

Ukraine/Russia conflict: Considerations for sheltering in place

MARCH 2022

- The ability to stand fast is an important part of any response to a deteriorating security environment or in the aftermath of a sudden or rapid-onset crisis. Depending on the circumstances, it offers a viable - and often safer - alternative to relocation or evacuation. It can also constitute a step in the evacuation process itself, particularly when evacuation options become compromised.
- Robust security management and contingency planning should always include evacuation options from an insecure environment, but alternatives should also be identified. The evacuation of all international and expatriate staff from a country can negatively impact business continuity, with associated human and financial costs. Encouraging resilience through detailed planning and adapted solutions aimed at ensuring the safety of international assignees and travellers is essential to minimising operational disruption.
- Stand-fast options can be implemented in a number of different scenarios, whether in anticipation of unrest or as a reaction to an event, including foreseeable natural disasters. The administrative and logistical components of a risk management strategy are central to the success of a stand-fast phase, as is appropriate education of all involved.
- The decision to stand fast should be based on pre-identified indicators of deterioration. Appropriate planning should include and be based on the anticipation and ability to recognise critical and non-critical indicators. Changes in the security environment should be monitored and reviewed as per contingency plans, and appropriate action taken in response. Indicators such as airspace and border closures, disruption to arterial road routes and violent unrest may precipitate a stand-fast posture.
- Standing fast, if managed correctly, can mitigate exposure to risk for staff operating in deteriorating security environments. It is simpler and more efficient to implement, reduces evacuations costs, and allows organisations to better recover and resume operations.

CHOOSING A POTENTIAL STAND-FAST LOCATION

The stand-fast location should be a well-connected building away from areas which could be affected by a further deterioration. Depending on the situation, this could mean avoiding venues of large-scale protests or rallies.

Access to the stand-fast location, as well as onward travel to potential ports of departure, should be possible using multiple routes, avoiding potential trouble spots or flashpoints. In case of a further deterioration, travellers should be able to reach the airport safely, avoiding locations where checkpoints could be erected.

The following aspects should be considered:

- Physical security, including continuity of access control, a security perimeter around the location, the integrity of construction of buildings and secure parking possibilities
- The availability of alternative security staff to protect employees and assets
- Supplies for up to one week for double the number of individuals planned: water, food, medicine, cash (at least US\$2,000 per person), fuel and other essential supplies.
- Reliable resupply sources, including options for delivery of goods – for example, through local contacts – to the stand-fast location in the event of movement being impractical.
- A charged satellite phone and short-wave radios (battery-powered, if possible) should be available to ensure that communications with colleagues, line managers and other key stakeholders can be maintained if social media networks are disrupted.

Relocating to a secure hotel or guesthouse is appropriate if security conditions allow a safe transfer. This can provide reassurance and increase safety through numbers. However, the hotel's ownership should be investigated to make sure it does not run the risk of being targeted for political reasons. The venue should ideally have a room which could be used as a shelter (a 'safe room') in the event that assailants storm the premises.

Underground facilities such as a cellar or a garage are best options; all rooms without windows (often bathrooms) are suitable alternatives. This is where essential items should be stored and where travellers should gather if a security incident affects exit from the building.

ADVICE FOR SHELTER-IN-PLACE IN UKRAINE

In the event of an armed clash, air raid or artillery shelling in an urban centre, we advise the following:

- Familiarise yourself with egress routes and emergency stairwells if you are in a high-rise or residential structure. Go down to the basement or the middle of the building with an emergency bag and wait. Stay as far away from windows and external walls as possible. Turn off all gas and electrical appliances. Turn off all the lights.
- Familiarise yourself with the nearest **government-sanctioned raid shelter** (an official list for shelters in the capital Kyiv can be found [here](#), and an unofficial list [here](#)) or underground metro stop. If you cannot find one, find the largest concrete structure in your vicinity (ideally a public hospital, overpass, religious building or stadium) and take shelter. Stay away from windows.
- If in Kyiv, monitor [this government website](#) for air raid announcements and information.
- Do not seek shelter in military, civil defense, or police installations or buildings.
- If you are in a moving vehicle exit immediately and refer to the advice points above.
- Do not exit your sheltered position unless explicitly told it is safe to do so, if located in an official shelter. If sheltering in other locations do not move until you assess that the situation has stabilised.
- Use your phone only as necessary. Call or text an emergency contact to inform them of your location.
- Keep identification documents on your person at all times. Be prepared to identify yourself to armed military personnel, emergency services, humanitarian actors, and/or government employees. Comply with their instructions and identify yourself in calm, clear manner.
- Monitor for local reports on humanitarian corridors and follow all official directives related to passage through them.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS CHECKLIST

- Important documents (passports, copies of medical prescriptions, insurance policies and bank account records) in a waterproof, portable container
- Cash: At least US\$2,000 per person, as well as local currency for day-to-day expenses
- Four litres of water per person per day for at least seven days, for drinking and sanitation
- At least a week's supply of non-perishable food
- Battery-powered or hand-crank radio and extra batteries
- Candles, flashlight and extra batteries
- First -aid kit
- Whistle to signal for help
- Local maps
- Mobile phone with chargers (solar chargers, if available)
- Prescription medications and glasses
- Sleeping bag or warm blanket for each person if in cold climates
- Complete change of clothing
- Fire extinguisher
- Matches in a waterproof container
- Paper and pencil

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