources prior to each medical mission's deployment. The decision to carry-on, postpone or cancel a medical mission or a project on security grounds is made after reviewing security information from the assessments, U.S. Department of State's Travel Advisory and Travel Warning for the specific country, recommendations by local and/or regional staff members representing Physicians for Peace, and security assessments and recommendations from other humanitarian organizations working in that country or the region.

Physicians for Peace believes that staff and volunteers comprise the most important resource for the organization and the communities and people served by Physicians for Peace. As such, Physicians for Peace has put in place safety and security policies and procedures to ensure that its work can continue unhindered even in challenging environments. Furthermore, *while recognizing that safety and security risks to staff and volunteers engaged in humanitarian work can never be completely eliminated, Physicians for Peace believes that safety and security exist when staff and volunteers are able to pursue their tasks without undue risk to health or life.*

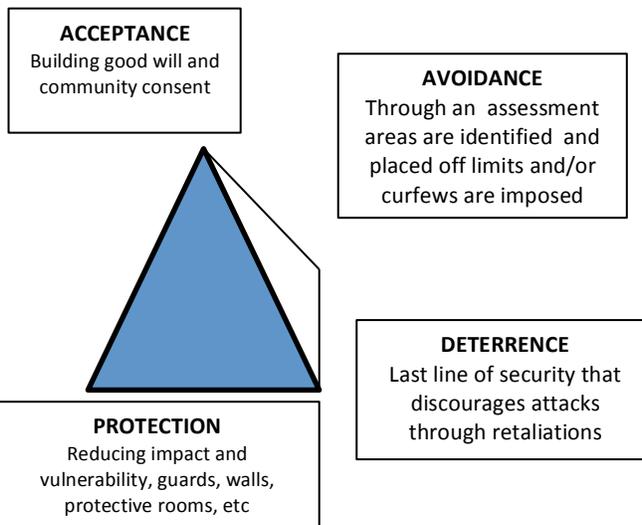
Physicians for Peace Security Strategy

Our policy is to ensure the maximum safety of its employees in cases of threats to security or health. Awareness of security/safety issues and evacuation procedures is critical in all locations, whether at home, at work, or in a hotel while traveling. Every traveling team member has a responsibility to help ensure his/her own safety and the safety of his/her colleagues.

All security policies, guidance, and best practices are drawn from decades of shared experience of many security experts and program implementers in the humanitarian and NGO communities. The foundation of any security program begins with a strategy. Without a strategy focused on an organization's fundamental principle, the security policy most often becomes a dusty binder that sits on a shelf in an office. But a policy that incorporates its values into its strategy begins the process of enhancing and enabling its programs instead of hampering and hindering them. There are four components which work together as a single unit that comprise an organization's security strategy, referred to as the "Security Pyramid".

The Security Pyramid

Acceptance is the first line of security for any development or humanitarian project. Under this strategy—also called “building goodwill”— a project focuses on gaining a community’s “consent” for its presence. For example, if people understand that a project is working to improve their community’s health or infrastructure, they are more likely to accept outsiders. However, acceptance must never be assumed; it must be earned and maintained over time. Actions that damage the image of the project or organization—such as disrespecting local cultures or speeding in project vehicles—can weaken the acceptance strategy.



Protection, the second line of security, is also known as “hardening the target.” This strategy involves reducing a location’s vulnerability through tangible security measures such as high walls around the office compound, guards, safe rooms and bomb shelters, procedures for restricting entrance into the compound or office, or simply making sure windows are rolled up and doors are locked at all times on project vehicles. The protection strategy is largely guided by the local context and uses many of the same devices and procedures as most businesses, NGOs, and residences in the area do.

Deterrence is the third line of security. It is used only in high-risk areas, such as conflict zones and places where threats of terrorism, open conflict, and/or crime are at critical levels. Deterrence discourages attacks through the threat of retaliation. For example, having armed guards can deter attacks by making potential assailants doubt they will succeed or making them believe the cost of attacking would be too high.

Avoidance, the fourth line, is a tactic that has been utilized for centuries just as the previous three components. Simply stated, if a place is dangerous one should not go there. The identification of where those dangerous locations may be should be based upon the Security Risk Assessment (SRA). The first portion of the SRA process analyzes the locations and the programming to be provided. From there the SRA will be able to assist in mitigation areas and programs that may be exposed to elevated risk levels. Once these areas or programs are identified, the frequency and/or impact of those risks associated with them can be mitigated through policy, insurance, training and other techniques. For example, an assessment might identify an elevated crime rate near a particular program at night. Mitigation in a form of policy would invoke a curfew to ensure that those traveling have returned at a particular time or provide a car service to safely transport individuals around the area.

None of these components exists in isolation. In *high-risk* locations where deterrence is heavily emphasized, a project and its staff should equally emphasize acceptance with the stake-holders in

the community. A project that is popular with a community should still build walls around its compound if that is what most organizations in the area do. Effective security strategies will have the flexibility to draw on these four components as the context and situation require.

IMPARTIALITY: Physicians for Peace is an impartial, secular humanitarian organization and it neither supports nor opposes any foreign government, political, religious or ethnic group or party. All staff and volunteers are expected to rigorously maintain this neutrality, both in substance and appearance.

PRIMACY OF LIFE: While staff and volunteers are expected to exercise all due care and diligence to protect the assets with which donors and funders have entrusted them, no staff member or volunteer should put their lives at risk in order to protect property.

PROPORTIONATE RISK: It is impossible to live in a risk free environment. In insecure environments, risks can be significant and any project activities can involve further exposure to these risks. Where staff and volunteers are exposed to risks, the work that can be achieved must always outweigh the risks taken. Physicians for Peace will seek to meet its specific country mission or overall organizational mission at an acceptable level of risk to its staff and volunteers. Keeping this in mind, Physicians for Peace will postpone, temporarily withdraw from, or completely cancel projects or programs in a country where the security situation no longer allows staff members and volunteers to work without unduly risking their safety.

INDIVIDUAL RESPONSIBILITY: While Physicians for Peace is responsible for developing the overall organizational security policy, each and every Physicians for Peace employee and volunteer must accept their individual responsibility for their own personal security as well as the security of the Physicians for Peace team when on an overseas mission. The behavior of an individual staff member or volunteer- while at work as well as while off duty - can have dramatic impact on the security of the team and the entire future of Physicians for Peace programs in the host country. Therefore, it is very important that each Physicians for Peace employee and volunteer understands and accepts this responsibility, and understands why failing to adhere to security and behavioral guidelines can put other members of the team at risk and lead to dismissal or other disciplinary action.

SAFETY AND SECURITY: Security in this sense refers to the threat posed by acts of violence or crime. While securing Physicians for Peace personnel and assets from violence and crime is of primary concern, in many situations it is safety threats such as vehicle accidents, malaria, water-borne disease, HIV, TB and other health threats that pose the greatest risks to humanitarian workers. Physicians for Peace staff and volunteers are obliged to take reasonable safety measures to protect their own health and safety as well as that of their team members. Again, safety is an individual responsibility, but unsafe behavior by one team member may put others at risk.

LOCAL SECURITY PROTOCOLS: When in place, each Physicians for Peace field office must adopt a local security protocol that reflects Physicians for Peace's programs. It is the responsibility of the employee or contractor to ensure that adequate security protocols are developed and revised as needed. These local protocols will be structured to reflect guidelines provided by Physicians for Peace headquarters including a clear threat assessment and

operational strategies under each of the four elements of the security triangle; acceptance, protection, deterrence, and avoidance. An effective local security protocol must balance all four elements. A strong acceptance strategy with supportive protection and deterrence elements is ideal. However, where local conditions limit the effectiveness of the acceptance strategies, it is necessary to build stronger protection and deterrence capabilities.

NO BRIBES or SIGNIFICANT CONCESSIONS: Physicians for Peace will never stop working to secure the release of a member of its staff or volunteer should the unlikely event of a detention or abduction occur while on deployment by the organization. Additionally, Physicians for Peace will not make significant concessions in programs nor any other means for the release of an abducted staff or volunteer. Neither will Physicians for Peace offer rewards, inducements, or bribes to local officials or others outside the organization to carry out their normal tasks nor to perform illegal services.

THE RIGHT TO WITHDRAW: Physicians for Peace staff and volunteers maintain their right to decline to take on an overseas deployment or travel assignment without suffering disciplinary action if they are convinced that a particular assignment poses undue risk to their life, safety and health.

FAILURE TO FOLLOW SECURITY OR SAFETY GUIDELINES IS A DISCIPLINARY MATTER: Staff and volunteers who do not follow organizational safety or security guidelines put others at risk. Even something as simple as unsafe driving by a Physicians for Peace staff member or volunteer or failing to obey certain behavioral guidelines could put other staff or team members at risk or create a very negative public image for the organization. Such actions may result in Physicians for Peace taking disciplinary action (for example, termination of employment, being barred from participating in future overseas missions, etc.) against a staff member or volunteer.

NO RIGHT TO REMAIN: Physicians for Peace has the right to withdraw its staff and volunteers from situations that it considers to be dangerous. Staff and volunteers are obliged to obey those instructions. This applies not only at the project level within country but also to the country program as a whole. If a staff or volunteer chooses to disregard Physicians for Peace instructions and remain behind, Physicians for Peace bears no responsibility for the safety and security of that particular individual.

EVACUATION: In the event of an evacuation due to a natural disaster, outbreak of an armed conflict or other unexpected security condition, Physicians for Peace, working with appropriate authorities and organizations will activate a Crisis Management Team in order to assist in the emergency evacuation and/or relocation of its staff and volunteers.

EQUAL RIGHTS: Different groups may face different levels of risk in different societies. Physicians for Peace's security rules are non-discriminatory and apply equally to all individuals engaged in the work of the organization. Staff and volunteers facing particular risks because of the choice of their destination or assignment will be advised of those risks and advised what security measures they should take. Even while adhering to and respecting the equality of all staff and volunteers, in some cases, Physicians for Peace will not be able to deploy staff of a

particular group or gender in a particular area if it is determined that the safety and security of that particular individual or individuals, as well as the security and safety of other members of the team or the future of Physicians for Peace program in a particular country, could be in jeopardy by such deployment.

ARMED SECURITY: Physicians for Peace neither advocates nor prohibits the use of armed security guards or escorts by its staff members or volunteers deployed. While Physicians for Peace remains mindful that in some circumstances it might be necessary to employ protective and deterrent measures such as armed guards to ensure the security of its staff and volunteers, the use of armed elements in securing Physicians for Peace staff and assets must be taken with the utmost of seriousness as it is generally seen as counterproductive to humanitarian work. It is essential that armed elements do not undermine the security of the broader community or add support to one faction or another of a conflict. Physicians for Peace employees or contractors may adopt country-level policies allowing or disallowing armed protection in consultation with Physicians for Peace headquarters.

SECURITY FOCAL POINTS: “No Programming without Security”. Physicians for Peace will identify a security focal point for each program. In most cases the focal point will be the Physicians for Peace Program Director and in most cases the designated security focal point will have other job responsibilities. The security focal point will be delegated with the following responsibilities: monitor the security environment, report security incidents as needed, represent Physicians for Peace in security related meetings that might be organized by the host government or other international organizations working in the country, organize local staff and volunteer security training, oversee the revision of country specific security plans and policies, orient new staff (national and expatriate) in security issues in that particular country, and advise the headquarters on security matters concerning their specific country.

Summary

The landscape of the security environment is constantly changing. Just because Physicians for Peace has safely been to a location before, does not guarantee the exact same outcomes can be expected the next time the location is visited. The same location where a humanitarian organization’s programs, employees and volunteers were accepted, welcomed and safe could become a place where the safety of staff members or volunteers can no longer be counted on. Therefore, as a humanitarian organization involved overseas, we will constantly assess, monitor and adapt to the security environment and requirements in each work location. The above-mentioned security guidelines are neither meant to serve as specific security instructions for a particular country or a particular medical mission nor are adequate to encompass every security emergency or challenge that Physicians for Peace might encounter. Instead, these are meant to serve as overall organizational security guidelines within which additional country specific or project specific security instructions could be (and will be) developed and implemented as needed.