

Preparing for your departure to the crisis-affected country (for international consultants)

Getting prepared for an emergency assignment is not easy. No matter what information you have, no matter how good the source, you will always meet with the unexpected. However, by careful preparation you can be equipped and ready to manage unforeseen events and eliminate many problems before they arise.

This annex gives some general indications on how to prepare yourself for the mission and provides a detailed check-list. Discuss with the HAC Desk Officer and the Logistics Officer in order to understand more about the task ahead and your needs in the area of assignment.

Some points in the checklist are so common and self-evident that they are often overlooked. Others that are very important to your peace of mind are not common and thus they are often not thought about.

The main topics are:

- **FAMILY WELFARE.** Discuss the Readiness Checklist with your spouse or another responsible adult. This can help avoid many unnecessary problems.
- **BANKING INFORMATION.** If your bank records are in order before you leave, deposits, withdrawals and payments while you are on mission will be easier.
- **BUSINESS AND FINANCE.** Make sure your finances are in good order before you leave. When you are away from home and working under stressful conditions the last thing you want to worry about is an unpaid bill or whether your family is having financial problems!
- **AUTO REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE.** Avoid automobile worries during your absence.
- **HOME SECURITY, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE.** Feel at ease about home security during your absence.

See annex G1 for guidance on what to take with you. The list there must be adapted to the situation and your own individual choices. Keep personal items within acceptable weight and value limits. Consider that in an emergency you may have to leave your luggage behind. Be sure you have:

- Suitcase should be solid and lockable to prevent theft and damage.
- An international driver's license is important.
- At least 12 spare passport photographs for additional visas or ID cards.
- Valid International Vaccination Card with all necessary shots for your destination.
- Sufficient per diem advance for duration of mission, some of it in cash: US\$ or a medium of exchange that is accepted in the area of assignment. Vary the denominations and enquire whether date of issue is a consideration - consult Desk Officer for more information.
- Travellers cheques. Ask your Desk Officer if they can be easily exchanged at destination. Keep separate record of cheque numbers.
- Credit cards. As above, plus closest contact number in case of theft or loss.
- Clothing appropriate to location, season and assignment. Take sturdy walking shoes with good ankle support, water proofing & comfort. Don't forget hat, sunglasses and sunscreen for protection from sun, or gloves for cold weather. Rubber sandals for showering.
- Toiletries (soap, razors, tampons, etc.) - do not assume availability of anything at destination.
- Watch. An inexpensive digital is generally ideal; take also an alarm clock.
- Any medications you may need; inform WHO of any relevant medical history that may affect treatment in case of accident (e.g. allergies and/or any prescription medicines). Make sure you have enough prescription medicine for the duration of your mission.

- WHO medical kit.
- Condoms.
- Waterproof flashlight and spare batteries.
- Short-wave radio and spare "long life" or rechargeable batteries.
- Camera, film and batteries.
- Swiss Army Knife or similar.
- Adapters for all electrical appliances and voltage converters (110v → 220v or vice versa).
- Pocket calculator.
- Travel/language books for the region will greatly assist you.
- Mosquito repellents and net, if required.

Tips

Photocopy important documents (Travel Authorisation; Laissez-Passer; vaccination card; drivers license etc.) and keep separately in safe place.

Note your blood type on your vaccination card.

If you are required to carry valuables for your work, arrange for extra insurance on your Travel Authorisation.

Operational equipment

Study the list of emergency equipment available at HQ and at the Regional Office and decide what you will need for the mission in consultation with Logistics Officer.

- Laptops and printers are a priority and, if you have a team, each team member should have his/her own. Ensure they are functioning and comply with the configuration and software requirements required for the mission. Ensure there are no passwords on the computer or the software programmes.
- Satellite telephone can be another priority at the emergency site. Ensure it is fully functioning and that it interfaces with the issued laptops for data transfer. Test the data and fax capability of the sat-phone before departure. Check that the user manual is enclosed.
- Operating manual for the e-mail software package used by WHO and the access numbers and codes, if any, to operate it.
- A video camera, batteries and film to record activities in the field.
- Ensure all electronic devices have appropriate power supply and plugs for destination country.
- Stationery: paper, ink jet cartridges, notebooks, pens, pencils, WHO official stamp, travel claims, letterhead stationery, etc.
- Identification: WHO armbands, T-shirts, pennants, vehicle decals, etc.
- Ask what is available at WHO office in affected country. Co-ordinate with the Logistics Officer for extra freight allowance if needed.

Essential documentation

Read as much as you can on the country of assignment and on the features of the emergency before you leave. This will greatly facilitate your work once you are there.

Ask your Desk Officer for:

- situation reports "sitreps" and any documents relevant to the country and the emergency;
- all WHO correspondence pertaining to your mission and to the emergency;
- reports from other UN agencies and NGOs involved;
- reference material on the country and the surrounding region: history, demography, economy, etc.;
- maps of the country and the surrounding region; have digitised maps installed in your laptop;

- the list of national and international contact persons in the affected country and surrounding region;
- the WHO technical divisions' guidelines that you may need according to your terms of reference;
- reports of other WHO emergency operations.

Look on the Web for additional information on the country and the current crisis (see list of web sites Annex 12.).

If you are to work in a team, familiarise yourself with the CVs of the other team members.

Essential briefings

The first briefing may take place at WHO Headquarters. After this, it is WHO procedure that before proceeding to the country of assignment, every staff member has a briefing at the Regional Office concerned. Upon arriving at the Regional Office you should:

- review with your supervisor and have a clear understanding of:
 - your Terms of Reference
 - the aims and objectives of the mission
 - whom to report to and the frequency and format of reports;
- be briefed by the Desk Officer for the affected country or sub-region; ask for the latest security update from UNSECOORD, including which means of transport you are entitled to use locally;
- discuss administrative and logistical matters with the Administrative/Logistics Officer;
- be briefed by the Regional Logistics Officer on the state of logistics in the affected country and get a list of equipment available at HQ for emergency operations;
- be briefed by Finance on imprests and proper financial reporting;
- get clear information on focal points, mechanisms and procedures for the mobilisation of technical and administrative assistance from the Regional Office;
- get a realistic estimate of the lead-time that will pass between your request and the Regional response;
- be briefed by the EHA focal point on methods of focusing donor attention. How you can assist one another in coordinating donor appeals; get a clear understanding on the information that you can release to the media.

Clarify the scope – and limits - of decisions that you are authorized to take. Make sure that they are consistent with your Terms of Reference. Get a clear understanding of all other relevant sections of the WHO Manual, including Section XV.4.

Be ready for difficult travelling conditions in the field. Do not assume that you will be always able to travel by regular, commercial means of transport. There may be times when you will have to negotiate your transportation with other UN agencies, NGOs, the Military, etc. Consider that:

- special flights or convoys can often accommodate only a limited number of passengers and require special clearances; often they are very costly and payment sometimes has to be in cash;
- depending on the mean of transport, you may have to travel very light. In this case, consider carefully which are the essential items to carry with you;
- cargo planes are uncomfortable and can be very cold, even in the tropics. Take a sweater with you and do not assume that you will find water or a toilet on board;
- you may have to sign a waiver, discharging the organisation that provides the transport of any responsibility concerning accidents during the travel: discuss this possibility with your supervisor.

Mission readiness checklists

Go through these checklists carefully. Some items are so common and self-evident they are often overlooked. Others are very important to your well being but are uncommon and thus often forgotten.

A-FAMILY WELFARE

Discuss and complete the following items with your spouse or another **responsible adult (r.a.)**. This can help avoid many unnecessary problems.

	YES	NO
a. Mission discussed with family?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Mission extension possibilities discussed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Family support system established?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Quick access to emergency phone numbers?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Family communication plan established, including the use of e-mail, fax, etc. (mission address, phone/fax numbers, UN pouch)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Guardianship agreements completed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Passports and visas current for all family?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Power of Attorney currently completed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
i. Wills: yours and spouses completed?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
j. UN insurance beneficiaries designated?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
k. Pension fund number available to responsible adult (r.a.)?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
l. Birth certificate available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
m. Social Security numbers recorded and known to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
n. Marriage certificate available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
o. High-risk-mission insurance current?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
p. All insurance policy data available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

B-BANKING INFORMATION

If your bank records are in order before you leave, deposits and withdrawals from your mission location will be easier.

	YES	NO
a. Name and address of all banks or credit union accounts available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Direct-deposit account established?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Savings/checking accounts established?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Is r.a. able to access bank accounts?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Credit card numbers known to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Other important banking information reported?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

C-BUSINESS AND FINANCE

Make sure your finances are in good order before you leave.

	YES	NO
a. Stockbroker name and certificate numbers available?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
b. Bond company and certificate numbers available?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
c. Mutual fund company and certificate numbers available?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
d. Business and finance records in a safe place where r.a. has access?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
e. Family budget well planned?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
f. Outstanding bill/loan payment method current?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
g. Signed UN contract available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
h. Income-tax data available to r.a.?	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| i. | Home/apartment: sold? rented? sublet? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. | Personal property high-dollar-item insurance? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

D-AUTO REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Avoid automobile worries during your absence.

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Auto repair book available to r.a.? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Next service on auto due? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. | Warranty book available to r.a.? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Tire rotation due? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Oil change due? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. | Tune-up required? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. | Dealers address available? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. | Vehicle insurance and registration current? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

E-HOME SECURITY, REPAIRS AND MAINTENANCE

Feel at ease about home security during your absence

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Heating & refrigeration repair phone Numbers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Plumbing repair phone numbers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. | Electricity repair phone numbers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Small appliance repair phone numbers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Roofing repair phone numbers? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. | Keys secure with responsible adult? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. | Mail and newspapers re-routed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. | Phone calls forwarded/answering machine updated? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

H-TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Gaining skills in these areas will enable you to be independently mobile and to communicate well in an emergency situation.

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Operation of a vehicle with manual transmission? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Operation of 4-wheel-drive vehicle? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. | Auto-repair trouble-shooting ability? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Two-way-radio operation ability? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Satellite telephone operation skills? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. | Knowledge of e-mail and data transfer package? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

F-GEOPOLITICAL AND CULTURAL AWARENESS

Investigating the items listed in this section will help you integrate more quickly and comfortably into the new work environment.

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Geographical location known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Government type known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| c. | Major ethnic groups known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Traditions and customs (do's and don'ts) known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Major religions known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. | Primary languages spoken? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. | Basic language skills developed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. | Basic language skills training material obtained? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. | Major industries known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. | Income per capita known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. | Natural resources known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| m. | Health and disease patterns known? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

G-HEALTH

Physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle do not come overnight, so you should act on the points in this section well before you leave. This will increase your effectiveness and your sense of well being once you are in the field.

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | UN medical and vaccines for area? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Is anti-malaria prophylaxis indicated? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. | Sufficient prescription medicines? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Stress management information? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Substance-abuse awareness: The Big Three (nicotine, alcohol & caffeine)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. | Awareness of sexually transmitted diseases (STD) prevention? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. | Lifestyle balance (work, play, rest, sleep)? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. | Recreational and educational need awareness? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| j. | Extra pairs of eyeglasses or contact lenses? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| k. | Did you have a dental check? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| l. | Health and dental care plans established for your family? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

H-WHO ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES

The following WHO administrative procedures must be completed before leaving on mission.

- | | | YES | NO |
|----|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| a. | Does your contract cover the duration of mission? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| b. | Does Finance have your personal banking details? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| c. | Have you received your Travel Authorization? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| d. | Is Laissez-Passer valid to end of mission? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| e. | Necessary visas for affected area? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| f. | Letter of introduction to WR or host government? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| g. | Next-of-kin details are with Desk Officer? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| h. | Per diem received in suitable medium of exchange? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| i. | Medical/Pension/Life insurance forms completed? | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |