

Vision Action Security and Safety Policy and Guidelines

This document sets out the overall principles for managing security and safety within Vision Action, formally Vision Aid Overseas. It is complemented by the Vision Action Security Plans for each country in which Vision Action is working. While a component of the policy addresses security of Vision Action in the UK, the Policy and guidelines primarily relate to the security of staff resident, working and travelling outside of the UK.

For the purposes of this document, Vision Action defines security as the protection of its staff and assets from intimidation, violence and theft.

There are two parts of this Vision Action security document, as follows:

Vision Action Security / Safety Policy – a short document giving overall principles for Vision Action management of security and safety. This is endorsed annually by the Trustees and reviewed regularly by the CEO.

Vision Action Security / Safety Guidelines – practical security and safety procedures applicable worldwide. These are established by the CEO and reviewed regularly.

This Security / Safety Policy and Guidelines have been kept as concise as possible. That said, there are many topics that a responsible employer must cover, and this document must be read in conjunction with other policies and the Staff Handbook.

More extensive general guidance and advice on security is available in published guides, Team Leaders and Directors should be familiar with the ECHO Generic Security Guide¹.

Every employee and associated person acting for, or on behalf of, the organisation is responsible for maintaining the highest standards of secure and safe conduct. All are expected to comply with this Policy and the associated Guidelines, and any breach could lead to disciplinary action and possible dismissal.

Mens.

Nicola Chevis CEO October 2018

¹ Also available online, in English, French, Spanish and Arabic, at <u>www.europa.eu.int/comm/echo/evaluation/security_review_en.htm</u> or <u>www.aidworkers.net/?q=node/809</u>.

Part A

Vision Action Security / Safety Policy

A1. Key principles

The security of all Staff is of utmost importance to Vision Action. We will strive to do all that we reasonably can to ensure that our staff are secure and safe as they go about their work.

People come first: the security of Vision Action staff is always of higher priority than the security of Vision Action's property and its reputation.

As well as protecting our staff and property, good security enables us to continue working in challenging environments – which is where our work is often most needed. It is therefore a vital enabler for our work.

Vision Action and its staff accept a certain amount of risk is in order to fulfil our mission. The Executive and Board will carefully weigh the likely risk against the likely benefits of operating in each context, and will ensure, as far as possible, that our staff only face those necessary risks that are outweighed by the likely benefits to the people Vision Action serves. The Directors and staff will do all they can to minimise and manage these risks.

Vision Action acknowledges the unique experience and sometimes different needs of women in relation to security and will strive to ensure that these are fully taken into account when deciding on security measures.

For the purpose of this policy. The definition of staff refers to all those working directly for Vision Action, formally Vision Aid Overseas, irrespective of contractual relationship. (Employees, Professional Volunteers, Consultants etc).

A2. Responsibilities

The Executive Director has overall responsibility for the security and safety of our staff and property.

The CEO delegates day-to-day security management to Country Directors. The responsibility for monitoring standards of security management within each country lies with the CEO.

All Vision Action Staff are responsible for:

- Their own security
- Being aware of security risks
- Behaving responsibly and positively as a representative or guest of Vision Action
- Understanding and following Vision Action Security / Safety Policy and all relevant security procedures
- Adhering to local laws and customs
- Promoting the security of other Vision Action staff
- Actively contributing to the maintenance of security measures
- The security of Vision Action property under their control
- Reporting any action that breaches security procedures or jeopardises security.

A3. Threats

There are a number of serious threats to Vision Action staff and property. They vary from country to country but can include:

- Crime, particularly theft
- Road traffic accidents
- Disease
- Region based violence
- Terrorist attacks, either aimed at Vision Action or affecting Vision Action because of its proximity to terrorist targets
- Kidnap
- Fire
- Natural disasters
- Sexual violence and sexual harassment
- Other forms of harassment.

All staff should take suitable precautions against current and potential threats against themselves and against Vision Action. They should be aware that some of the most serious threats are related to health and safety, rather than security.

A4. Compliance

A certificate of compliance (Annex A), should be signed by all Vision Action Country Programme Directors and all staff who reside in or visit our Programme Countries.

Part B

Vision Action Security and Safety Guidelines

B1. Vision Action approach to security and safety

The Charity aims to ensure the security and safety of its staff and property, mainly through being accepted by the local population. If our work is known and valued in the local community, it is less likely that we will suffer threat, violence or theft.

But since crime is part of life in every country, even if Vision Action is widely accepted, it must also take steps to protect staff and property. Common protection measures include, for example, gates, guards, locks and safes, and being well informed about the threat. The protection measures used should be proportionate to the assessed risk in each location. An assessment of such proportionate measures must govern the selection of such things as accommodation, transport etc. The responsibility for conducting such an assessment lies with the appropriate Country Director (who may take advice from other "in country" colleagues.

B2. Individual responsibility

Vision Action security measures depend on each individual acting responsibly, using common sense, good judgement and the advice of experienced colleagues whenever necessary. Staff members should stay aware of security risks, keep themselves up-to-date on security procedures, and promote the security and safety of other staff.

B3. Volunteer Staff

This Security / Safety Policy and procedures apply fully to Professional Volunteer staff.

B4. Vision Action Security Officer

The role of the Vision Action Security Officer is held by the CEO. The Security Officer is available to Directors, managers and the Board of Trustees, to provide advice and other help in security management, if they require it.

The CEO (acting as the security Officer) is responsible for monitoring standards of security and safety management, and for reporting findings regularly to the Board.

B5. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment should be carried out before any visit to a new area or any action which could carry a security risk. This risk assessment will form part of the Terms of reference for any assignment, including and especially **Non-Programme Assignments**.

The CEO and the appropriate Country Director must review the risk assessment. For work starting in a new country, a risk assessment must be carried out before work begins or the initial visit takes place. It is on this risk assessment that the Security Plan (see below) for that country or area will be based.

Risk Assessments for new countries or new areas of operation must use the following template:

Standard format

<u>The written risk assessment should be kept short</u>, unless the situation requires a more detailed report. The standard format for a risk assessment is simple:

- Location, date and author
- Brief description of the general situation, especially any aspects that might affect security
- Local authorities who are they and will they help protect Vision Action against threats?
- Threats
 - List of threats
 - The likelihood of each threat occurring
 - The likely impact of each threat, if it occurred
 - Make sure you include threats which might arise as a result of intended work, for example large numbers of people arriving for finite resources
- Vulnerabilities to the threats
- Security measures needed to minimise those vulnerabilities
- What liaison will be required with other organisations including partners
- Conclusion:
 - Does the likely benefit of our work outweigh the security risk?
 - Recommendations, including:
 - Is it safe enough for Vision Action to work in this area?
 - If so, what security and other safety measures should it take?

B6. Countries requiring CEO's approval

Formal approval from the CEO is required for any travel to "fragile states" and will only be authorised after a comprehensive risk assessment against current and developing strategy.

B7. Security and Safety Plan for each country

The Country Director responsible for each country programme must write a Security and Safety Plan, giving context-specific rules and procedures which are to apply to Vision Action staff in, or travelling to that country.

Security and Safety plans for each country are endorsed by the CEO.

Each Security plan should be based on the risk assessment (see above) for that country, so that its rules and procedures are tailored to the risks in that area. For work starting in a new country, or for an initial visit to a country, a Security Plan must be written, at least in outline, before any initial visit, and should be completed before work begins. It should be updated as necessary. As a minimum it should reviewed annually.

All Vision Action Security and Safety plans should follow the same format as below:

- List of main threats or risks
- Any context-specific security rules that are essential for staff to know, that they cannot reasonably be expected to know already:
 - Behaviour: are there certain behaviours to adopt, or avoid, because of local culture?
 - \circ $\;$ Law and custom: what local laws and customs should staff be aware of?
 - Dress: are there some forms of dress that should be avoided, or adhered to, because of cultural or other issues? For example, are shorts unacceptable? Should any khaki or

green items of clothing be avoided, to prevent them being mistaken for military uniform? etc.

- Are any specific security measures necessary for women?
- Are any specific security measures necessary for men?
- Any context-specific medical or other safety-related precautions, such as malaria prophylaxis
- Procedures in case of an emergency, including procedures for evacuation
- Emergency contact details of the Programme Director
- Medical facilities
- Medical evacuation (medevac) procedures
- Name and signature of the Country Director
- Date.

Vision Action does not work in high-risk locations; therefore both the Risk Assessment and the Security Plan can be very short. They should be as concise as possible, since busy staff may be tempted to ignore long documents. What is important is that they must be appropriate to the circumstances of the particular location that they refer to.

B8. Training

All staff who need security and safety training should receive it.

To simplify what would otherwise be the complex task of analysing the training needs of each staff member, Vision Action will adopt the following levels of security and safety training.

Type of security training	Category of staff
Basic security briefing	All Directors to have an annual briefing on security – In House
	(See below)
Standard security briefing	Security sessions of VDP and TLDP
Crisis management exercise	Executive and Board briefed on and trained in crisis management
	– half day per annum. (See Below)

Topics for Basic and Standard Security Briefing

The following topics must be included in a Basic and Standard Security Briefing. Some may need adapting, and others may need to be added, depending on the local situation.

Security / Safety-specific topics

- Cultural and context awareness
- Assessing risks
- Precautions in the field (inc clinics, outreach etc)
- Precautions when travelling
- Dress and behaviour
- Personal equipment
- Reacting to security incidents
- Evacuation
- Dealing with Authorities

Communications

• Reporting: Incident reports.

Vehicles

- Tips for being driven safely
- Basic vehicle checks and procedures.
- When to say "No"

Medical

- Health and hygiene on assignment
- Handling stress, including in a team context
- Medical evacuation (medevac).

Insurance

• Vision Action insurance arrangements (less confidential)

First Aid Basic First Aid

Crisis Management

An exercise should be conducted, using a fictional scenario relevant to the local situation. The exercise should pose practical and decision-making problems. It should be followed by a discussion designed to draw out and underline the lessons identified during the exercise. This should enable the Executive and the Board to identify capability and capacity gaps in their ability to handle a crisis.

The following topics should be covered:

- Discussion of the main types of crisis considered to be possible in the local situation. For example:
 - o Kidnap
 - o Rape
 - o Murder
 - Mass Casualties (ie Road Traffic Accident (RTA))
 - Large scale robbery
 - \circ $\;$ Accusations of Child Abuse and other reputational critical incidents
- Discussion of some decision-making dilemmas commonly posed by such crises
- The importance of having a single person in charge of the crisis
- Procedures for a Crisis Management Team
- Informing Next of Kin, keeping contact with them, providing reassurance and support
- Where to find specialist help, for example in kidnap negotiation
- Dealing with the press.

B9. Briefing

All external visitors to Vision Action programmes should receive appropriate security and safety briefing. This includes invited visitors and consultants who are being hosted by Vision Action. The aim of a security briefing is to enable someone to understand the local situation sufficiently to live, travel and work safely in it and not to be an additional risk to the Vision Action/staff. This includes briefing on cultural norms and appropriate dress and behaviour.

The briefing should be given by the Country Director, or by the relevant team leader (for visitors being hosted by an assignment).

B10. Health

Staff should be aware that in many cases health issues pose the most serious risk to life and should take precautions accordingly. Malaria is a major risk, as is HIV/AIDS.

Assignments should deploy with a basic First Aid kit; these can be ordered on a case-by-case basis. It may also be useful to carry a record of your blood group and any regular medication that you take in case they are needed in an emergency.

B11. In Country Travel

In - country staff travelling outside of their normal work area (ie Lusaka to Livingstone, Addis to Gondar, Kenema to Freetown etc), must ensure that their journey is logged with another non travelling responsible person. That person may be the International Programme Director or a family member. In the case of the latter, the nominated family member must understand the need and have the ability to contact Vision Action should they need to.

If a security incident or a 'near miss' occurs during the trip, the person travelling must inform Vision Action immediately.

Important points to remember when travelling

All travellers are expected to use their experience and common sense to make sensible judgements on security and safety issues when travelling. **People travelling on Vision Action business must not knowingly place themselves in situations with a high risk.**

A traveller should on their own authority leave a situation of risk if they believe it to be the best decision for security or safety reasons.

Take care when choosing hotel accommodation. This can be particularly important for women, especially if travelling alone.

If the itinerary changes, or the security situation changes, individuals and Teams must inform the Programme Director or (if more efficient), the Vision Action HQ.

Appropriate dress and behaviour, including at evenings and weekends, greatly enhance security and safety. Make sure you know what dress and behaviour are appropriate in the local culture, and what types of dress and behaviour should be avoided.

It is entirely acceptable for any individual who feels unduly anxious about the proposed travel to postpone their trip or, if already travelling, to return home early.

B12. Vehicles and driving

Vehicle accidents are one of the biggest risks to Vision Action. Avoid unnecessary road journeys and use alternative transport such as local flights, with reputable airlines, where possible.

Seatbelts must be fitted to all vehicles used by Vision Action and worn at all times. Unless there are overriding reasons to the contrary, no staff member may travel in a car which does not have seatbelts. All staff and volunteers have a right and duty to insist on defensive, safe and considerate driving.

Vision Action has a specific Policy on the use of vehicles which all staff must adhere to. This is at Annex B.

B13. Stress

Although most staff and volunteers balance the work, they do with the enjoyment of being in project countries, staff should be aware of the dangers of excessive stress, and watch for signs of it in their colleagues. People suffering from stress are likely to manage their security and safety less well, increasing the risks for themselves and their colleagues.

Staff should be aware of the need to monitor their own stress levels and be prepared to acknowledge and do something about excessive stress. This is not only important for them but also their colleagues who may be relying upon them to perform well.

Different types of staff may show different signs of stress, because of cultural or personality differences.

B14. Insurance

Vision Action holds insurance which covers all international staff, staff travelling between countries, trustees, and consultants hired internationally. This includes volunteers travelling internationally, and other freelance agencies travelling on Vision Action business with the agreement of Vision Action.

The Finance and Operations Director in Crawley holds details of the Insurance Policies, which includes comprehensive cover for medical treatment and evacuation. Vision Action does not hold insurance for visitors, who normally should obtain their own insurance cover.

B15. Financial security

Poor control over cash and other valuables increases security risks. Robust financial procedures and good professional staff are vital. Without them, fraud or theft are much more likely. If theft occurs, not only does the field programme suffer but there can be an increased risk of violence to staff, since thieves may use violence. **Staff and Professional Volunteers must not risk their lives to protect cash and valuables**.

B16. Incidents

Prevention is better than cure. All staff are responsible for preventing incidents in any way that they can. They should **seek advice** when they think they may need it. If an incident occurs, its impact can often be greatly reduced by applying sound procedures. adapted to the local context.

The Country Director and the CEO must be informed of any security or safety incident as soon as possible. If the incident is serious (for example death, serious injury, kidnap or violence, including sexual violence, and any incident likely to attract media attention), he or she should inform the CEO directly. Vision Action has two types of reporting for security or safety incidents.

These are:

- Immediate incident report, sent as soon as possible following the incident, often by phone
- **Full incident report**, sent after the incident is over. This must be written.

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. Do not confuse fact and opinion.

The standard format for an **Immediate Report** is as follows:

- Who? who has the incident happened to?
- When? when did the incident happen?
- Where? where did the incident happen?
- What has happened?
- What have you done about it?
- What help do you need?

A **full incident report** gives a complete written account of the incident, and should follow this format:

- Full chronological account of the incident
- Who was involved
- Reasons for any decisions taken
- Lessons to learn from the incident
- Identification of any failure of procedures or staff, and recommendations for any remedial or disciplinary action
- Date, author, role of author, and signature.

'Near miss' security incidents should always 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.

A 'near miss' incident in some cases will not require an immediate incident report but should always result in a full incident report so that lessons can be learned. After an incident, the CEO, Country Director and other relevant people, should think through the events and consider whether there are any lessons to learn. For example:

- What were the causes of the incident?
- Should staff be better briefed?
- Should procedures be adjusted?
- Should there be better liaison with the police or other bodies?
- Is it safe for Vision Action to continue working in this location?
- What further action is required by Vision Action at this location, to avoid further incidents? Who will carry out this action?
- Are there lessons or information from this incident to be shared with other agencies or actors?
- Are there any aspects of this incident or this analysis which need to be kept confidential? How will this be achieved?

When an incident may be protracted, a person will be nominated at the Crawley Office to maintain a rolling log (this is normally when repatriation may be delayed and or, third parties are involved).

B17. Crisis Management Team

For serious incidents which represent a potential crisis for the organisation, the Crisis Management Team should be set up on the decision of the CEO and Chair of the Board of Trustees. Its composition should reflect the needs of the particular crisis, but is likely to include:

- Senior staff member in or responsible for the country concerned
- The following functions covered by nominated staff, carrying out more than one role if appropriate:
 - Communications with the field
 - Human Resources issues
 - Answering enquiries from the press and public
 - Administrative support
 - Legal resource

The Crisis Management Team is responsible for all aspects of handling the crisis. No other staff member should take action relating to the crisis without the approval of the Crisis Management Team. The Crisis Management Team must include the Chair of the Board of Trustees, or other Trustee nominated by them.

Ideally the Crisis Management Team should physically meet, however, depending on the nature of the incident it may be equally effective to convene the Team virtually.

B18. Sexual violence

Anyone who has suffered sexual violence must be treated with great sensitivity. The incident should normally be treated as confidential, and the wishes of the person affected must be respected as far as possible.

B19. Informing Next of Kin

If a serious event happens to a staff member or volunteer, for example if they are injured, kidnapped, imprisoned or killed, it is vital that Next of Kin are informed quickly and sensitively. This is right in principle, and is also wise in practice, since the staff member's family may hear soon from the media or other Professional Volunteer.

For some situations, for UK based Staff this will be led by the police and Vision Action will be required to coordinate with their actions.

B20. Suspension or relocation

Suspending Programme activities in country may be necessary to avoid a threat which has recently emerged. It may also be necessary in order to allow time for reflection on a changed security situation.

Suspension is likely to be more effective if carried out by all similar or related organisations at the same time, and for the same stated reasons. Staff who are working in their own country will not normally be evacuated from their country.

The decision to suspend a Programme will be taken by the CEO, however, if the situation warrants it (civil unrest etc), the appropriate Team Leader should make that decision for the Team without waiting for authorisation for the CEO.

The decision to relocate a Programme Team will be taken by the CEO on advice from the Country Director.

Annex A to Security and Safety Policy

SECURITY / SAFETY POLICY COMPLIANCE

I have received and been briefed on the Vision Action Policy on Security and fully understand my responsibilities to comply with and promote the Policy.

Signed	
Name	
Position within Vision Action	
Date	



Annex B to Security and Safety Policy Version 3

All Country Programmes

VISION ACTION VEHICLE POLICY

The following regulations apply to any Vision Action, formally Vision Aid Overseas, Programme Vehicle and to staff employed by Vision Action authorised to drive such vehicles. For the avoidance of doubt, these regulations also apply to those vehicles and drivers hired by the charity and such, deemed to be the charities vehicles and drivers within the constraints of this Policy.

These are generic regulations and should be adjusted to ensure compliance within specific programme countries. Any such adjustments can only be authorised by the County Director, who will ensure such adjustments are formally documented.

<u>Drivers</u>

1. All drivers must be legally entitled within the programme country to drive Vision Action vehicles; each driver must be approved by the Country Director (CD).

2. The CD must ensure that each driver is safe and competent to drive (irrespective of legal entitlement). This will normally require the CD to "assess", such competency through observation. Hire vehicle drivers must be subject to the same standards of safety and competency.

3. Drivers employed by Vision Action should undergo an eye test on starting employment and thereafter every 2 years.

3. All Vision Action staff are responsible to ensure that the vehicle they are in is driven in a safe and competent manner. Any issues over safety and competence must be raised immediately with the senior staff present, who should take immediate steps to raise concerns with the driver.

4. Expatriates can only drive Vision Action vehicles with the express authority of the CD and for a specific reason / purpose (this will be by exception only).

5. Drivers may be dismissed for gross misconduct on the following grounds:

- Consumption of intoxicating substances (alcohol, drugs etc.);
- Breaking speed limits;
- Theft of fuel, oil or equipment;
- Negligence resulting in an accident;
- > Use of vehicle for private/commercial purposes.
- > Letting any un-authorized person drive his/her vehicle
- Failure to report mechanical faults and damage
- Leaving the vehicle unsecured

6. Drivers will be responsible for the cleanliness of all vehicles.

7. Drivers only will be permitted to access the baggage rack on top of the vehicle.

Passengers

7. All passengers in Vision Action vehicles should be staff / Professional Volunteers, or people being transported by Vision Action for official business.

8. Unauthorised passengers are strictly forbidden and the transportation of such is deemed gross misconduct.

9. At no time should the vehicle be overloaded. Each passenger must have his / her own designated seat.

Insurance

10. The CD must at all times ensure that there is adequate insurance for both the vehicle and passengers. Each country programme will have different procedures; however, the UK equivalent would be "Fully Comprehensive".

Driving and Safety

11. National legislation regarding seatbelts must be complied with at all times. The Vision Action minimum standard is that ALL front seat occupants will wear seatbelts at ALL times. Where fitted, all rear passengers should wear seatbelts. Where rear seat belts are not fitted and no alternative transport is available, staff and team leaders must weigh up the journey and risk of travelling without seat belts before embarking and if necessary, contact the Country Director for advice.

12. Drivers are expressly forbidden to use mobile phones whilst driving. For hired drivers, the CD should ensure that the driver (and hire company) are aware of this. The senior Vision Action person in the vehicle should be prepared to enforce this regulation if required.

13. Drivers must always comply with national legislation on speed limits. However, vehicle speed will always be dictated by the condition of the road. The following principle should apply:

- Built up area No faster than 20mph
- Rural area tarmac road No faster than 60mph
- Rural area graded road No faster than 40mph
- Rural area ungraded road No faster than 20mph

All speeds will be significantly reduced in wet conditions.

14. Any driver taking a Vision Action vehicle "off road" (which includes ungraded roads in the rainy season), must have experience of off-road driving. CDs should NOT assume that national drivers understand the skills and techniques for off road driving.

Vehicle Maintenance

15. All Vision Action vehicles should be maintained in accordance with that set out by the vehicle manufacturer, additionally local conditions may dictate an additional maintenance schedule. The CD is responsible to ensure maintenance is carried out by an authentic mechanic.

16. Drivers are expected to conduct daily checks of fuel, lubricants and water. In addition, they should inspect each tyre at the end of each day.

Breakdowns, Accidents and Reporting

17. Drivers are expected to know the procedure in case of a breakdown or accident; CDs are responsible for ensuring that such procedures are in keeping with the national norm. Insurance Companies may insist of a specific set of actions, these actions should be complied with, providing safety of all personnel is maintained. In general, the following should be followed:

- > Ensure that all passengers are safe and if appropriate evacuate them from the vehicle.
- If possible, move the vehicle off the road (only if appropriate to the nature of the accident)
- Call the Country Director (or other Country Programme rep)
- > Comply with all reasonable requests of any other person involved in the accident.
- > Comply with all orders from the national police / emergency services
- > Ensure that any casualty from the Vision Action vehicle is accompanied.
- > If leaving the vehicle, take all the documents and high value goods from the vehicle

16. All Vision Action vehicles should carry the following equipment for use in breakdowns and emergency:

- ➢ Warning Triangle
- > X2 high Visibility Vests
- X2 spare wheels
- Towing strop
- > Tools, tyre wrench and jack (where possible a high lift jack should be carried)
- Water
- Torch and spare torch batteries
- First Aid kit

<u>Security</u>

18. Doors should be locked, and windows closed when travelling through built up areas.

19. If left unattended the vehicle must always be locked

20. Valuable items must not be left on display in the vehicle.

21. Care and sensitivity should be used if taking photographs from a vehicle, ideally photographs should not be taken when travelling through built up areas.

22. In the eventuality of the vehicle being stopped and passengers asked to hand over belongings (theft), all occupants must comply immediately. If ordered to vacate the vehicle (hijacking), this should also be complied with.

Team Leader Briefing

23. CDs must ensure that TLs are fully briefed and conversant with this Policy. Volunteers who through their actions (or inactions), contravene this Policy, may be asked to leave a Team.

Recording and Logbooks

24. The CD is to ensure that a daily Logbook is maintained for all Vision Action vehicles (NOT including hire vehicles). The minimum information to be recorded will be:

Date	Driver	Destination	Time Out	KM Start			Faults / Repairs Observations

This logbook may be inspected on request of visiting Vision Action UK staff.

25. All drivers should sign a copy of this Policy (as amended for each country programme), which should be kept in their personnel file (not for hired drivers), with a copy of their driving license.

Men.

Nicola Chevis CEO October 2018