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TITLE: SAFETY AND SECURITY PROTOCOLS FOR DSWD FIELD WORKERS
IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AND HIGH RISKS AREAS

I. RATIONALE

As the lead agency in human development and poverty reduction, the DSWD leads the development, implementation and coordination of social protection and poverty reduction solutions for and with the poor, vulnerable and disadvantage. It also formulates policies and plans which aimed at providing direction to intermediaries and other implementers in the development and delivery of social welfare and development services. Moreover, the Department also develops and enriches existing programs and services for specific sectors such as children and youth, women, solo parents, elderly, indigenous peoples, and Persons with Disabilities (PWDs). There is a wide range of action required to implement social protection programs of the Department, and provide services designed to promote social change and empower people to enhance their well-being. Since these are services which the poor are unable to provide for themselves or if without additional support, comprehensive intervention are oftentimes being done in the communities where there is a broadening base of clientele in a complex, dynamic and oftentimes unpredictable environment where there are inherent risks, potential dangers to safety and security.

The safety and security of the DSWD personnel is of primary importance. While the nature of the job of the workers of the Department would exposed them to occasional threats and potential danger as this may be inherent in the environment, proper measures must be exhausted to deal with the dangers. This can be done through comprehensive regulations and security plans to ensure the safety and security of DSWD personnel, and to provide guidelines for emergency response when incidents do occur.

In May 2013¹, suspected Abu Sayyaf bandits seized a social worker in Basilan identified as Jenelyn Entera, who is in charge of the Department of Social Welfare and Development's (DSWD) Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program (4Ps) in the municipality of Ungkaya Pukan. Entera was inspecting some of the 4Ps beneficiaries when four gunmen suspected to be Abu Sayyaf bandits seized her around 9 a.m. in Barangay Ulitán in Ungkaya Pukan.

¹ <http://www.mindanews.com/top-stories/2013/05/22/dswd-staff-boat-captain-abducted-in-basilan/>
SAFETY AND SECURITY PROTOCOLS FOR DSWD FIELD WORKERS IN CONFLICT AFFECTED AND HIGH RISKS AREAS

The suspects, armed with caliber .45 pistols, forced Entera to board one of the two motorcycles without registration plates and sped towards the municipality of Sumisip, Dapiloza. With this, it is imperative to develop guidelines to protect our workers. Hence, this Protocol.

II. DECLARATION OF PRINCIPLES AND STATE POLICIES

Article II, Section 2, 1987 Constitution. The Philippines renounces war as an instrument of national policy, adopts the generally accepted principles of international law as part of the law of the land and adheres to the policy of peace, equality, justice, freedom, cooperation, and amity with all nations.

Article II, Section 3, 1987 Constitution. Civilian authority is, at all times, supreme over the military. The Armed Forces of the Philippines is the protector of the people and the State. Its goal is to secure the sovereignty of the State and the integrity of the national territory.

Article II, Section 5, 1987 Constitution. The maintenance of peace and order, the protection of life, liberty, and property, and promotion of the general welfare are essential for the enjoyment by all the people of the blessings of democracy.

Article II, Section 11, 1987 Constitution. The State values the dignity of every human person and guarantees full respect for human rights.

Rule IV, Section 13, Implementing Rules and Regulations of Magna Carta for Women, - Women Affected by Disasters, Calamities, and Other Crisis Situations – Women have the right to protection and security in times of disasters, calamities and other crisis situations especially in all phases of relief, recovery, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts.

III. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. **Acknowledgement of the Context of Social Welfare and Development (SWD) Practice.** The Department acknowledges the risks involved in the implementation of its programs and projects particularly in Conflict Afflicted and High Risk Areas (CA-HRAs). Hence, it does its best to mitigate and manage these risks through strict implementation of its Operational Safety and Security Protocols. The Department's nature of work required the program and service providers to reach and interact with various clientele categories – vulnerable individuals, families, group and communities using the appropriate social welfare strategies and interventions. In cases though where threats are present, there is a need to find means and ways to address these issues properly, thus, protecting the valuable workforce in the field.

2. **Field Worker’s Right to Report Safety Concerns.** Every worker has a right to safe working conditions, including adequate safeguards on his life and property during work. Therefore, every worker has the right and responsibility to report and assert existence of any forms of threats or situations detrimental to his safety. The right of every worker to a safe and healthy working environment is a “widely recognized principle, stemming directly from the right to personal integrity, one of the fundamental principles of human rights.
3. **Application of Universal Safety Precautions.** Universal safety precautions provides for deep awareness and understanding of the necessary standard precautions to ensure safety and ensuring receiving safety information for necessary assistance and secure safer circumstances while on and off of duty in CA-HRAs. Awareness and understanding of the environmental risks and other factors such as but not limited to political, historical and socioeconomic be well defined in order to establish safety plans as a matter of routine planning.

IV. DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. **“Ambush”** means a surprise attack by people lying in wait in a concealed position.
2. **“Abduction”** means the action or an instance of forcibly taking someone away against their will.
3. **“Bombings”** refer to attacks made in a place or places or to people with the use of explosive weapons.
4. **“Conflict Affected and High Risk Areas (CA-HRAs)”** are areas where there are political and social instability, where violence and human rights abuses occur or may occur and areas wherein such incidents may occur (pre-conflict) or re-occur (post-conflict). For purposes of this Protocol, the Armed Forces of the Philippines, the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process and the Regional Director (having in mind PAMANA areas) can declare CA-HRAs.

The following are the criteria and indicators to identify conflict-affected areas (in accordance with international humanitarian law) as well as high-risk areas in specific zones within a country. For example, such areas may be identified by:

- a. The presence of an international or non-international armed conflict;
- b. The transition from an armed conflict to peace;
- c. Widespread or serious human rights violations;
- d. Political and social instability or repression; or
- e. Institutional weakness or collapse of state infrastructure.

5. **“Extortion”** is a crime in which one person forces another person to do something against his will, generally to give up money or other property, by threat of violence, property damage, and damage to the person’s reputation, or extreme financial hardship. Extortion involves the victim’s consent to the crime, but that consent is obtained.
6. **“Field implementers”** refers to DSWD staff and workers in the local levels. They basically put into effect and realization the agency plans, decisions and agreements. For purposes of this Protocol, it may also mean “field workers” and “field staff”.
7. **“Incident Report Template”** is a form that is to be filled out in order to record details of an unusual event that occurs at the workplace. The purpose of the incident report is to document the exact details of the occurrence while they are vivid in the minds of those who witnessed the event. This information may be useful in the future when dealing with liability issues stemming from the incident.
8. **“Inherent risks”** means conditions which are impossible to manage or transfer away, risks that exist when no controls have been put in place.
9. **“Kidnapping”** is a crime where the victim is transported a substantial distance or held in a place of isolation through the use of force.
10. **“Protocol”** is a system of rules that explain the correct conduct and procedures to be followed in formal situations.
11. **“Safety”** refers to the condition of being protected from or unlikely to cause danger, risk, or injury.
12. **“Staff debriefing”** is an information-sharing and event-processing session conducted as a conversation between peers. Group members become informants to each other about a situation or event that occurred to them as a group. The listener can be a therapist, counselor, or professional peer who helps the group process the information being shared. The person who conducts the session should have the professional skills to guide the established process that will help staff members recover from their distress.
13. **“Security”** refers to all the measures that are taken to protect a place, or to ensure that only people with permission enter it or leave it.
14. **“Soft targets”** includes persons or things that are relatively unprotected or vulnerable, especially to military or terrorist attack.

15. **“Theft”** refers to the act of stealing; specifically: the felonious taking and removing of personal property with intent to deprive the rightful owner of it, an unlawful taking (as by embezzlement or burglary) of property illegally.

16. **“Threat to security and safety”** refers to any incident or confrontation that jeopardizes security and safety.

V. TITLE OF THE RULES

These Rules shall be known and cited as the Safety & Security Protocols for DSWD Field Workers in Conflict Affected and High Risks Areas (CA-HRAs).

VI. SCOPE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE RULES

A highly productive workforce can help ensure delivery of continuous service and achieve the objectives of the programs and projects of the Department. However, any disruption in the threat levels and vulnerabilities on their safety and security, particularly those who are stationed in CA-HRAs may alter the quality of services which our beneficiaries badly need. It may be considered that in an environment of increased exposure of program implementers, they are also facing increased risks to their safety and security because they are oftentimes considered as ‘soft targets,’ and the programs/projects that they are implementing may be perceived as impartial, or culturally and politically sensitive. Hence, these Protocols are of paramount importance. They will serve as guidance document for all field workers in order to increase the level of their security.

With a view to ensuring the effective exercise of the right to safe and healthy working conditions within the SWD practice, this document specifically has the following objectives:

1. To formulate, implement and periodically review a coherent policy on field workers safety.
2. To improve safety and to prevent accidents and injury arising out of, linked with or occurring in the course of work, particularly by minimizing the causes of hazards that may be encountered in CA-HRAs;
3. To inform the all DSWD Officials and staff about the importance of safety when in field work, and advocate for social workers’ right to work environments that promote safety;
4. To provide support for the exploration of technology and training that enhances field workers safety;
5. To encourage DSWD officials and field workers to participate in the development of best practices in promoting work safety.

Moreover, as an educational and reference tool, this document provides a comprehensive overview of the important aspects of safety and security while in the field of work.

All field implementers and personnel of the Department, whether employed in a regular basis under the Civil Service Law, Memorandum of Agreement (MOA), Job Order (JO), or through a Consultancy with existing contractual agreement with the Department, and volunteers, who are stationed temporarily or permanently, in a CA-HRAs in official capacity shall be covered by these Rules.

VII. PRE-ENGAGEMENT AND PREVENTIVE MEASURES

A. Regional Level Coordination

Determination of the incidence of violent conflicts should be done prior to the deployment of field staff. Assessment and validation of the area as CAA-HRA shall be the responsibility of the regional staff and necessary information should be relayed to the concerned field implementers before the actual date of deployment.

All field implementers and personnel of the Department who are stationed in a site identified as Conflict Affected and High Risk Areas (CAA-HRAs) shall:

1. Undergo security and safety training before deployment including staff debriefing. With the help of the Capacity Building Bureau (CBB) as the lead Bureau to craft the basic training modules, the Regional Director shall have the discretion as to the details/contents of the training which includes the number of days of the training, the office concerned and others. Funds for the training may be sourced from unutilized funds, if available. If not available, the Regional Director has the discretion where to source the funds

For Central and Regional office staff who visits a conflict affected area, the Office must secure travel clearance from AFP/PNP/MPOC. Each travel must be supported by an approved Special Order or Travel NO travel clearance and/or No special order to travel means NO travel. Local staff assigned at the Municipality should coordinate with the PNP or the Municipal Peace and Order Council.

2. Proper coordination should also be observed with the head of the Local Government Unit stating the purpose and confirmation from the Local Chief Executive shall be reviewed before facilitating security clearances.

3. Must secure and know the established pick-up point (evacuation plan).As a matter of course, the MPOC develops the evacuation plan;

4. All workers going on field visits shall wear DSWD ID and a uniform shirt with "DSWD" in bold print emblazoned on the back at all times. The DSWD vest may be

worn as an alternative to the T-shirt, should include a white handkerchief and First-Aid Supplies. In addition to the vest there should be a DSWD cap for greater visibility. Required supplies/logistics must be procured before the deployment of newly hired staff as well as the office IDs.

During pay outs and other activities that involve disbursing of cash, the Regional Director may opt to dispense this requirement for security reasons. The Regional Director should also closely coordinate with Land Bank and other conduits necessary for disbursement of cash and define/adopt techniques to ensure safety and security of personnel who will be involved.

5. Field workers shall conduct mapping of violent conflict incidence and may conduct risk assessment in their area of responsibility and maintain up-to-date inventory of the situation to be filed in a confidential folder under the safekeeping of the Regional Office.

To conduct a risk assessment, there have been three key stages in the strategic conflict assessments conducted to date:

- a. Analysis of the conflict;
- b. Analysis of local responses to the conflict;
- c. Development of strategies and options.

The mapping of violent incidence, risk assessment and self-preservation can be part of the modules to be crafted in partnership with CBB;

6. Always indicate in the Locator Board the field staffs destination and whereabouts and its certain date and time.

B. Coordination with Municipal Peace and Order Council, Armed Forces of the Philippines, and/or Philippine National Police

Prior entry or visit to the area identified as CA-CHRs, the worker shall strictly observe the following:

1. Request briefing by the PNP or meeting with the Municipal Peace and Order Council to understand the current threat level of the area to be visited;
2. Once assessment is established, the worker shall strictly follow the security measures provided by any member of MPOC to prevent untoward incidents and follow the guidelines set by the PNP/AFP for emergency response when incidents do occur;
3. Establish and maintain communication with any of the members of the MPOC and DSWD FO;

4. If the municipality has reported sightings of armed groups or has experienced clashes between government and rebel groups, the worker shall request the Mayor to call for a dialogue with all stakeholders to assess the situation, formulate plans and strategies, and agree on actions to ensure the safety and security of the worker.

The role of the Municipal Peace and Order Council is very critical. The DSWD field team shall:

1. Request that the MPOC issue a formal Resolution on the installation of security measures, including a quick response mechanism, for the safety of DSWD field staff;
2. Attend regularly MPOC meetings to be updated and to report on emerging peace and conflict issues and concerns.

Since DSWD team at the municipality level is not included in the mandatory members of the MPOC, the Regional Director shall ensure that the DSWD Team shall become either a regular member or a permanent observer so that they can attend MPOC meetings regularly as prescribed.

C. Coordination with the Barangay Officials and the Community

The roles of the Barangay officials and local constituents are very critical. Hence, it is required that all field workers shall also comply the following:

1. After clearances have been secured, the worker shall consult the barangay officials in areas to be visited and request for an escort in going to and from the area ("Hatid-Sundo" buddy system), if needed, to minimize security risk;
2. To prevent untoward incidents, no field worker shall spend the night in conflict affected barangays/sitios. Therefore, activities have to be planned carefully to start and finish at the appropriate time. In cases like natural calamity, such as sudden storms, landslides, earthquake, etc., which is preventing the staff from leaving the area, such staff shall seek shelter in the safest house in the area, like the barangay captain's house or a teacher's house or the house of any barangay official;
3. All field workers must exercise care and caution in conducting barangay assemblies and in dealing with community volunteers who may be members or relatives of members of rebel groups. All staff should refrain from making comments that have or reflect ideological and political leanings or slants to avoid unintentionally offending sensitive listeners;
4. In case of disaster, the worker must go to the designated evacuation center identified by the Barangay Local Government Unit.

VIII. ENGAGEMENT

1. The Regional Office should provide continuing information to field staff on the local security situation. A Focal person for Safety and Security must be identified by the FO. If no Focal person is identified, the Assistant Regional Director for Administration shall be the Focal Person and to be lodged under the HR Unit, the Region.
2. If there are reported clashes between government and rebel troops, all field workers who have information from reliable sources, must immediately report to the ARDO and the ARDO to the Regional Director. The Assistant Regional Director for Operations, Regional Project Coordinator, Deputy Regional Project Manager, and/or the Regional Community Development Specialist (RCDS) must also be informed either thru text, fax, or email, on the current situation of the affected areas. The report shall contain details of the conflict, and if possible, with maps showing conflict areas for reference and guidance;
3. If there are reported clashes between armed groups, all field workers must refrain from going to affected and neighboring areas and stay in the office until given clearance by AFP or MPOC. The order to redeploy or return to the area can only be issued by the Regional Director or the Assistant Regional Director/Regional Project Manager upon clearance from the AFP or MPOC;
4. If unavoidably caught in a cross fire or clashes, every field worker shall exercise self-preservation measures such as “hapa” (dapa), “tago”, “kamang” (gapang), “dagan” (takbo), “langoy” (swim). (They can also be required to carry white handkerchiefs that they can wave to signal that they are non-combatants).
5. In cases of reported attack on civilians or government buildings and facilities by armed groups, all field workers shall be immediately pulled out from the municipality;
6. In cases of kidnapping or abduction already concerned field implementers should remain calm during crisis (occurrence of violence, the incidence of hostage-taking or abduction) and to determine the actual situation and find ways to coordinate and cooperate with the hostage takers or abductors and further on to the appropriate authority.
7. Disclose to your immediate supervisor if you have a relative in the military especially if you think you might be at risk because of your association with this relative;
8. Refrain from using/riding marked and unmarked military vehicles.

IX. POST-ENGAGEMENT

1. Field workers exposed to such situations where his security was compromised must undergo critical incidence stress debriefing and if needed with the whole family members if possible. Debriefing after the crisis² shall include:

² Lim, Childs, and Gonsalves

- a.) Reporting and assessment of the learning incurred from the incident;
- b.) Introduction: The facilitator establishes the goals and rules and reinforces the need for confidentiality, if needed about anything that transpires during the incident;
- c.) Fact gathering: Each staff describes what happened and facts are gathered.
- d.) Reaction phase: Led by the facilitator, the staff examines its feelings, thoughts, and responses to the event experienced. If the debriefing session happens soon after the event occurred, there might not be any symptoms.
- e.) Symptom phase: If some time has elapsed since the event, group members may be experiencing symptoms. The facilitator helps the staff examine how these reactions have affected personal and work lives.
- f.) Stress response: The facilitator teaches staff involved about his stress response.
- g.) Suggestions: The facilitator offers guidance on how to cope with stress related to the incident.
- h.) Incident phase: Group members identify positive aspects of the event.
- i.) Referrals and provision of other support services phase: The facilitator concludes with this phase, whereby specific individuals who require additional support are referred for individual follow-up.

X. INCIDENT REPORTING; INCIDENTS TO REPORT

1. Any and all incidents involving the safety and security of a worker must at all times be reported to the Director/ARDA/ARDO.
2. The Director/ARDA/ARDO must provide prompt assistance to the field worker involved.
3. The Director/ARDA/ARDO, together with the Field Office Medical Staff, must assess the medical needs and obtain medical assistance if necessary;
4. Each field office of the Department must have a well-maintained incident report system to help the field office analyze, assess, identify and react to any changes in the security situation of the area. Incidents should be reported to the immediate senior staff that will then document and provide updates to the Regional Director and Asst.Regional Director. *(Please see Incident Report Template in Annex 1 for reference)*
5. The Director/ARDA/ARDO must develop a safety plan in response to the incident;

The Incidents to Report are the following:

- a. Attacks or Assault, (sexual, or any related assault);
- b. Theft;
- c. Vehicle accidents that result in injury or death;
- d. Arrests, to include unlawful/illegal detention
- e. Extortion attempts;
- f. Kidnapping or attempted kidnapping;

- g. Ambush;
- h. Credible threats of harm;
- i. Bombings;
- j. Other incidents that pose threat to the safety and security of the worker.

XI. OTHER MATTERS

1. The Director/ARDA/ARDO must address the caseload distribution of the affected field worker;
2. As much as possible, the Director/ARDA/ARDO must offer technical, financial and legal assistance as needed to the field worker involved;
3. The Director/ARDA/ARDO must recommend and implement a quality assurance review of policies and procedures.


XII. EFFECTIVITY

These Protocols shall immediately take effect upon approval.

Signed this 18th day of Nov. 2014.


CORAZON JULIANO-SOLIMAN
Secretary

Certified Copy:


MYRNA H. REYES
Officer In-Charge
Records Unit

ANNEX 1: INCIDENT REPORTING TEMPLATE

Form CA-HRA 01

INCIDENT REPORTING FORM

This is documenting an:

- Accident/Injury
 Credible Threat
 Incident
 Arrest
 Observation

Details of person injured or involved (to be filled in by person injured / involved if possible)

Person Completing Report: _____ Date: _____

Person(s) Involved: _____

Vehicle/Truck Plate Number: _____

Event Details

Date of Event: _____ Location of Event: _____

Time of Event: _____ Witnesses: _____

Description of Events (Describe tasks being performed and sequence of events):

*If more space is required please use the back of this sheet

TO BE COMPLETED ONLY IF INJURY OR FIRST AID WAS REQUIRED

Type of injury sustained:	
Was medical treatment necessary?	Yes _____ No _____ If yes, name of hospital or physician:

ACTION/S TAKEN AND TO BE TAKEN (To be filled out by the RD or ARDO or any authorized person)

Name:	
Position:	
PROPOSED ACTIONS/ RECOMMENDATION:	

Signature of Employee: _____ Date: _____

Signature of Supervisor: _____ Date: _____

Use this form to report any and all incidents involving safety and security in the workplace including but not limited to accident, injury, incident, and arrest
Return completed form to the Office of the Regional Director and or Assistant Regional Director for Operations.