## Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

# Guide for drafting a Researcher Safety Protocol

DEFINITION & PURPOSE:

This is a guide to drafting a Researcher Safety Protocol and needs to be adapted for each research project.

Researchers need to assure their own safety as well as that of their participants and research assistants. The main purpose of a researcher safety protocol is to assess the level and likelihood of risk and to provide appropriate arrangements to minimise and manage those risks.

Situations in which researcher safety is likely to be at risk may include times when:

* researchers are visiting the homes of others;
* researchers are undertaking sensitive research in a manner that puts them at personal risk;
* researchers are undertaking research in hazardous conditions;
* researchers are undertaking their research in a social or cultural setting with which they have minimal familiarity;
* researchers are involving people who pose a higher risk than would normally be the case (e.g. people with a known propensity for violence);
* the study impinges on the vested interests of powerful persons;
* the study is subject to the exercise of coercion or domination (e.g. where the research is about social conflict or where participants may face political threat, discrimination or stigma);
* there is an increased exposure to everyday risks (e.g. accidents, illness).

*Researchers may find it useful to read this research about levels of violence towards researchers in the field (*[*QUALITI (NCRM) COMMISSIONED INQUIRY INTO THE RISK TO WELL-BEING OF RESEARCHERS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH by Bloor, M., Fincham, B., and Sampson, H*](http://www.cardiff.ac.uk/socsi/qualiti/CIReport.pdf)*.)*

The following questions may be used to help write a protocol that is relevant to the context of the research.

### Project title and brief description:

#### Applicant

#### Primary Researcher

### Where is the research being undertaken?

What [current travel warnings](https://www.safetravel.govt.nz/) are in effect in the area in which the research will take place?

At whose property will the research be undertaken?

Who is likely to be present at the research location?

What access permissions are needed to undertake the research at the chosen location?

What maps and guides has the researcher consulted to ensure familiarity with the locations?

What reliable local public transport is available?

Which reputable taxi firms are easy to access?

Where is it safe to use private cars and leave them in the area?

What local rendezvous or contact points are available for researchers?

How close to your research location are hotels or safe accommodation?

### Who will be collecting the data and interacting with participants?

Who will be accompanying the researcher?

How will the safety of any dependent children accompanying the researcher be assured?

How will the safety of any translators, interpreters, intermediaries or transcribers be assured?

### How familiar is the researcher with the social or cultural context of the research ?

What level of familiarity does the researcher have with the social context of the participants and the research?

What level of familiarity does the researcher have with the cultural context of the participants and the research?

What consultation has taken place?

What language support is needed?

What local tensions are there?

How strongly active are any cultural, religious or racial divisions?

What do local sources, such as the police or local leaders, say about risks in the research area?

Which local 'community leaders' have been spoken with to explain the research and gain their endorsement?

### How safe are the activities in which the researcher is taking part?

Does the research involve sports or activities that may be hazardous in nature?

What safety protocols are in place?

Will sufficient qualified personnel be in attendance to supervise the activity or respond swiftly to any emergency?

### What level of access to support is available?

Who will be available to provide assistance should it be required?

How will the researcher ensure that those providing support will be aware of any need that arises?

What will those providing support do if it is needed?

### What emergency plans are in place? Who can help?

What training or support is needed and how will it be accessed?

What University policies are relevant to your project? Have you read and understood them?

How have significant local actors, such as statutory and community organisations been contacted?

Who has been in touch with potential participants and what advice have they given?

Who else is aware of the researcher’s itinerary and research schedule?

How will the researcher keep key support people informed of what is happening?

How will key support people react if the agreed contact protocols are not followed?

### Don’t forget to update your safety protocol regularly:

#### **Date for next review**