Safe Distribution/Registration

A basic guide for NGO partners in Somalia
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1. **Introduction**

The Saving Lives Together directive encouraged the formal development and adoption of safe and protective measures to be considered and included in the distribution of relief assistance during and after an emergency. The “Do No Harm” principle must be used as part of the guidance during planning of humanitarian assistance, so beneficiaries are never placed at further risk of harm. These guidelines and checklists are aimed at providing a framework for implementing partners at the field level to understand protection issues that may arise during distribution activities. There are also some simple checklists which can be used to identify “best practice” actions that should be incorporated into the planning of distributions in the field.

2. **Guidelines for safe distribution**

The current model adopted by WFP for safe distributions is designed to ensure the safety and security of the beneficiaries. The model respects and represents the right of the beneficiary to humanitarian assistance in a manner which preserves their dignity and well-being in an environment which is safe and free from harassment.

The guide is not an exhaustive examination of all safety, security and risk management systems that can be developed or implemented by partner organisations in Somalia. Instead, the document is intended to give guidance on the key needs that must be addressed at distribution and or registration sites. This guide uses checklists and step-by-step tools to ensure important duty of care needs are identified and managed.

3. **Responsibilities**

The primary responsibility for the security and protection of distribution/registration sites rests with the Host Government. Partner organizations are accountable for the safety and security of their personnel in accordance with their ‘duty of care’ obligations as employing organizations.

4. **Governance and accountability**

- Determine a suitable security risk management structure for the organisation to enable objectives to be met and ensure there is a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities.
- Identify a Security Focal Point (SFP) to support the development and implementation of the security risk management framework.
- Establish a cross-departmental security working group/committee to oversee the development and implementation of the security risk management framework.
- Ensure that all relevant job descriptions/ToR outline the security risk management roles and responsibilities associated with that position or activity.

5. **Governance and accountability**

- Develop a security policy that reflects the organisation’s principles and approach to security.
- Ensure the policy clearly outlines the organisation’s risk attitude, security risk management structure and the security responsibilities of individual staff and those allocated specific security roles.
- Identify practical and appropriate minimum-security requirements that must be in place in each location or activity, linked to a risk ratings system.

6. Safe distribution / registration model

7. NGO Security Liaison

Your national personnel can play a key role in determining the stakeholders to liaise with and getting in touch with them. In difficult environments, dedicated national ‘liaison’ staff may be needed. In some cases, using a respected intermediary (such as a religious leader or community head) can endow the organisation with local respectability.

Saving Lives Together is a series of recommendations aimed at enhancing security collaboration between the UN security management system and international NGOs/international organisations, and includes:

- Establishing security coordination arrangements and forums;
- Sharing relevant security information;
- Cooperating on security training;
- Cooperating on operational and logistics arrangements, where feasible;
- Identifying resource requirements for enhancing security coordination between the UN, international NGOs and international organisations, and advocating for funding; and consulting on common ground rules for humanitarian action.

8. Security and contextual information

Good security management, like good programming, requires a solid understanding of the local environment and of the role – both actual and perceived – that aid agencies play in it. Ideally, the organisation will already seek a deep contextual knowledge base for every setting for the benefit of programming, but if not, security management can be a legitimate
impetus for doing this. Such an understanding can contribute greatly to your organisation’s ability to anticipate threats.

NGO security coordination bodies (e.g. EISF, INSO, etc.) can also help your organisations access NGO-specific information: https://www.ngosafety.org/country/somalia

9. Incidents reporting

- All serious incidents must be fully examined to understand the events leading up to, during and after the incident.
- A post-incident inquiry, ideally led by someone not connected with the incident, should consider possible motives or causes, the actions and behaviour of staff, and the response to the incident.
- Incident investigations should identify key recommendations or follow-on actions, including possible disciplinary procedures, to continually improve security risk management.
- The partner NGO shall inform WFP of a significant Incident within 24 hrs.

10. Establish a crisis management structure

- The majority of security incidents should be handled through your organization’s regular line management. However, exceptional situations can arise which, due to the nature and severity of the incident, or its wider implications, would require your organisation to establish a dedicated structure to respond. This is generally referred to as a ‘crisis’. An essential part of pre-planning for such events is to identify a team that will coordinate and manage the organization’s response.

11. The Safe Distribution Process

1.1. Pre-distribution preparation

- **Distributions or registrations should ‘never’ be undertaken until there is assurance that the beneficiaries / communities have been fully informed and sensitized as to the criteria for selection as a beneficiary, and fully informed of the methodology and date of actual distribution. (NOTE: Where applicable, it is equally important to ensure that non-affected communities are informed and sensitized as to the criteria for selection).**

- Every individual distribution requires planning and preparation. NGOs must collectively discuss, coordinate and implement a safe, secure and effective delivery/distribution system.

- No distributions or registration take place without a confirmation from the local authorities or police that crowd control measures will be provided on the given dates for distribution or registration.

- Building a safe operating environment through consent, approval and cooperation from individuals, communities and local authorities is key.
1.2. Distribution or registration sites

- Distributions or registrations should have adequate shelter, shade, water and sanitary outlets. *(Note: Community traditions and cultural norms should be adhered to as much as possible during distribution. E.G Separation of males and females)*
- From the planning stages, delegation of duties and familiarization of the command structure at the site should be implemented and known by all staff involved in the distribution.
- Agreed security and crowd control measures must be in place well in advance of the actual commencement time of the activity.

1.3. Protection Do’s and Don’ts

- Avoid night-time distributions unless it is an extreme emergency. Generally, the risks and problems associated with undertaking distribution at night far outweigh the benefits.
- COMMUNICATE! COMMUNICATE! COMMUNICATE! Let the beneficiaries know well in advance what is happening – who is eligible for assistance – and who is not – and why. If the community understands the reasons for inclusion or exclusion, they are less likely to create any problems at the distribution site. They need to know when and where the distribution will take place, and all information should be given in their local language.
- Vulnerable groups with special needs must be identified and provisions made for them to receive support in a safe and dignified manner – e.g. either through special or mobile distributions; other forms of transport to the distribution site arranged etc.
- Be aware of cultural and social norms when identifying distribution points e.g. consider access for women and children so they do not have to go past men’s area.
- Consider a secure and friendly information/assistance desk for the least educated and special requirement individuals.
- Under any circumstances - No person(s), other than aid recipients should be allowed inside the distribution or registration site.

1.4. Distribution / registration site selection

This activity should consider the following aspects:

- Carry out a security assessment of the selected site.
- NGO coordinate with local authorities of any planned distribution well in advance, including request for police presence (where applicable).
- Situate the site in neutral areas in coordination with community leaders together with security authorities.
- Sites should not be located in busy areas.
- Entry and exit for trucks delivering the commodities must clearly identified.
- Should not be on the main highway/road.
• Prepare site Layout – including separate area for women, disabled etc.
• Designate an entrance and exit.
• Consider the distance between the waiting area/registration and distribution point
• Plan for adequate crowd control capacity.
• Social mobilization.
• Staff Management.
• Exercise transparency of action at all levels.
• Safe Storage of commodities.
• Distance between commodities and beneficiaries.
• Consider the timing of the distribution and registration activity – i.e. religious holidays, night-time.
• Incident response planning.
• Should have road communication.
• Access to telephone/mobile network.
• Site should not be close to a security force’s infrastructure or children academic institutions.
• Explain to beneficiaries the boundaries of the distribution site.
• Ensure that there are basic toilet facilities (Male and female).
• Volunteers/Labours to have ID/Visibility items.

1.5. Crowd control

The activity should consider the following aspects:

• Involve community leaders.
• Effective use of local volunteers and prior brief is necessary.
• Social mobilization should include local media, when feasible.
• Increase beneficiary registration/verification points.
• Use barriers.
• Separate line for males and females.
• Start distribution early. Sign boards in local language.
• Organize beneficiaries outside the distribution perimeter (controlled entry).
• Only allow small numbers of people to enter distribution site at a time.
• Cater for amenities (water, toilet, sunshade).
• Position sufficient crowd personnel to ensure orderly movement.

1.6. Communication during

The activity should consider the following aspects:

• Communicate prior distribution with all parties.
• Megaphones, posters, flyers, electronic Radio/TV
• When shortages are expected, let local leaders know in advance.
• Keep beneficiaries informed on how long they have to wait & why.
• Discourage parents from bringing their children along to the distribution site.
• Hold this activity, in the waiting area.

1.7. Staff management

The activity should consider the following aspects:
• Make sure that only one person is in charge.
• Give detailed job descriptions to staff, explaining their specific roles.
• Ensure clear lines of communication.
• Use your VHF radio and your mobile phone.
• **Ensure contingency and evacuation plan is clear**
• Headcount before departure.
• Ensure adequate supervision and assistance for the vulnerable.
• Never surprise the population with a sudden change in system.
• Deal promptly and fairly with cases of cheating and disorder (involve leaders).
• Increase entrances/exits.
• Use rope/barbed wire for separation.
• Profiling – identify troublemakers early, inform security.

1.8. NGO staff travels to distribution / registration sites

The level and types of risk to travellers will vary significantly according to their destination, the nature of their trip, and their personal profile. Specific travel risk assessments should be completed for staff travelling to higher risk destinations, or where the nature of the visit raises security issues. You will need to provide clear guidance to staff when a travel risk assessment is required and clarify who is responsible for approving the assessment and authorising travel. NGO personnel embarking on travel should receive a security briefing specific to the area before departure and also on arrival, given by the organisation itself.

1.9. WFP Safe distribution / registration checklist

The guidelines and accompanying checklist provided to NGOs establish the underlying mechanism for WFP to perform its oversight role. WFP designed the list to document and NGO's consistency and completeness, or the lack of it, in implementing the guidelines. The list also provides evidence to WFP that a minimum risk management system is in place at distribution sites, which could then be measured or verified.

12. WFP anti-fraud policy

WFP has zero tolerance for fraud, corruption and collusive practices.

13. Protection Policy

Humanitarian protection involves humanitarian agencies doing all they can to ensure that human rights are respected – in accordance with international law – within their work. Agencies should seek to minimize the negative impacts of their assistance, to avoid increasing the harm or risk to already vulnerable populations in conflict or natural disaster settings.

14. Beneficiary Feedback Desk

The system enhances accountability and interaction with beneficiaries by allowing them to call or email directly when they have questions or complaints about WFP food assistance activities. The Desk’s phone numbers may be found in back of SCOPE cards.
15. Supporting resources

To strengthen your organization’s security risk management, all managers and staff should have access to relevant security guidance, tools, and templates. An essential component in developing your organization’s security risk management framework is collating, and providing access to, a library of useful security-related resources. Make use of the personal security guidance and NGO security and safety management resources which already exist, rather than reinventing them.

16. Useful websites

www.eisf.eu/training-and-events/
www.ngosafety.org
www.ngosafety.org/keydata-dashboard
http://ingossa.org/
www.interaction.org/work/security
www.insecurityinsight.org/aidindanger
https://aidworkersecurity.org/incidents
https://kayaconnect.org
https://ifrc.csod.com/
https://training.dss.un.org/