



## A principled guide to health and safety

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How the development and humanitarian NGO sector applies the spirit of the *Health and Safety at Work Act* to our unique working environment.

### Our commitment to health and safety:

We will seek to **control** policies and processes that mitigate the health and safety risks for New Zealand staff and volunteers, here and overseas.

We will seek to **influence** policies and processes that mitigate the health and safety risks for staff, contractors or local volunteers working for our partners or sub-contractors in different countries.

At all times we will be guided by what is **reasonably practicable** in the challenging environments where we work.

### Our mission

The primary mission of the international development and humanitarian sector is to support and strengthen the dignity and well-being of the world's most vulnerable communities. Keeping New Zealand staff and volunteers safe, and promoting good health and safety practices with our overseas partner communities and organisations is an intrinsic component of this mission.

### Risk and development go hand in hand

International NGOs are obliged to conduct their activities in overseas situations where health and safety risks are likely to be present, and in some cases high. CID members recognise the ethical duty to adopt effective risk management and mitigation tools, and commit to rigorous standards of conduct to achieve this. That means ensuring a consistent standard of quality performance and continuous improvement across the sector.

### Our commitment to a duty of care

As Persons Conducting a Business or an Undertaking (PCBU) under New Zealand's Health and Safety at Work Act, development and humanitarian NGOs acknowledge their specific legal duties and rights in relation to workplace health and safety. These duties include developing an understanding of the risks and hazards specific to the development and humanitarian sector, and to providing the highest level of protection against harm to health, safety and welfare from these risks, so far as is reasonably practicable.

### What 'reasonably practicable' means for us

CID member international NGOs accept that a 'reasonably practicable' approach applies within a set of structural constraints that limits the degree of control a PCBU may exercise in the management of sector-specific risks.

- International NGO activities often occur outside of New Zealand, typically in developing country environments where workers and other persons may face distinct health and safety risks from the New Zealand context. Each overseas context also has its own regulatory environment, with distinct legal and sector-specific professional standards.
- International NGOs also engage with a varied workforce in the conduct of their activities. This can include New Zealand-based workers, consultants and volunteers, as well as overseas foreign national staff, volunteers, contractors and organisational partners.

Given the unique risk profile of the development and humanitarian aid sector, it is not always 'reasonably practicable' to eliminate or avoid health and safety risks.

Our overarching approach is to identify where we can reasonably **control** activities, and where we can reasonably **influence** the activities of our partners, sub-contractors or other organisations, and then to establish the most effective approaches to managing risks and promoting health and safety.