



UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM

Duty of Care Task Force Recommendation 4

Living and Working Standards in High Risk Environments

8 March 2018

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Enabling us to stay and deliver in high risk environments

1. A significant proportion of the contexts where the United Nations is required to provide protection, deliver services and life-saving assistance are carried out in some of the most dangerous and insecure places around the world. The UN has a legal and moral obligation under duty of care for its personnel. This duty is particularly pronounced in **high-risk environments**.
2. Duty of care is a collection of appropriate measures enabling the UN to deliver and fulfil its mandated responsibilities towards persons in need. Thus, duty of care towards personnel is an enabler for the Organization to stay and deliver in high-risk duty stations, and a contribution to organizational and individual resilience.
3. In 2009, the United Nations Chief Executive Board approved the “how to stay” approach, entailing a security risk management approach designed to enable the UN system to continue to stay and deliver development and humanitarian programmes.
4. In April 2014, the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) established a working group on “reconciling duty of care for UN personnel while operating in high risk environments”.
5. The HLCM Duty of Care Working Group identified **13 deliverables** that would comprise the thrust of the system-wide work covering psychosocial, health and medical, human resources, administration, and safety and security, which encompasses the four streams of duty of care.
6. Deliverables cover the preparation, incumbency/during and post phases of deployment. Many of these duty of care deliverables as they apply to staff in dangerous workplaces fall under occupational (workplace) safety and health.

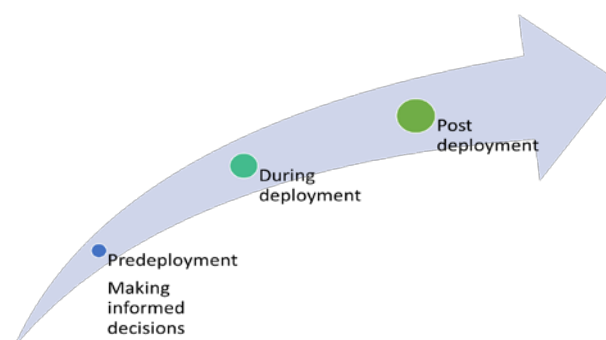


Figure 1



Recommendation 4: Living and Working Standards

7. The Work Group on Recommendation 4 (WG4) was established in July 2017, with WFP taking the leadership.
8. The objective of the Work Group is to identify consistent standards on living and working conditions for staff deployed in high risk environments.
9. Participants include:

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Available Standards/Policies/Guidance

10. The WG4 has collected available material from each Agency regarding accommodation and office standards, policies, instructions and guidance so to analyse the as-is situation for the UN environment.
11. The following is the list of available documents:
 - *WFP Administrative Standards on Living Conditions in Field Accommodation*, WFP, 30 October 2015
 - *Administrative Governance for WFP-provided Accommodation in the Field*, WFP, 26 May 2017
 - *Opening and closing of WFP Office*, WFP, July 2014
 - *Administrative Instruction on UNHCR-Provided Accommodation in the Field*, UNHCR, 24 September 2014
 - *Operational Guidelines on Support for the Provision of Offices and Staff Accommodation in Emergencies*, 14 October 2015
 - Extract of Operational; Support Manual. D: *Scales of Accommodations in the Field Missions*, DFS, 1996
 - *Peacekeeping High-Level Priorities – Accommodation Solutions*, DFS, 25 November 2014
 - *UNICEF Staff Wellbeing Guidelines and Good Practices*, UNICEF, 7 December 2009
 - *UNSMS Security Policy Manual*, Chapter IV, Section E

Definitions

12. "UN Premises" are all categories of land and physical structures occupied by personnel of one or more organizations of the United Nations Security Management System, including accommodation and offices.



13. UN-provided accommodation is defined as a place to rest and recover from fatigue, either built or rented or loaned for use, and managed by any UN Agency. Its management services can be directly provided by the UN Agency, in collaboration with other humanitarian partners (UN Agencies and NGOs), or outsourced to commercial parties.
14. UN-provided accommodation may be classified as:
 - Permanent: accommodation of a durable nature such as guesthouses; or
 - Temporary: accommodation of a non-permanent nature such as camps for a rapid response in emergency onsets.
15. All UN-provided accommodation in high risk environments are currently non-family duty stations given the security risks involved.
16. UN Offices are defined as a place to work, either built, rented or provided by the host Government for use of any UN Agency, and managed by any UN Agency. UN Offices differ widely in quality, size, layout, construction, availability of utilities and essential services as well as in other functional aspects, depending on the varying needs, the prevailing local market conditions and a need (or not) for direct proximity to relevant areas of operations.
17. UN Offices may be classified as:
 - Permanent: offices that cannot be readily relocated;
 - Temporary: offices that are expected to be in place for a limited period and then, likely, relocated.
18. Office Space can be defined by its gross or net area. Gross area is defined as area required to include: sufficient space for an individual to work, primary and secondary circulation, support spaces such as meeting rooms, restroom, etc., and the required utilities to support the office work. Net area covers the immediate working space, such as desk, chair, file cabinet and immediate circulation.
19. Facilities include operation and maintenance of the building structure and associated utilities such as water, electricity, air conditioning, sewage and internet.

UN-Provided Accommodation and Office Mapping

20. To understand the scope of application for common to the UN living and working standards, a mapping of current locations where UN Agencies provide accommodation and offices was undertaken.
21. In December 2017, WG4 has identified 236 UN-provided accommodation and 415 UN offices. The following tables summarize where some UN Agencies provide



accommodation and offices to its own staff and sometimes to the humanitarian community in the 18 Countries and Areas with mandatory programme criticality assessment:

UN-Provided Accommodation Mapping in High Risk Environments (December 2017)

UN Agency Country	UNHCR	WFP	UNICEF	DFS	IOM	Total
Afghanistan	9	2	4	6	1	22
Cameroon	2	0	0	0	0	2
CAR	5	3	3	1	1	13
Chad	14	11	3	1	0	29
DRC	8	0	0	0	0	8
Ethiopia	17	7	2	0	0	26
Iraq	2	2	0	0	2	6
Kenya	3	5	0	0	0	8
Libya	0	0	0	3	1	4
Mali	1	1	0	18	0	20
Niger	0	2	0	1	2	5
Nigeria	1	3	2	0	1	7
Pakistan	6	1	2	11	0	20
Somalia	2	4	2	5	0	13
South Sudan	11	14	5	0	0	30
Sudan	7	9	2	0	0	18
Syria	2	0	1	0	1	4
Yemen	1	0	0	0	0	1
Total	91	64	26	46	9	236

Data Source: internal data from Agencies (DFS camps very large in capacity)

Figure 2

UN-provided Offices Mapping in High Risk Environments (December 2017)

UN Agency Country	UNHCR	WFP	UNICEF	Total
Afghanistan	9	5	16	30
Cameroon	1	8	0	9
CAR	8	9	1	18
Chad	1	16	4	21
DRC	8	14	0	22
Ethiopia	10	24	7	41
Iraq	4	6	0	10
Kenya	5	11	3	19
Libya	2	0	1	3
Mali	4	6	1	11
Niger	1	9	6	16
Nigeria	2	3	1	6
Pakistan	2	10	12	24
Somalia	8	8	6	22
South Sudan	11	59	14	84
Sudan	8	25	8	41
Syria	6	9	0	15
Yemen	7	10	6	23
Total	97	232	86	415

Data Source: internal data for UNHCR and WFP; UNDSS Database for UNICEF

Figure 3



UN Health, Safety and Security Standards for living and working conditions

22. Both UN-provided accommodation and offices are also 'UN Premises' and as such they must be compliant with the United Nations Security Management System (UNSMS) policy "Security of United Nations Premises".
23. UN Premises shall comply with the requirements of Security Assessments and the Security Risk Management (SRM) process in terms of security risk management measures such as physical security (including bunkers/safe havens, as required), access control and integrated security systems.
24. UN Premises must be compliant with the provisions of the UNSMS "Fire Safety" policy.
25. UN-provided accommodation and offices shall have obtained a Certification that the building has been built according to the national design, construction codes and standards.
26. If UN-provided accommodation or offices locations fall in a seismic area, the buildings shall have obtained, or in the process to obtain, a seismic certification.
27. For the wellness of personnel and internal comfort conditions, hazardous or risky materials (such as asbestos, radioactive materials, banned or prohibited materials, etc.) shall be avoided and, if present, a cleaning up or decontamination action shall be undertaken.
28. Organizations in the UN system are committed to providing inclusive environment for all staff, including those with disabilities. It is important, to the extent possible, for the UN-provided working and living facilities to be equipped with tools and services that ensure universal accessibility for all. Examples of measures to ensure reasonable accommodation and working conditions for staff with disability may include provision of amenities and assistive devices, e.g. adapting existing facilities to make them accessible, such as building a ramp, adapting existing or acquiring new equipment such as including voice input/output software for staff with sensory impairments, as well as providing specialized supervision, training and support in the workplace.

UN Standards for Accommodation and Living Conditions



29. UN-provided accommodation quality standards address five distinct service aspects: lodging; community facilities; community services; administrative services; and health, safety and security (addressed in paragraphs 21-27).

Lodging

30. UN-provided accommodation offers visitors a place to rest and store their personal belongings which are reasonable and appropriate for the duty station for the duration of their stay. Such rest allows personnel to recover from fatigue and to de-stress; it is key to the well-being of UN personnel and to the efficient functioning of UN operations.
31. Sleeping quarters are to be private for each visitor. Likewise, temporary accommodation such as tents should be as private as possible. Each private room should have an area of no less than 12m² for permanent accommodation and 4m² for temporary accommodation with a lockable door.
32. Permanent lodging is to contain an individual bed with mattress, pillow and linen, a lockable wardrobe or a locked safe to store personal belongings, a desk and chair, a reading lamp and a window opening with screening. In temporary accommodation, a collapsible bed with a storage/luggage locker is provided.
33. Toilets with seat and flush, showers with enclosure, water basin, shelves, towel stands and hooks are mandatorily provided en-suite in permanent accommodation. In interim/emergency accommodation toilets and showers can be shared, gender segregated and in a ratio of no greater than 1 to 6 visitors.
34. Clear filtered water is to be made available in adequate quantities based on an average of 50 litres per person per day in permanent accommodation and 30 litres per person per day in temporary accommodation.
35. Hot water for showers is provided.
36. Water for drinking and cooking is to be made available on an average consumption of 5 litres per person per day; average consumption may change based on seasonal requirements. Bottled water should be replaced with safe filtered/treated water, with regular water testing, where ever possible.
37. Adequate protection against insects and other pests, including rats, is to be assured; mosquito screen on windows in locations with high prevalence of vector borne disease are also provided. Regular pest control services should also be provided.
38. Adequate ventilation, heating or cooling equipment is provided to retain lodging within 20-30 Celsius degrees temperature range.



39. Wi-Fi internet access is mandatory in common areas and private quarters, with adequate bandwidth provisioning also outside working hours for personal communication.
40. Power supply is provided 24/7 with adequate lighting and at least 2 duplex power receptacles available in each permanent private sleeping quarter. In temporary ones, electricity can be partially provided with adequate lighting and power receptacles. Power is to be provided by, in order of preference, renewable energy sources, grid connection, if available, and generator. Battery back-up is to be adequate to ensure power availability.

Community Facilities

41. A common kitchen is provided with appropriately sized stove and oven, sink with tap and dish rack, refrigerators and freezers based on the number of visitors being served. Food storage space, utensils, microwave appliance and adequate clean water supply are also present. Equipment required for disposing of kitchen waste and the cleaning of the kitchen should also be supplied.
42. The common dining area is equipped with appropriately sized communal tables and chairs based on the number of visitors being served. All cutlery, plates, glassware and other dining ancillaries are provided as well as hand washing facilities.
43. A social area is provided appropriately sized based on the number of visitors using it in permanent accommodation equipped with TV.
44. Within reach and considering security, visitors of permanent accommodation can exercise in a covered area with gym equipment adequate in number and purpose. A court/pitch where a suitable ball sport can be played is to be made available to the extent possible.
45. In permanent accommodation, a laundry room is available and equipped with adequate washing machines and washing facilities. In interim/emergency accommodation, an area with adequate drainage for laundry hand washing and line drying is provided.

Community Services

46. An accommodation Focal Point is present in every UN-managed accommodation for running accommodation services including general maintenance.
47. Housekeeping service is provided for room cleaning and replenishment of service items (i.e. toilet paper, laundry services).



48. General maintenance is carried out with preventive measures (exterior and interior ones) and emergency repairs to facilities and utilities systems (such as water testing, room/kitchen cleaning, etc.).
49. In permanent accommodation, the Head of office/administration is to address availabilities of local food market and catering services. Food should be wholesome, adequate, providing a suitable level of nutrition and account for dietary variations. In interim/emergency accommodation, emergency rations can be distributed or food is provided.
50. For waste management, proper handling and disposal of solid and liquid waste is carried out.

Administrative services

51. As duty of care for better informed consent in high risk environments pre-deployment phase, on line accessibility to accommodation information on lodging, facilities, community services and costs is provided. A feedback section is also provided for visitors to leave comments on single location experience; feedback from visitors is to be acted on within a reasonable amount of time.
52. Accommodation fees are to follow global pricing criteria aligned to common quality standards. Fees for local staff should be lesser, in comparison to that for international staff.
53. Use of UN-provided accommodation is always mandatory if security in high risk environments requires it.

Interim/emergency Accommodation

54. A quality annual checklist and compliance form is carried out each year to assess compliance to UN common standards and to highlight necessary extraordinary maintenance needs. A decision on whether an interim/emergency accommodation is to be closed for emergency operation termination or upgraded to permanent quality standards for long term use is taken within 6 months from deployment.



Accommodation and Living Standards summary

55. A summary of UN common living standards for accommodation provided in high risk environments is represented in Figure 4:

Conditions of service	PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION	INTERIM/EMERGENCY ACCOMMODATION (up to 6 months)
LODGING		
Private sleeping quarters	Mandatory/non tented solution	Shared/tented solutions
Sleeping quarters size	12m ² to the possible extent	4m ² to the possible extent
Sleeping quarters furnishing	Individual bed with mattress, pillow and linens, lockable wardrobe, desk and chair, reading lamp, adequate protection from insects/pests, window opening with screening, lockable doors	Collapsible bed, storage/luggage locker
W/C, shower and water basin	En-suite mandatory, toilet with seat, wash basin, water heater, shelves, towel stands/hooks, shower with enclosure	Shared and gender segregated, ratio of 1:6 guests
Clear water	65 litres/person/day	30 litres/person/day
Hot water	Provided	Provided
Drinking water	Provided, 5 litres/day/person	Provided, 5 litres/day/person
Sleeping quarters temperature control	Adequate ventilation, heating or cooling equipment to retain lodging within 20-30 Celsius degrees temperature range	Adequate ventilation, heating or cooling equipment to retain lodging within 20-30 Celsius degrees temperature range
Wi-Fi internet	Mandatory in common areas and private quarters, with adequate bandwidth	Mandatory in common areas and office space, with adequate bandwidth
Power supply	Provided 24/7 with adequate lighting and 2 duplex power receptacles	Partially provided, with adequate lighting and power receptacles
COMMUNITY FACILITIES		
Common kitchen	Provided with cooker, fridge, freezers, food storage space, utensils, microwave appliance, with adequate clean water supply	Provided with cooker, fridge, freezers, food storage space, utensils, microwave appliance, with adequate clean water supply
Dining room	Provided with tables and chairs	Provided with tables and chairs
Social area	Provided and appropriately sized	n.a.
Fitness area	Gym provided and properly equipped	n.a.
Laundry area	Laundry room provided	Established area with adequate drainage for laundry hand washing and line drying
COMMUNITY SERVICES		
Accommodation Focal Point	Tenants access to general accommodation service provider	Tenants access to general accommodation service provider
Housekeeping services	Replenishment of service items (i.e. toilet paper, laundry services)	Replenishment of service items (i.e. toilet paper, laundry services)
Maintenance services	General maintenance and preventive (exterior and interior cleaning) and emergency repairs to facilities and utilities systems (water testing, room/kitchen cleaning)	General maintenance and preventive (exterior and interior cleaning) and emergency repairs to facilities and utilities systems (water testing, room/kitchen cleaning)
Catering services	Head of office/administration to address availabilities of local food market	Emergency rations or food provided
Waste management	Proper handling and disposal of solid and liquid waste	Proper handling and disposal of solid and liquid waste
SAFETY & SECURITY		
Safety and Security	UNDSS 'Security of United Nations Premises' policy compliance	UNDSS 'Security of United Nations Premises' policy compliance
ADMINISTRATION		
Pre-deployment info	On line accessibility to accommodation specific information on lodging/facilities and community services and costs	On line accessibility to accommodation specific information on lodging/facilities and community services and costs
Accommodation fees	Global pricing criteria aligned to common standards	Global pricing criteria aligned to common standards
Accommodation choice	Mandatory if security in high risk env't requires it	Mandatory
Long term strategy	Yearly quality compliancy assessment	Within 6 months from deployment decision on stay/go

Figure 4



UN Standards for Offices and Working Conditions

56. Meeting quality standards for working conditions is part of the larger effort to ensure a respectful working environment for all personnel working in the UN.
57. UN Offices differ widely in quality, size, layout, construction, availability of utilities and essential services as well as in other functional aspects, depending on the varying needs, the prevailing local market conditions and a need (or not) for direct proximity to relevant areas of operations.
58. Permanent Office quality standards address three distinct service aspects: office space; facilities; health, safety and security (addressed in paragraphs 21-27).

Office space

59. Office space per person is of no less than 10-12 sq. m/person as gross area.
60. Each workstation inside the building is provided with at least:
 - i) A desk at least 140 x 70 cm
 - ii) An ergonomic chair
 - iii) A lockable drawer
 - iv) 2 RJ45 plugs (LAN/Phone system)
 - v) 2 electrical plugs
61. Office space is shared among personnel; individual space can be allocated depending on local conditions and operational needs.
62. An adequate number of windows and sunshades shall be granted for natural sunlight and ventilation, security requirements permitting.
63. There should be an adequate number of meeting rooms depending on size of the building and staff number. Meeting rooms are equipped with a meeting table, chairs, phone-conference system, and appropriate monitor, video projection equipment to show video content.
64. Where feasible, the office building shall include: a lobby; a lunch room for the staff; common areas such as filing area; a radio room; archives; a kitchenette on each floor; a prayer room, gender segregated; storage space in the office; a server room.
65. Drinking water is to be made available.
66. Office equipment, photocopier, printer and scanner should be available.



67. Toilets with seat and flush, water basin and hooks should be provided in a ratio of no less than 1 each 10 users. Restrooms should be gender segregated and, where possible, accessible to disabled.
68. Space to meet ICT needs for server and IT equipment, as well as radio room and the needed antennas (usually VSAT and HF/VHF), shall be provided as necessary.

Facilities and Systems

69. Offices should be equipped with adequate electrical and mechanical systems to guarantee:
 - i) Sufficient lighting in each part of the building, according to applicable standards;
 - ii) Power supply of reasonable continuity, according to the electrical network availability and/or using power generators;
 - iii) Power supply of critical loads through an UPS system;
 - iv) Adequate internet connection and bandwidth
 - v) Adequate temperature and humidity control through air conditioning, heating and ventilation systems;
 - vi) Plumbing and sewage systems;
 - vii) Firefighting systems.
70. To limit the downtimes and optimize operating costs, a maintenance management, and/or a related outsourced contract, should be in place. This includes scheduled maintenance, repairs, small renovations, etc. on both the building and its mechanical and electrical systems, such as elevators, generators, A/C, heating, plumbing, roof, etc.
71. Cleaning, waste management, pest and rats control, catering, guard services, etc. shall be contracted as necessary.

Interim/emergency Offices

72. Interim/emergency office space will allow reduced standards due to operational constraints for rapid response in emergency onset. A Quality Compliance Assessment is carried out after 6 months to decide whether an interim/emergency office is to be closed for emergency operation termination or upgraded to permanent quality standards for long term use.

Further recommendations

73. It is recommended that the identified standards be applied in all UN Agency–provided offices and accommodation in non-high-risk environments, to ensure a uniform standard in operational management and staff experience.
74. WFP has developed a global accommodation digital platform providing humanitarian parties information (such as pictures, included and optional services, cost and



conditions) and booking services for WFP accommodation worldwide. Such platform can be offered in service provisioning to all UN Agencies to support informed consent by their staff before deployment in high-risk environments as part of a pre-deployment package.

75. For environmental standards, it is recognized that Organizations in the UN system are committed to supporting sustainable building and housing. Wherever possible and subject to availability of resources, UN-provided working and living facilities should be energy-efficient and eco-friendly, based on each agency's Energy Efficiency Programmes and Policies. Examples of energy-efficient and eco-friendly features may include environmentally-friendly paint on the walls, automated low-energy lighting, energy-efficient computers for workplaces and water-saving lavatories.

76. It is recognized that implementation of the identified standards will require each Agency to develop operative guidelines and responsibilities taking into consideration technical, cultural and resources challenges resulting from addressing quality standards assessment, upgrade and maintenance.

Acronyms

HRN	Human Resources Network
DFS	Department of Field Support
HLCM	High Level Committee in Management
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
OSH	Occupational Safety and Health
RSM	Residential Security Measures, UNDSS
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	United Nations Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WG4	Work Group on HLCM Duty of Care Recommendation 4
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization