

Syrian German Medical Association (SGMA)

Safety and Security Policy

1. Purpose

The purpose of this Safety and Security Policy is to establish a comprehensive framework to safeguard all individuals engaged in SGMA operations and ensure the continuity of SGMA's medical and humanitarian missions. SGMA acknowledges the inherent risks of operating in volatile, insecure, and resource-limited environments. This policy sets the standards for physical, psychological, and operational safety, ensuring that staff, volunteers, partners, and beneficiaries are protected from foreseeable harm. The policy also outlines emergency response mechanisms and promotes a proactive culture of risk awareness, prevention, and preparedness.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all individuals associated with SGMA, including:

- Board members and executive leadership,
- Permanent and temporary employees,
- Local and international volunteers,
- Medical and paramedical staff on field missions,
- Consultants and advisors,
- Partner organizations and subcontractors operating under SGMA programs.

The policy is applicable across all operational locations, including Germany, Syria, and any country where SGMA has a presence. It covers activities in clinics, offices, transport, distribution points, field missions, training centers, and temporary shelters.

3. Core Safety Principles

SGMA adheres to the following principles:

- **Duty of Care:** SGMA has a moral and legal responsibility to take all reasonable measures to ensure the safety of those under its authority.
- **Prevention First:** Emphasis is placed on anticipation and mitigation of risks before they escalate into incidents.
- **Local Adaptation:** Security plans must be tailored to the socio-political, environmental, and operational context of each site.
- **Shared Responsibility:** While leadership ensures systems are in place, each individual is expected to contribute to their own safety and that of others.
- **Humanitarian Access:** Security measures should support, not hinder, access to populations in need.

4. Risk Assessment and Management

SGMA's risk management process involves:

- **Pre-Deployment Risk Assessments:** Covering medical, environmental, political, and logistical risks prior to any field deployment.
- **Risk Matrix Tool:** Used to classify risk levels (Low, Medium, High, Critical) based on likelihood and impact.
- **Dynamic Risk Monitoring:** Ongoing situation analysis using security briefings, news sources, and NGO coordination.

- **Contextual Risk Mapping:** Engaging with local stakeholders (e.g., community leaders, UN agencies, security actors) to map threats and vulnerabilities.
- **Contingency and Evacuation Planning:** Every mission site must have a written Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan (EPRP), including evacuation routes, shelter-in-place procedures, and communication trees.

5. Physical Security Measures

Facilities must be equipped with:

- **Access Controls:** Guards, ID checks, restricted access zones, and sign-in logs.
- **Fire Safety Systems:** Fire extinguishers, smoke detectors, and fire drills.
- **Lighting and Surveillance:** Exterior lighting, locks, cameras where appropriate.
- **Safe Rooms or Shelters:** Designated areas for staff protection during active threats.

Travel and transport measures include:

- **Pre-Movement Briefings:** Security updates, maps, and check-in protocols.
- **Vehicle Safety Checks:** Tires, fuel, first-aid kits, communication tools.
- **Movement Logs:** Documentation of routes, times, and personnel.
- **Curfew Compliance:** Adhering to locally set security curfews or travel bans.

6. Medical and Health Security

- **Medical Pre-Screening:** Required for all field staff to ensure fitness for duty.
- **First-Aid Training:** Basic life-saving training for all staff.
- **Medical Evacuation Plan (MedEvac):** Pre-identified clinics, transportation plans, and insurance.
- **Infection Control Protocols:** Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for hygiene, PPE use, waste management, and epidemic response.
- **Mental Health Support:** Psychological first aid and post-deployment counseling available.

7. Personal Conduct and Responsibilities

- **Safety Briefings:** Mandatory for all staff before deployment or upon arrival at a site.
- **Behavioral Expectations:** Staff must refrain from risky behaviors such as substance use, political activism, or violating local customs.
- **Visibility and Identification:** SGMA IDs, mission t-shirts, and visibility gear are required in the field.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Staff must demonstrate respect for local customs, dress codes, and religious practices.
- **Vaccinations and Health Compliance:** Required immunizations and health checks must be up to date.

8. Incident Reporting and Emergency Response

- **Immediate Reporting:** All incidents—including accidents, injuries, threats, or harassment—must be reported within 24 hours to a designated Safety Focal Point.
- **Crisis Activation Protocol:** Major incidents (e.g., kidnappings, attacks, mass casualty events) trigger the Crisis Management Team (CMT) and activate the emergency response framework.

- **Notification Procedures:** Internal reporting, family notification, and donor alerts (if applicable).
- **Incident Documentation:** Written reports must be submitted, including location, timeline, parties involved, and initial response.
- **Debriefing and After-Action Review:** Conducted to evaluate response, identify gaps, and revise plans.

9. Gender-Sensitive and Inclusive Security

SGMA promotes safety for all genders and vulnerable groups by:

- **Gender-Based Risk Analysis:** Integrating GBV risk into all security assessments.
- **Safe Accommodations:** Gender-segregated or culturally appropriate housing.
- **GBV Reporting Mechanisms:** Confidential, survivor-centered, and trauma-informed.
- **Inclusion of Vulnerable Staff:** Ensuring security planning considers persons with disabilities, LGBTQ+ individuals, and minority staff.

10. Information and Cybersecurity

- **Data Classification Policy:** Information categorized as public, internal, confidential, or restricted.
- **Password Protocols:** Use of strong passwords and multi-factor authentication.
- **Device Security:** Encryption, screen locks, and prohibited use of personal devices for work purposes.
- **Cyber Incident Response Plan:** Includes backup recovery and IT lockdown procedures.

11. Training, Simulations, and Preparedness

- **Induction Safety Training:** Required within the first week of employment.
- **Annual Safety Training:** Refresher courses on fire safety, active shooter response, and medical emergencies.
- **Simulations:** Scenario-based drills (e.g., evacuation, earthquake, active conflict) conducted quarterly.
- **Local Partner Orientation:** Partners receive contextual safety briefings and compliance documentation.

12. Coordination and Institutional Oversight

- **Security Focal Points (SFPs):** Appointed at each field location. Responsibilities include risk monitoring, training coordination, and incident reporting.
- **Head of Operations:** Maintains central oversight of safety planning and ensures alignment across sites.
- **Safety and Security Committee:** Multi-disciplinary team meets quarterly to:
 - Review incident reports and audit findings,
 - Monitor policy implementation,
 - Recommend changes to procedures,
 - Assess partner compliance.

13. Interagency Coordination and External Interfaces

- **Coordination with UN and NGOs:** SGMA participates in local security clusters or humanitarian coordination meetings.
- **Liaison with Authorities:** Local security forces and government agencies are engaged transparently and within legal limits.
- **Shared Security Resources:** Agreements with peer organizations for shared transport, escorts, or emergency supplies.

14. Policy Compliance and Enforcement

- **Mandatory Compliance:** All personnel are required to adhere to this policy as a condition of employment or partnership.
- **Audits and Site Inspections:** Periodic reviews of facilities, documentation, and training logs.
- **Performance Evaluations:** Supervisors assess staff safety compliance during annual reviews.
- **Violations:** May result in verbal warnings, written reprimands, suspension, or termination.
- **Legal Accountability:** Where negligence results in harm, legal recourse may be pursued.

15. Policy Review and Continuous Improvement

- **Annual Review Cycle:** Led by the Governance and Ethics Committee in consultation with safety stakeholders.
- **Incorporation of Lessons Learned:** Incident reviews and near misses are used to update protocols.
- **Stakeholder Feedback:** Input from staff, volunteers, and partners is solicited through surveys and learning reviews.

Approved by the SGMA Board of Directors on: 01.01.2025
To be reviewed annually by the Governance and Ethics Committee.