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Village By Village - Health And Safety Policy

Introduction

"There will always be an inherent risk in travelling overseas. There are many things that can happen when you travel if you're not careful.

The first and single biggest concern regarding activities undertaken as part of gapmonth is the reduction of risk to health and safety as far as practically possible.

We provide our volunteers & staff with clear informative briefings, factsheets and safe practices overseas to reduce that risk to a minimum. We are committed to embedding health and safety in our organisation."

Doctor Nicholas Swift, Chairman of Village by Village.
Date: 14 September 2007.

The Organisation

The Chief Executive Officer, Neil Kerfoot is responsible for the management of Health and Safety matters within the Organisation.

He will take special interest in the promotion of Health and Safety matters and to provide the first level and advice and act on behalf of Village by Village in respect of these matters. All staff, Trustees and volunteers are responsible for ensuring that they work in a manner that is safe to themselves and to others and to comply with the relevant requirements of the Village by Village Health and Safety Policy.

General Health And Safety Information

All staff and volunteers are urged to read the relevant pages of the Health and Safety Policy and this document will form part of the induction process for new members, volunteers and staff.

Activities involving a significant risk will have a "risk assessments" completed about them. "Risk assessments" may include control measures. Control measures will partly take the form of written fact sheets and briefings. Each of these three types of documents:

Risk Assessments
Fact Sheets
Health and Safety Policy document

And the briefings will dovetail into each other to form Village by Village's Health and Safety Policy.

Provisions for in-country volunteers

All relevant health and safety information will be given to all volunteers before they arrive in-country. Relevant information will be given in-country and post-departure.

All volunteers and staff are instructed to contact their doctors or travel clinics to ascertain their suitability to travel and the most recent information on the immunisations and prophylactic medications required before entering the country.

All volunteers and staff are instructed to purchase a comprehensive insurance policy that includes a "repatriation" clause and allows the insured to participate in "light labour, gap year" activities.

Specific information is also provided; both written and verbal, on necessary personal protection equipment (PPE) for activities they will be involved in.

Information is also given in country; on the various environments where they will reside, equipment being used, local politics and culture.

Information is also given on all our projects and trips regarding social responsibility: Volunteer's role and responsibility in their new society is explained, as they will often be immersed in delicate cultures, which can easily be upset through ignorance or through what is socially acceptable behaviour in their home country.

Ensure that appropriately experienced field staff and group leaders lead projects we operate and have served a supervised probationary period prior to being given responsibility over a group or project.

Auditing of operating procedure on a regular basis in each area / region followed by meetings of all relevant staff (both UK and in-country) to identify corrective actions needed and implementation of decisions made.

Identification of the risks associated with activities and locations, as well as the development of measures to minimise these risks.

For any activity involving a significant risk a "risk assessments is produced". These cover activities, specific projects and residentially associated risks.

All volunteers are made aware of these risks through briefings and factsheets. Factsheets cover activities such as, personal hygiene, cooking, food preparation, HIV and insect / snake controls and many other aspects of the trip and projects, which are covered in specific risk assessments.

Village by Village have in place strong relationships with the Chief of the village, the Elders and local authorities which support our work and support our contingency plans should a situation arise.

All in-country transportation is via our Land Rover that is checked by a mechanic every 6,000 miles. The Land Rover and is only driven by an authorised driver.

The Land Rover always carries a First Aid kit in the vehicle.

There are hospitals with good facilities for all possible injuries and these have all been visited and assessed by our local staff and volunteers.

Evacuation plans for High Priority emergency evacuations have been developed for each of the areas where we work. Evacuation plans for Medium Priority (fastest overland route to a hospital) and Low Priority (most convenient and comfortable overland or over water route) have also been developed for each region and will be updated with any local developments or changes.

Briefing all volunteers on arrival in the safe operating procedures, and acquainting them with the medical facilities available.

All volunteers before departure are given a general health and safety briefing. Leaders give additional briefings as the volunteers join new projects or visit new areas.

We record all illnesses, accidents, near misses or incidents which may have a bearing on health and safety and using this information as part of an ongoing refinement of the operating procedures.

The in-country staff keep detailed confidential medical records on all staff and volunteers, which are used in combination with accident

Accidents

All accidents, near misses and incidents of known or suspected issues must be reported in the Village by Village Report Book which the CEO will be responsible for.

Appropriate personnel will investigate all accidents and incidents, except those of a minor nature and, where necessary, remedial measures including revising work procedures and training will be implemented as appropriate.

Accidents/incidents of a serious nature must be notified immediately to the CEO and will be subjected to a more formal investigation. When appropriate a family member/next of kin will be contacted and informed of the event as well as the chairman of the charity.

First Aid

First Aid boxes will be located at, or near our base of operations and in the Village by Village Land Rover, the CEO will be trained in basic first aid.

Risk Assessment

The majority of activities carried out by Village by Village are routine and generally low risk in nature and do not require a formal risk assessment.

However, for any activity involving a significant risk a risk assessment must be carried out. To assist this, model risk assessment forms will be used and the five step process will be applied.

Risk assessments, and any risk controls/control measures will outline the procedures we want followed and will be disseminated to staff and volunteers via a series of Fact Sheets and briefings will be issued as part of the induction process for new members, volunteers & staff.

Monitoring Of Village By Village's Health And Safety Policy

A self-inspection:- Safety Audit of Village by Village's Health and Safety Policy will take place every twelve months to monitor the effectiveness of the Health and Safety Policy). The Trustees at the annual AGM will make the inspection.

Health And Safety Inquiries And Issues

All staff and volunteers encountering any kind of health and safety hazard should report these promptly to the CEO or, in his absence to any Trustee of Village by Village.

Health And Safety Consultation

Health and Safety will be a standing item on the Agenda of the AGM, which will be held every twelve months. Any member of staff or volunteer of the Village by Village who wishes to raise a Health and Safety item should inform the CEO as soon as possible.

Purpose

This document is to provide a safe and healthy environment for employees, volunteers, contractors and members of the public when dealing with Village by Village. In doing so it observes that Health and Safety is a matter for the entire organisation. Accordingly there is a need for a collective responsibility for Health and Safety issues and the promotion of strategies and procedures to achieve compliance with this policy and related legislation.