



Health and Safety Guideline and Templates for New Zealand Humanitarian and Aid Workers

Introduction to this guide

This guide includes tools, links to policies, and general principles and approaches used in New Zealand and globally to support Council for International Development (CID) members to deliver on their health and safety requirements, particularly in their engagement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). The aim is to encourage common and effective approaches to support compliance. The guide covers five areas:

- Collection of health and safety standards and good practice
- MFAT policies relating to health and safety
- New Zealand Health and Safety at Work Act 2015
- Suggested content for health and safety Policies
- Resource sheets and templates.

For those organisations with no established policies, these templates are available to use and adapt as required. For those agencies with existing policies, the examples provide reassurance that you are doing what is required to comply with the legislation, and they may encourage a re-think in some areas. [Some agencies](#) have shared their policies, templates or experiences (World Vision, Save the Children, Caritas). Guidance from MFAT may also prompt you to assess how your own organization can best respond to staff needs.

A few tips: Human resource policies benefit the organization most when staff have been involved in their creation and are briefed on their use; and effective 'Duty of Care' policies require managers to implement them and monitor their effects.

We highlight issues and needs of humanitarian and development workers prior to, during and following their deployment and will continually update this policy guideline and its documents and templates, in collaboration with you and MFAT. That requires continued information sharing with us.

The guidelines are about health and safety rather than security, and does not cover aspects of security management or practice that are specific to particular locations, cultures, or types of humanitarian operation. Instead it focuses on generic aspects that may be applicable in a wide variety of situations.

Collection of health and safety standards and associated good practice

There are many humanitarian health and safety standards and associated good practice resources specific to development and humanitarian activities:

The **Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS)** sets out Nine Commitments that organisations and individuals involved in humanitarian response can use to improve the quality and effectiveness of the assistance they provide. As a core standard, the CHS framework describes the essential

elements of principled, accountable and high-quality humanitarian action, each with guiding notes and questions to inform monitoring action. The [2015 CHS Guidance Notes and Indicators](#) are a background against which development organisations may develop relevant and meaningful health, safety and security policies. Humanitarian organisations use it as a voluntary code with which to align their own internal procedures.

The **Sphere Project** is a voluntary initiative that brings a wide range of humanitarian agencies together to improve the quality of humanitarian assistance and accountability of humanitarian actors to their constituents, donors and affected populations. The Sphere Handbook, [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response](#) is one of the most widely known and internationally recognized sets of common principles and universal minimum standards in health, safety and security policy. Mapped out across key actions and indicators, and supplemented with guidance notes, [Core Standard 6 'Aid Worker Performance'](#) outlines appropriate management, supervisory and psychosocial support for the development of policy that protects aid workers by establishing knowledge, skills behaviours and attitudes to plan and implement an effective humanitarian response with dignity and respect.

CHS and Sphere frameworks complement one another. The Sphere Project has committed to fully integrate the CHS into the Sphere Handbook, and the CHS will not change or replace Sphere's Humanitarian Charter, Protection Principles or the minimum standards in the Handbook's four technical chapters for WASH; Food security and nutrition; shelter, settlement and non-food items; health action.

The **Antares Foundation** has developed its own guidelines for good practice for managing stress in humanitarian workers. The [Guidelines for Good Practice](#) are intended to help organisations define their own needs in relation to stress management and develop their own staff care system. The eight principles suggested in the Guidelines can be universally applied, but they will be implemented using indicators based on the specific context and culture of the organization.

Building on previous guidelines, the [People In Aid Code](#) seeks to offer agencies an effective framework for human resources management, helping them assess and raise their performance. Under an overarching principle "people are central to the achievement of our mission", the Code links together aims and indicators in seven areas of (i) [health, safety and security](#); (ii) learning, training and development; (iii) recruitment and selection; (iv) consultation and communication; (v) support, management and leadership; (vi) staff policies and practices; and (vii) human resources strategy.

Irish Aid has developed its own guidelines for [NGO Professional Safety and Security Management](#). These guidelines have been designed to assist NGOs to fulfil duty-of-care responsibilities towards their own staff and aid contractors. Within the guidelines, each standard is translated into key actions, indicators and guiding notes to provide a usable reference for moving beyond minimum requirements to a high level of professionalism in safety and security.

Each of the principles is followed by a discussion on why the principle is important, as well as brief case studies from current practice by many agencies from across the world. The Code is relevant for agencies in development and advocacy as well as emergency response.

MFAT policies relating to health and safety

MFAT is committed to the health, safety and well-being of all those involved in programmes and activities, and that includes staff and volunteers in NGOs funded by MFAT. Under the Health and Safety at Work Act, it has a duty to ensure the health and safety of workers whose activities are influenced or directed by MFAT, while the workers are carrying out the specific tasks. Additional information is available here: [information for workers and contractors](#).

MFAT focusses on what is 'reasonably practicable' for MFAT employees, their partners and contractors to keep workers and others safe. The [Health and Safety Acknowledgement Form](#), represents minimum standards of health and safety for organisations delivering New Zealand Aid Programme contracts and grants. Organisations must acknowledge compliance with these requirements and include completed Safety Plans before work is undertaken.

New Zealand Health and Safety at Work Act 2015

The [Health and Safety and Work Act \(HSWA\)](#) came into effect on 4 April 2016. The Act introduces new obligations for employers to identify workplace hazards and manage associated risk.

A guiding principle of the HSWA is that workers and others need to be given the highest level of protection from workplace health and safety risks, as far as is reasonable. The Act shifts the focus from monitoring and recording health and safety incidents to proactively identifying and managing risks at all stages of a task. While legal liability and risks under the Act for overseas aid workers is unclear, some areas are common:

- **Physical health risks** posed by local disease and limited access to care;
- **Personal security risks** due to crime, political instability and conflict in fragile situations;
- **Physical safety risks** arising from weak regulatory capacity or regulations (traffic accidents, building codes, sanitary standards);
- **Psychological risk** due to stressful working environments, long hours, post-traumatic stress, cultural dislocation or isolation;

The Act does not impose a one-size-fits-all approach to risk management. Each organization is expected to undertake what is 'reasonably practicable' for it to manage the risk.

What is crucial under the legislation is that you identify the health and safety risks in your agency, and then consider and put in place the **behaviours, practices, systems, processes and training** needed to eliminate them, and where they can't be eliminated, minimise those risks.

New Zealand INGOs have developed a principled guide to health and safety (**Appendix 1**) to inform how the development and humanitarian NGO sector applies the spirit of the Health and Safety at Work Act to their unique working environment.

Suggested content of a health and safety policy

A health and safety policy is a document that each organisation should develop, and describes an agency's commitment to ensure a safe and healthy working environment. Suggested content of a health and safety policy:

General introduction, definitions and basic principles:

- General statement acknowledging risk in aid work;
- Statement on the basic position of the organisation towards national laws;
- Clarification of what is meant by health and safety;
- General statement that individual staff members and the organisation have a responsibility to try and reduce risk, and that the organisation commits itself to do so;

- Basic principles representing the organisation's philosophy and practice regarding security management (eg pillars of its health, safety and security philosophy and practice);
- Commitment to include a risk assessment in any general assessment;
- Status of the document.

As a rule, guidelines should be separated from a policy statement.

Appendix 1: A Principled guide to health and safety

COUNCIL for INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
Kaunihera mō te Whakapakari Ao Whānui



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.

Health and safety templates

Induction Process

All staff should receive an induction prior to commencing work. Prior to any health & safety induction, ensure the worker has read and understood the organisations' Health and Safety Policy & Procedures. This should include the NGO's process of assessing risks and for reporting risks.

General Information	
Organisation name:	
Worker's name:	
Name of Person Conducting Induction:	
Date Induction completed:	
Discuss the following Health and Safety control measures with the worker:	
NGO Health and Safety Checklist: This broad checklist is a prompt for organisations and workers to consider potential risks and what can be done to mitigate them.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Safety and Security Briefing Checklist: Before travelling to or working overseas, all NGO staff must be fully briefed on the safety and security situation.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Medical and Stress Management Checklist: It is the responsibility of NGO staff to ensure their staff are kept healthy both physically and mentally during and post their assignments.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Basic Vehicle Checklist: Vehicles should be properly maintained and equipped so that they are less likely to break down. Checking a vehicle is the responsibility of the driver, but all staff should be familiar with how to conduct a basic vehicle check. Staff using drivers in-country should complete the Vehicle Check list below.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Travel Checklist: It is the responsibility of NGOs to take precautions to assist their staff to have safe and secure travel when on NGO business. This includes cross-referencing the MFAT 'Safe Travel' advice where appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Health and Safety Incident Report: In the case of an incident it's the responsibility of staff on the ground to complete and report (see checklist below).	<input type="checkbox"/> Completed
Sign Off: Copy this form and have the inductee sign it to acknowledge their completed induction	
Signed (worker):	Signed (person conducting induction):

Health and Safety Checklist

Before travelling to or working overseas, all NGO staff must be fully briefed on the safety and security situation.

General Context	<input type="checkbox"/> Political, Safety situation and political trends <input type="checkbox"/> Key issues: -Crime related issues -Political and conflict related violence -Environmental hazards <input type="checkbox"/> Local laws, cultural norms and customs that affect NGOs	
Roles and Responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety Management structure and responsibilities of Country Office/Field Office <input type="checkbox"/> Individual responsibilities	
Safety	<input type="checkbox"/> Office safety and security (access: guards, location of first aid kit, fire extinguishers and emergency exits) <input type="checkbox"/> Travel and movement procedure (authorisation, communication, check points) <input type="checkbox"/> Transportation (transport policies/driving rules, taxis and public transport) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication procedures and equipment (mobile phone coverage, radio use, back up communication, landline phones, alert system) <input type="checkbox"/> Residential security (guards, emergency supplies and equipment) <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation Map (no-go areas, location of NGOs facility) <input type="checkbox"/> Reporting accidents	
Other Safety Considerations	<input type="checkbox"/> Policy, procedures and advice for specific threats <input type="checkbox"/> Financial security <input type="checkbox"/> Information security and the use of specific equipment (GPS, cameras) <input type="checkbox"/> Off-duty activities (curfew and restrictions)	
Health	<input type="checkbox"/> Food, water and hygiene <input type="checkbox"/> Special health concerns (malaria, dengue, avian influenza etc.) <input type="checkbox"/> HIV/ Aids <input type="checkbox"/> Approved doctors/hospitals and clinics <input type="checkbox"/> Medical emergency procedures	
Necessary documents	<input type="checkbox"/> NGO ID Card <input type="checkbox"/> Passport (original or copy) <input type="checkbox"/> Travel Visas /permits <input type="checkbox"/> Travel notifications / registration (MFAT SafeTravel website)	
Key contents information	<input type="checkbox"/> Country Director <input type="checkbox"/> Health and Safety and Security Office/ Focal point <input type="checkbox"/> Other agencies and Embassies/ High Commissions <input type="checkbox"/> Emergency services and facilities (Police, fire brigade, Ambulance, hospitals and clinics)	
DATE:	NAME:	SIGNATURE:
Approved by (line manager):		

Medical Management Checklist:

It is the responsibility of NGO staff to ensure their staff are kept healthy both physically and mentally during and post their assignments.

NGO policies concerning medical care are available and briefed to staff		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Staff have received all appropriate immunisations, vaccinations and pre-existing medical conditions are recorded		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Staff members have proper medical insurance, including evacuation insurance with clauses appropriate to potential risks, prior to assignment		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
NGO policies and procedures concerning stress management are available and briefed to staff		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
NGO has provided provided staff basic needed equipment (mosquito nets, first aid kit, etc.)		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
NGO policies concerning post-stress management and psychiatric treatment are available and briefed to staff		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Staff have received training in HIV/Aids awareness, first aid (including CPR) and potential threats in the area, with updated training when required.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Staff have been sourced all personal protective equipment required such as a personal alarm, mosquito net etc.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
DATE:	NAME:	SIGNATURE:
Approved by (line manager):		

Vehicle Checklist

Vehicles should be properly maintained and equipped so that they are less likely to break down. Checking a vehicle is the responsibility of the driver, but all staff should be familiar with how to conduct a basic vehicle check.

Route:	
Are you aware of the planned route and of any potential threats or areas to avoid?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Will you reach your planned destination before nightfall? If not, are there planned checkpoints where food, water, safe shelter and other amenities are available?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Is there an alternative route that can be taken?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Are both the NGO Home Office and the people at your destination aware of your travel plans and know the steps that should be taken if you do not arrive as scheduled?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Equipment:	
Is the vehicle equipped with spare tyre, a jack, flashlight, warning triangle, first aid kit, tool kit?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Is the communication equipment stored securely and do passengers know how to use it?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Are seatbelts functional?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Can the doors be locked and should they be in the context?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Is all appropriate documentation (including vehicle registration, road tax, insurance, permission to travel, radio license, waybill for supplies, personal identification (ID card, passport or photocopy) and relevant driver's license) in the vehicle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Conditions:	
Is the driver intoxicated or do they appear fatigued?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Do the weather conditions require less speed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
Do the conditions of the roads require less speed?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes

Travel Checklist

It is the responsibility of NGO staff to take precautions to assist their staff to have safe and secure travel when on NGO business.

My travel plans have been approved by my Manager		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I have registered my travel plans with the official consular services/ website for my country of citizenship		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
The Country Office has consented to me travelling to a local office		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I have read the destination country's advisories and travel updates on MFAT's site: https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/ and applied the advice if and where appropriate.		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I have been given an internationally valid medical card		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I am aware of my health risks and have taken any precautions according to my personal needs		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I will take with me the following documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Copy of passport and visas - Copy of Health and Accident insurance - Personal information on medical treatment, and the contact address of a medical doctor - Employment and personal contact information - NGO ID Card 		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I have left copies of all the above with my Manager at the NGO Home Office		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
I understand the risks associated with my mission and confirm I shall comply with all instructions during my assignment		<input type="checkbox"/> Yes
DATE:	NAME:	SIGNATURE:
Approved by (line manager):		

Health and Safety Incident Report

Personal Information (of person filling this form)		
Name		
Title		
Relationship to NGO		
Email		
Phone		
Incident Data		
Region		
Country		
Place of incident		
Date & Time of incident		
Did the incident happen	<input type="checkbox"/> ON DUTY <input type="checkbox"/> OFF DUTY	
Type of incident		
Category		
What happened? What Actions were taken at the time?		
Is it notifiable or reportable to	<input type="checkbox"/> MFAT <input type="checkbox"/> Worksafe	
NGO staff involved		
Name		
Consequence and severity (minor/major injury, death, post incident trauma)		
Relationship to NGO		
Investigation		
Findings from investigation of incident		
Actions taken by NGO		
Action Description		
Actions taken by others		
Action Description		
Attachments		
Supporting documents		
DATE:	NAME:	SIGNATURE:
Approved by (line manager):		

Further Resources

Templates

- Hui E!: [Hazard Management Register](#)
- CID: [Health and Safety Register](#)

Research

- OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch: [To Stay and Deliver: Good practise for humanitarian in complex security environments](#)
- Antares Foundation: [Managing stress in humanitarian workers](#)
- Feinstein International Center: [Briefing Paper: Sexual Assault Against Humanitarian and Development Aid Workers](#)
- [Embracing Evaluative thinking for better outcomes: Four NGO Case Studies](#)
- OCHA Policy Development and Studies Branch: [Safety and security for national humanitarian workers](#)
- Save the Children: [Safety First 2010 Edition](#)

Guidelines

- Oxfam GB: [Improving the Safety of Civilians: A Protection Training Pack](#)
- CID: [Health and Safety Factsheet](#)
- CID: [Health and Safety at Work Act](#)
- Worksafe NZ: [What events need to be notified?](#)
- Canadian Council for International Co-operation (CCIC): [Code of ethics](#)
- [Salvation Army: Broad Outline](#)
- Australian Council for International Development (ACFID): [Human resources policy](#)