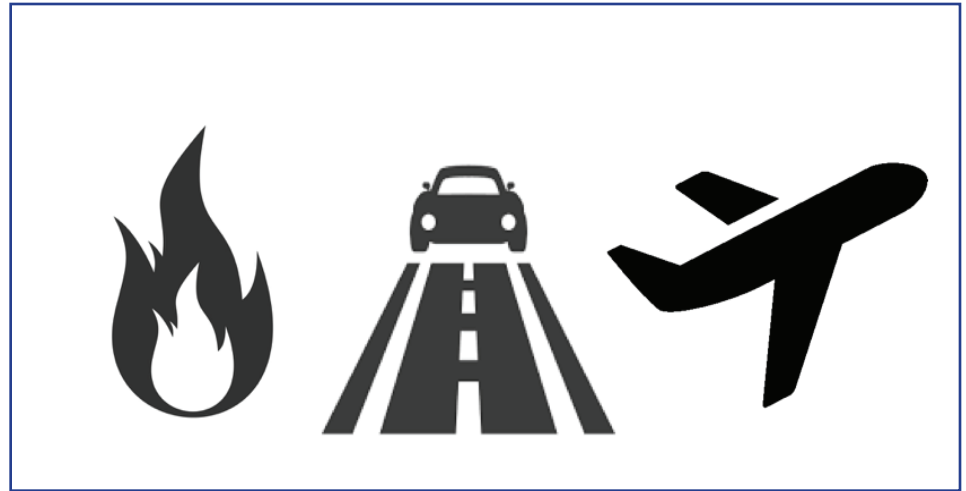# Role of UNSMS in Occupational Safety and Health: Explained

Above: Currently the UNSMS has a remit over three areas of safety: fire, road and aviation safety.

In June 2019, the UN Inter-Agency Security Management Network (IASMN) approved the "Guidance on the UNSMS role in Occupational Safety & Health (OSH)", which explains the intersection of OSH and the UN Security Management System (UNSMS).

The guidance takes stock of *current* responsibilities of the UNSMS on safety, introduces the developing role of the UN OSH system, and points to further resources on OSH.

The revised Security Risk Management (SRM) process, promulgated in 2015, distinguishes security from safety. Security is related to undesirable events deliberately caused by people. Safety is related to undesirable events that are not deliberate, such as natural disasters. The UNSMS has a remit for three areas of safety: road safety, fire safety and aviation safety.

Overview of the OSH Framework

The UN OSH system is currently developing rapidly, and it is expected that the roles and responsibilities outlined here will later be adjusted as the UN OSH system matures.

The High-Level Committee on Management endorsed a common system-wide OSH framework in March 2015 to encourage organizations to harmonize their policies.
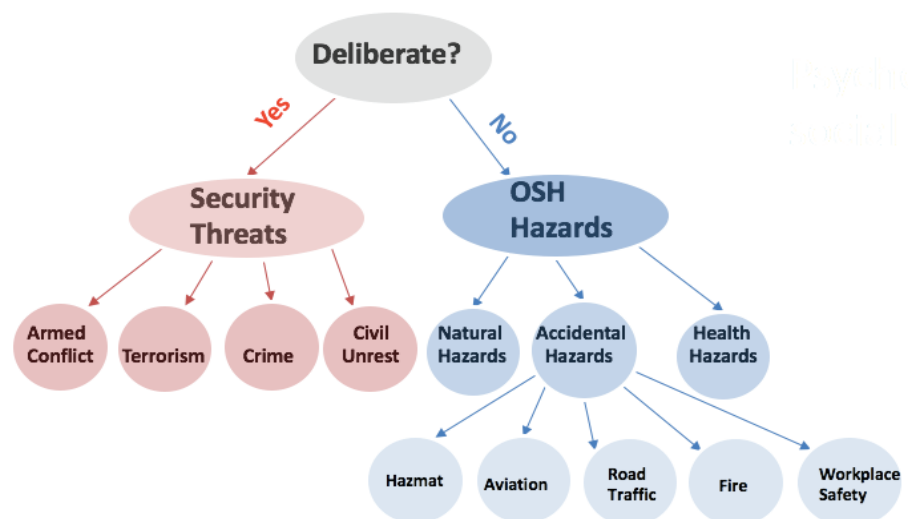
In 2018, the Secretary General committed to establishing an integrated OSH system in the UN Secretariat. Consequently, a

Definitions

OSH: refers to work-related hazards that may cause harm to personnel, including natural, accidental and health hazards.

Safety Risk Management: the process of identifying and preventing non-deliberate events that may cause harm, and distinct from Security Risk Management (known as SRM), which is the process of identifying and protecting against deliberate actions intended to cause harm.

Harmful Events: Threats or Hazards?

Roles and Responsibilities

Some aspects related to OSH are managed through the UN-SMS policy framework, namely: road safety, fire safety and aviation safety, as well as security plans and the identification of natural hazards. **At this stage, there are no additional responsibilities for security personnel.**

SENIOR MANAGEMENT OF UN ORGANIZATIONS:

- Takes overall responsibility and accountability for the prevention of work-related injury and ill-health;
- Responsible for provision of safe workplaces for personnel;
- Establishes the OSH risk management responsibilities of personnel;
- Supports the overall OSH management system.

UN COUNTRY PRESENCE:

- Identify and assess safety hazards;
- Manage OSH risks and undertake post-incident analysis;
- Support OSH incident response.

OSH FOCAL POINTS:

- Identify and coordinate management of OSH hazards, especially with UNSMS, and fire, aviation and road safety experts;
- Assist with such incidents, including on crisis response;
- Liaise with DOS OSH capacity on UN system-wide compliance, standards, guidance, concepts and methodology.

DO

- In consultation with SMT, decides on resources for manag-

ing the risk from each identified hazard.

SECURITY PERSONNEL:

- List all safety hazards identified in the area;
- Assist with implementation of fire, aviation and road safety measures;
- Develop and implement specific crisis response plans for the hazards;
- Provide security support related to safety-related incidents and crises.
- The Security Adviser informs Security Management Team (SMT) of specific natural hazards through the SRM report.

Please note: The responsibilities for security personnel outlined above are those currently in effect. No new tasks have been introduced through this guidance.

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dedicated Health Management and Occupational Safety & Health division was established within the newly-formed Department of Operational Support (DOS). This division is meant to consolidate all safety risk management programmes and safety categories to ensure that they are integrated under one OSH risk management system with the UN Secretariat.

Various UNSMS organizations have different levels of responsibility for safety management and it may be led by different parts of each UNSMS organization (for instance, the security section or the medical section). This new guidance does not restrict these approaches but clarifies the minimum responsibilities within OSH for all UNSMS organizations.

For more information, please see: unosh.org or email osh@un.org

Whether the incident is caused by a security threat or a safety hazard, the UNSMS policy on security planning applies, as do the guidelines on management of security crisis situations.

Recognizing that Security is responsible for most crisis response, security personnel must collaborate with those responsible for each identified hazard on how best to plan for and manage the crisis response for potential incidents stemming from these hazards.

3 vs **1** FATALITIES
Incident data for the UN Secretariat shows that occupational safety and health-related fatalities outnumbered fatalities related to security by approximately three to one.

10 vs **1** INJURIES
Occupational safety and health injuries and illness outnumber security injuries by approximately 10 to one.

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