



: CHAPTER 10 :

Dangerous Situations

: NOTES :

Dangerous Situations

To fulfill an agency’s humanitarian mission, many international aid agency employees work in areas at risk to certain dangers. While CRS is not currently present in all locations, some contexts where we do work present enough concern to warrant that any staff assigned to them make a conscious decision to work there prior to deployment and, once there, accept the responsibility to practice mitigating behaviors as deemed appropriate in the local security plan, including travel and communication protocols.

This chapter collects some standard preventative procedures and contingency protocols for some of the more “high risk” threats that prevail in CRS operating environments. If not prevalent, on the off chance that one of these threat events does occur, these guidelines will serve as a starting point for steps to take in response.

Country program security management requires active senior management participation together with a dynamic team of engaged security-conscious staff, engagement and feedback with programming partners, and networking with other concerned institutions and agencies to monitor these threats. All country programs should have a duly constituted and trained crisis response team to handle security incidents from minor accidents to major life-threatening scenarios.

This section discusses the following dangerous situation scenarios:

- Abduction, Hostage and Detention.
- Ambush.
- Carjacking.
- Crowds, Mobs, and Looting.
- Landmines.
- Natural/Public Health Disasters.
 - Earthquakes.
 - Hurricanes and Cyclones.
 - Public Health Epidemic.
- Sexual Assault.
- State of Siege.
- Using Aircraft.
- Using Boats.

ABDUCTION, HOSTAGE-TAKING AND ILLEGAL DETENTION

Humanitarian workers—whether local or international staff—work in areas where abduction, hostage taking, and illegal detention pose a threat. CRS employees have been abducted or illegally detained in the past. Situations ranged from a few hours to the unfortunate case of the CRS Lebanon representative’s abduction in 1985. The representative was released from captivity a year and a half later in 1986. High risk areas for abduction and kidnapping as of the writing of this agency guide include Haiti, India, Afghanistan, Somalia, Lebanon, Gaza, Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia and Yemen.

CRS has an agency Crisis Management Plan that provides guidance on how to respond to such situations. In addition, below is some information to consider when planning to mitigate threats in a country program’s operating environment.

Motives for Abduction and/or Hostage Taking

- In the course of circumstances and for no clear purpose, aid workers may be taken “hostage” or restricted in their freedom of movement. They may simply be told that their perceived “abduction” is for their own security.
- It is not unusual for aid workers to be abducted or temporarily detained as “reluctant guests” to signal a complaint about the aid work.
- Aid workers can be abducted for political or ideological motives. This may be because of the international political position of the home country of the aid agency or the particular staff member. It may also be because of the perceived bias and partiality of the aid agency in a conflict.
- In some cases the abduction may be committed by a terrorist group, which might be prepared to kill the hostage to maximize its own threat.
- Aid workers may get abducted for primarily economic motives, i.e., for ransom. Criminal gangs, but also some groups who claim a political objective for their violence, may thus seek to finance themselves.
- Aid workers may be taken hostage as a “security” strategy of an armed group.
- Aid workers can get abducted for sexual abuse.
- In certain contexts, people are abducted not to obtain a strong negotiating position, but as part of a political strategy of repression and terror.

CRS Vulnerability Assessment Should Consider

- Countries or regions where abduction and/or hostage taking appear frequent.
- The categories of people most at risk, e.g., foreigners as a whole, foreign business people more than aid workers, certain nationalities more than others, categories of local people.
- Pattern analysis shows that about half of the kidnappings occur during movement, e.g., between two work stations, between home and office.
- Abduction episodes are often seen as involving four phases: capture, transport and consolidation, holding, and termination. The moment of capture and transport to the initial place of detention and the moment of termination are seen as those of highest risk. The captors themselves are stressed, suspicious and more likely to act violently and in unpremeditated ways.

Preventative Standard Operating Procedures and Policies

- **Reduce exposure.** This can mean not going into, or withdrawing from high risk areas. It can also mean withdrawing or not deploying staff perceived to be at higher risk.
- **Reduce vulnerability by controlling movements.** Movements are “randomized”, i.e., one avoids routine movements; restriction with no-go zones and times. Movements are monitored and no staff move without prior announcements of destination and trajectory. For maximum safety this system requires radio communications.
- **Reduce vulnerability by increasing numbers.** At-risk staff could be prohibited from moving alone, meaning each individual vehicle would be accompanied by an “escort” vehicle. Or, at-risk staff could be prohibited from living in separate locations.
- **Surveillance recognition is a strategy of looking for more immediate indicators.** Kidnapping may be planned in advance, in which case the perpetrators will observe the movements of their target for a while. Surveillance recognition consists of being alert to individuals or vehicles hanging around in the neighborhood that do not seem to belong there. Good knowledge of the immediate neighborhood and good contacts with people may be of value in this regard. A rule of thumb is that if you notice an unfamiliar person in two places, raise your alert level; if noticed a third time; do not assume it is coincidence, go to a safe location and contact your local CRS security officer to report the incident and

await further instructions.

- **Improve Risk Assessment by Collecting Information From**

- Specialized security forces such as the FBI.
- In country, the national police and the Ministry of Interior.
- The U.S. Embassy/OSAC contacts.
- Private companies that conduct ongoing assessments.

- **Crisis Management Teams**

(CMTs) should be pre-identified and trained to manage both internal and external aspects of an abduction crisis. External aspects include communications with other agencies, with home- and host-government authorities and with the press. Among the internal matters, there is the conduct of the negotiations, and the liaison with and support to the relatives of the abductee. Upon termination of the crisis event, the abductee as well as the negotiators and crisis management team members may need stress debriefing and further support. *Note: if kidnapping/abduction is a high risk for your environment, be in touch with the HQ-based Director for Staff Safety and Security for more information about the HQ Crisis Management Team, and how HQ and field CMTs should interface.*

- Staff sent to high-risk area should be **clearly briefed before assignment**. Individual staff can prepare themselves by:
 - Know the specific and the wider environment you are moving in; carry a map but also try to have some mental map.
 - Learn by heart some key telephone numbers and if appropriate, radio channels.
 - Always carry legal identity papers, including an organizational ID.
 - Always carry a blood group card.
 - For those on medication, carry a small supply.
 - Always carry family pictures.

Hostage Survival

- The most dangerous moments are during your abduction and at the time of your release, especially if this is obtained through a rescue operation. The kidnappers will feel threatened and tense; stay calm and avoid adding to their tension through your behavior.
- During captivity you may be blindfolded and even drugged, do not resist this, as the main purpose is to keep you quiet, a quietness also to your benefit.
- Prepare for a long period: although some kidnap situations end quickly, others can last for weeks or for months, be patient.
- Securing your release is not your problem, but that of your organization; be confident that they will do everything possible and are also providing support to your relatives, even if your captors tell you otherwise.
- Do not try to escape unless you are very certain of success and in good condition, otherwise you may put yourself at risk; if there are other people kidnapped, your escape may put them at risk.
- You are of most value to your kidnappers when alive, play on that fact.

Passive Cooperation

- Obey the orders of your captors without appearing servile.
- Do not talk tough or threaten them.
- Be careful about eye contact, the expression in your eyes may appear aggressive or superior; on the other hand, establishing eye contact may strengthen your humanity and make it harder to do you harm.
- Avoid surprising or alarming your captors, always ask for permission before doing something even as simple as opening a window.

- Keep a low profile, avoid appearing to seek clues to their identities, or to be witnessing criminal acts.
- Do not speak unless spoken to, listen attentively, don't appear argumentative.
- Offer persuasive reasons why your captors should not harm you.
- Encourage your captors to let the authorities know your whereabouts and condition.
- Be conscious of your body language.

Escaping

- Attempting an escape is dangerous decision.
- Consider escaping if you are very confident your captors are likely to kill you.
- If there are other hostages, you may put their lives and well-being at risk.
- If you are the only hostage, there are some questions you need to ask yourself:
 - How many captors/weapons are there?
 - Do you know the location of your room in the building?
 - Are there captors stationed outside the building?
 - What will you do once loose outside the building?
 - Are you physically and mentally capable of attempting an escape?
 - Are you prepared to accept the psychological and physical consequences of failure/recapture?

Build Rapport when the Situation Appears “Stabilized”

- Insist on your impartial role as a humanitarian and explain CRS' mandate and ways of operating.
- Do not argue politics or ideology with your captors.
- Build human rapport to generate sympathy and respect; do not beg, plead or cry, but draw attention to your human needs such as hunger, thirst, etc. Ask for food, water, a radio, the use of a toilet.
- Try discussing family and children—topics of mutual interest.
- Try not to give up your personal belongings such as clothes, watch, eye glasses.
- Always face your captors; it is more difficult to hurt someone who is facing you than someone who has turned his or her back.
- There have been cases in which the kidnapped began to empathize strongly with their captors, and their interpretation of the situation. In the technical literature this is called the “Stockholm Syndrome.” Building rapport with one's captor is a protective strategy that should not cancel out one's separate identity and position.

Physical and Mental Health

- Maintain whatever structure you can in the space under your control, in what is otherwise a situation of chaos and dependency.
- Try to keep track of time.
- Try to keep to a daily schedule, keep structure in your life.
- Exercise daily, stick to a daily fitness program.
- Accept food and drink, you need to maintain strength.
- If possible, try to stay well groomed and clean.
- Think positive, emphasize your values, focus on pleasant memories and scenes, recall plots of books and movies.
- Ask for medicines, books, paper.
- Your real release may or may not be imminent when your captors mention it, keep yourself under control until you really are free.
- You may be deliberately subjected to humiliating or terrifying experiences to break

you down, such as mock executions; accept that humiliation and fear of pain or death are very normal reactions, do not lose hope.

Communicating and Negotiating

- Be prepared to speak on the radio or telephone, say only what you are told to say.
- Avoid being drawn into the negotiation process, do not seek to involve yourself in the negotiations.
- If you have been captured as a group, appoint a spokesperson.
- If you end up serving as a negotiator between the captors and the authorities, be very careful to convey messages accurately.
- You may be shown to one or more press people: bear in mind that their primary interest is in the headline-making story, not in your release; their intervention is more likely than not to complicate the negotiations for your release.

Rescue Operation

- Try to avoid changing clothes with your captors as this may put you at risk during a rescue operation.
- If there is a rescue attempt by force, drop face down to the ground, seek cover and keep your hands on your head, covering your ears and opening your mouth to lessen the effects of any explosives.
- When appropriate, identify yourself, be prepared that rescuers may not immediately recognize you and may handle you roughly until you are identified.

CRISIS MANAGEMENT CONSIDERATIONS

Negotiations

There are various actors that potentially can take a lead in conducting the negotiations:

- the agency itself, possibly deploying an experienced staff member from headquarters.
- respected and influential local people/partners, on behalf of the agency.
- a specialist negotiation team from a private company or from the national security services of one's home country.
- the national authorities.
- another aid agency.

The preferred negotiator profile will depend on the circumstances. Much depends on the motivations of the captors, on their demands, on the need for various channels of contact and influence, on the attitude of the national authorities and on the relative requirement of intimate political or social and culture knowledge.

A number of points can be highlighted here:

- Consider the legal status of negotiations in which the national government does not take the lead.
- Consider who would be the best negotiating actor in term of the specifics of the case, and in term of your goals i.e. the safe release of the abductee.
- Consider the degree of control CRS wishes to retain over the negotiation process.

Family Support

The family needs to be informed immediately of any serious incident, including abduction. An information policy will need to be quickly decided upon. Its main objectives may be

- to honor the family's right to know.
- to preserve the integrity of the crisis management approach.

This may involve finding answers to questions and concerns such as the following:

- Will the family be told everything or not?
- How to explain that they may not be told everything, while still maintaining their confidence.
- If the family is in the country where the abduction took place, should they remain there and for how long, or should they be made to return home (for international staff)?
- If the family is not in the country, should they be brought there to show them first-hand how the crisis is being managed and by whom?
- What does one advise/request of the family in terms of contacts with the press?

Expect that, after a while, the family will question whether the agency and the authorities are doing everything in their power to obtain the speedy and safe release of the abductee. Consider naming one person on staff to accompany the family on a full time basis, for the duration of the crisis.

Managing the Press

In some cases international publicity may be the best available strategy to prevent an abducted person from being killed. The strategy may only be effective when a government is behind the abduction, or an opposition group that hopes one day to gain power and international respectability. Otherwise, high media attention is more likely than not to seriously complicate the negotiations and may endanger the life of the hostages. Possibly the best approach is to limit comments to a neutral and factual minimum. In many cases discreteness is the most promising situation. An active press strategy is more constructive than a passive one whereby you only respond to the press approaching you. Talk also on the assumption that the captors are receiving messages from public media resources. Therefore never say anything that might endanger the abductee(s).

Post Release

Several issues need to be taken into account simultaneously:

- the person's need for rest, tranquility, medical care and psychological care.
- the person's need to communicate with loved ones.
- the value to be had from a post-trauma stress debriefing.
- the urgent need of the authorities for debriefing on information that could lead to the arrest of the captors or the release of other hostages.
- the desire of the press to get the story.

AMBUSH¹

Some typical situations that could indicate an ambush include:

- An obstacle placed in the road.
- A fake accident or injured person.
- Hitting your car to fake an accident.
- A landmine or other explosion.
- Shooting at you.
- Forcing you off the road with a vehicle.
- Attacks at residence entry gates.
- Attacks at traffic lights or in traffic jams.
- People blocking the road.
- False checkpoints.

¹ Information drawn from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' "Stay Safe" Guidelines, 2007.

Ambush Prevention Procedures

- Maintain up-to-date security information (situation, location and type of possible ambush) through regular security briefings and reviews of police statistics.
- Observe the local population for any sign of unusual behavior, such as people no longer greeting you as they did in the past or avoiding you completely.
- Vary your routes as well as times of departure.
- Do not travel at night.
- Consider implementing a two-vehicle policy.
- If you have any doubt, turn back.
- At stoplights, leave enough maneuvering room between your vehicle and the one in front of you. Stop such that you can see the bottom of the tires of the vehicle in front of you.
- Immediately report back to the local CRS Security of the ambush attempt or incident when safe to do so to alert others to avoid this danger.

During an Ambush

- Make an instant decision and act—stay or flee. The common reaction to stop, look, try to understand and only then attempt to escape will cost you valuable time.
- In most cases, the best way to get away is to drive through the ambush.
- If you cannot drive away, get out of the car and, if possible, run away. If not, lie down on the ground until any shooting stops.
- If you see the ambush before you get there, or you see others being ambushed, drive away and contact the police/other security authorities.

CARJACKING²

The risk of carjacking is greater in high-crime areas and those recovering from past conflict, or where a large-scale demobilization of soldiers has taken place. Some CRS countries that face a high risk of carjacking include: Kenya, Chad, Sudan, Haiti, and Afghanistan. If carjacking is a medium to high risk in your operational context, contracting for defensive driving training for all drivers of CRS vehicles (including spouses) is recommended. In general, the aim of a carjacking is either to:

- Steal a vehicle or items inside the vehicle.
- Take hostages.
- Obtain a vehicle for another crime.
- Injure or kill.

As with ambush situations, the most common modus operandi for car-jackings include:

- Roadblocks or checkpoints.
- Bogus government officials or police officers.
- Attacks at residence entry gates.
- Attacks at traffic lights or in traffic jams.
- Forcing you off the road with a vehicle.
- Hitting your car to fake an accident.
- Staging a fake accident or breakdown.

Carjacking Prevention Procedures:

- Carry out regular risk assessments.
- Conduct planning and briefing sessions before undertaking travel.
- Having a knowledge of the local situation and recent events.

² Information in this section is drawn from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' "Stay Safe" guidelines, 2007.

- Assess the need to travel.
- Travel at safer times and using safer routes.
- Drive with another vehicle (two-vehicle convoy) and make frequent and correct use of the radio.
- Use escorts or armored vehicles (only as a last resort).
- Be observant while driving (no music playing, no talking on cell phones), and keep windows and doors locked.
- Observe the areas around the vehicle for any suspicious persons/vehicles watching you and your vehicle when exiting a building—if you see anything suspicious, don't proceed to your vehicle without an escort. Alert security.
- Avoid traveling through suspicious or unknown areas.
- Do not travel close to military, police, or government vehicles.
- Do not travel alone or at night.
- Do not display items of value in the vehicle.
- Avoid predictable routines/pattern/time for movements.
- If you think you are being followed:
 - Stay calm and do not speed.
 - Change direction to see if anyone is following you.
 - Avoid small side roads.
 - If attackers close in on the vehicle, stick to the center of the road.
 - Maintain a distance from the car in front of you.
 - Do not drive home, but to a safe place.
 - Alert security officers at your earliest opportunity.

During a Carjacking:

- Assess the situation and decide whether to stop or not.
- Balance the risk of being stopped and robbed, assaulted or kidnapped, against the risk of attempting to escape.
- Do not provoke.
- Do not resist. Give the carjackers anything they demand—except your life.
- If possible, negotiate to keep the radio, water, and spare clothing.
- Report the incident as soon as it is safe to do so.

Danger moments

Getting out of a car is a dangerous moment. The attackers may suspect that you too carry a weapon or will try some manoeuvre; their finger will be on the trigger. Never spontaneously grab for the door handle, release the seat belt or touch the hand brake without alerting the attackers to what you are doing: they may think you are grabbing a weapon. Keep your hands, visible, and say or signal what you must do/intend to do before making any movement. Leave the car door open when you are out of it. Surrender personal items on demand. Don't show fear or anger.

Negotiating

There may be circumstances when you could try to negotiate—for instance, so that you can keep your passport and/or the radio, so that you are allowed to first make a distress call, or so that you keep a supply of water and food (when ambushed in a remote area and a long walk from a help point). This again is a situational judgment: in general, avoid negotiating when the attackers are very nervous, visibly anxious to get away as quickly as possible and/or highly aggressive.

Try to get away during a carjacking **only** if:

- It is known that carjackings in the area often lead to assault, kidnapping, murder or rape, and that therefore stopping will result in greater danger.
- You are confronted by an angry mob.
- Survival without a car is dangerous.
- The opportunity to escape presents itself.

CROWDS, MOBS AND LOOTING³

Anticipating crowd and mob violence is not an exact science. However, the possibility of it occurring needs to be factored into the local risk assessment. Urban centers with high concentrations of urban poor as well as frustrated displaced people can be fertile ground for spontaneous crowds, protests, and violent civil unrest to develop. CRS offices in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Haiti, East Timor and Guinea among others have experienced this threat first-hand. The rising prices of food and fuel worldwide suggest that this may be a growing phenomenon, particularly in locations where economic frustrations may also be politically motivated to spark unrest.

Proactive Measures

- Public relations strategy. Oftentimes the CRS office is located in capital cities, far away from the communities that actually benefit from CRS projects. The more that CRS image in the local community or neighborhood is of just another wealthy organization with expats driving around in expensive vehicles, doing little good for the poor in country, the greater the risk that collective frustration and anger will be directed against it. CRS could become a target of collective frustration if, apart from not promoting acceptance where we “live” in addition to where we work, the U.S. or the Catholic Church is perceived to be the cause of any of grievances the crowd has on its mind. This may include implementing small projects in the immediate neighborhood where the CRS office is located, such as garbage clean-up. If there is the time/opportunity, sitting together to listen to criticisms from the public and being publicly open to searching for solutions can help to prevent frustration from turning to anger.
- Crowd control. Never encourage a crowd to gather unless you can meet their expectations. If there is an organized event (such as a community meeting or food distribution) during which the potential for hostility exists, work out in advance procedures with local representatives. Avoid or minimize uncontrolled crowd movements, long queues and waiting times. Multiply distribution points; schedule distributions throughout the day for different sections of the population. Create waiting areas with shade and water. Provide precise information about the nature and quantity of handouts. Designate crowd control staff who screen closely for eligibility and involve recognized leaders among beneficiaries to serve as arbitrators for unclear eligibility cases.
- Reduce exposure by avoiding crowd gathering spots, withdrawing specific at-risk staff from the area, reducing warehouse stocks, temporarily re-locating equipment and other valuables from offices to safe locations.
- Reduce visibility by removing agency logos and flags from buildings and cars, limiting movements of staff who do not blend in, and renting vehicles or using taxis instead of agency vehicles.

Escaping/Surviving Looting

- A well-chosen site should have a separate emergency exit which is not visible from the

³ Much of the information in this section is drawn from Koenraad Van Brabant’s “Operational Security Management in Violent Environments,” ODI Humanitarian Practice Network Good Practice Review 8, 2000.

main entry/exit point. Familiarize yourself with alternative back routes in advance. Use situational judgment to determine whether to run and risk drawing attention to yourself, or walk and pretend everything is normal.

- If the situation is more unsafe outside the premises, and/or escape is not possible, try to hide and retain one means of communication. Establish contact with colleagues as soon as possible.
- Don't resist—allow looters to take what they want to in order to preserve life and prevent aggression against staff.
- Remain calm, retain dignity, and try to defuse the anger.

LANDMINES, UNEXPLODED ORDNANCE (UXO), AND OTHER EXPLOSIVE DEVICES

Explosive devices represent a great danger in many countries where CRS works, for example: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Serbia, Kosovo, Burundi, Chad, Sri Lanka, Angola, Afghanistan, Cambodia, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Palestinian Territories and Mozambique. If landmines are a medium to high risk in your operational context, seek out landmine awareness training for all staff from trained organizations such as the UN.

Personal Safety Rules (Do's and Don'ts)

- Always ask local people for information, contact local authorities and mine clearance agencies about mines or traps before entering a building, using a road or a trail, landing an aircraft.
- Brief all staff on arrival about existing risks, security rules, and minefield markers used by combatants, local population and mine clearance agencies.
- Have regular meetings with agencies working on mine clearance.
- Update maps of forbidden roads/zones.
- Inform the security officer of all mine incidents.
- In high risk zones always work with a local guide (by car or by foot).
- Never leave roads or tracks used everyday by local people.
- Do not travel at night.
- Immediately evacuate any person who does not respect security rules.
- Monitor all staff movement.

Landmines tend to be located

- On and in the surroundings of communication routes: bridges, roads, trails, railway, rivers, disputed borders.
- In the surroundings of strategic installations: electric power plants, electrical poles, water treatment/pumping stations, factories, airports.
- Near the outskirts of frontlines, military bases, borders.
- Around enclave zone/towns.
- Close to places of concentration: markets, schools, medical structures, wells, springs.
- Keep in mind that mines can move due to heavy rains and after a thaw.
- Become familiar with the existence of minefield maps.

When on Foot

Don't:

- leave trails or enter uninhabited buildings.
- go where local people refuse to go.
- approach or touch something that looks like a mine or any other explosive device. Mark the place and inform local authorities.

Do:

- Walk in single file and keep a distance of 20 meters between each person.
- Know how to recognize minefield markers.
- In non-controlled zones, always have a local guide.
- Be attentive to indicators: markers, wires, battlefield relics, abandoned valuables.

Responding to a Mine Incident by Foot

- Don't run to the victim, advise him/her not to move and reassure by explaining that you are calling for assistance.
- Make radio contact with the base office.
- If possible, call mine clearance specialists to attend the victim.
- If no specialist team can reach the site within a reasonable time to save the victim:
 - Attempting to approach the victim and prodding in any circumstance (see also vehicle mine incident) should be done only if you have received an appropriate training by a specialized agency on how to secure a path (feeling for trip wires, prodding). It is the responsibility of the CR to arrange such a training for all staff working in areas affected by landmines.
- Mark the site of the accident with local markers.
- Inform local authorities.

Traveling by Car

Don't:

- Enter forbidden roads.
- Drive off roads.
- Use dirt roads, if it can be avoided.

Do:

- Seek up-to-date information about incidents on the road.
- Drive in the tracks of previous vehicles.
- Maintain a distance of 30 meters between each vehicle.
- In non-controlled zones, always use a local guide.
- Drive slowly.
- Always fasten your seat belts.
- Always have a first aid kit in your vehicle.
- Always ensure a road has been used daily and has been declared cleared before using it.
- Take tarmac roads whenever possible, even if it is a detour.
- If a mine clearance has been made, look for information about when it was and how it was carried out.
- Always have road maps in your vehicle indicating green, orange and red roads (see below).

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

Report and record all mine incidents on maps.

A Green Road Means:

- Normal road.
- Used by hundreds of vehicles per week.
- Does not cross fighting/crime zone.

Then, traveling is permitted, but don't forget:

- Mines may have been placed the night before.

- A trail, after many passages, may have move some meters off, especially during rainy season and after thaws.
- Keep in contact with local populations on the most up-to-date information on the route of travel.

Orange Road

- Sporadically used by vehicles.
- Crosses former zone of fighting/crime.
- Mine incidents in the past, not considered safe yet.

Avoid Orange Roads

If you need to travel on orange roads, look for all reliable information and strictly apply all security measures.

Red Roads

- Used very infrequently or not used.
- Recent mine incidents reported.
- No reliable information available.
- It is strictly forbidden to use red roads.

Vehicle Mine Incident

- Try not to leave the road.
- Switch off the ignition.
- Give treatment to casualties.
- Make radio contact, explain the situation, give your position.
- Ask for intervention from a mine clearance agency.
- If there is no specialist available:
 - At night, don't leave the vehicle before dawn.
 - Leave the vehicle without touching ground, leave the vehicle by passing over the roof.
 - Examine the surroundings.
 - If tire tracks are visible, walk inside them to return to a safe place.
 - If tire tracks are not visible:
 - Try to find a 50 cm long stick.
 - Stake out the soil every 2 centimeters moving forward at a 45° angle.
 - If you sense resistance, mark it and go around the area.
 - Move forward on your knees.
 - Mark a safety corridor.
 - When you reach a safe zone, other occupants can follow your steps keeping a distance of 20 meters between each person.
- Never try to remove a mine.
- Contact specialists to recover the vehicle.
- Inform local authorities.

Armored Vehicles

- Purchasing an armored vehicle requires approval from HQ.
- Travel in armored vehicles does not permit passage on mined roads.
- In cases where armored vehicles are not available, a vehicle can be equipped with:
 - Sandbags.
 - Iron plates of 6 mm minimum thick covering the bottom of the cabin.
 - Aramide fiber plate (Kevlar).

- An armored vehicle gives very minimal protection; it is essential to fasten your seat belts.
- Never take uncontrolled risks because you have an armored vehicle.

NATURAL/PUBLIC HEALTH DISASTERS

Earthquakes⁴

Earthquakes create a number of different kinds of impacts, each of which require different strategies to mitigate against. These are:

- **Shaking/Rupture.** One of the principal causes of damage to structures.
- **Landslides and avalanches.** Of obvious threat in mountainous terrain, these occur even during minor earthquakes. Deforestation exacerbates the risk.
- **Fires.** Disruption of electricity and natural gas services caused by an earthquake can cause fires, which can become uncontrollable given a wider disruption of emergency services.
- **Soil liquefaction.** This happens when water saturated material, such as soil but even concrete, changes from a solid to a liquid state. This can cause structures to sink, tip or collapse.
- **Tsunamis.** Huge waves caused by underwater earthquakes, which can travel thousands of kilometers and devastate coastal regions. The 2004 tsunami, caused by an earthquake in the Indian Ocean, is a recent example.
- **Secondary effects.** All of the effects above can cause widespread damage to infrastructure, causing losses of electricity, potable water, damage to transportation networks, etc. All of these effects can in turn lead to disease outbreaks, civil disorder, internal displacement and other effects which can become more serious than the original damage caused by the earthquake.

Earthquake Preparedness

There is rarely any warning prior to an earthquake occurring, and so it is vital that preparations are made well beforehand.

- **During the site selection process for residences or office spaces,** consider what might be areas more or less prone to earthquakes. If possible ensure that CRS building structures are built to high earthquake resistant standards.
- **Check for hazards in the home and workplace.** Consider what objects could become loose or fall during an earthquake. Fasten shelves securely to walls and in warehouse areas, ensure that heavy items are not stored on high shelves. Check for deep cracks in structures, and get expert advice to repair them.
- **Educate Staff and Families.** Identify what might be safe places to hide should an earthquake occur. Discuss the risks and how you will cope with them. Conduct earthquake drills.
- **Have Emergency Supplies Available.** The same supplies that go into a hibernation kit double as emergency supplies in case of natural disaster. Ensure that they are stored somewhere likely to be accessible to survivors after an earthquake—not in a basement.
- **Have an Emergency Plan.** Security plans should include how CRS will weather a natural disaster, where staff will meet should communications fail, etc. CRS must take stock of how our own staff and office is able to weather a natural disaster before we will be able to aid others.
- **Consider the use of blast film on windows to mitigate the hazard of flying glass.**
- **Develop a communications plan assuming a total loss of infrastructure (i.e. using warden system that includes passing messages in person, or uses systems unlikely to be affected such as satellite phones).**

⁴ Content drawn from a May 2008 report on Earthquake Safety by Safer Access <http://www.saferaccess.org/index.html>

During an Earthquake

The majority of people killed during or immediately after an earthquake are crushed by collapsed structures or debris. Those that survive the initial collapse of buildings often do so because they are in a “void” or space within the collapsed structures. The following advice can assist in finding a “void” or safe place during an earthquake:

- Get next to a large object that will compress slightly but leave a void next to it.
- Curl up in the fetal position. Make yourself small so you can survive in a smaller space.
- Wooden buildings can be the safest type of structure. Wood is flexible, creates more voids when it does collapse, and has less concentrated weight.
- If you are in bed during an earthquake, roll off the bed. Next to the bottom of the bed is a likely place for a void to be formed.
- Doorways are not safe. If they collapse, there will be no void formed.
- Get near the outer walls of buildings or outside of them if possible. Getting out of a building and away from falling debris is best, but if you must be in a building stay near the outer walls—again this is a likely place for a void to be formed.

*If outdoors—stay there. Move away from buildings, streetlights, and utility wires.

*If in a moving vehicle:

- Stop as quickly as safety permits.
- Avoid stopping near or under buildings, trees, overpasses, and utility wires.
- Avoid roads, bridges, or ramps that may collapse.
- If there is a danger of a structure collapsing on the car, get out and move away, or get into the fetal position beside the car.

*If trapped under debris:

- Do not light a match.
- Do not move about or kick up dust.
- Cover your mouth with a handkerchief or clothing to filter dust.
- Tap on a pipe or wall so rescuers can locate you. Use a whistle if available. Shout only as a last resort. Shouting can cause you to inhale dangerous amounts of dust.

After an Earthquake

- Expect aftershocks. Secondary shockwaves are usually less violent than the initial earthquake, but can follow hours, days or weeks afterwards. Don’t assume you are safe because you survived the initial tremors.
- Stay away from damaged areas. Unless providing essential assistance, or in the company of specialist responders, stay away from damaged structures which could collapse.
- Be aware of possible tsunamis.
- Inspect utilities - gas, electricity, water/sewage. All could have been damaged by the earthquake, even if comparatively minor. If you smell gas or hear blowing or hissing noise, open a window and quickly leave the building. If you see sparks or broken or frayed wires, or if you smell hot insulation, turn off the electricity at the main fuse box or circuit breaker.
- Check in and communicate to CRS HQ and region the safety of all CRS staff and families.
- Designate an emergency contact who is not at post with you via the Employee Self-Service Center.

Hurricanes and Cyclones⁵

A hurricane or cyclone refers to a type of storm with winds at a constant speed of over 100 kilometers per hour. These winds blow in a large spiral around a relatively calm centre of extremely low atmospheric pressure known as the eye. Around the rim of the eye, winds may gust up to more than 300 km per hour. This type of storm can dominate the sea and ocean surface and the lower atmosphere over tens of thousands of square kilometers. CRS regions prone to hurricanes and cyclones include the Caribbean and Central America, as well as Southeast Asia and parts of South Asia.

Hurricane Preparedness

Do:

- Make sure that all team members are in a safe location (on high ground) before the hurricane or cyclone hits, ideally in the same location, in a solid structure.
- Clear loose material from around buildings that could cause injury and damage during extreme winds.
- Batten down your location, i.e. secure the doors, board up and tape or cover the windows to avoid flying glass and other objects from coming in.
- Have a grab bag ready containing a selection of essential items in case of emergency evacuation, including an emergency kit (water, food, torch, and first aid kit), warm and waterproof clothing, and personal essentials/valuables in sealable plastic bags.

During a Hurricane or Cyclone

- Remain indoors—away from windows, skylights and glass doors—and remain in the strongest part of the building.
- In flood-prone areas do not use the cellar or basement.
- If the building you are sheltered in starts to break up or fall apart, protect yourself with a mattress, rugs, blankets or tarpaulin, and hold on to any strong fixtures, get under a strong, heavy table or bed.
- Do not run out into the open.
- Beware of the calm when the eye of the storm is over your area, and do not assume the cyclone is over.
- If you are driving, stop and stay clear of trees, power lines, and streams.
- Avoid using naked flames such as candles and paraffin lamps as a source of light.
- Take cover in a room without windows.

After a Hurricane or Cyclone

- Avoid damaged power lines, bridges, buildings, trees and any flood waters.
- Take a headcount to make sure all team members are safe and sound.
- Be aware that heavy rains and flooding will move landmines.
- Also remember that heavy rains can easily trigger landslides.

Public Health Disasters, i.e. Pandemics

If a public health hazard has the potential to reach epidemic proportions in CRS' operational context, specific standard operating procedures and contingency protocols to orient staff how to prevent infection and how to respond should they become infected should be included in the Field Security Plan. Avian influenza is one example of a recent public health hazard around which some affected country programs developed contingency protocols and preventative procedures for staff orientation.

⁵ This information was drawn from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies' "Stay Safe" guidelines, 2007.

SEXUAL ASSAULT⁶

Sexual assault is an act of aggression that may be differently understood in different cultures and legal traditions. Intimidation and sexual harassment of women constitute forms of gender-based violence which have psychological effects that can turn into physical symptoms.⁷ This section focuses however not on harassment but on direct assaults on the physical integrity of a person. While men can also be victimized by sexual assault and rape, the overwhelming majority of victims are women. Sexual assault and rape are usually carried out with the threat or actual use of violence. Those who force sex on others are often not motivated by sex, but rather acting on a desire to hurt and control another person. In cases where the attacker is not known to the victim, opportunity is a common reason for sexual assault. Frequently, the opportunistic rapist carries out the assault while in the process of committing another crime, e.g. a robbery or carjacking. For this reason, the steps that you take to enhance your personal security can also mitigate the risk of common forms of assault and sexual aggression.

Personal Safety Rules (Do's and Don'ts)

Avoid:

- Movements alone and at night—on foot or by car.
- Isolated, unsafe or poorly lit locations.
- High-crime areas.
- Taking drugs and excessive use of alcohol.
- Dressing inappropriately to the local culture and norms.
- Intimate relations with locals.

Do:

- Carry an alarm/radio/phone with you at all times.
- Ensure drugs are not put in your drinks; do not leave drinks unattended in bars or with people you do not really know.
- Dress in line with the local cultural norms.
- Wear comfortable shoes.
- Socialize in groups.
- Share accommodation.
- Show self-confidence.
- Be aware of the threat of rape (i.e. if you are operating in a war zone do everything in your power to not leave female staff unaccompanied). Rape is a risk in any society at all times, however some countries present conditions where there is a generalized higher risk of rape.

Surviving Rape/Sexual Assault

When a person is about to be attacked, the ability to react depends on the amount of time between the threat of attack and the actual attack. Initially, you may use verbal or physical tactics or may be overwhelmed with fear and not resist at all. In deciding what action to take, you must take into consideration the type of rapist, the environment, and your own capabilities.

You may choose one or a combination of the following options:

- **Passive resistance**—Do or say anything to ruin the attacker's desire to force sexual contact with you, such as saying that you have a sexually transmitted disease or that you have your period, urinating, defecating, etc.
- **Active resistance**—Shout for help, use an alarm, run away if there is somewhere safe to run

⁶ Most of the information in this section is drawn from Stay Safe: The International Federation's guide to a safer mission, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, 2007.

⁷ For reference, see CRS' policy on Harassment, POL-HRD-REL-0002.

to, or fight back furiously.

- Submit - Do this only if you sense your life is in danger and survival becomes your only objective.

After a sexual assault

- A sympathetic person (of the same sex) should be assigned immediately to comfort, accompany, and listen to the victim. The first priority is to restore some sense of safety and control for the victim.
- A doctor (preferably of the same sex) should examine the victim as soon as possible in case urgent treatment is necessary. Ideally this examination would take place before washing in order to preserve evidence.
- Outside specialist counseling should be offered.
- Any wish on the part of the victim to leave the operational area or to quit the mission should be fully supported.
- Mid- and long-term follow-up care must be ensured, whether the victim remains in the operational area, returns home, or transfers to another location.
- Always consult the victim before any follow-up steps are taken.
- Strict confidentiality should be respected with regard to all details of the case.
- Witnesses of rape and sexual violence, colleagues and friends of the victim will also be affected by the crime and should be offered professional counseling services.

Reporting the Crime

Following any assault, sexual aggression as with any violent crime should be reported to the local authorities. This should only be done, however, with the victim's consent and confidentiality must always be respected by senior managers. The police will question the victim in detail about the event, and due to differences in sensitivity to the nature of rape may not treat the victim with the dignity and respect one would expect. For this reason it is important that the victim be accompanied to report to the police and the accompanying staff person should be mature and sensitive enough to be able to step in and advocate should police behavior not meet standards of respect and dignity.

STATE OF SIEGE/"HUNKER DOWN" (SECURITY LEVEL V)⁸

Good practice recommends that you also plan for hibernation. Hibernation in a danger zone can be voluntary or forced. Voluntary hibernation is the result of a decision to stay confined in a very high danger zone on the assumption that, although violence may be unleashed around it is unlikely to directly impact CRS staff and assets. This is a very dangerous assumption. Past experience should not be taken as guidance: just because armed groups or local people have respected your assets and staff in previous crises does not mean that they will do so now. *Failure to follow a CRS order to evacuate when it is safe to do so is grounds for serious disciplinary action, up to possible termination.*

Voluntary hibernation is a decision that consciously puts staff at high risk. It cannot be imposed and requires fully informed consent. Even then, you expose the agency to serious allegations and liability claims from relatives and friends should something go wrong.

Forced hibernation, on the other hand, can result from a rapid unfolding of events that could not be anticipated, or can be imposed by external factors outside your control that make withdrawal impossible (eg, the scheduled plane does not arrive, land borders are closed, escape routes out are blocked, etc.).

⁸ Koenraad Van Brabant's "Operational Security Management in Violent Environments, section 14.6 Hibernation.

Forced hibernation is also high-risk. It could mean that staff are confined to the same building for hours, days or even weeks on end. Anticipatory planning is required to determine an adequate stock and supply a safe house/location for a prolonged period:

- **Long-term physical requirements:** food, water, medicine, fuel, lighting, cooking, sleeping, washing and toilet facilities, power supply (battery recharging), air circulation, etc.
- **Long-term psychological requirements:** books and games, daily physical exercise and also stress management, team management, and mutual psychological support.

You also need to prepare for:

- **Looting:** the most precious item to preserve is your means of communication. Hide a radio and aerial or satphone where it cannot be found, even if the whole site is being stripped down to the door frames. Negotiate to be left other vital items such as food and medicine, but anticipate waves of looters who in the end may take everything (refer to Koenraad Van Brabant's "Operational Security Management in Violent Environments Chapter 10 for further discussion).
- **Aggression against one or more team members:** with no short-term possibility of back-up and support from the agency, or the possibility of leaving the site (refer to Koenraad Van Brabant's "Operational Security Management in Violent Environments Chapter 12 for further discussion).

USING AIRCRAFT

Sometimes airplanes are the only means to reach populations in danger (due to mines, insecurity on roads, for evacuation of a team).

- Uphold transparency with civilian authorities, military authorities, and population.
- Obtain a formal agreement for travel, landings and takeoff, from warring parties and verify that actors in the field are aware of the agreement.
- Never take off without proper authorizations.
- Never land without the certainty of taking off again.
- Pilot makes the final go-no go decision.
- Respect the pilot's instructions on transporting dangerous material.
- Verify that the pilot has the following information:
 - Location of the front lines.
 - No-fly zones.
 - Security situation at the destination.
 - Weather report along the itinerary.

The Aircraft:

- Assess what kind of aircraft is needed by considering:
 - The distances and condition of runways to be used.
 - The number of passengers, weight/volume to transport.
 - The kind of fuel available.
- The options of aircraft available should be carefully analyzed and should include CRS' needs, availability and cost.
- Ensure that the aircraft is registered and insured for passengers and cargo, that all equipment has been properly maintained, that it is equipped with GPS and has radio communication with the ground.
- While on contract with CRS, the plane cannot be contracted for commercial flights.
- Choose a white-colored aircraft.

The Pilot

- Must be a professional licensed pilot; know the area and its context.
- Must know the official language of the country (communication with control tower).
- Must receive from CRS all information concerning:
 - Current conditions of the airstrip.
 - Recent evolution of the situation.
 - Radio frequencies on which to contact the CRS team.
 - The cargo (waybill).
 - Passenger list.
- Gives a briefing to passengers about the security procedures on flight.
- Must have access to sensitive information such as:
 - Aerial maps of the area.
 - Plans of airports, airstrips.
 - Revised maps including zones of flight exclusion, military camps, front lines.

Passengers

- Never replace the pilot with a non-licensed pilot.
- Obey security rules.
- Include only CRS staff, patient with accompanying person, and/or staff from other NGOs.
- Limit the number of passengers (one passenger plus personal luggage = 100 kg).
- Non-CRS passengers must sign a Discharge of Responsibility form.
- Never transport weapons or uniforms.
- A list of passengers must be submitted to the appropriate authorities.

Identification

- Aircraft must be easily identifiable on the ground and in the air (preferably white in color).
- Where appropriate, include donor identification.
- Remove CRS identification from the aircraft at the end of the contract.

The Cargo

- The maximum weight depends on the distance, possibilities for refuelling en route and the number of passengers.
- Transporting dangerous products (electrolyte, gas, chlorine, under pressure containers) must be cleared with the pilot prior to loading.
- Make a detailed waybill of the cargo.
- Indicate the weight and destination of each parcel.
- No unknown personal luggage will be accepted.

On the Ground

- Respect the security zone around the aircraft.
- Choose a place to park the aircraft considering:
 - If possible, identify a CRS parking area at the airport where the plane is based.
 - Verify the guard system at the airport. If necessary use CRS guards (obtain the necessary authorization to do so).
- During threat of storms, stow the plane on the ground.
- In the bush, always place CRS guards.
- Never smoke close to the plane.

In the Air

- Avoid night travel.

- All passengers must remain seated with seat belts fastened.
- Freight must be securely stowed.
- The pilot is responsible for making radio contact with the point of destination to give the ETA.

Landing

- In a war situation, approach destination at a high altitude and spiral down.
- The pilot establishes a radio contact before landing to confirm arrival time and to confirm a green light for landing.
- In the bush, a first low flight pass should be made to evaluate the condition of the runway.
- A CRS vehicle should always be at the airstrip before the aircraft will land.

Equipment

- GPS, HF and VHF radio.
- Life jackets.
- Distress rockets/flares.
- Survival kit.
- Potable water.
- Fire extinguisher, axe.
- Medical kit.
- Torch lamp/flashlight
- Aircraft check-list.

Fuel

- Guarantee sufficient autonomous fuel source.
- Always filter fuel.
- Use only sealed fuel drums.
- Verify the expiration date.

USING BOATS

Principles

- An alternative for assisting inaccessible areas.
- In some cases it is the only means to evacuate a team.
- Maintain total transparency with:
 - Civil authorities.
 - Military authorities.
 - Population.
- Have a formal authorization to navigate in areas controlled by different warring parties, ensure that actors in the field are aware of the authorization.
- The captain is the decision-maker; respect his/her decisions.

The Boat

- A rented boat is the best choice for CRS use; generally, a boat has "its" captain.
- Sign a charter contract with the owner.
- Ensure that the boat is well maintained.
- When chartered by CRS, a boat may not be contracted for commercial travel.
- Identify the boat with CRS flags and emblems.
- Never use a Zodiac/inflatable for sea navigation.
- For sea navigation, have a boat with two engines.
- A boat designated for evacuation must be checked regularly to ensure that it is in proper working order.

The Captain

- Is the responsible party and knows the equipment.
- Should have knowledge of local languages and navigation dangers in the area.
- Knows the zones to avoid (sandbanks, mines, fishnets, etc.)

Passengers

- Never substitute the captain.
- Transport only CRS staff, people linked with humanitarian activities, other NGO staff.
- The number of passengers is limited to the number of lifejackets and the capacity of the boat.
- Establish a list of passengers and submit to pertinent authorities.
- Non-CRS passengers sign a discharge of responsibility.
- Identify passengers that can and cannot swim.
- Everybody wears a lifejacket.
- No weapons or uniforms on board.

Cargo

- Never accept personal luggage/parcels when the contents are unknown.
- Establish a detailed waybill for all cargo.
- Ensure that cargo is correctly stowed on deck.
- Protect cargo with plastic sheeting.

Equipment

- Anchor.
- Compass and maps.
- Spare oars.
- Boat hook.
- Tools and basic spare parts: propeller, spark plugs, battery.
- Gas reserve.
- Distilled water and motor oil reserves.
- Radio communication and battery.
- Lifejackets.
- Medical kit.
- Oilskins.
- Shaded area.
- Potable water 20 liters per person per day.
- Manual water pump with filter and chlorine.
- Mosquito repellent, mosquito nets.
- Torch/flashlight.
- Distress rockets.

: NOTES :