

Welcome to Module 2: Safety and Security

Safety and security are important components of field operations management. In Section 1, we will look at some of the high level safety and security risk assessment considerations that you should take into account *before* you start your mission. These include legitimacy; approvals; personal identity; and visibility. In Section 2, we will examine some of the assessment considerations you should think about immediately *before* you depart and *during* the mission, such as prior assessment, real-time risk management, and mitigation.

[Section 1](#)

There are several safety and security issues that you need to consider when running program assessments, implementing programs, or conducting third-party monitoring and evaluations. These include: 1 - **legitimacy**; 2 - **approvals**; 3 - **personal identity**; and 4 - **visibility**.

1. First of all, it is important to check that you have appropriate **legitimacy** with regard to the accreditation of your organization or the accreditation of the operational partner you are assessing. Accreditation usually comes from the appropriate capitol ministry for your type of operation or from the district authorities. You must carry these accreditation papers with you at all times in the correct language wherever you go as they may be asked for at checkpoints or roadblocks. This is especially important in conflict areas as they will enable you to gain crucial access to those you are aiming to aid.
2. You will also need certified **approvals** at the local level. This is so that people

and authorities have a clear understanding and awareness of who you are, what you are there to do, and why you are there. Local approval and awareness can be obtained verbally but should also always be written in the appropriate language with a signature. This is so that you can show evidential proof if you are challenged with regard to your presence on an operation.

3. If you are working for an organization, they should provide you with some form of **personal identity** card, preferably with a photograph, clarifying who you are. This form of personal identification must exist separately to your passport and/or driving license. It should be personalized with details relevant and tailored to the organization you are working for/with. This should establish the legitimacy of any papers you are carrying with you such as government approval papers. These affirm that you as an individual are conducting an approved operation in said location.

4. The fourth and final safety and security measure you must consider is high **visibility**. This depends on your overall higher level security assessment. When conducting this assessment, you must consider the following factors:

- a. What sort of visibility are you going to wear?
 - i. You might have a chalet or a jacket with your organization's emblem on it. You could have an identity badge or you could have markings on the cars that you are traveling in.
- b. How is your organization recognized or perceived by the public or local authorities? This depends on how the actions of your organization have impacted locals in the past as well as current social attitudes toward foreign or local interventions.

Remember:

in some situations which may be volatile, high visibility is not always appropriate.

Hostility may increase the likelihood of attempted thefts or being stopped at checkpoints.

Section 2

We will now look at some of the assessment considerations you should think about immediately before you depart and during the mission. There are 3 main topics that will be discussed here. These are 1 - **prior assessment**; 2 - **real-time risk management**; and 3 - **mitigation**.

1. The **assessment prior** to departure is necessary for a number of reasons. Most importantly, it is designed to update the necessary authorities, members of your team and district personnel if anything has changed since your original security assessments. Previously, in module 1, we looked at the political, environmental and conflict security risks regarding your mission. These risks should be reviewed again immediately before your team departs for the field.
2. Upon arrival in the field, it is important that you and your team conduct a **real-time risk assessment or risk management**. There are several factors to think about when doing this, these include:
 - a. Is it clear within your team who is responsible for what if you're stopped at a checkpoint?
 - b. If you have security issues that occur during your mission, are the roles clear and are duties assigned and understood by every team member involved?

To put this into perspective, let's look at the example scenario below.

You and your team are travelling to a nearby refugee camp where you plan to distribute food aid. You need to get there quickly and safely however social tensions are rife, and hostilities have broken out sporadically in the surrounding area. The refugee camp is located 30 kilometres away from your base of operations and you and your team are travelling there by car in convoy.

What safety and security concerns can you think of that might inhibit your access or endanger you and others involved?

- First of all, whilst travelling on the road, take the opportunity to update yourself on any changes happening in the conflict situation. This may involve the frontline moving, new incursions, or fresh hostilities of any kind.
 - Do not assume that the situation will be static after you have conducted your previous security assessments. Always take the opportunity to refresh and update your knowledge. You could ask for information from the police, local authorities, the Red Cross or other NGOs working in the area.
 - If the security situation has deteriorated, you need to consider your options. *Ask yourself: is it still appropriate to continue with the mission or is it better to return to base and rethink the operation?* For team leaders, remember, your prime responsibility is the protection and welfare of your staff and operations team.
3. If you get into a situation where there are unprecedented security and safety issues, you must consider how to **mitigate** the situation.
- a. Do you attempt to diffuse hostilities in order to continue with your mission, but risk endangering your team?
 - b. Or do you comply with the demands of whoever it might be to terminate your mission and leave, thereby avoiding conflict?

The bottom line is do not put your team at risk or in unnecessary danger. Peoples'

welfare is more important than what you may consider to be the critical goals of your mission. There is no simple answer to ensuring one's and others' safety and security. But just remember the 4 key steps involved in planning your operation: legitimacy, approvals, personal identity, and visibility, and the 3 important considerations immediately before you depart and during your mission.

Remember, the local authorities will have copies of your accreditation papers for your mission and your access approvals. These will be very important for diffusing a situation, but it might still be the case that you have to cancel the mission, return to base, and rethink and adapt your original operation plans.