

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR COMPLETING A RISK ASSESSMENT & SECURITY PROTOCOL

The following guidance is for local and international freelance journalists of varying levels of experience. It provides an outline of considerations for completing a Risk Assessment and Security Protocol, with advice on basic preparedness through to high-risk threat assessment and complex issues of digital security. It equips freelance journalists to be able to identify potential risks to safety and security, classify threats and put measures in place to mitigate risk.

Completing a Risk Assessment and Security Protocol before beginning an assignment will help to manage and minimise risks and enable an appropriate response to an incident or emergency on location.

Treat it as a friend and companion throughout the journey of an assignment. Start it at the beginning of the assignment, from your first point of contact for the story, and use it as an essential tool and checklist to make sure you have thought through and prepared for all possible situations that may happen. It will evolve as you conduct your research before and during reporting, so treat it as a dynamic and fluid document, constantly re-assessing and updating it as appropriate.

Consult as many sources as possible to ensure a thorough understanding of the nature of the threats facing you, your crew, contacts and contributors. Reliable, current local knowledge is extremely valuable – though be mindful that people and organisations have different thresholds of acceptable risk. Journalists, NGOs, activists and government agencies will be able to help with this. Online reports and guides are also useful, though beware of sources and dates of publication in assessing if the information is current or worth considering.

For each stage of the document, think through every possible ‘What if...?’ scenario to help identify and classify threats – both the possible and the unlikely. Quite often the least expected events or scenarios are the situations that freelance journalists find themselves in on the ground.

Constantly ask yourself: ‘How am I perceived...?’ and ‘How am I perceiving people, places and situations in assessing safety and security?’ This is a particularly key consideration for local journalists operating in their home country or area. Most importantly, always weigh perceived risks against the editorial benefits of the assignment.

EACH JOURNALIST AND ASSIGNMENT FACES UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES AND THE RISK ASSESSMENT & SECURITY PROTOCOL SHOULD BE TREATED AS GUIDANCE ONLY AND MODIFIED ACCORDINGLY.

1. ASSIGNMENT OUTLINE

To be able to identify risks, the project needs to be thoroughly outlined. Before beginning a risk assessment, it is important to write an assignment outline, identifying and listing the key building blocks of the project: all the sequences, interviews, travel plans and actions that are vital to the assignment plans.

Over the following sections, give specific details of what is intended to be covered in completing the assignment, who will be working on the project, what will be filmed, photographed, recorded, written about; including relevant meetings, sequences, interviews and locations. This will act as the foundation of the risk assessment and security protocol and will give a clear idea of what you want to achieve and how you want to achieve it.

1.1 KEY CONTACTS & EMERGENCY NUMBERS

Ensure that all contact numbers for relevant people are included here – international mobile, local sim number, satellite phone number, etc. It is crucial to place this information at the top of the document to ensure that you and those who may need it have all the essential information to hand quickly.

When listing contact details, ensure that any numbers and emails, etc. have been double checked, so that there are no errors. It's easy to mistype, but a wrong number can be potentially disastrous in an emergency!

Complete the Brief Details of relevant experience section, ensuring that any relevant experience is noted in justifying why that person is right for the job. It could include practical expertise, subject area expertise or local area expertise.

EMERGENCY CONTACTS:

Again, ensure these numbers have been double checked and call them before departure to make sure that they haven't changed or become redundant. Do not rely on internet research alone. Local knowledge from a fixer, other journalists, NGOs or other organisation is invaluable in understanding what services are available.

○ **Local emergency services:**

List any details of emergency services, either public or private, that could help in an emergency. Also detail the provisions and realistic expectations of the service. In many countries where public emergency services are not reliable or non-existent, there are often private services operating. Ensure you have researched what is available to you and if you need to have pre-registered with the service before starting the assignment.

- **Appropriate key security contact:**

Appoint a designated security contact in-country, who can be kept informed of any changes to plans, movements and locations.

When appointing a key security contact, ensure they are the right person for the job, and, crucially, that they will be reliable. Are there languages to consider and is someone who can speak the language of the area you are operating in required? Or do you need to appoint someone to be available for translation into a local language or dialect? Beware that national languages are not always spoken in remote areas.

Most importantly of all, ensure your key security contact is always available! Do not choose someone who is frequently in a poor reception area or must turn off their phone for any reason. Consider having a back-up key security contact, should your primary person need to be unreachable for any reason.

- **Any other relevant contacts:**

Provide a list of additional contacts in-country who can assist in case of a security incident, loss of contact with team, or any other emergency.

This should include any local NGOs, embassies, local officials, local provider of legal advice or law enforcement authorities. Note if they have been pre-informed of the assignment and if any formal registration or affiliation has been made.

Obviously, if you are operating using a cover story or in any covert manner, notifying people of your presence will impact your profile and potentially compromise your assignment, contacts or contributors. Be sure to have considered all the 'What if...?' scenarios and perceptions.

1.2 STORY OVERVIEW

Give a brief overview of the assignment, including story outline and proposed interviews.

1.3 LOCATIONS & BRIEF SCHEDULE

List all locations with a brief schedule for the assignment.

1.4 FLIGHTS, TRAVEL & ACCOMMODATION

List details of all flights, travel arrangements and accommodation (including contact details, addresses, etc.).

- Ensure you attach any relevant documents and maps in 7. APPENDIX.

1.5 PASSPORT, VISAS, PRESS ACCREDITATION & COVER STORY

Include all passport information, details of how any visa has been obtained (letters, responses), details of how to obtain press accreditation, and if you are travelling undercover or as a tourist, details of any cover story.

Travelling as a tourist is strongly discouraged, unless there is a compelling reason to do so. Check with the broadcaster or editor if they are happy to receive material gathered under these circumstances, as there are strict industry guidelines for working undercover and filming secretly. If you intend to film without press credentials, it must be reflected in 2. RISK ANALYSIS section.

- Ensure all relevant documents and correspondence are attached in 7. APPENDIX.

2. RISK ANALYSIS

More than anything, effective risk management is about asking questions, listening to the answers and working within the realm of the possible.

In breaking down and considering each of the elements of the assignment from a safety and security perspective – physical, digital, psychological – it will become clear that they are all inextricably linked. For example, weather or seasonal climatic events can impact equipment, communications, transport and access to proposed locations or interviewees; digital security impacts communications, profiles, security of contacts and contributors, research risks; stress and fatigue impacts health, psychological security and physical resilience.

Keeping the risk analysis fluid and completing it as an on-going process during preparations will enable the most comprehensive plans to be made, which then offer flexibility and robustness in the field – both practically and creatively with the story. Sound and rigorous analysis based on meticulous research with reliable and current sources gives adaptability, which then offers the best chance

of a successful assignment, as safely and securely as possible.

Thresholds of risk are an essential component to assessing risks. When analysing information on potential hazards or risks to safety and security, be extremely mindful of who the advice is coming from and their threshold of risk. Are they interpreting risk at the same level as you need to for your assignment? Bear this in mind when utilising information from NGOs, government agencies or other organisations – they will all have different thresholds of risk, dependent on their role and purpose.

Most importantly, no matter how experienced you are – be it years in the job or range of locations or stories that you have worked on – every assignment is different and will pose new challenges. Keep an open, fresh and curious mind, identifying the expected and the unexpected potential risks in all scenarios.

2.1 GENERAL SAFETY & SECURITY ASSESSMENT

Give an overview of a general safety and security assessment, identifying potential safety or security risks associated with carrying out the assignment, the story and the location.

Consider the sensitivity of the topic, whether the assignment covers a high-risk location, activity or event, person or people.

2.2 PROJECT-SPECIFIC GENERAL RISK ASSESSMENT

For each of the following sections, identify:

- a. The potential risk associated with carrying out the assignment*
- b. The level of threat for the risk (how serious it is and how likely it is)*
- c. How it will be mitigated (the measures being implemented to reduce the chance and severity)*

➤ LOCATION RISKS

The potential location risks to work through are extensive (identifying them, assessing the level of threat and likelihood of the risk and detailing measures in place to mitigate them) and should be considered individually with care and attention – no matter how you perceive the hostility of the environment you will be working in.

For example, historical unexploded ordinance can be present for many years, and may not be an obvious risk for a seemingly peaceful location. Earthquakes can occur in 'non-hostile' areas. Infectious diseases may be considered the norm for a local population and not adequately identified.

Attitudes of the public or authorities can differ according to how you are perceived. This particularly applies to local journalists who may feel they know and understand all aspects of the location; however, they may be perceived very differently by the public and authorities while in the role of a journalist rather than a civilian.

Include any relevant training you and your crew have received, such as Travel Safety Awareness (TSA) or Hostile Environment Training (HET), with details of provider, dates and course content. After completing the risk assessment, be sure to consider whether the training you and your crew have or are intending to complete is adequate for the assignment. Ensure the course provider is approved by your broadcaster/editor and insurance company.

Consult the [SAFETY & SECURITY TRAINING](#) resources for information about types of training and providers and the [RORY PECK TRAINING FUND](#) page for assistance in funding Hostile Environment Training.

If required, complete a [PROOF OF LIFE](#) document.

➤ **PROFILE RISKS**

Identify how your profile or that of the team/contacts/contributors may cause any risk:

1. Are you operating at a high or low profile and are there any associated risks?
2. Are there any potential risks identified with the individual profiles of you or your team for the location or story (gender, age, ethnicity, religious beliefs or nationality)?
3. Are there any risks identified in relation to you or your team's image or presence online and how that might be perceived, including any past affiliations, jobs and assignments? (If necessary, refer to DIGITAL RISKS section)

This is not about how you perceive yourself, but how others may perceive you. Be aware of your image and presence online, and consider any past affiliations, jobs, and assignments that may compromise your safety. The same questions apply to those accompanying you. You should already have considered if you and your team are the right people for the assignment and this section is crucial in

ensuring you have considered all the factors in making that decision.

➤ **SECURITY FOR LOCAL CONTACTS/CONTRIBUTORS**

Outline any potential risks related to people working or interacting with you (local fixers, translators, drivers, NGOs, sources and contributors). What are the credentials and experience of the local fixer/driver/translator that make them suitable for this assignment?

For their own security, your fixer/driver/translator may not need to know all the details of the assignment, but they must know the risks they are taking and you must discuss with them the safety measures and consequences of getting into trouble.

Crucially, know the people you will be working with and relying on. Observe your instincts and question potential staff thoroughly prior to engagement. Seek recommendations from others who have worked with them and keep in mind the principles of threshold of risk when weighing up information from both the staff you are working with and those who endorse them. Do they understand what you are trying to achieve, any sensitivities related to the assignment, and your threshold of risk? Are they consistent and reliable, and do you trust them?

There are occasions when the choice of people working with you in more challenging or remote locations can be limited. You may have to make judgement calls in weighing up the editorial benefits of the compromises – and ensuing potential risks – in employing them. Never be afraid of re-assessing the people you work with in the field, ensuring you have thought through all the potential consequences and ramifications of changing staff during an assignment. Identify any potential risks or concerns about locally hired staff, the level of concern or likelihood for concern and any potential measures in place to reduce risk; ie. research any alternative fixers/drivers/translators in advance in case of any issues whilst on location.

➤ **COMMUNICATIONS**

Complete a [COMMUNICATIONS PLAN](#) and reference the [DIGITAL SECURITY RESOURCES](#).

List all modes of communication to be used by you/the team/contacts/contributors (local mobiles, international mobiles, satellite phones, radios, landlines, internet), considering for each any potential risk, the likelihood and severity of that risk and how it will be mitigated.

Think carefully how you will be communicating during your assignment and how you will be communicating with your editor, check-in person and/or key security contact.

The types of risks to consider include: poor coverage for mobile networks, restrictions for reliable use of satellite phones (such as bad weather, dense urban areas, dense foliage, etc.), surveillance, legal or security issues with satellite phones or radios. Think about perception and your profile in terms of your choice of communication method – there are countries where carrying a satellite phone or radio may imply that you are military or have a sinister motive for your presence, potentially causing hostility.

Could any of your communications methods be compromised or compromise your safety and/or that of others?

Will you be using a tracking or GPS device? Who will be monitoring your journey, and who will respond to a distress call?

The advice of other journalists, communications experts and reliable local knowledge can be vital in assessing risk associated with communications.

➤ **DIGITAL SECURITY**

Refer to the [DIGITAL SECURITY RESOURCE](#) and complete a [DIGITAL RISK ASSESSMENT](#).

Outline any digital security-specific risks (both assignment and personal) and how they will be mitigated. Consider storage and protection of data (particularly if it is a sensitive or controversial story and/or involves contacting or interviewing vulnerable people), potential surveillance or censorship, likely adversaries (intentional and unintentional), equipment, what materials will be gathered, recorded and stored, communications, research and online access, digital profiles, etc.

Protecting your digital profile, data and data of your sources should be an important part of your security plan (and your daily digital life). Digital attacks can have real-life consequences for you and the people you work with. Even taking small, simple steps can make a huge difference to your safety in the digital space.

Be aware of how digital security, social media and the amount of time spent online can impact psychological wellbeing and, if necessary, cross-reference with the [PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK](#) section.

The [DIGITAL SECURITY](#) resource covers key areas, including: the internet, passwords, email, malware, computers, mobile phones, best practice for social media, trolling and doxing, encryption, securing materials, and border crossings and checkpoints.

➤ **RESEARCH RISKS**

Outline any risks involved in conducting research interviews, filming, taking photographs, obtaining and carrying information that may have evidentiary value.

It's helpful to cross-reference research risks with digital security considerations in gathering, storing and sharing research data and information. Again, consider how you are perceived in your line of questioning or enquiry by those you are speaking with. Always try to place yourself in their position or context and consider how they will perceive you (and your crew/fixer/translator) by how you approach your research.

➤ **TRANSPORT**

Outline risks involved in travel arrangements. Specifically consider road traffic accidents and other transport (aircraft, boat).

Consider travel to the destination and any travelling within the country or between countries. Plan the itinerary carefully and research the safest means of travel – it may not always be the quickest or cheapest. Although budget is generally an important consideration, weigh up what is the safest and most sensible option with the cheapest option. For example, often the cheapest flights will transit through countries that may mean a lengthy stopover or extra considerations for transiting equipment or PPE that are different to the destination country. Arrival times are extremely important, particularly if a cheaper flight lands in the early hours of the morning, when it is often still dark, into a country where you may not speak the language or be familiar with the arrivals and entry process. This is the time you are most vulnerable and tired and can be an easy target for theft, crime, bribery or more severe security threats.

Consider how you will identify and meet fixers or drivers and if it is necessary to have a pre-arranged code. Arrival in-country can be easily overlooked in considering risk, but it can potentially be the end of an assignment before it has begun if a thorough risk analysis has not been completed.

Road traffic accidents are often a major risk in many countries, so ensure the vehicle(s) is working properly and is well equipped. Check the route carefully and find a driver that is cautious, experienced and has the language skills required.

Particularly when travelling in remote areas and covering long distances, check before beginning a journey that the vehicle(s) are correctly equipped for the terrain and weather. Consider if a second vehicle is necessary for either security reasons or practical reasons, such as traveling off-road and/or potentially getting stuck in the rainy season in remote areas (cross reference with your COMMUNICATIONS section as to how you will communicate reliably between those vehicles). Also include detailed considerations, such as if more than one spare tyre is required (depending on the state of the roads), additional fuel tanks for long journeys without petrol stations, spades, etc. Ensure the HEALTH AND MEDICAL assessment is cross-referenced in assessing a suitable Vehicle Trauma Kit, access to local hospitals, emergency evacuation plans and suitable first-aid training.

Consider if there are any relevant events not related to the assignment that could affect travel (for instance, a strike, road blocks, public holiday or celebration). Always have an exit plan, as on-the-ground situations may change or you may not feel comfortable with your initial plan.

➤ **ACCOMMODATION**

Securing accommodation on location – for you, your crew and your rushes – is vital, though not always easy to find or to afford. Consider not only where you stay, but the travel time and potential risks of travelling from where you are staying to where you will be working. Well-known hotels, small guesthouses or a friend's flat: they all pose advantages and disadvantages in terms of risk and safety. Be aware of these risks, consider what is your best option and plan ways to mitigate danger.

Also consider prior to travel what items can be taken with you to help secure accommodation – extra padlocks, door wedge, etc.

Each assignment and location may be different, even between neighbouring towns.

Consider:

1. Are there already some security measures in place (ie. guards)?
2. Who else is staying there (ie. diplomats, other journalists, tourists)?
3. Who knows where you are staying and can you trust the diplomacy or integrity of the owner/staff, if necessary?

4. How close is it to potential terrorist targets (ie. embassies, tourist destination, barracks, etc.)?
5. How might the accommodation affect your profile?
6. How easy would access and egress be in the event of an emergency?
7. Could the building withstand attack, do windows need tape, is there a basement?
8. Does the building or area have a history of problems/incidents?

➤ **HEALTH AND MEDICAL**

Identify any health and medical risks in relation to the assignment, the location and any environmental hazards (climate, disease, medical emergencies). Online resources and reliable local knowledge are useful in analysing in these risks. This analysis will help to assess and inform requirements for an adequate first aid and trauma kit.

This will include assessing risks such as:

-COVID:

Where appropriate, outline all mitigation of risk of contracting or transmitting the COVID virus during your reporting. Consult the [REPORTING GUIDES & COVID](#) resource.

-FOOD & WATER:

Research and acquire reliable local knowledge when detailing access to safe food and water during the assignment. If either is not readily available or suitable for any reason, ensure a plan to provide adequate provision is carefully detailed. Consider any dietary requirements (or considerations, such as for religious reasons, ie. working during Ramadan) for you and the crew. Note if there are any allergies to be aware of. If clean water is not readily available, state how it will be either sourced or purified adequately for each specific water source.

-WEATHER:

Note any weather or climatic implications to health, such as heat and humidity or extreme cold. Consider if any parts of the assignment include risk of: sunburn, dehydration, over-hydration, hyponatraemia, physical activity or PPE that will increase chances of heat illness, etc. and outline how risks will be minimised.

-COMMUNICABLE DISEASES:

Research the risks of communicable diseases for the destination country and all locations for the assignment (these may include dengue, chikungunya fever, malaria, schistosomiasis (bilharzia), measles, rabies, plague and HIV, etc.). Note if the incidence of communicable diseases is higher during particular seasons, ie. if flooding occurs during the rainy season, increasing the chance of water sources

becoming contaminated with faecal matter or stagnant water becoming a breeding ground for mosquitos, increasing the risk of mosquito-borne diseases.

-WILDLIFE:

Consider any potential risk or hazard posed by local wildlife, such as snakes, scorpions, spiders or larger animals that may need to be assessed and mitigated.

-RISK OF STRESS AND FATIGUE:

Working long hours, sometimes in physically, mentally or emotionally arduous conditions can take an enormous toll. Be sure to assess if the level of hours and days worked are realistic for all members of the crew. Ensure that adequate rest and breaks have been worked into a schedule; it will make the assignment safer and more productive. Be mindful that everyone has different thresholds of acceptable risk, physical and mental capabilities and limits. The assignment can only operate to the lowest threshold of individual capacity on the team.

- If necessary, cross reference with section 2.8 PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY.

State precautions including:

-VACCINATIONS:

Detail any vaccinations, immunisations and boosters required for you and your crew. List vaccines and the timescale in which they are needed, including where they have been/will be administered. If, for any reason, they are not appropriately administered, detail if there are subsequent risks.

Be aware that some vaccinations have a lead time to be effective before you can travel and some require a course. Check what is needed for the country – and regions – of travel in plenty of time. If travelling regularly, it's sensible to keep key vaccinations updated. Also, research if the destination country requires proof of vaccination, such as a yellow fever certificate, for entry. Detail any such requirements on the risk assessment.

If malaria prophylaxis is required, ensure to detail the recommended type for the destination. Check the lead time to begin taking them before entry into a malarial area and follow the guidance to complete the course.

- Attach copies of any vaccine records in 7. APPENDIX.

-MEDICAL CONDITIONS:

Detail if you (or anyone relevant on the team) have any medical condition that needs to be considered and/or poses a risk. List for each medical condition:

- a. What are the risks of travelling with the medical condition?
- b. How severe are the risks?
- c. How likely are the risks?
- d. What management strategy is in place to reduce the chance and severity of the risks?

If necessary, outline (or reference the EMERGENCY EVACUATION section) any treatment plan or evacuation procedure in place in relation to the medical condition.

-PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION:

List any prescription medication you or your crew must take, including:

- a. Medication name:
- b. Dosage amount and frequency:
 - Attach copies of prescription information and/or related medical details, plus copies of letters from issuing doctor (if required) in 7. APPENDIX.

If any special medication is required, check whether it will be locally available or if it can be carried with you. Research and identify any authority (including that of a transit country) that may require either a letter from an issuing doctor or permission to carry prescription drugs (some countries have severe restrictions on the import of medical items). If necessary, bring a letter from the issuing doctor and the medication leaflet with details of the active components and consider if this needs to be translated into any appropriate languages.

-FIRST AID TRAINING:

State the level of first aid training/knowledge of you and your crew and detail any medical kit to be carried. Note crew's blood groups.

- Attach full medical kit list in 7. APPENDIX.

Ensure that you and your crew are familiar with any first aid or trauma kit being carried with you - spend time before you travel familiarising yourself with the location of items and how to use them. Figuring it out under stress is not easy and is potentially life-threatening. Equally: you do not want to be already injured when trying to explain to a crew member where the kit is and how to use it.

Consult the [SAFETY & SECURITY TRAINING](#) resource for guidance on types of training available and the [RORY PECK TRAINING FUND](#) page for information on applying for financial assistance for Hostile Environment Training.

-HOSPITALS:

For each location (or for relevant sections of a long journey), state if access to a hospital with international standards is possible, including:

- a. How far and difficult would it be to reach this hospital?
- b. Research and list details of all local hospitals that can be attended both for illness/minor injury and in an emergency. Include the level of standard and facilities available and all contact details. Contact the hospitals in advance to ensure the information you have is correct and, if appropriate, include driving directions. This is especially relevant in remote areas.
- c. Note if doctors and staff speak a language in common with you and your crew and any plans in place to communicate effectively if this is not the case (ie. in the situation that there is not a fixer or translator with you for any reason or they are the injured party).

-EMERGENCY EVACUATION:

Detail emergency evacuation plans, including for each location:

- a. From where to where, by whom and at what cost?
- b. Any insurance cover provision

Check if emergency evacuation plans vary for different sections or locations during the assignment, as per 2.3 DETAILED ASSIGNMENT PLANS section.

Research air evacuation providers and plans meticulously. Air transportation (and medical services) can be expensive and emergency evacuation by air can also be influenced by many factors, such as weather, suitable landing areas in the location, daylight hours, etc. If necessary, develop and detail a robust secondary evacuation plan as a backup, if air transport is not feasible.

It may be helpful to refer to the [INSURANCE](#) resource.

Do not travel to a hostile environment if you are not in good health or physically or not mentally fit enough. Take into account that some assignments may be demanding for a multitude of reasons: from climatic stresses, to long hours, carrying heavy equipment, physically arduous terrain and heightened stress levels. Have regular medical and dental check-ups. Ensure that you and your team are adequately prepared – both physically and mentally – for the assignment.

➤ ENVIRONMENT AND WEATHER

Identify any potential environmental or weather issues and any implications for health, safety, security, equipment or assignment.

Cross reference with the HEALTH & MEDICAL section for impact of environment (include considerations such as pollution of any form etc.) and weather on health and illnesses.

Also consider safety and security implications from potential extreme weather events and what they can trigger. For example, heavy snowfall potentially impacting access, power, supplies etc; rainy seasons or heavy downpours causing localised flooding and resultant landslides and health implications; earthquake zones presenting potential risk and associated hazards, such as tsunamis. Research and detail any relevant recent events or potential threats, the likelihood and severity of the threat and what measures are being put in place to reduce the risk. If necessary, detail and cross reference with any exit strategies or emergency evacuation plans.

Consider the risk to equipment of weather and environment, including wet weather, humidity, heat, dust, pollution, etc. Cross reference with section 2.5 EQUIPMENT & CARNET, if necessary, in detailing any amendments to equipment or strategies in place to mitigate risk.

➤ LONE WORKING

Working as a freelancer will often mean lone working. Consider all the potential scenarios that may present risks to personal safety and security risk when lone working. Possible mitigations of such risks may include: completing self-defense training prior departure or other forms of additional equipping, as appropriate.

Regular check-ins are even more essential when lone working. Ensure that any key security and check-in contacts know your location and plans in detail throughout the assignment, as well as any changes or updates whilst in the field. Ensure that a thorough [COMMUNICATIONS PLAN](#) is in place and detail relevant emergency and medical emergency protocols.

2.3 DETAILED ASSIGNMENT PLANS

Provide a detailed filming/reporting schedule, including any interviews planned and any safety or security-specific issues for each item; for example, if security is threatened by talking to specific people or visiting/working in specific areas.

Include the level of threat or risk, its likelihood and how it will be mitigated (and, if necessary for any of the items, an emergency evacuation plan):

DATE	LOCATION	SEQUENCE/STORY ITEM & INTERVIEWS	SAFETY & SECURITY ISSUES

2.4 RUSHES/RECORDINGS/NOTES & MATERIALS

Outline how rushes/information/material will be stored and managed, including data wrangling and backup. Specify measures to protect sensitive information.

Identify any potential risks, the severity and likelihood of those risks, and detail measures being taken to reduce the chances and severity, including:

1. If loss, unauthorised access or confiscation of any information would put you or other people at risk
2. How information will be protected on devices for gathering and storing
3. How material will be transported out of the country/location (across borders or checkpoints)
4. What data-wrangling and back-up regime will be operated

Refer to the [DIGITAL SECURITY RESOURCE](#) and a [DIGITAL RISK ASSESSMENT](#).

2.5 EQUIPMENT & CARNET

List any professional kit being taken on the assignment. Consider and adapt kit to the specific needs of the project and potential risks, including those posed by security (ie. crossing borders, checkpoints, hostile authorities), weather or climatic conditions, profile, perception, story, etc.

1. Identify any potential risks related to equipment (include the level of threat or risk, its likelihood and how it will be mitigated)
2. Detail any import regulations/restrictions in the destination country (or transit country, if relevant)

Detail if a carnet, detailed equipment list (with serial numbers) or letter outlining the reason you are carrying professional equipment is required

- (consider this requirement for any transit countries as well). Research if any of these documents require translation into appropriate languages
3. Provide information of any insurance cover for equipment or any other relevant hire information
 - Provide a detailed equipment list with serial numbers and attach any other relevant paperwork in 7. APPENDIX.

If equipment is being hired, ensure that the hire company provides a correct list of items with serial numbers and value for a carnet or other documentation. Carnets are cheaper if applied for in advance, so be sure to inform the hire company of the timescale in which the kit hired is allocated and detailed to your job. Be sure to hire from reputable companies or contacts that are trusted, reliable and keep equipment well maintained. It is prudent to research prior to arrival any facilities or shops in- country that will be able to mend or maintain any broken equipment during the assignment. Detail and carry any spare items, as appropriate (ie. additional batteries, power surge adaptors, etc.)

If a cover story is being used, ensure the kit matches the cover. How you and the crew are perceived according to the equipment being carried and used is essential to consider. From being a potential target for crime or kidnap, to possible perception that you may be military or a spy, consider carefully how you are perceived and how you are perceiving the risk involved in carrying professional equipment. Detail all the possible risk scenarios, the likelihood and severity of them, and measures in place to minimise them.

2.6 PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT (PPE)

Outline any potential PPE required for the assignment, considering:

1. How it will be obtained
2. How the equipment will be transported to the location and any risks of travelling with it. Detail the level and likelihood of risk and how it will be mitigated
3. If the equipment is to be obtained at the location, how likely is it that any problems will arise and how will they be mitigated?

Assess what safety equipment you will need to take and what can be sourced on location, from flak jacket, tear gas goggles and helmet to strong boots. Weigh up the reliability and integrity of any locally sourced PPE (and check that a commissioner/

broadcaster/insurance company is happy with the supplier in advance). Check local costumes regulations and, again, consider perceptions of the PPE being utilised.

Research any regulations or potential risk for PPE (particularly body armour) when transiting through any countries.

2.7 COVER STORY

If a cover story is being used, outline the implications and protocol for if the cover is compromised. Identify the risk scenarios, the severity and likelihood of the threats and the measures in place to minimise them.

Consider carefully and detail who is aware of the full extent of the assignment and the cover story. Ensure any contact, commissioner, editor or broadcaster has been consulted and approved any cover story, particularly if they can be potentially contacted by hostile authorities in the event of the cover story being compromised.

Travelling as a tourist or working without press credentials can carry very serious implications. In identifying all possible risks to cover being compromised, consider very carefully (including researching recent/current information from other journalists or relevant contacts and/or local lawyers) the implications of cover being compromised for you, the crew, contacts, contributors and any commissioning organisation or broadcaster. Adhere to strict industry and producer guidelines for working undercover and filming secretly and be certain that the perceived risk is weighed against the editorial benefits for the assignment.

2.8 PSYCHOLOGICAL SECURITY

Identify any potential psychological security risks for you, the crew or contributors in relation to the story, location, contributors or working undercover. Consider how physical and digital risks identified throughout the risk analysis can impact psychological security.

If it is possible the story or any element of carrying out the assignment may cause any adverse psychological effects or trauma, outline full details of the risk, the potential severity and likelihood of it and how it will be minimised. Detail psychological help available during and after the assignment and broadcast/publication.

Consider how confidentiality of any personal mental health information will be managed.

2.9 DYNAMIC RISK ASSESSMENT & RELIABILITY OF INFORMATION

Detail access to up-to-date security assessments for the assignment area and story. Outline what and who will be the main sources for the risk analysis and if it will be limited or outdated.

Include plans to assess changes in the security and safety situation and ensure the [COMMUNICATIONS PLAN](#) is clear on how any changes in security intelligence or plans are communicated with a security contact and/or check-in person, editor and anyone else relevant.

3. SECURITY CHECK-IN PROCEDURE

Outline the security check-in procedure:

1. REGULARITY AND TIMES OF CHECK-IN

State a regular check-in time that is sensible for the location and appointed check-in contact. Identify any locations or events during the assignment that require varying check-in times or intervals; ie. multiple locations with different threat levels, long distance travel, etc. If necessary, specify the time at the assignment location and where the security check-in person is based.

2. METHOD - Phone, email, text, message

Ensure that the method chosen is appropriate for each location or section of the assignment, even if it means changing means of communication as appropriate at different times or locations during the project.

3. SECURITY CONTACT

Responsible for receiving a regular check-in. Consider if different people are appropriate for each location or parts of the assignment, perhaps due to languages or specific expertise.

4. PROTOCOL

To be followed in the event of a failed check-in, emergency or if crew are in a compromised or hostile situation:

- Specify at what point a more senior or supervising contact should be notified.
- State if and when the security contact or commissioning organisation should attempt to reach security contacts on the ground.
- What further action should be taken (ie. contacting local authorities,

embassies, relatives, other media). Ensure an emergency evacuation plan has been agreed. (This may also be detailed for appropriate items in section 2.3 DETAILED ASSIGNMENT PLANS)

- Ensure clear instructions and action plans are with named contacts in the case of injury, kidnap or death in the field.

Observing an agreed check-in procedure is essential in ensuring the safety and security of you and your crew, particularly if an assignment involves lone working. Make the check-in time sensible for all parties and consider any factors that might risk disrupting the Check-in procedure. Clearly outline any identified risks and how they will be minimised, including a back-up procedure if necessary.

When appointing a check-in contact, ensure they are the right person for the job. Colleagues, family members or friends all have different strengths and weaknesses in this role. Choose calm, collected and level-headed people who are not going to panic if you have an incident or emergency.

Most importantly of all, ensure your Check-in person is always available! Do not choose someone who is frequently in a poor reception area or must turn off their phone for any reason. Consider having a back-up check-in contact, should your primary person need to be unreachable for any reason.

4. RECENT EXPERIENCE OF OTHER JOURNALISTS

List advice received from other journalists who have *recently* worked in the country/location and/or in the subject area of the assignment.

This section is vital for insurance cover and a very valuable tool to discover how others in the same situation have faced and resolved (or not) similar problems. Pertinent information from this section will be referenced throughout the different sections of the risk analysis.

When considering advice from other journalists, keep in mind the nature of their assignment and, therefore, potential different thresholds of risk that they may have been operating at. They may have approached situations in a manner that may or may not be appropriate for the nature of your assignment.

Consider any possible compromise of your assignment, contacts or contributors and potential ramifications for them when conducting this research. Particularly when working on sensitive issues, think carefully about how to approach it and how conversations will be conducted – what information they need to know and what may be sensible to withhold.

Again, this is about perception – how people perceive what you are doing and how you are approaching the assignment may present potential risks or be beneficial. Consider your approach to all research and conversations carefully, depending on the nature of the assignment.

This section should be considered dynamic, with latest local information available continuing throughout the assignment.

Also list any other relevant advice from experts, NGOs, Foreign Office Travel Advice, etc.

5. OTHER PRECAUTIONS/POTENTIAL ISSUES

List any other issues that may need to be considered prior to or during the assignment, such as:

- Compliance and legal issues (i.e. working with children or criminals, access, trespass issues)
- Local customs (any relevant events, such as strikes, public or religious holidays or celebrations)
- Release forms and Right to Reply

Ensure that if your material is intended for a particular broadcaster or editor that all the appropriate sections of their producer guidelines, compliance or policies information have been consulted. If necessary, consult, discuss and agree these areas with a commissioner prior to the assignment. Any potential scenarios in the field that fall under the remit of any guidelines must be adhered to, if the material is to be accepted by the broadcaster/editor. Many organisations have Producer Guidelines available online and should be consulted in advance of an assignment.

6. INSURANCE

Detail any insurance cover while on assignment, including the type of insurance cover, the policy provider, name, contact details and address, and a description of what each policy covers.

- Attach copies of relevant insurance papers in 7. APPENDIX.

Consult the [INSURANCE](#) resource, if required.

Read any insurance policy extremely carefully and be aware of what coverage it provides and the limits of coverage. Include a copy of the policy in the EMERGENCY

FILE. A risk assessment should help to inform a comprehensive understanding of what kind of insurance is required.

If a broadcaster/commissioner is providing insurance, be sure to read the full policy and be happy that it is suitable for your requirements and the assignment.

7. APPENDIX

Attach all relevant documents referenced throughout the risk assessment:

- Visa, accreditation, permits & permissions letters
- Travel details
- Maps
- Equipment list:
 1. Item
 2. Make and model:
 3. Serial number:
- Full medical kit list
- Any other relevant information

DOCUMENT ENDS

EMERGENCY FILE

The RISK ASSESSMENT & SECURITY PROTOCOL, DIGITAL RISK ASSESSMENT, COMMUNICATIONS PLAN and PROOF OF LIFE QUESTIONS are key documents for the EMERGENCY FILE. This folder should also contain important personal safety information, like copies of your passport, visa and vaccination book.

This should be kept with a reliable contact(s) who will be available to you at all times.