

Work in challenging or hostile environments

Overview

This Standard is about journalists working in challenging or dangerous environments, and those which have the potential to become so.

This includes a variety of situations where there is a heightened risk to personal safety or emotional well-being, such as: war zones, terrorist incidents, demonstrations, scenes of transport crashes, extreme weather events or industrial accidents.

This Standard is about preparing yourself for reporting from the challenging or hostile environment by making an assessment of the risks you are likely to encounter, including ensuring that you have received any necessary training. You will need to understand the reasons for your visit to the hostile environment, and how to maintain your own wellbeing whilst you are there.

This Standard is for journalists working in challenging or hostile environments.

Work in challenging or hostile environments

Performance criteria*You must be able to:*

1. conduct a comprehensive assessment of risks in the hostile environment against appropriate organisational procedures 2. ensure you have received the appropriate safety and first aid training prior to travelling to hostile or challenging environments 3. check that you are covered by an appropriate level of insurance 4. think ahead and plan for all risks you may encounter whilst in the hostile environment 5. ensure that all documentation relevant to your work is completed and up-to-date, and that you understand and comply with any rules or orders that are in place to protect your safety and that of others 6. ensure that all necessary equipment and resources for your personal safety, communication, and first aid are appropriate for the environment, reliable, and in full working order 7. assess the situation for risks on a continual basis 8. take breaks when possible to maintain your physical and mental wellbeing 9. make sure you do not jeopardise your status as a civilian by carrying a weapon or any other action 10. take appropriate action in line with your plans when you identify that things have gone wrong or are about to go wrong 11. recognise the symptoms of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) in yourself and in others, and seek the appropriate support when necessary

Work in challenging or hostile environments

Knowledge and understanding

You need to know and understand:

1. your purpose for visiting the area, why you or your organisation feel it is necessary, and why you have been recommended or have volunteered 2. the means of communicating with your editor or commissioner and other relevant people once you are in the hostile environment 3. where to find information about the safety risks in the particular hostile environment in which you are planning to work 4. what the risks to safety are in the hostile environment, including; who's involved, the specific risk or danger, weapons, climate, geography, flora and fauna and any other relevant factors 5. how to recognise when your presence might exacerbate a situation 6. why it is important to remain aware of what can go wrong, what action to take if it does go wrong and preventative measures 7. local laws and customs, and your rights if you get arrested in the area in which you are working 8. your responsibilities and authority when working in a hostile environment 9. the clothing and resources available to you for personal protection, including body armour, safety harnesses, and high visibility clothing 10. appropriate places of safety and shelter, and how to access and exit from them safely 11. the support available from your organisation to maintain your wellbeing 12. what can cause trauma, the symptoms and consequences, and how to identify those at risk of developing traumatic stress (including yourself) 13. how to sustain your mental and physical fitness in hostile situations, and techniques for dealing effectively with stress and exposure to trauma 14. the appropriate agencies or resources for trauma counselling

Work in challenging or hostile environments

Developed by	ScreenSkills
Version Number	2
Date Approved	31 Mar 2019
Indicative Review Date	30 Mar 2022
Validity	Current
Status	Original
Originating Organisation	Screen Skills (formerly Creative Skillset)
Original URN	SKSJ27
Relevant Occupations	Media and Communication, Media Associate Professionals
Suite	Journalism
Keywords	hostile environments, risk, journalism