



SECURITY POLICY

Introduction

International Blue Cross (IBC) has a mission to prevent, treat and reduce substance use, abuse and dependency among the most vulnerable people around the world. Headquartered in Bern, Switzerland, IBC is an international actor in the field of development cooperation and serves as the umbrella organization for its national member organizations. IBC has no regional offices but works with in-country partners.

The members are independent, non-political and non-denominational Christian associations that form a network to assist marginalised populations and people harmed by, or at risk to be harmed by, alcohol and other drugs.

As a global organisation, IBC also implements international development cooperation programmes in the field of substance abuse in line with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Project activities are run in grass roots settings in various locations and include alcohol and drug prevention, treatment and counselling for people with substance abuse problems, as well as international policy advice and lobbying.

The seven core values of the International Blue Cross are: love, solidarity, excellence, respect, empowerment, inclusiveness and good governance.

Purpose

This policy has been designed by and for IBC and has been adopted by the Network Committee. This policy affects all IBC employees and volunteers whilst travelling on IBC business. Contracted parties such as consultants are also required to comply with this policy when travelling on IBC business.

Objectives

International Blue Cross values the life and health of its staff over its physical assets or achievement of programme objectives. Therefore, security planning and risk assessments are essential. Staff should not place themselves in excessive risk and this should be borne in mind in all security decision-making. The objective of this policy is to ensure safe working conditions, to prevent harm and minimize risks. IBC uses ACT Alliance's Staff Safety and Security Guidelines as a good practice guideline when sourcing emerging best practice - to challenge assumptions and ways of working, to learn, strengthen and improve the IBC security management.

The application of this policy must be adapted to differing local circumstances as well as DAC and non-DAC countries.



IBC assesses the need to use our organisational name/logo and evaluate the security implications on our partners' and funders' usage of the IBC name/logo case by case as part of the local security plan. IBC recognises the need for a high level of security awareness to be maintained and for staff to have the necessary skills to respond to security incidents. IBC therefore builds and maintains security awareness and invests in staff training on a regular basis and engages local partners to security planning for each trip.

Areas of Application

Development of country specific plans

Where International Blue Cross carries out programs, staff and volunteers are protected by country-specific security plans. These plans will apply the principles of the organisational security policy within a locally specific context. IBC secretariat assesses all field travel by and updates country security plans in order to make informed decisions about travels. The General Secretary will approve these documents with the Programme Officer.

Travel safety

Each field trip needs an updated security procedure:

- a) **Travel to non-DAC¹ countries: travel agenda and travel key information form are required. In addition A1 form and any other documents ensuring right for social security and health care should be completed.**
- b) **Travel to DAC countries requires a full security plan that includes: travel key information form, country specific security plan, risk assessment and a travel agenda and insurances.**

For each travel to DAC countries, the person travelling is in charge of updating the country security plan, complete risk assessment, fill in the travel key information form containing all important data associated with the travel such as contact information, schedules, ticket number, visa, passport number etc. The documents have to be authorized by the General Secretary prior to departure and saved on box for secretariat access. During travels, Blue Cross staff, volunteers and consultants must carry their passport and have a copy of the passport in a safe place. In addition, a copy of the passport and visa must be saved in the IBC networking database (box).

Transfer of money and cash handling

International Blue Cross recognises that in many locations there is no banking infrastructure and therefore the movement of cash is often a necessity. A clear money handling plan is described in the key travel information form to enable the safe transfer of cash during field trips in a way that takes account of the local context.

¹ Definition and current members: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/dacmembers.htm>



Wherever possible, when transferring cash, the risk should be with the cash transfer agent. Two members of staff or representatives from partner organization should be involved in collecting, receiving and counting transferred cash.

Only minimum amount of cash should be carried in person but the amount of the transport cost to the airport should always be available in case of emergency evacuation.

The particulars for each trip will be detailed in the travel key information form.

Evacuation

IBC aims to prevent any incident by careful risk assessment and security planning. Staff has the right to withdraw from travelling or taking part on a travel due to severe security concerns. IBC recognises severe security concerns such as health epidemic, sudden military action, severe political unrest, and recent terrorist attack as indicators to necessitate the removal of its staff from a location or postpone the travel.

In case of emergency IBC staff members or volunteers are to seek the first possible opportunity to return back to Europe, in coordination with the travel insurance and local representation of the staff's national government.

Kidnap

IBC recognizes the risk of kidnapping as a serious threat and therefore seeks to prevent it through training, procedures and guidelines as outlined in the country specific security plans and maintaining high level of awareness of the risk.

In case of a kidnap, IBC will seek expert support to create dialogue for purpose of keeping staff member safe. If there is no chance to create dialogue IBC must decide what its' options are. These must be looked at with next of kin and other key stakeholders and an informed decision taken under advice.

Photography

IBC staff should not routinely take photos. Any photography should be properly planned and executed, and is subject to the local organisation's and photographed individual's permission. Informed consent of children and their duty-bearer should always be obtained.

IBC staff is not allowed to take photographs of tactically sensitive places (military installations, airports etc.), public places (allowed with permission) and mass events (demonstrations / rallies etc.).

Minimum requirements before field trip

- Desk research of context and key threats facing NGO workers (including assessment of communications and transport assessment, plus cultural context).
- Updated risk assessment for the trip.
- Connect with local networks (UN office if available).



- Understand what IBC positioning means within the local context and the risks it will attract.
- Assessment of existing skills/training - if required plan additional training minimum 3 months in advance.
- Accommodation security.
- Connect with in country partners and briefing regarding the plan
- Clear **schedule** of movements, activities and calls for the duration of the trip - any changes must be reported to General Secretary by travel agenda.
- **Travel key Information form** will include all necessary contact details: travel information, passport and visa information, phone, e-mail, address for accommodation, minimum 3 local people, local emergency contact details, staff member's own contact details and details of next of kin and critical data, cash handling and finance plan.
- A copy of **travel documents** including the passport and visa with travel tickets, insurance and accommodation booking must be saved on box for secretariat access.
- Vaccinations and health protection measures as advised.

Security Equipment

IBC acknowledges and commits itself to the primacy of life over equipment/assets.

IBC is committed to providing the necessary equipment for effective security risk management but also recognises its resource limitations and therefore requires all staff to take responsibility for the upkeep, maintenance and care of equipment. This responsibility also requires all staff to ensure equipment defects are reported in a timely way and responded to. All staff and consultants should receive the equipment necessary for their security.

Insurance

Each person travelling must ensure that IBC will provide appropriate insurance coverage for the required IBC travel. IBC representatives are not permitted to travel without appropriate insurance coverage.

All staff will be briefed and reminded of the relevant insurance procedures in response to an incident, and coverage.

All in-country security plans must clearly establish links with the local security network and the nature of any joint security management.

Health

IBC recognises that staff health is a key platform for maintaining good security.



IBC requires people to operate in situations where they are exposed to increased health risks, therefore will contribute towards treatment for those conditions that clearly arise from the working environment. IBC staff informs IBC of any health concerns and are responsible to ensure they take necessary vaccinations that are paid by IBC. Any significant changes in health circumstances (including pregnancy) must be informed to IBC prior to travel in order to ensure appropriate risk assessment and planning.

IBC recognises that Post Traumatic Stress symptoms can occur without a trauma through a combination of intense stressors (separation from family and friends over long periods of time, working in an insecure environment, lack of access to recreational facilities etc.). Therefore, IBC will support its staff to seek out activities that promote a work-life balance.

Induction/Orientation/Training

As part of its commitment to its staff's security, IBC will induct all new staff members on security and their responsibilities in relation to it. This will be done by arranging appropriate security training before travelling.

All staff will arrange a security briefing prior to travel by contacting embassy / UN security information services. On arrival in country, IBC staff should contact UN security officials (where available) and local partner organisation. All official registration duties for in country arrival should be done at first possible opportunity.

Each member of staff returning from the field should provide a briefing to the Programmes Team communicating trip outcomes. The returning individual will also be debriefed by their line manager in order to provide the opportunity to address any arising issues.

IBC Contracted parties and support recipients

- Commitment to keeping staff/volunteers safe.
- In country security planning for field visits together with IBC.
- Commitment to field visit agenda and information sharing of any changes.
- Contracted parties have a responsibility to ensure they have appropriate security know how in order to enter any contracted activities with IBC. All IBC contracted consultants are responsible for their own security training but will receive IBC's security information for advice. This does not exclude contracted party's responsibility for their own security planning and risk assessment. In addition, contracted parties are to fill in the travel key information form with copies of travel tickets, passport, visa and accommodation details with IBC.



IBC employees and volunteers:

IBC is committed to ensuring a high, on-going level of awareness for security issues, responsibilities and behaviour. In fulfilling this commitment IBC may:

- Convene security awareness workshops.
- Provide resources for individual reference (handouts, hand books).
- Ensure security is included in routine meetings and reports.
- Training.
- Briefings and de-briefings.
- Regular consultation on security planning and strategies.
- Practice scenarios and drills.
- Posters.
- Advisories (email).

IBC members and donors

- IBC runs high quality programmes with sufficient security planning. IBC encourages MO's towards safe working practices.
- In all its events IBC requests MO's and donors to work with IBC security policy.

Complaints Procedure

IBC seeks to provide a safe environment through which stakeholders can voice a concern, without fear of reprisal or unfair treatment (Non-retaliation/ whistleblowing principle). These instructions will apply to the handling of complaints unless they are in conflict with compulsory Swiss legislation in which case IBC complies with mandatory legislation. The Swiss law supplements the complaint procedure as necessary for handling the complaint. Complaints can be made in **English or in French** by filling in an online form, by e-mail, phone, in person, or by post. IBC website contains details of how to complain, including a sample complaints letter format. IBC implements a fast-track process for dealing with complaints about Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and other gross misconduct issues.

IBC Secretariat
Complaints
Lindenrain 5a
3012 Bern, Switzerland
Tel.: +41 31 301 9804
Email: complaints@internationalbluecross.org
Webpage: www.internationalbluecross.org

The complainant shall receive confirmation of receipt of the complaint, within 5 working days after IBC receives the complaint. The email, letter or phone call should give the following information:





- when and how the complaint was received;
- how the IBC has responded to the complaint so far and what it will do next;
- the name of the focal point or person responsible for the complaint;
- the person to contact with questions or feedback.

IBC is committed to responding to all complaints and concerns of abuse in English or in French. IBC has responsibility for this work, and carries out investigations, and delivers support to survivors of and victims according to the [IBC complaints policy](#). IBC will communicate the preliminary outcome of an investigation to the complainant(s), where possible, within 60 days after acknowledgment of the complaint. In complex or exceptional cases, the investigation period may take longer.

Any investigation may result in disciplinary hearings and disciplinary action. Thereby, IBC applies the disciplinary guidelines of ACAS (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) and the national employment law. Allegation of gross misconduct will result to immediate suspension of this person from work until investigation is concluded. Gross misconduct includes issues such as corruption, sexual or any other form of exploitation, violence, abuse and criminal acts (<http://www.acas.org.uk/media/pdf/f/m/Acas-Code-of-Practice-1-on-disciplinary-and-grievance-procedures.pdf>).

If the complainant(s) or Subject(s) of Complaint does not accept the outcome of the investigation, he/she/it/they can appeal the decision to the Network Committee (NC) using the IBC Complaints procedure as explained above. For a more detailed overview of the good practice on handling complaints we adapt the [ACT Alliance Complaints Procedure \(2016\)](#). Its guidelines are the basis for our process (<https://actalliance.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/Complaints-and-Investigation-Guidelines-July-2010-1.pdf>).

Responsibilities

The Network Committee (NC) is the driving force behind this policy and its members are informed of all logged complaints without confidential details. NC provides the **secretariat** with the assistance to drive the IBC strategy, statutes and vision. All IBC employees are responsible for upholding, respecting and acting in accordance with this policy and two-yearly signing that they have updated their knowledge on the topic.

Management provides direction, training and support to ensure employees and contracted partners understand their responsibilities and can apply this policy in their areas of work. The **Code of Conduct** states that it is the duty and the responsibility of all managers, employees and IBC representatives **to report** in line with this policy any suspicions or incidences of inappropriate behaviour. IBC arranges case-by-case support for victims. Victims have access to medical and psychological support. **Survivors and victims** can choose if and when they would like to take up the support options available to them.




Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 4 years, or as necessary. IBC will review the operation of this policy in consultation with the NC, employees and other stakeholders, where appropriate, in light of changing best practice and the law, amending the policy where required. IBC will take into account any lessons learned from handling complaints and to take into consideration any feedback received. IBC secretariat staff is responsible for the effective implementation of this policy in all IBC work.

This policy is valid from: January 7th 2019, updated 15th March 2024

Signed:


Reinhard Jahn
President IBC


Anne Babb
General Secretary IBC