

OCI Foundation International

Sponsors of the: (i) Cyfed Undergraduate Scholarships (ii) CBH Scholarships (iii) IFOMSSA Junior Awards (iv) IFOMSSA Senior Awards and (v) Annual JAMB Awards (vi) ArOF Health Campaign (vii) LAMS Initiative (viii) The Gynocular Project



Policy on Safety and Security for Personnel While Travelling (March 2025)

A. Introduction

Some of the OCI Foundation's aid and development activities are outside Australia. The safety and security of the staff, volunteers, and other associates are paramount. Therefore, to mitigate the associated risks of travelling and working overseas, it is necessary that all OCI Foundation personnel are aware of the risks associated with travelling to all areas of our operations and that the Foundation's Safety and Security Policy is strictly adhered to.

This Document clarifies relevant measures in place for achieving these by providing clear decision lines and responsibility levels, guidance in certain specific situations, and regular assurance of adequate awareness and preparation.

B. Policy

This Safety and Security Policy Document recommends that all practicable steps be taken to ensure the well-being of people at the forefront of OCI Foundation's operations. As part of the Foundation's wider duty of care to staff, we strive to minimise and manage staff's safety and security risks.

The OCI Foundation views security management as a way of enabling our work and programs. We consider security management as a way to:

- Enable operational activities under difficult security conditions.
- Reduce the risk to individual staff members to an acceptable level.
- Protect OCI Foundation's property and reputation.

People come first within the OCI Foundation, and their safety and security will always take precedence over protecting the organisation's assets, programs, and reputation.

This Policy applies to all OCI Foundation associates, including staff, interns, volunteers, directors, partners, contractors, consultants, and visitors to OCI Foundation offices and program implementation locations.

C. Principles

1. All OCI Foundation personnel will be accountable for maintaining and respecting

the organisation's Safety and Security principles, which are propagated through our policies, protocols, and procedures.

2. Safety and security are everyone's responsibility within the OCI Foundation, and should be achieved through full compliance and accountability.
3. Program decisions must be informed by appropriate safety and security considerations at all levels.
4. Clear lines of authority and decision-making mechanisms must underpin safety and security.
5. OCI Foundation personnel are equipped, trained, and supported in safety and security measures appropriate for the conditions of their assignment.
6. In the case of travel and duty trips, working time will usually be considered to be beyond the actual working hours as it is difficult to distinguish between activities with or without business objectives. This Policy, therefore, applies 24/7, and staff are expected to comply throughout the entire duration of a duty trip or placement.
7. On occasions when personal choices or trips are made to embark on unofficial duties unrelated to an OCI Foundation activity, the Foundation will not take responsibility. Staff are, however, advised to be security conscious at all times.
8. A written assessment of security, travel, and health risks specific to the relevant country or region will always be available and reviewed at appropriate intervals.
9. Health clearance, a verbal and written briefing on all risks relevant to the role, and clear advice on agency obligations and individual responsibilities in relation to possible risks will always be communicated.
10. The OCI Foundation aims to always have measures in place to mitigate identified risks, including insurance.
11. We provide update briefings when new equipment, procedures or risks are identified.
12. We regularly review security plans, including evacuation procedures
13. The OCI Foundation offers all staff a debriefing or exit interview at the end of any contract or assignment.
14. We ensure personalised health checks.

D. **Compliance**

- The acceptance and compliance of staff and all other persons involved are critical success factors for this Safety and Security Policy.
- Compliance is not optional. It is compulsory and concurrent with the start of any work within the OCI Foundation. This Policy is, therefore, binding on all persons it addresses.
- In some unforeseen situations where staff might be unable to comply with the stipulations of this Policy or where compliance will lead to greater risks, consultation with the CEO needs to be sought beforehand, and a clear explanation is submitted afterwards.
- Unreasonable breaches of this Policy are considered a disciplinary offence and will be subject to disciplinary action within the OCI Foundation. Such might include, but will not be limited to, suspension or dismissal.

E. Key Provisions

1) Primacy of life and the individual right to withdraw

Life is prioritised over materials at the OCI Foundation. Therefore, no staff member should endanger their own life or the lives of others while attempting to protect OCI Foundation property, equipment, financial resources, documents, or infrastructure.

Personnel are always informed beforehand of and prepared for the level of risk of any given duty travel, and by accepting the mission, they accept the risk. However, unforeseen circumstances or developments may occur, and therefore, every individual staff member has the right to request to suspend activities, withdraw, and/or leave the area.

Such requests will be granted where this suspension or withdrawal does not expose the individual or team to greater risk. The CEO will assess this. If the CEO considers that this individual decision exposes a greater risk to the individual or team, then the individual still has the right to suspend or withdraw at his/her own risk and costs.

2) Principle of precaution

Within the line-management structure, there is a co-responsibility between an individual or manager and the next higher manager. They try to communicate and discuss certain issues and aim for consensus. If this communication is not possible or there is a difference of opinion, and immediate action is required, then the principle of precaution overrides. This means that the decision to evacuate, withdraw or prohibit a field trip will be endorsed, independent of which level initiates the decision. Both levels can make decisions on evacuation, withdrawal, or the prohibition of specific trips, and nobody can overrule these decisions.

3) Acceptance as much as possible, protection when needed

The basis of our security management in all situations will be acceptance by the local community. We will make all reasonable efforts to negotiate and gain acceptance from relevant local stakeholders. Acceptance by the community is one of the preconditions for operating, and we will actively contribute to that through communication, participation, relationships, and our programs. Our behaviour is with respect for local cultures and existing economic, religious, and political patterns, and the Code of Conduct manages all OCI Foundation personnel's behaviour.

The protection approach to security focuses on reducing staff vulnerability to risks by implementing procedures and using equipment to secure themselves against them. Key elements are clear and agreed-upon policies and procedures, staff awareness of risks and vulnerabilities, communication procedures and equipment, protection devices, and so forth.

The default balance between the mentioned approaches is to achieve acceptance as much as possible, complemented with protective measures when needed. Ideally, the protective measures do not inhibit or contradict our acceptance approach.

4) Deterrence as a last resort

In the reality of current working environments, where the context and sometimes even the configuration of aids are politicised, acceptance or even protection is not enough. In those cases, one last resort might be the deterrence approach, most clearly defined as posing a counter-threat in legal, economic, or political terms. One of the most viable examples might

be the threat of suspending activities or withdrawing from the area. Another example is using any form of armed guards, protection, or escorts. Since the latter example seriously undermines our acceptance approach and the perception of our independence and impartiality, this option is an exception that can only be made after approval by the CEO or temporarily during immediate evacuation.

5) Do no harm

One of the biggest factors influencing the success of our acceptance approach is the “Do No Harm Principle.” The OCI Foundation will not undertake any missions or field visits that jeopardise the safety of personnel, partner organisations, or the local community.

6) Threshold of risk

The impact of our activities that can be achieved should always outweigh the risks taken. In principle, the OCI Foundation will suspend its operations where the security risks are disproportionate to the potential program benefits. Therefore, the OCI Foundation commits itself to continuously analysing and understanding the context and the risks that result from working in that context.

As already stated, acceptance by the local community is one of the preconditions for operating. The OCI Foundation is not willing to operate in areas where it is evident that employees of international organisations are explicit targets of attacks. Also, when there are known and specific threats towards OCI Foundation staff in certain areas and this threat is considered as credible, or in circumstances where the level of generalised violence suggests a high probability of an incident harming OCI Foundation staff, the principle of precaution indicates that the OCI Foundation will not allow staff to work in or travel to this area.

The OCI Foundation commits itself to minimising the risk to staff and will, therefore, always explore all possible alternatives to attain the operations' aims.

The CEO will monitor and consider the above developments.

7) Risk assessment

Risk Assessment aims to identify safety and security risks to OCI Foundation personnel. All proposed travel must undergo a risk assessment in advance. Critical risk areas must be considered, including civil unrest and political tension, criminal activity, natural disasters, and health risks.

F. Safety and Security Framework

A clear division of responsibilities, communication between staff, and checks on the application of measures are key factors in managing security in the best possible way. For that, the OCI Foundation considers the line-management structure the primary security management system. Security is an integral part of field operations, and only managers can balance the impact of the activities and the risks taken. Additionally, the OCI Foundation has some management tools and task forces at the institutional level to support this line-management responsibility.

For the security management structure to work, the strict operational hierarchy must be respected at all times. This requires an open and inclusive working environment in which all staff members contribute to improved security by taking an active role in security issues.

In the event of key players' absence, the responsibility is transferred to a colleague at the same level or one's own manager, and this is communicated beforehand and effectively. Decisions made by higher levels should be adhered to with due consideration of each individual's responsibility.

The following Safety and Security Framework outlines the various procedures, guidelines and allied policies that are in place to ensure the safety and security of our personnel:

1. The **CEO** is responsible for all OCI Foundation associates working or travelling overseas.
2. **Personal Responsibility:** Staff are the organisation's most valuable asset. The OCI Foundation employees made conscious decisions to work with the organisation and are committed to its mission. While this attitude is crucial for boosting staff motivation and performance, it must be balanced against security risks. Employees are expected to understand, weigh, and ultimately accept these risks. Personal responsibilities include, but are not limited to, the following:
 - a. Staff members are adequately prepared to go to or stay in certain areas. This includes understanding the context and the risks involved, receiving security briefings from the OCI Foundation, and knowing about and complying with organisational policies.
 - b. Everyone is responsible for his or her health. The OCI Foundation offers health advice from qualified professionals, vaccinations, first aid kits, and other preventative measures, and employees are expected to act accordingly. Every employee is expected to maintain a certain level of hygiene and avoid infection.
 - c. Everyone is expected to actively contribute to improved security management practices in the organisation. This includes incident reporting, making suggestions for improvement, and pointing out to colleagues when certain behaviour is not in line with the policy.
 - d. Staff members must share their detailed travel planning with all relevant stakeholders.
 - e. The CEO is responsible for approving and maintaining security planning and/or for adequate and functional alignment with OCI Foundation partners regarding security management agreements.
 - f. The CEO ensures every staff member is adequately trained and prepared for his/her work.
 - g. The CEO decides whether to withdraw or evacuate staff members individually or collectively, voluntarily or involuntarily.
3. **Board of Directors:** The Board of Directors has overall responsibility for the safety and security of all OCI Foundation personnel and thus has the obligation to actively contribute to and formulate the OCI Foundation security policy and its implementation:
 - a. Lead a discussion and process of articulating the OCI Foundation's principles on current and foreseeable security issues; this is a standing item at all board meetings.
 - b. Decide on armed guards or armed escorts.
 - c. Thoroughly assess security before starting operations or establishing a field presence in an area.
4. **Chief Operating Officer (COO):** The COO, in charge of on-field operations, reports directly to the CEO. He or she is one of the first points of call for reporting safety and security incidents and for the OCI Foundation's immediate response to incidents. The COO is responsible for:

- a. Delivering pre-departure briefings.
- b. Preparing, with the CEO, safety and security risk analyses.
- c. Reporting to the board on safety and security risk assessment.
- d. Being the first point of call for safety and security incident reports.
- e. Establishing the Crisis Management Team (CEO, COO, and a Board Member for severe incidents)

G. **Review of Policy Document**

This policy is subject to review in March 2028, three years after its implementation. Our appraisal tool will be used as part of that review. However, it can be sooner if legislation or other events warrant it.

H. **Feedback**

If you have any feedback on the OCI Foundation on this document, please contact us immediately via the link [**HERE**](#).

This document was partly developed courtesy of a similar document from Kokoda Track Foundation, KTF