

A GUIDE FOR UNITED NATIONS PERSONNEL IN NEW YORK

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS



UNITED NATIONS
● Organizational
● Resilience
● Management
● System (ORMS)

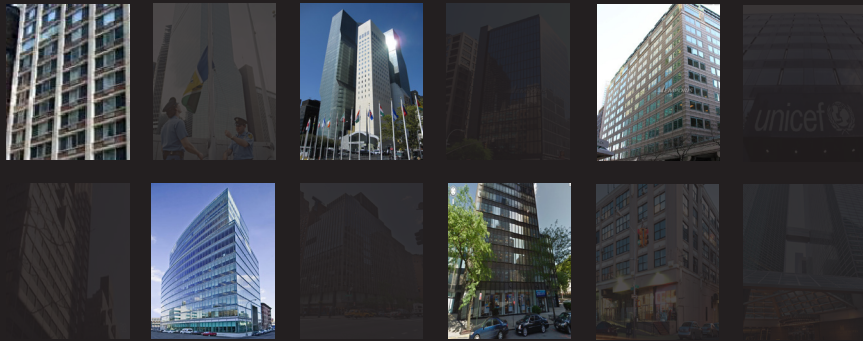
2014



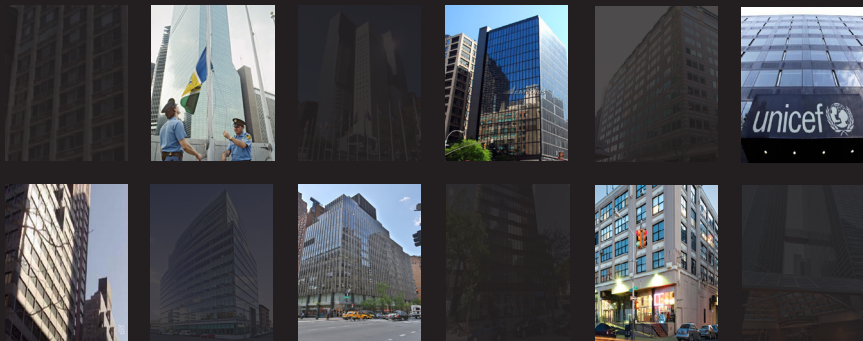
in an emergency



*If landlines are down the SSS Security Operations Centre can be reached on the following cell phones:
(917) 535-4693, (917) 291-7985 / 8345



annex buildings



Albano Building
305 E. 46th St.
(201) 798-0404

ALCOA Building
866 UN Plaza
(1st Ave. 48th St.)
(212) 752-0875

Daily News Building
220 E. 42 St.
(212) 687-3733

DC-1, DC-2 and DC-3 Buildings
323 E. 44th St.
(212) 486-9447

Falchi (LIC Archives)
31-00 47th Ave., LIC, NY
(347) 390-1156

FF Building
305 E. 45th St.
(212) 599-1027

ULM (Innovations Luggage)
300 E. 42 St.
(212) 957-1776

UNFCU (Court Square)
24-01 44th Rd., LIC, NY
(347) 418-3710

UNFPA Building
605 Third Avenue
(212) 949-4485

UNICEF House
(212) 486-9447

UNICEF Building
633 Third Avenue
(212) 949-9095

UNJSPF Building
1 Dag Hammarskjöld Plaza
(47th St./Second Ave)
(212) 752-4911

UNITAR Building
801 E. 45th St.
(212) 963-7851

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The **Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS)** is a comprehensive emergency management system, linking actors and activities across preparedness, prevention, response and recovery. The aim is to enhance resilience in order to improve our ability to ensure the safety and security of our staff and assets, and to deliver our mandates.

Preparedness is the responsibility of all staff members and resilience should be part of your day-to-day activities. This Guide aims to raise awareness among staff, and to help you prepare for crises in both your professional and private lives. It contains practical advice and guidelines, checklists and emergency kit suggestions that will help prepare all of us, both physically and emotionally, in the event of an emergency. You are encouraged to share this information with fellow colleagues and spread the word.

Remember...**EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**

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A message from
the Under-Secretary-General
for Safety and Security



Dear Colleagues,

From targeted attacks, natural disasters, epidemic diseases, fires or power blackouts, the United Nations family has to be ready to respond to emergencies both by safeguarding ourselves as individuals, as well as ensuring the continued functioning of the United Nations and all its vital services.

The Department of Safety and Security is mandated “to enable the safest and most efficient conduct of the programmes and activities of the United Nations System.” It is with this aim and responsibility in mind that this Emergency Preparedness Guide for United Nations personnel at UN Headquarters has been developed.

The Guide addresses our roles and responsibilities before, during and after a crisis. It contains practical advice and guidelines, checklists and emergency kit suggestions that will help prepare all of us, both physically and emotionally, in the event of an emergency. It draws on lessons learnt in the past and is part of the larger Crisis Management Plan which sets out the policy and decision-making process for managing a crisis in all United Nations New York locations.

I strongly encourage you to familiarize yourself with the contents of this Guide and I welcome your support in this vital activity.

Peter Drennan
Under-Secretary-General
Department of Safety and Security

foreword

Personal emergency kit

- Medicines & personal medical information
- Important documents
- Comfortable walking shoes, change of clothes and solar blanket
- Flashlight and batteries
- Dust masks
- Cash and chequebook
- Phone numbers of family and friends
- Mobile phone
- Bottled water
- Battery-operated radio, and extra batteries

PREPAREDNESS AT UN HEADQUARTERS



At the United Nations in New York, as at all United Nations duty stations, the primary responsibility for the security and protection of personnel and their families rests with the host government. This legal obligation, however, does not diminish the responsibility we all have as personnel for our own personal security and well being in times of crisis. In order to assist personnel in meeting these responsibilities, and to enhance the safety of all personnel in New York, the Organization has put into place a system for planning and managing emergency situations at all United Nations locations in New York including all its Agencies, Funds and Programmes. This system is aimed at ensuring a coordinated approach for the protection of personnel.

A Crisis Management Plan has been developed to set out the policy and decision-making process for managing any physical crisis at United Nations New York locations. It ensures that the mission-critical functions, those that allow essential services to continue, are maintained while ensuring the safety of personnel.

Since personnel safety and security are central to crisis management planning and preventive activities in the United Nations, three main groups have been established, specifically to prepare for and manage crisis situations at all United Nations New York locations:

- The Senior Emergency Policy Team (SEPT) is responsible for the immediate policy decisions required to deal with the particular impact of the crisis based on the operational decisions of the Crisis Operations Group.
- The Crisis Operations Group (COG), comprised of staff from key administrative and support functions within the United Nations New York family, is responsible for implementation in accordance with the directives of the SEPT.

- An Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) has been established to manage emergency operations of the Organization in New York. The EOC acts as a focal point during crisis events, providing a single location for emergency managers to coordinate response and collect and manage information in support of the COG.



Emergency Staff

Several key staff play important roles in an emergency. Familiarize yourself with them as part of your emergency planning and preparation:

Security Officers

Uniformed officers are assigned to protect and assist staff, delegates and others conducting business within the main complex and at all other UN locations in New York (UN annex buildings). Many of our Security Officers are certified as Emergency Medical Technicians, Fire Safety Directors, Firefighters and Hazardous Material Technicians, and are well equipped to operate as first responders in emergency situations.

Medical Officers and Nurses

Medical Services Division (MSD) staff have specialized training in life-support and emergency treatment. In an emergency, these staff can provide immediate medical support until the local emergency medical services can assist.

Floor/Fire Wardens/ Deputy Wardens

Each floor is under the direction of a designated Floor/Fire Warden for the evacuation of occupants in the event of fire or other emergencies requiring evacuation. He or she is assisted by two Deputy Wardens familiar with the Fire Safety Plan, the location of exits and the location and operation of the fire alarm system. In the event of fire or other emergencies requiring evacuation, Floor/Fire Wardens and their Deputies will ensure that all occupants are

notified of the emergency, and will proceed immediately to execute the Fire Safety Plan.

Searchers

Upon sounding of the alarm, searchers visit each rest room and other areas to seek out persons who may not have heard the signal or who may be incapacitated. They assist those in need of help to leave the floor area as soon as possible.

Threat Scenarios

The Crisis Management Plan for New York locations identifies various threat scenarios and guidelines for how the Organization will respond to each. Staff should keep in close contact with their supervisors and keep updated through the UNHQ Emergency Information website and Hotlines as indicated at the beginning of the guide.

As a staff member working for the UN family in New York, you should feel confident that the Organization and the host country have your best interest in mind when it comes to security and safety. However, the ultimate responsibility for personal security and that of your family rests with you. This booklet will help you prepare for and respond to an emergency, which are very important aspects of crisis management.

- Fire
- Blackouts
- Threats
- Natural Disasters
- Armed Attacks
- Medical Emergencies

TYPES OF **EMERGENCIES**



FIRE

If you see fire or smell smoke, activate the fire alarm pull box and evacuate to an area of safety

When it is safe to do so make the following call notifications:

- If located in UNHQ - Call (212) 963-5555/3-5555 or (212) 963-6666/3-6666
- If located in Annex Buildings - Call 911

Before

- Know escape routes and locations of pull boxes
- Participate in fire drills
- Learn the locations and how to operate fire extinguishers
- If you are physically challenged, you should register with your Floor/Fire warden so that assistance can be provided in case of an evacuation. Familiarise yourself with evacuation routes. Any questions should be directed to the SSS Fire Unit at (212) 963-5555/3-5555.

During

When activated, the fire alarm will emit a loud audible tone and turn on strobe lights. If you hear an alarm:

- Begin evacuation by proceeding down the nearest unaffected stairway to a floor below the lowest alarmed floor
- Close all doors but do not lock them
- Take only essential items such as grounds pass, medicine, etc.

- Follow instructions of Floor/Fire Warden and security
- Listen to and obey all announcements made over the public address system
- Feel doors before opening; if hot do not open
- Do not use elevators. All elevators will return to the lobby when the fire alarm is activated
- If smoke is encountered, stay low to the ground while exiting
- If you are physically challenged - move to nearest clear stairway and request help from security, fire warden teams or fellow personnel
- If you are on fire: **STOP - DROP - ROLL**

After

- Assist others in need
- Stay clear of damaged buildings
- Follow your Floor/Fire Warden's instructions
- Go to the evacuation point away from your building so that the Floor/Fire Warden can report that you have safely evacuated; only return to your floor upon your Floor/Fire Warden's instructions
- In the case of a damaged workplace, check with your communications focal point and/or supervisor regarding returning to work, alternative work locations, etc.

BLACKOUTS

It is important to be prepared in case of power failure

AT WORK

Before

- Keep handy an emergency kit with essential items you might need (See Personal Emergency Kit, page 10)
- As a routine, at the end of the workday, turn off your computer and other electrical equipment as you leave
- Keep your computer files and operating systems backed up regularly

During

- Use only a flashlight for emergency lighting. Don't use candles
- Turn off all electrical equipment you were using when the power went out - your computer, monitor, printer, the office copier, scanners and other electronic devices - before you leave the office. When power comes back, it may surge which can damage equipment
- If you have a car or are being picked up, offer rides to other personnel who live in your general area

AT HOME

Before

- Keep handy a home emergency kit that includes:
 - ✓ Flashlights (Don't use candles)
 - ✓ A supply of batteries

- ✓ Battery operated portable radio
- ✓ A gallon of bottled drinking water per person per day (2 to 3 days)
- ✓ A telephone that is not dependent on electrical power (no cordless phones)
- ✓ Containers of water for sanitary purposes
- Connect a surge protector to your computer and other valuable electronic equipment including the television
- Keep some emergency cash on hand since automated teller machines (ATMs) may not work
- Make sure you know where the manual release lever is located for the electric garage door opener in your house
- Keep your car fuel tank at least half full since gas station pumps rely on electricity
- Get professional advice from a licensed electrician before buying or using a generator. Do not use a generator inside a home or a garage

During

- Turn off electrical equipment you were using when the power went out
- Keep one light turned on so you will know when the power returns
- Make sure burners are turned off on the kitchen stove
- Use only flashlights. Don't use candles
- Avoid opening the refrigerator and freezer doors in order to keep contents fresh

After

Follow your community's energy conservation tips to reduce power usage.

THREATS

- If located at the main HQ complex call (212) 963-6666/3-6666
- If located at Annex Buildings call 911

It is always important to be alert and watchful in your workplace, however, it is also important that you not panic or “cry wolf ” if you hear something said that might be a threat or maybe just a silly, thoughtless joke. There will always be people who when visiting or calling places like the United Nations think it’s funny to try to scare others with idle threats. Keep calm until you have had time to think and/or check out what you might hear in passing or said in jest. However, if there is a real threat, follow these procedures.

Telephone Threat

If you receive a phone call that is threatening to the United Nations, the following information is critical:

- Exact nature of the threat
- Identity of the person/organization making the threat
- Background noises or other distinguishing voice characteristics
- Location, address and/or phone number of the caller
- Reasons for the threat
- Identity of any specific individual(s) who may be targeted
- Try to inquire on the date and time that the threat may be carried out

Try to write down this information as you are listening.

Call the Security Operations Centre at (212) 963-6666/3-6666 or the building manager for your particular building. Describe in detail the information you heard on the phone.

Written Bomb Threats

Upon receipt of a written bomb threat:

- Immediately call - (212) 963-6666/3-6666 or the building manager for your particular building.
- Do not destroy the note
- Do not let others touch or handle the note
- Turn the note over to Security and Safety Service (SSS) personnel

Biological or Chemical Agent

Learn about some of the common potential biological or chemical threats and their indicators.

Personnel should first attempt to isolate the source and/or evacuate to make notifications. Evacuate to nearest safe location without exposing fellow personnel. Contact the Security & Safety Service (Fire Unit at (212) 963-5555/3-5555 or the Security Operations Center at (212) 963-6666/3-6666) in the HQ complex. Call 911 if in annex buildings and provide the following information:

- Your name and location
- Exact nature of the biological or chemical agent threat/incident
- Exact location and name of any sick or injured person(s)
- A telephone number where you can be reached
- A brief description of the assistance required (saying whether or not you have called for help outside the Organization)

THEN

- Listen to security personnel or designated HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials) Response Team personnel for further instructions
- Report to Security & Safety HAZMAT personnel for screening before exiting the building or reporting to a local hospital
- Follow directions of public health officials or Security HAZMAT personnel on seeking medical attention
- Follow directions of security “first responders” to evacuate the affected area as required (if the hazardous materials situation is localized)
- Seal off the affected area, if possible, to contain the spill
- Do not re-enter the building or work area until instructed to do so by security or HAZMAT Response Team personnel

NATURAL DISASTERS

WEATHER RELATED

Before and During

- Monitor UNHQ Emergency Information website at emergency.un.org / or call the hotline at (212) 963-9800, (888) 986-8732 for information on the status of the UNHQ closure
- Move away from the perimeter of the building (windowed areas) toward the centre of the building and close any doors behind you
- Security personnel, Floor/Fire Wardens and other emergency personnel will direct you toward corridors, stairwells and elevator lobbies. Do not exit these designated areas or use elevators

- If you cannot reach a corridor or lobby in time, the next safest place is under a desk, table or chair
- Remain in the designated area until an announcement has been made by the Security & Safety Service or designated emergency personnel in your building that it is safe to return to your workstation

After

- Once everyone has returned to their workstations, Floor/Fire Wardens, Deputy Floor/Fire Wardens, and emergency personnel will assist the Security and Safety Service in accounting for all personnel
- Call security personnel or 911 to assist if anyone has been injured
- If any portion of your office or surrounding area has been damaged, please notify the Security & Safety Service immediately. In annex buildings contact 911 or the building manager for your particular building

EARTHQUAKE

Before and During

If you are inside the building when an earthquake occurs:

- Take shelter away from windows and seek protection under tables, desks, or other objects that offer shelter from flying glass and debris
- Do not leave the sheltered area or exit the building until the earthquake is over. Seek safety where you are and leave calmly afterward, if evacuation is necessary
- Do not dash for exits – stairwells may be unsafe

- Never attempt to use elevators during an earthquake. Afterwards, do not use elevators until they are checked for safety
- Stay clear of bookcases, file cabinets, windows and other heavy objects
- Turn off electrical equipment. Do not be surprised if electricity goes off or alarm systems are activated
- Do not smoke or use matches in case of gas leaks. If power fails, use battery operated lights

If you are outside the building when an earthquake occurs:

- Move away from buildings, utility wires and poles, debris and areas subject to falling glass
- If you are unable to reach a clear area, stand in a doorway or archway
- If threatened by falling debris, cover your face with one forearm and the back of your head with the other
- The most dangerous place to be is on a sidewalk, subject to falling debris such as glass and masonry

After

- Check for injured people. DO NOT attempt to move a seriously injured person unless he/she is in immediate danger
- DO NOT use matches, candles or other open flames
- DO NOT activate electrical switches or appliances
- Inspect your area for damage
 - ✓ Check for fire
 - ✓ Check utilities for gas and water leaks or electrical shorts

✓ Stay clear of wires that are shorting out

- If you smell gas, open all windows. Evacuate the building if possible and report the leak to the Security & Safety Service - (212) 963-6666/3-6666 or the building manager for your particular building.
- Report any dangerous spills
- Replace telephone receivers to restore communications. However, do not use telephones, except to reach the Security & Safety Service
- Listen to the radio for emergency reports (you should have one in your emergency kit)
- DO NOT pass on unsubstantiated rumours regarding the condition of the building as these may cause panic
- Cooperate with the Security & Safety Service personnel and Floor/Fire Wardens
- Be prepared and stay alert for aftershocks

ARMED ATTACK

In the event of an armed attack:

- Take all threats seriously and remain calm
- AVOID - Attempt to evacuate area to a safe location if in immediate danger
- DENY - If unable to evacuate, attempt to shelter in place, lock/barricade doors and hide/remain silent
- DEFEND - Confront attacker only as a last resort if unable to evacuate or shelter in place

Call the Security & Safety Service at (212) 963-6666/3-6666 or 911 or **the Building Manager for your particular building** providing them with the following information:

- Nature of the incident
- Building name and location
- Exact location and name of sick or injured staff member
- Your name and department
- Whether or not you have called outside law enforcement
- A number where you can be reached

NOTE: **Do not hang up the telephone until the Security Officer does so**

If you become a hostage during an armed attack incident:

- Your only job is to survive
- At the time of your seizure, do not attempt to fight back. The first 15 to 45 minutes are the most dangerous
- Do not play the hero; do not talk back or act “tough.”
- Be certain that you can explain everything you have on your person. Do not carry any items that may call into question your motives or status within the mission
- Fear is a normal reaction. Try to relax, pause, take a deep breath and accept the situation
- Keep a low profile
- Be cooperative without appearing either servile or antagonistic. Follow the instructions of your captors
- Never beg, plead or cry

- Do not make threats against your captors or indicate that you would testify against them
- Avoid appearing to study the features, dress and mannerisms of your captor(s)
- Try to gain the respect of and build rapport with your captor(s). An excellent topic of discussion is family and children
- Emphasize that as United Nations personnel, you are neutral and not involved in politics
- Encourage your captors to let the authorities know your condition and whereabouts
- Take care of yourself; exercise, stay well groomed, eat and drink even if you are not hungry
- Be patient and mentally prepared for isolation
- Focus your mind on pleasant scenes, memories or prayers
- Do not attempt to escape unless you are certain you will be successful
- If there is a rescue attempt by force, drop to the floor and keep your hands over your head
- Once the situation stabilizes, identify yourself

MEDICAL EMERGENCIES

If you have a medical emergency or are witness to one, then:

- Stay calm and call out for help
- Telephone
 - ✓ New York emergency services **9-911 / 911**
 - ✓ Then call the SSS Security Operations Centre on **(212) 963-6666/3-6666**
- Make sure if you are going to provide medical assistance that it is safe to do so.

When you telephone for help, be prepared to give your exact location, a call back number, and the nature of the emergency.

Medical Services strongly recommends that you call the UN Security Operations Centre after you have called **911**. They will then be able to ensure rapid access is provided to emergency services and if needed contact Fire and Medical services as well.

Non-emergencies

For medical help which is not an emergency, contact Medical Services at either:

SECRETARIAT BUILDING

- S-535 (5th floor)
- Tel: (212) 963-7080

DC1 BUILDING

- DC1-1190 (11th floor)
- Tel: (212) 963-8990

UNICEF BUILDING

- H-5F (5th floor)
- Tel: (212) 326-7541



- Familiarize yourself with the evacuation point away from the building
- Know your Floor/Fire Warden, Deputy Wardens and Searchers

EVACUATION



EVACUATION

There are two evacuation plans for the UN HQ complex:

- The Fire Safety Plan for building evacuation during fire; and
- The Evacuation Procedures for the United Nations Headquarters Complex - ST/SGB/2002/8 - for the precautionary evacuation of the complex for emergencies other than fire

The organizational structure of both evacuation plans is the same.

- All matters pertaining to evacuation drills are the responsibility of the Fire Safety Director / Emergency Action Plan (EAP) Director
- Each floor is under the direction of the Evacuation Team comprised of
 - One Floor/Fire Warden
 - Two Deputy Floor/Fire Wardens
 - Searchers

ANNEX BUILDINGS

Each floor in the annex buildings have:

- One Floor/Fire Warden
- A deputy and an alternate Floor/Fire Warden
- Searchers

Know your Warden, Deputy Wardens and Searchers.

You must register in advance with your Floor/Fire Warden should you require assistance in evacuating during an emergency due to a physical disability. Even if your disability is temporary, please familiarize yourself with evacuation procedures for “physically

challenged persons” as described in ST/SGB/2002/8 and register so that assistance may be provided.

The Floor/Fire Warden, assisted by the team members, directs the evacuation of his or her floor in accordance with directions received from the Fire Command Station.



Emergency Contact Information

TELEPHONE NUMBERS:

UN Headquarters (212) 963-9800

U.S. Toll Free (888) 986 -8732

UNICEF (212) 326-7000

UNDP (212) 906-6666

U.S. Toll Free 1-888-906-UNDP

or 1-800-650-4118

WEBSITES:

emergency.un.org

www.un-epst.org

ORGANIZATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY / RESOURCES



UNITED NATIONS
● Organizational
● Resilience
● Management
● System (ORMS)

INFORMATION

The Office of Human Resources Management (OHRM) at the main Headquarters complex has established several ways to keep you informed of emergency issues and arrangements. You should keep up to date through these channels and through your supervisor.

- UN Headquarters Emergency Information Website: [emergency.un.org](https://www.un.org/emergency)
- UN Headquarters Staff Information Hotline: (212) 963-9800 or (888) 986-8732
- Frequent updates on the security situation through broadcast e-mail announcements
- Watch and listen to media reports for specific information about the status of United Nations Headquarters
- At UN annex locations, other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes have established similar websites and hotlines

SAFETY

Over the past several years, the Organization has significantly upgraded the safety systems and procedures within the United Nations Headquarters complex. These upgrades, with which you should be familiar, include a new audio warning and announcement system, new safety equipment on every floor, training for Floor/Fire Wardens and Deputy Wardens, more frequent drills for personnel, and an improved flow of information to personnel before, during and after an emergency. Get to know the safety personnel on your floor and make sure you participate in all drills from start to finish.

MEDICAL CARE

The Medical Services Division (MSD) is responsible for attending to the medical needs of New York based personnel prior to, during and following a crisis situation. MSD has staff in the following locations:

- Room S-535 (5th floor of the Secretariat building) (212) 963-7080/3-7080
- Room DC1-1190 (11th floor of One UN Plaza) (212) 963-8990
- Room H-5F (5th floor of UNICEF House) (212) 326-7541

The MSD has a comprehensive plan for providing emergency medical assistance at UN facilities, and will operate either from its current locations or from a location designated by the Security & Safety Service. MSD can call on up to 20 clinically trained staff to set up a triage area and provide both emergency medical care and first aid until outside medical help and assistance arrives. MSD staff have emergency response and mass casualty medical kits, and can be identified by blue and yellow vests with “Doctor” or “Nurse” marked on them.

COUNSELLING

The Staff Counsellor’s Office (SCO), located in Room S-505, is responsible for attending to the psycho-social needs of staff and dependents based in New York. SCO has a plan to provide Psychological First Aid to staff and families requiring immediate psychological or emotional support during an emergency and afterwards. In the event that the Secretariat building is inaccessible, the Staff Counsellors’ Office will relocate to an area accessible to personnel.

In addition, SCO will activate a hotline to provide remote counseling services via telephone and or Skype for those who can not travel to the office locations, a professional staff/stress counselor will be available on-line around the clock.

Please check the UN Headquarters Emergency Information Website and Hotline for the location of these services.

- Staff Counsellor's Office: (212) 963-7044
- UNICEF Staff Counsellor: (212) 824-6902

SUPPORT TO STAFF, SURVIVORS AND FAMILIES

The Emergency Preparedness and Support Team (EPST), a dedicated capacity within the Office for Human Resources Management (OHRM), raises awareness on "preparedness" among personnel, and has made available a range of tools and resources to enhance both personal and organizational readiness in event of emergencies through training and awareness sessions, social media and informational bulletins. EPST also provides support and coordinates referrals to medical, psycho social, welfare and administrative support services to staff and families affected by malicious acts, natural disasters or other emergency events.

EPST can be contacted for more information via email epst@un.org or visit the website www.un-epst.org

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Personnel should be able to access their funds held by financial institutions, including the United Nations Federal Credit Union, through automated teller machines (ATMs) outside of the immediate

disaster area. As part of your emergency preparedness planning, you may wish to contact your financial institution to enquire about provisions for access to funds in the event of an emergency. You may wish to keep some cash on hand in case ATMs are not working.

The United Nations Treasury has made provision to continue to pay salaries of staff through direct deposit in the event of an emergency. You should ensure that your banking information is current and you are receiving your regular pay through direct deposit. Other UN Agencies, Funds and Programmes have also made provisions to continue to pay salaries in the event of an emergency.



Tips To Stay Healthy

- S — Sensible eating
- T — Take time to enjoy life
- R — Rest and relaxation
- E — Exercise and education about Critical Incident Stress (CIS)
- S — Social support (family, friends)
- S — Satisfying expressions of spirituality and sexuality

STRESS MANAGEMENT



This section examines the concepts of stress, distress and cumulative stress and offers some advice on basic stress management. It also deals with critical incident stress (CIS), including recommendations on how to cope in the aftermath of a critical incident.

Stress can be defined as any real or perceived challenge, demand, threat or change to which you must adapt. Stress becomes distressing when the demands of the situation exceed your available coping resources. "Stress is a wear and tear brought on by perceived threats and coping deficiency". (J.C, Smith)

TYPES OF STRESS

BASIC STRESS

Daily life stress such as basic daily physiological functioning and needs such as circulatory, respiratory and metabolic: water, food, rest, sleep and daily social and work demands, learning, growing, and aging.

CUMULATIVE STRESS

Chronic exposure to various prolonged stimuli in addition to brain ability to tune them out. A gradual form of stress reaction often related to lower- intensity chronic unrelieved stressors such as:

Environmental

Difficult climate, isolated location, shortage of shelters and water supply, dangerous political climate, hearing or witness stories about other's traumatic experiences and chaotic working environment.

Organizational

Difficult, dangerous and exhausting tasks, poor preparation and briefing, long working hours, uncomfortable working places, lack of privacy, need to make decisions, need to keep emotional control, need to consistently demonstrate good and rapid judgment, time pressure, conflict among the staff, conflicting demands and priorities and facing moral and ethical dilemmas.

Social

Isolation from natural social support network, family problems, problematic or unhealthy relationships with others and lack of social and recreational choices.

Personality

Idealism, setting high personal standards.

Biological

Chronic exposure to strain, chronic illness, allergies and bad nutrition.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Somatic

- Chronic fatigue
- Sleep difficulties
- Being easily startled
- Upset stomach
- Hanged appetite

Emotional

- Irritability
- Mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Chronic feelings of anxiety

Cognitive

- Obsessive thinking
- Difficulty in concentration/ distractibility
- Constricted thought
- Rigid , inflexible thinking
- Difficulties with decisions/ priorities

Behavioral

- Increase in drinking, smoking, drugs and/or promiscuity
- Risk taking (e.g., fast driving)
- Social withdrawal
- Changes in appetite

Spiritual

- Loss of meaning and purpose
- Loss of hope
- Change in religious beliefs
- Extreme cynicism

SELF CARE AND BUILDING RESILIENCE

- Maintain healthy habits - Try to get the 7 hours of sleep that most of us need. Eat regular and nutritious meals. Limit intake of alcohol, nicotine, caffeine, sugars. Water is very important , two liters per day
- Physical exercise - Gives your mood a natural boost
- Build relationships - Connect with people around you. Share concerns but try to stay positive, avoid speculating and catastrophizing. Do something enjoyable together. Encourage and monitor each other and stay in touch with your family and friends
- Identify what is under your control and what is not- Try not to stress over things that are NOT under your control. Develop a plan of action for the things that ARE under your control
- Review how you think - Avoid rumination and “what if” thinking. Focus on the positive aspects and use self-encouragement to stay resilient
- Spiritual practice/Active relaxation - Helps you to lower stress levels, find meaning and reconnect with your inner strength
- Change your focus by doing something you enjoy - Have a repertoire of simple time-out activities that you do regularly
- Think about something that makes you feel good- Positive emotions helps you to heal from negative emotional experiences
- Time off - Use your leave, have at least one day off per week and take regular breaks during the day. This will help you to maintain efficiency, perspective and health
- Breathe - It is physiologically incompatible to be focused on breathing slowly and be stressed out at the same time

Breathing Exercise: Let yourself breathe normally - in and out - a few times. Then breathe in through your nose for a count of 3, hold for a count of 3, then release to a count of 5. Take a few normal breaths and then repeat the slow breath. Repeat this breathing cycle for a few minutes.



TRAUMATIC “CRITICAL INCIDENT” STRESS (CIS)

“Critical incident” is defined as “a stressful event that is outside the range of usual human experience and that would be markedly distressing to almost anyone” (DSM IV)

A traumatic event is something that is:

- Sudden and unexpected
- Beyond your control
- Threatening to life or integrity

Examples of traumatic events include rape, torture, war, kidnapping, natural disasters, multiple-casualty accidents, death of a child, suicide, duty-related death of a co-worker, terrorist acts, etc.

Although a critical incident may occur at any time and anywhere, there are certain occupational groups that are at an increased risk of exposure to traumatic events. These include emergency health-care workers, police officers, search and rescue personnel, disaster relief and humanitarian aid workers, and United Nations staff and their dependents.

FACTORS INFLUENCING RESPONSE TO CRITICAL INCIDENTS:

Survivor specific factors:

- familiarity with incident
- involvement in incident
- associated terror and horror
- degree of warning
- past traumatic experience
- age

Incident specific factors:

- human causality
- speed of onset
- duration
- long-term effects
- scope of impact

Community specific factors:

- social support among victims
- level of preparedness
- proportion affected

Culture specific factors:

- norms and expectations regarding trauma and recovery
- level of stigma attached to mental health and wellbeing
- resources available for individuals affected by trauma

Acute stress reaction:

- Disorientation
- Not being able to care for themselves or their children (not eating/ drinking, not being able to make simple decisions)
- Physical symptoms (i.e., shaking, headaches, feeling very tired, loss of appetite, aches and pains)
- Crying, sadness, depressed mood, grief
- Anxiety, fear
- Being “on guard” or “jumpy”
- Worry that something really bad is going to happen
- Insomnia, nightmares
- Irritability, anger
- Guilt, shame
- Confused, emotionally numb, or feeling unreal or in a daze
- Appearing withdrawn or very still (not moving)
- Not responding to others, not speaking at all

These symptoms can temporarily interfere with your ability to cope at work or at home. For the majority of people most symptoms will diminish in intensity and frequency within a few days or weeks.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER

Critical incident stress is a major factor in the development of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). However, the onset of PTSD can often be prevented by proper preparation, by defusing and debriefing sessions, and by individual counselling after the critical incident has taken place.

PTSD is a medical diagnosis made according to specific criteria by medical professionals. It can include chronic symptoms of critical incident stress that interfere with work and social life long after the event.

Critical incidents cannot be predicted, nor can critical incident stress or post-traumatic stress disorder always be prevented. However, your ability to cope will increase if you are fit, healthy and informed.

I. Intrusive symptoms:

- The traumatic event is persistently re-experienced in one (or more) of the following ways:
 - Recurrent and intrusive distressing recollections of the event, including images, thoughts, or perceptions
 - Recurrent distressing dreams of the event
 - Flashback episodes: acting or feeling as if the traumatic event were recurring
 - Intense distress at exposure to internal or external cues that resemble an aspect of the traumatic event
 - Physiological reactivity on exposure to cues

II. Avoidance symptoms:

- Persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma and numbing of general responsiveness, as indicated by three (or more) of the following:
 - Efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations associated with the trauma
 - Efforts to avoid activities, places, or people linked to the trauma

- Inability to recall an important aspect of the trauma
- Withdrawal from social activities
- Feeling detached from others
- Restricted range of affect
- Sense of foreshortened future

III. Arousal symptoms:

- Persistent symptoms of increased arousal, as indicated by two (or more) of the following:
 - Sleeplessness
 - Outbursts of anger, irritability
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Hyper-vigilance
 - Extreme startled response

IV. Duration of the disturbance for more than one month.

- The disturbance causes clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important domains of functioning

Taking care of yourself after an extremely stressful event

When we are faced with an emergency or crisis situation, our body goes into a state of high-alert, and we may experience different symptoms as a result of this.

Even though we have already mentioned that we can expect that most of these reactions will disappear with time, here are some suggestions for your self-care in the following days and weeks of the event.

Seeking professional help

The recovery period will vary greatly from person to person. In most cases the symptoms will begin to ease off within a few days or weeks. If the symptoms persist and interfere with normal functioning after one month, it would be wise to seek professional help as soon as possible to hasten the recovery process and to avoid further accumulation of stress.

If you find yourself having suicidal thoughts, or you have severe psychological symptoms, including flashbacks or intrusive memories of the event; also, if you feel very nervous or extremely sad, or if you have trouble sleeping, you should get support from a mental health specialist.

Taking care of others after an extremely stressful event: Psychological First Aid (PFA)

You might find yourself in a position of being able to help in situations where other people have been affected by a critical incident.

World Health Organisation (WHO) recommends this type of intervention, which involves factors that seem to be most helpful to people's long term recovery.

Psychological First Aid includes:

- Providing practical care & support, which does not intrude
- Assessing needs & concerns
- Helping people address basic needs
- Listening to people, but not pressuring them to talk
- Comforting people & helping them to feel calm
- Helping people connect to information, services & social supports
- Protecting people from further harm

Signs of stress in preschool children (2 - 6 Years)

- Anxious attachment
- Separation anxiety
- Regressive behaviour
- Loss of new skills
- Nightmares & night terrors

Signs of stress in school children (6-12 Years)

- Poor concentration
- Learning problems
- Restlessness and aggression
- Multiple Somatic Pain
- Sleeping problems
- Depression
- Regressive behaviour

Signs of stress in adolescent (12 - 17 Years)

- They are more likely to exhibit symptoms similar to adults, in addition to increased difficulties at school. They may also experience some changes in their thinking, beliefs and values that manifest themselves in behavioural changes. It is not uncommon that children in this age range refuse or dismiss their need for adult support during crisis. At times, they may lose hope for the future and enter into a "pseudo independency" stage where they try to assume adult roles.

DO

- Expect the incident to bother you
- Remind yourself that your reactions are normal
- Spend time with family, friends and colleagues
- Maintain a balanced diet with minimum caffeine and sugar
- Exercise daily on a moderate basis
- Take time for leisure activities
- Learn as much as possible about critical incident stress
- Talk to trusted family, friends, counsellor
- Minimize use of alcohol and drugs
- Treat yourself especially well

DON'T

- Think you're going crazy
- Try to resist recurring thoughts, dreams or flashbacks
- Withdraw from family, friends, colleagues
- Think you are the only one who has been affected
- Drink alcohol excessively
- Abuse medication
- Have unrealistic expectations for recovery — it takes time

Suggestions for family and friends:

- Listen carefully
- Spend time with the affected person
- Offer your assistance and listening ear
- Reassure them that they are safe and normal
- Help them with routine tasks like cleaning, cooking and caring for the family
- Allow them some private time
- Don't take their anger (or other feelings) personally
- Tell them you are sorry such an event has happened and you want to understand and assist them
- Call for help or support as soon as you feel it is needed

- UN Resources
- External Resources

INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR EMERGENCY PLANNING AND RECOVERY



UN RESOURCES

UNHQ Intranet Sites

Organizational Resilience Management System (ORMS)

<https://iseek.un.org/m210dept1923>

Department of Safety and Security/ Security & Safety Service (DSS/SSS)

<https://iseek.un.org/m210dept688>

Medical Services Division (MSD)

https://iseek.un.org/departmental_page/medical-services-division-homepage

Staff Counsellor's Office (SCO)

<https://iseek.un.org/m210dept132>

Facilities Management Division (FMD)

<https://iseek.un.org/m210dept640>

Emergency Preparedness and Support Team (EPST)

<http://www.un-epst.org/>

Business Continuity Management Unit (BCMU)

<https://iseek.un.org/m210dept1497>

Publications

- Evacuation Procedures for the United Nations Headquarters Complex, Secretary-General's Bulletin, United Nations Secretariat, New York, 5 June 2002 (ST/SGB/2002/8)
- Evacuation Procedures for United Nations Complex, Security & Safety Service, DSS, United Nations, New York, 2013
- Mission Readiness: Preparing for field work, Office of Human

Resources Management, United Nations, New York, 2005

- Security in the Field: Information for Staff of the United Nations System, Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, United Nations, New York, 1998
- Basic Security in the Field: Staff Safety, Health and Welfare (CD-ROM), Office of the United Nations Security Coordinator, United Nations, New York, 2002. Also available on-line through the DSS intranet website
- Handbook for Action in Cases of Death in Service, Office of Human Resources Management, United Nations, New York, 2001

EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Websites

American Red Cross

www.redcross.org/prepare

Federal Emergency Management Agency

www.fema.gov

New York City Office of Emergency Management

www.nyc.gov/html/oem/

Disaster Information Network

www.disaster.net

U.S. Dept of Homeland Security

<http://www.ready.gov>

New York State Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Services

<http://www.dhSES.ny.gov/oem/>



UNITED NATIONS
● Organizational
● Resilience
● Management
● System (ORMS)

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