

Human Resources

As with all staff, the hiring of national staff must be conducted with the utmost professional care in any situation. In conflict situations, this is even more important as mistakes in hiring in a volatile environment can jeopardize the personal security of the individual or others in the CRS office.

Always use professional procedures for hiring and personnel management:

- Ask for a curriculum vitae; check references.
- Be aware of needs for ethnic, religious, gender, geographic, etc. balance on staff.
- Be knowledgeable of national labor laws.
- Assure that all staff have clear job descriptions and understand their roles and responsibilities.
- Give all staff professional ID cards.
- Analyze whether it makes sense to identify national staff by wearing a distinctive CRS emblem (T-shirt, armband, badge, etc.) remembering that wearing a CRS T-shirt can contribute to personal safety only if CRS is recognized as an impartial, independent, non-partisan humanitarian relief organization.

Protecting CRS Buildings²

The focus of this section is on considerations for office and residential protection. The purpose of site protection is to deter or stop intrusion, and to delay attack.

When selecting a site for a CRS office or residence, along with other desirable factors related to suitable size, desirable location, etc., a security filter should also be applied. Consider known or potential natural or man-made threats, the physical strengths and deficiencies (structure, status of electrical wiring, fire exits, etc.), as well as CRS option for acceptance.

Some Specific Points:

- **Neighborhood**
Consider issues like stability of the neighborhood, proximity to demonstration routes and gathering points, crime levels, proximity to flood areas, proximity to common targets of security incidents (i.e. military bases, police stations, government buildings, embassies, etc.), proximity to crisis response services such as hospitals, police, fire station, etc.
- **Landlord**
To the extent possible, find out as much as possible about the landlord, his/her occupation, social background, image in the local community, political affiliation, etc. CRS should avoid renting a warehouse, office or residence from a person involved in suspicious activities, who is politically prominent, or affiliated with one party to a civil conflict. Consider that in some tribal cultures, a host is duty-bound to protect his guests and if we choose a well-respected host, that could assist with our protection.
- **Physical Criteria**
 - An outer wall of at least 2.5 meters in height.
 - A good amount of lighting around the exterior—sensor or motion detection lights are best so that they don't draw a lot of attention to the building if it is the only one all lit up.
 - Multiple exits are preferred in case of armed robbery or mob violence threats.
 - Secure gates, should not be easy to scale, and be secured by more than a chain and padlock.
 - No hiding places. Watch out for areas around building entry/exits that offer places

²Ibid.

for attackers to conceal themselves: vacant and dark lots, overgrown bushes or vegetation, dark alleyways, etc.

Single Occupancy Versus Multi-Tenant Buildings

Single occupancy buildings offer greater control over security procedures, access, etc., but the advantage of a multi-tenant building is additional surveillance and protection (assuming high levels of social cohesion among the tenants). If possible occupy floors between the 3rd and 5th floor—lower levels are more vulnerable to intruders, and higher floors present fire safety challenges. Occupying a building close to other peer NGOs could contribute to greater security if the guards help each other out. It is always advisable to get to know your neighbors.

See Chapter 11 Useful Forms and Graphics for recommended Residence Security Checklist and Warehouse Security Checklist. (Chapter 3 a, b)

Domestic Staff³

The employment of domestic staff is one area of vulnerability experienced by most if not all international staff. Disenchanted or badly vetted/trained domestic staff can actually increase our risk of experiencing: robbery at home, kidnapping, others. They are also often the first line of safety and security for children left in their care.



TIPS

Before hiring domestic help:

1. Conduct a careful screening, including carrying out reference checks, in-person interviews, visit the person's home to understand their circumstances, and if references are not extensive ask the U.S. Embassy Regional Security Officer (RSO) to vet the name.
2. Be sure that you and all family members comfortably relate to the individual before they are hired.
3. Record basic personal information—full name, date and place of birth, address, telephone number and names of family members, names and contact information for any other key contact or reference. Confirm these before hiring.
4. Change the locks when you move in, and keep a close control on who has access to keys to your home.

Domestic Staff Orientation:

- Train household staff (and baby sitters) to answer the door rather than members of the family, and not to allow visitors to enter without specific approval.
- Maintenance, repair or delivery personnel should not be allowed to enter the residence without prior notification of their arrival and presentation of proper identification.
- Never give the impression that no one else is home.
- Never tell any caller where the occupants are or when they are expected to return home.
- Staff should report any presence of strangers or strange occurrences in the neighborhood.
- Staff should sign an acknowledgement of receipt each time they receive payment from you.
- Be clear about the consequences of: giving access to your home to people who are not specifically authorized by you; losing or giving your house keys to others; stealing; or otherwise abusing their access to your home.

³ Information in this section drawn from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' "Stay Safe" guidelines, 2007.