
FOREWORD

Members of the Foreign Service are well aware that living abroad may involve increased risks to personal safety. The nature and level of the risk varies from place to place and from time to time. Accordingly, security facilities and procedures at individual missions differ. There are, however, general principles or guidelines which should be understood by all personnel and their families to assist them in following departmental recommendations and in adopting prudent measures that will help protect them from attacks by criminal elements, terrorists and natural disasters. The purpose of this booklet is to provide such direction and guidance of a general nature. Measures to be taken will depend on the circumstances; common sense plays a major rôle.

Host governments have an obligation under the Vienna Convention to provide measures for the protection of foreign representatives. Mandated by the Government Security Policy, the Department of Foreign Affairs is also responsible to ensure that Canadians serving abroad are afforded appropriate protection by means of the Personal Safety Program. Although the Government of Canada encourages international measures to protect diplomats, the Department also has a legal and ethical responsibility to protect Canada-based staff and their dependents against the threat of violence according to baseline security standards and continuous security risk management. However, the benefits will be limited unless each individual is informed and vigilant, and each Head of Mission ensures that personal safety receives the required attention and effort by all mission members.

We each have a responsibility for our security and safety and it is hoped that the advice provided in this booklet will assist in helping each of us to meet that responsibility.

Every mission has specific instructions concerning emergencies such as fire, floods, earthquakes, etc. These subjects are also included in this booklet. All personnel are required to familiarize themselves with Departmental and mission-specific instructions which provide direction and guidance. Chapter 5 of the Manual of Security Instructions (<http://intranet.dfait-maeci.gc.ca/departement/security/menu-e.asp>) describes the policy and procedures for emergency measures and contingency planning abroad. It is also suggested that comments and recommendations be conveyed by the mission staff to the Mission Security Officer.

It should be noted that the risk from criminal acts, particularly theft, is much greater than from politically-motivated crimes. Nevertheless, terrorism has been included in this booklet because it is perhaps less well understood and is of concern to all of us due to the increase of incidents of terrorism. You will note that measures taken to protect yourself effectively against terrorism are the same as those against criminal acts.

Through this booklet, under various headers, practical suggestions follow on what to do to reduce the risk on different types of personal safety incidents. They also outline how the Department can help you. You will note that some of the advice is repetitious but it is intended to assist you should you be looking under a particular topic for advice.

This booklet is prepared for Canadian Foreign Service employees and their families.

Your comments on the material provided are welcome and should be sent to the Corporate Security Division (ISC) or to the Security Operations and Personal Safety Division (ISR).