

Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC)



Health, Safety and Security policy

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Health, safety and security guideline

1. Introduction

The Ethiopian Orthodox Church Development and Inter-Church Aid Commission (EOC-DICAC is a development wing of the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; established in 1972 by legal notice No.415.

Health, safety and security policy reflect the organization's unique mission, mandate, commitments, mode of operations and risk tolerance. It clearly articulates the expectations the organization has of its employees and the organization's responsibility to its employees, including redress in the event the organization or its employees fail to adhere to security guideline.

1.1. Applicability of the policy

The Policy applies to all persons working for the EOC-DICAC. This includes all EOC-DICAC staff and consultants who are contracted or deployed by EOC-DICAC, contractors representing EOC-DICAC, and also visitors.

1.2. Purpose of the policy

EOC-DICAC is committed to ensure staff safety and security and the organization aim to integrate security in a way that it is relevant and user-friendly. Good security management is about good program management which would enable staff work safely and securely. By proactively managing and deal with crises, EOC-DICAC could enable all who works for it deliver their duties safely and securely to benefit staff, target groups, and other stakeholders.

In general, this policy gives an overview of generic procedure for the safety and security issues that may affect EOC-DICAC's operations. In order to address newly emerging issues this document will be reviewed as necessary.



1.3. Organizational duty of care, and individual responsibilities

EOC-DICAC views staff safety and security as one of the first and foremost concerns in its development, humanitarian and advocacy work. The sharp increase in attacks on aid workers all over the world in the past decade, particularly among humanitarian aid workers, makes it imperative that EOC-DICAC to put in place this policy to ensure the safety and security of their program personnel (employed or volunteers) and resources.

Safety and security management is a collective responsibility. It involves participation by every person working for an organization. Trustees, Executive Officers, and Directors should ensure the member organizations exercise duty of care towards all staff. This commitment needs to be visible throughout the management line. Directors at head office and their field managers will lead by example, demonstrating a systematic approach to assessing and managing safety and security. Staffs of EOC-DICAC should use each other as resources, for example, sharing travel briefings.

The organization will be responsible to ensure the safety and policy committee is adequately prepared and equipped to manage the risks the staff face when delivering assistance to those who need help. Directors and senior managers are responsible for the safety of their staff and must ensure staff has access to training and resources. Staff is responsible for their individual well-being and should take their individual responsibility seriously.

The security measures of EOC-DICAC are depend on each individual employee, visitors or consultants acting responsibly, using common sense, good judgment and the advice of experienced colleagues whenever necessary. Each staff member should stay aware of security risks, keep her or himself up to date on security procedures, and promote the security of other staff. All travelers are expected to use the advice from the safety and security committee and their experience and common sense to make sensible judgments on security issues when travelling, whether inside or outside the country with relief or with no relief operations.

1.4. Risk assessment



A risk assessment should be carried out before any visit to any potentially insecure operational area or any action that could carry a security risk. A similar assessment is necessary before making public statements.

The designated safety and security committee should conduct a risk assessment as often as deemed necessary. Before starting work in a new operational area, a risk assessment should be carried out before work begins or the initial visit takes place. Annex A has a standard format and guidance for carrying out a risk assessment. EOC-DICAC is responsible for conducting timely risk assessments; whereas, individual staff are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the basic terms and being able to follow the security plan based on the risk assessment.

Depending on the context, individual regions of the country may be assigned different risk ratings. High risk levels are generally associated with civil unrest and crime, but may reflect increased threats from disease epidemics or natural disasters.

Low risk

Areas (regions, towns) categorized low risk are those essentially stable and free of political, economic, and social unrest. In these areas, the crime is generally low in terms anti-government or terrorist groups, if present, exhibit limited operational capabilities. It is important to remember those locations with low crime and stable social systems may still have threats from natural disasters, such as volcanoes or floods. Thus normal security precautions are required in low-risk regions.

Moderate risk

Regions or towns categorized under moderate risk are where low-level political, economic, and social unrest is present and/or where safety and security infrastructure (police or medical care for example) is poorly developed. Organized anti-government or terrorist groups may be active but not strong enough to threaten government stability. The region may be involved in a localized dispute, exhibit high crime rates, or prone to natural disasters or disease epidemics. Increased safety and security precautions are required in moderate-risk regions.

High risk



These are those regions or town where organized anti-government or terrorist groups are very active and pose a serious threat to the country's political or economic stability. A civil war may be in progress and paramilitary forces may be in control of a significant area.

Severe risk

These are towns or regions where the level of violence presents a direct threat to the safety and well-being of development and/or humanitarian aid workers. Operations are usually not possible and reasonably assured without military support and security. In these areas there may be a need to temporary suspend operations, relocation of international staff, and/or additional precautions for national staff.

1.5. Safety and security planning

No matter what security strategy is adopted, certain fundamental safety and security preparations and procedures are appropriate in all locations and in all activities of the humanitarian organization. EOC-DICAC should develop its own safety and security procedures and provide staff training and equipment to ensure effective implementation.

1.6. Briefings and debriefings

Briefings and debriefings will help allow for the quick and effective exchange of security and safety information between the organization and the staff and those who work for EOC-DICAC.

1.6.1. Briefings

EOC-DICAC should ensure that appropriate security briefings are given to all staff, invited visitors and consultants, who are being hosted by the organization. The aim of a security briefing is to enable all to understand the local situation sufficiently to live, travel and work safely in it. Staffs who are based at grass root level should receive a full security briefing, appropriate to the local situation, before they start work and at all times. All staff, visitors and consultants being hosted by EOC-DICAC, should get security briefing before them travel to any location. The briefing should outline the current risks and the main precautions that need to be taken



This briefing may be complemented by a follow up phone call with a manager working in the location to which they are travelling. It should be accompanied by at least basic written information (for example recent situation reports) to remind them of points that they may not have taken in during a face-to-face briefing. On arrival, an additional security briefing can give greater details.

Further security briefings should be given as often as necessary according to the judgment of the relevant line manager, including when people are moving to a new location. For example, in low-risk locations, an annual security briefing may be sufficient. In some high-risk locations a daily security briefing may be required.

1.6.2. Debriefings

On return from work-related travel to high risk areas, the line manager should debrief the recent traveler, to:

- Check the staff member's general well-being
- Identify any lessons relevant to good security management for future trips, or anything that may change the agency's risk/threat analysis of the given area.
- Discuss any security-related difficulties experienced during the trip. Receive a completed incident report form (Annex B) from the traveler, if any incidents or near-misses occurred. 'Near-misses,' such as when the vehicle was confronted by threatening individuals with guns, though nothing actually occurred that harmed the staff, are equally important to capture on an incident report form.
- Ensure that the traveler who has been involved in an incident has the necessary medical checks, including psychological care, if necessary. It is important for managers to take a pro-active role to encourage and facilitate their staff receiving appropriate and adequate psychological care following exposure to a traumatic incident. Needs may differ with individuals depending on sex, age, culture, belief, or other such status.

2. Personal safety and security



EOC-DICAC with the involvement of coordination offices should conduct a comprehensive security assessment and develop and implement a security strategy and general safety and security procedures. However, every EOC-DICAC staff member must view safety and security as an individual responsibility. A staff member will gain a greater sense of security and self confidence by preparing ahead for a potential incident.

This section provides general safety and security guidelines that individual staff members can use. Most of them are common sense measures that are frequently forgotten when in an unfamiliar environment or during crisis. To successfully employ the safety and security measures EOC-DICAC and staff need to be vigilant. It is hoped that by applying these measures, EOC-DICAC staff can prevent safety and security incidents from ever occurring. When they do occur, the well prepared staff members can take quick and decisive action to minimize the likelihood of injury or damage.

2.1. Situational awareness

Developing situational awareness by examining the surroundings and potential threats is the first step in reducing the likelihood of a safety or security incident. Because each region poses its own unique threats, it is important to look at each region and culture with openness and discernment. Situational awareness in its simplest form means paying attention to your surroundings and being sensitive to changes in them. It begins with an understanding of the culture and history of the area and is reinforced by frequent interaction with the local people. EOC-DICAC will help incoming staff develop situational awareness by compiling cultural guidelines into a single document for use during staff orientation. It should include information on the country, the region, and the specific communities in the operational area, as well as the following:

- The identity of the various groups within the population and possible hostile or vulnerable groups.
- The sensitivities, policies, and capabilities of the host government.



- The relationship between local authorities and various interest groups, and the effectiveness of local government and civil infrastructure, such as police, fire and emergency response.
- Areas of criminal activity or instability.
- Situations that may lead to tension and confrontations among different factions.

2.2. Building community relations

Experienced field workers understand the value of protection provided through building positive rapport and good relations with the local population. Such positive acceptance can help reduce vulnerability, creating a buffer of neighbors committed to the safety of staff in the event of a crisis. Steps to building positive community relations include:

- Do not be aloof or isolated. Interact often with neighbors and other staff.
- Consider frequenting the local social gathering places, cafes, and parks. Families should be included as appropriate.
- Arrange an introduction to the local authorities as appropriate and build rapport with them.
- Become involved in community activities apart from work. If not from the area, learn the local language and practice it often. At a minimum, be aware of words or phrases that could be offensive.
- Avoid political discussions.
- Avoid being drawn into relationships that might carry personal obligations or expectations.
- Understand local religious and cultural beliefs and practices and the various issues that may arise from them.

General security guidelines

- Take time to plan activities. Try to know the exact route before traveling.



- Dress and behave appropriately, giving consideration to local customs.
- Learn a few words or phrases in the local language to deter an offender or call for help, such as “police” or “fire.”
- At a new assignment, find out about local customs and behavior and potential threats or areas to avoid.
- Know the local security arrangements, such as the nearest police station, emergency contact procedures, and potential safe areas.
- Maintain a calm, mature approach to all situations.
- Be non-provocative when confronted with hostility or potentially hostile situations.
- Be alert to the possibility of confrontation with individuals or groups. Be aware of times when crowds can be expected, such as after religious services or sporting events.
- All international visitors, family members, and visitors should register with their embassy or consulate. They should know the telephone numbers, contact personnel, location and emergency procedures for their embassy.

2.3. Criminal activity

In recent years, criminal activity has become a significant threat to the safety of aid workers. Criminal activity can take many forms, including armed assault, hijackings, or robbery. General precautions against criminal activity include:

- Avoid tourist areas that are often favorite places for criminal activity.
- Do not display jewelry, cash, keys, or other valuables in public.
- When carrying a backpack or purse, keep it close to the body. Do not carry valuables in these bags; instead, leave them in a secure place.
- It is better to carry only a small amount of money and a cheap watch to hand over if threatened. Divide money and ATM cards between two or three pockets or bags.

2.4. General guidelines for traveling

- Use hard case, lockable luggage and label it so the name and address are not easily seen.



- When traveling, leave a planned itinerary with a responsible person.
- Carry a list of emergency names, addresses, phone numbers, and the names of reputable hotels along the route.
- When appropriate, photocopy passport and other documents and carry only the copy, keeping a second copy at home or office. When carrying the original, consider disguising it with a plain slip-on cover.
- EOC-DICAC should provide photo identification cards for all staff and emergency contact cards for visitors. They can be laminated, two-sided cards with English or another local official language on the reverse.
- Carry a phone card or local coins to make emergency phone calls if required.
- In public areas or on local transport, sit near other people and hold all belongings.
- Use caution when taking taxis in areas where cab drivers are known to be involved in criminal activity. When available, take licensed taxis and always settle on the fare before beginning the trip. Have the destination address written out in the local language to show the driver if necessary.

2.5. Hotels

- Be sure the hotel is approved by the safety and security committee. Country Office.
- Take note if people are loitering in front of the hotel or in the lobby. Avoid hotels frequented by criminals.
- Ask for a room between the second and seventh floors, avoiding the top floor. This minimizes unwanted access from outside the building yet is within reach of most fire-fighting equipment.
- Be alert to the possibility of being followed to the room.
- Advise colleagues of hotel location and room number.



- Note the evacuation route in case of fire or emergency. Keep a flashlight by the bed to aid emergency evacuation.
- Always secure doors when inside the room, using locks and security chains.
- Examine the room, including cupboards, bathrooms, beds, and window areas for anything that appears suspicious.
- If the room has a telephone, check to be sure it is working properly.
- Keep room curtains closed during hours of darkness.
- Do not open the door to visitors (including hotel staff) unless positively identified. Use the door peephole or call the front desk for verification.
- When not in the room, consider leaving the light and TV or radio on.
- If available, use the hotel's safe deposit boxes for the storage of cash, traveler's checks, and any other valuables. Do not leave valuables or sensitive documents in the room.

2.6. Public transportation

- Avoid traveling alone.
- During off-peak hours, wait for the train or bus in a well-lit, designated area.
- In areas where crime is common on public transport, especially at night, consider using a taxi instead. In some areas, taxi use may also be dangerous but can be safer than waiting for public transport.
- Be mindful of pickpockets and thieves when waiting for transportation.
- If bus travel at night is unavoidable, sit near the driver. Avoid riding on deserted trains or buses.
- If train travel at night is unavoidable, select a middle car that is not deserted and try to sit by a window. This provides a quick exit in the event of an accident. Alternatively, select a lockable compartment if available.
- Leave any public transport that feels uncomfortable or threatening. After getting off any public transport, check to be sure no one is following.



2.7. Vehicle safety and security

Traffic and vehicle-related accidents are the major cause of injuries and fatalities among aid personnel. Driving in unfamiliar and sometimes difficult conditions, or where traffic laws are different from what staff members are used to, can increase the likelihood of an accident. If available and practical, all staff members should receive driver safety training.

General guidelines

- It is EOC-DICAC policy for all staff members to wear seat belts at all times, in the front and rear of the vehicle.
- Do not speed or drive too fast for conditions. Observe local driving laws and regulations.
- Take extra precautions when driving through rural villages or on undeveloped roads.
- Avoid night driving or driving alone.
- Avoid letting the fuel tank fall below half full.
- Keep a spare vehicle key in the office. Keep vehicle and residence keys on separate key chains to reduce additional losses during a carjacking.
- Never voluntarily carry unauthorized passengers, especially soldiers. However, if threatened, provide the transportation.
- Keep doors locked. Open windows no more than 5 cm and only those windows near occupied seats.
- Know where the vehicle safety and communication equipment is and how to use it. Know how to perform basic vehicle maintenance (changing a flat, checking and adding fluids, etc.)
- Motorcycle drivers and riders should wear helmets at all times.
- In remote areas or where threats may be present along the route, select primary and alternate routes. Avoid developing patterns.
- Avoid areas with criminal activity or known threats.



- When possible, consult with other agencies and organizations to monitor route conditions and change routes as necessary.
- If approaching a suspicious area, stop well before the area and observe other traffic passing through it. This is especially useful for “unofficial” or unexpected checkpoints or police roadblocks.
- Notify others of travel times, destination, and steps to take if late.
- Vehicles should be well maintained and checked daily. Safety discrepancies should be corrected before any journey. Make a maintenance checklist and keep a copy of the checklist and maintenance schedule with each vehicle.
- Do not travel without appropriate safety and communication equipment, such as first-aid kit, maps, compass, etc.
- Have travel documentation in order, including vehicle registration, inspections, and passes as required. All drivers should have a valid license.
- Avoid transporting sensitive documents or equipment in areas prone to banditry. Arrange proper permits for transporting items that could be interpreted as useful to combatants or terrorists.
- Mark official vehicles appropriately for the area. In most cases it is advantageous to have EOC-DICAC posters clearly visible.
- Consider posting a sign on your door or window indicating guns are not permitted in the vehicle.

2.8. Traffic accidents

Traffic accidents involving EOC-DICAC staff can be minimized by implementing defensive driver training and other precautions, but they can never be avoided entirely. When an accident is mishandled, it can quickly change from an unfortunate occurrence into a security risk. In extreme situations, it can trigger violence or threats of retribution. The following procedures are useful when involved in an accident.



- Quickly discern the attitudes and actions of people around the accident site to ensure that the staff member is not at risk by staying.
- Do not leave the site unless staff safety is jeopardized and then only to drive to the nearest police or military post.
- Provide care and assistance as appropriate. As appropriate, contact local authorities immediately and cooperate as required. Contact the Coordination Office as soon as practical.
- If feasible, take pictures of the scene and record the names and contact information of witnesses, responding authorities, and those involved.
- When approaching an accident involving other vehicles consider safety and security, taking care not to become involved in a second accident while responding.

2.9. Additional considerations for women

Female EOC-DICAC staff members should never be pressured, or allowed to forgo common sense safety measures, to prove themselves in the field. General safety and security measures are the same for everyone. Both men and women should review all sections of this policy guidelines. Additionally, women should consider the following:

- Upgrade hotel accommodations if they feel unsafe.
- For long-term housing, consider sharing a residence with another woman or living in a group home or apartment.
- Do not use first names in the telephone book or by the entryway or doorbell.
- Do not hesitate to call attention when in danger. Scream, shout, run, or sound the vehicle horn.
- Immediately leave a location or person that feels uncomfortable.

2.10. Sexual and Gender-based Violence Prevention



Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) can be found in every society and can be particularly high in complex emergencies, for the affected population but also for your staff. SGBV has both severe physical (STD, HIV/AIDS, unwanted pregnancy) as well as emotional health impacts. How to reduce the risk of sexual and gender based violence? Adequate response to the threat of work related SGBV comprises of:

- **Coordination**

Coordinate prevention with other agencies and include assessment and SGBV prevention directed activities in programming as well as in each security plan.

- **Monitoring**

The security officer/committee should keep updated on the level of SGBV in the country or in the area. There should be a trusted manager that staff can report sexual harassment and violence to, in confidence, regardless if it's another staff member or someone external to the organization but work-related.

- **Protection**

The protection of staff from SGBV is often linked to the protection and security of the beneficiaries of the program. All staff should be trained EOC-DICAC Code of Conduct on the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation. This Code of conduct should be signed by all staff and visitors. Rules for handling breach of Code of Conduct including firing of personnel should be well known to everyone in the program.

2.11. Health precautions

Healthy staffs tend to be more efficient, alert and safe. Therefore, it is vital that EOC-DICAC staffs take good care of their health and are rigorous about hygiene and other preventive measures. Typical health precautions include:

- Malaria precautions are essential, in areas where malaria is a risk. Malaria can kill, and often does. Take care to prevent mosquito bites. Precautions against malaria include:
 - Wear long sleeves, trousers and socks in the late afternoon and evening, to prevent bites



- Wear insect repellent on any exposed areas of skin
- Use a mosquito net correctly when sleeping
- Burn anti-mosquito coils or tablets to kill mosquitoes inside buildings
- Fit anti-mosquito netting to doors and windows
- Take the appropriate malaria prophylaxis, on the advice of your doctor
- Site buildings away from mosquito-breeding areas
- Vaccinations against serious diseases.
- Verify the quality and capacity of local medical facilities. Ensure that all staff knows which medical facilities can be trusted and where they are located.
- Precautions against HIV/AIDS, including
 - Availability of clean needles and syringes for medical purposes
 - Appropriate and responsible sexual behavior
- Protection against the sun. Wear a hat, long sleeves and long trousers or skirt, and use sun protection cream.
- Avoid dehydration: drink enough. Carry a water bottle if necessary.

2.12. Hygiene precautions

- Clean water supply. If clean water is not guaranteed, filter water and boil for 5 minutes to make it safe for drinking.
- Keep a spare stock of water in case of failure of supply.
- Keep a stock of water purification tablets.
- Ensure food is sourced and prepared correctly.
- Wash hands frequently, and always before meals and always after using the toilet, for 20 seconds or more with soap and warm water. Do not accept a wash bowl in which several people wash hands before it gets changed.
- Ensure cooks wash their hands frequently while preparing meals and always after the toilet, and ensure there is always soap and running water at hand for them.



- Watch the cooks and kitchen personnel's health and check their vaccinations for validity. Be prepared to pay to get them updated.
- Ensure kitchen, washing and latrine areas are kept clean.
- Dispose of rubbish effectively.

Avoid eating fruit or vegetables that have not been thoroughly washed in clean water, and peel fruit after washing, using a clean knife, and cook most vegetables at least ten minutes.

2.13. Fire

Aid workers should consider the threat of fire when assessing the safety and security of their environment. Fire poses a significant risk to health and safety, especially in countries where fire-response infrastructure is lacking, buildings are not built to minimize fire hazards, and few people have fire-safety training. Fires in refugee camps, warehouses, and residences can prove catastrophic. Most fires start small and can be extinguished if detected early. All EOC-DICAC staff should receive fire- and electrical-safety training and all offices, warehouses, and residences should be equipped with fire-fighting equipment, such as chemical extinguishers, hoses, water tanks or buckets of sand. The best method for fighting fires is prevention through regular inspections and training.

Immediate action for fire response

It is important not to panic when confronted with fire. There are many things that can be done to prevent a fire from spreading and minimize damage and potential loss of life. The steps to take are:

- Sound the alarm. Yell for help, activate the fire alarm, etc. Do not attempt to fight the fire until the building evacuation is initiated.
- Determine the cause of fire and what is available to fight it. If it is an electrical fire, it is important to first turn off electricity, if possible.
- Attempt to fight the fire but under no circumstances risk injury in the process.
- If successful, continue monitoring the site to prevent flare-ups until help arrives.



- If unable to fight the fire, evacuate quickly, closing doors and windows, if possible, ensuring no one remains in the building. Give information to fire-response personnel when they arrive.

Annex A – Risk Assessment Template

Below is a standard format for assessing risks to be used by Security committee and managers with security responsibilities.

Activity	Threats (Hazards)	Vulnerability				Gros s Risk	Existing measure s to mitigate	Further measure s required	Net Risk
		Likelihood		Impact					
		Factor affecting likelihood	Level	Factor affecting impact	level				

Annex B – Incident report form

For managers or Security Committee, this form is a template of key points to include. Your finalized form should be completed by the affected staff or trip leader and sent to the appropriate manager.



It is important that an incident report states the facts and that any analysis or opinion is either clearly identified or left for the next stage of incident inquiry and analysis. Staff should be trained and advised on how to write incident report forms.

‘Near miss’ incidents should also be reported. A ‘near miss’ is where it appears that a security incident came close to occurring. It may reveal a weakness in security procedures, or new information about security threats. Though a ‘near miss’ incident in some cases does not require an immediate or follow-up incident report, it should always result in a full incident report, so that lessons can be learned. All incident reports also help the Security Focal Point to build an accurate picture of current risks and future trends.

Who? Personnel involved (staff and others). Indicate female (F) or male (M) behind each name.
When? Date and time of incident
Where? Incident location (attach map / sketch / diagram if necessary)
What has happened? Description of incident



What have you done about it?		
What help do you need?		
Add any other important information here		
Name	Signature	Date
Position		

While completing the form and in the follow up analysis, consider if relevant:

- Did the incident appear to be deliberately targeted at the organization?
- Do you know who the perpetrators were? (Give details of appearance, behavior, etc)
- What property was damaged, lost or stolen?
- Whom have you reported the incident to locally? E.g. authorities, police, other agencies, community.
- What reactions have there been from authorities, police, local people, other agencies etc?
Have the media taken an interest? Might they?

All incident reports should be sent to the relevant line manager (coordination office manager) and be copied to the head office security committee and management.

