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Security and resilience — Community resilience — Guidelines for supporting vulnerable persons in an emergency

Sécurité et résilience — Résilience des communautés — Lignes directrices pour soutenir la réponse communautaire aux personnes vulnérables

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8c80d1641be5/iso-22395-2018

Contents

Page

Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 292, *Security and resilience*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

This document gives guidelines for identifying individuals who are the most vulnerable to an emergency and how to include them in the preparation, response and recovery from events, incidents and emergencies. Emergencies have different effects on people; for example, some individuals will become less able to anticipate, cope with, resist or recover from the impacts of an emergency. An individual is not defined as vulnerable by the nature of their vulnerability, but by their personal circumstances at the time of the emergency. A person's vulnerability to an emergency is influenced by many factors and can vary in different environmental, political, cultural and social contexts. It is widely acknowledged that persons who are vulnerable to an emergency require specific kinds of assistance. However, there is less understanding and guidance on how to recognize the individuals who are vulnerable in different emergency situations, and how to support them. This can be because vulnerability changes over time, so persons move in and out of being vulnerable, even to the same event, incident or emergency. Relevant factors include age, economic security, language and health, but also the effects of broader processes such as climate change, international security and national political trends.

In large numbers and in different contexts, vulnerable persons are not always recognized or there are too many and they could overwhelm emergency response teams. Furthermore, other types of support structures exist for vulnerable persons, but these might be fractured in an emergency. It is important to understand and implement best practices for recognizing and including vulnerable persons in all phases of emergency preparedness, response and recovery. In particular, this requires an understanding of what creates vulnerability in order to ensure persons are not overlooked or more negatively impacted through the management of emergencies.

This document emphasizes capacity building and community resilience. It recognizes that vulnerable persons and their representatives are key stakeholders and planning partners. It considers the preparatory measures for involving vulnerable persons in decisions made about providing assistance before, during and after an emergency, the planning required to engage vulnerable persons and their representatives, and the ways in which including vulnerable persons will help to increase understanding about those vulnerabilities and contribute towards their personal well-being during an emergency.

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Security and resilience — Community resilience — Guidelines for supporting vulnerable persons in an emergency

1 Scope

This document gives guidelines for organizations to identify, involve, communicate with and support individuals who are the most vulnerable to natural and human-induced (both intentional and unintentional) emergencies. It also includes guidelines for continually improving the provision of support to vulnerable persons in an emergency.

It is intended for use by organizations with the responsibility for, or involvement in, part or all of the planning for working with vulnerable persons in an emergency.

It is applicable to all types and sizes of organizations involved in emergency preparation, response and recovery activities, such as local, regional and national governments; statutory bodies; international and non-governmental organizations; businesses; and public and community groups.

The focus of this document is on vulnerable individuals and their needs in relation to an emergency.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 22300, *Security and resilience — Vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 22300 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
carer
individual who provides support to a *vulnerable person* (3.2)

Note 1 to entry: Carers can be paid or unpaid providers of care.

3.2
vulnerable person
individual who might be less able to anticipate, cope with, resist or recover from the impacts of an emergency

Note 1 to entry: In this document, a vulnerable person is not defined by the nature of the vulnerability but by their personal circumstances at the time of the emergency.

4 Identifying vulnerable persons in an emergency

4.1 General

The general aspects to be addressed when considering vulnerable persons in an emergency are

— identifying types of vulnerabilities (4.2),

— identifying vulnerable persons (4.3),

— identifying how vulnerable persons could assist others (4.4), and

— establishing information sharing arrangements (4.5).

An organization may implement all clauses of this document or only some clauses. Partial implementation of this document could still improve the organization's performance.

4.2 Identifying types of vulnerabilities

The organization should

— identify the contributing factors that make some individuals vulnerable to an emergency (e.g. physical, mental, emotional, cognitive, cultural, ethnicity, religion, language, citizenship, location, socioeconomic status, age, gender),

— determine the different kinds of vulnerabilities that exist and are relevant in an emergency,

— identify how these causes impact on the interaction between vulnerable persons and the emergency (e.g. the consequences of slower reaction times),

— determine the types of support that vulnerable persons might benefit from before, during and after an emergency,

— identify the reasons why some vulnerable persons prepare for an emergency and why others don't prepare,

— find out the questions that vulnerable persons have that could aid their preparation, response and recovery from an emergency,

— establish the challenges and opportunities that vulnerable persons face to aid their preparation for, response to, and recovery from an emergency,

— identify how vulnerable persons might react to an emergency (e.g. whether they will follow instructions from officials), and

— assess the impacts of different methods of communication on vulnerable persons.

The process of identifying vulnerable persons should

— analyse information about individuals using population-level information to gain a broader understanding of vulnerable persons,

— include difficult-to-reach groups that involve vulnerable persons, such as those whose interests are not well represented in decision-making structures,

— engage communities, local authorities and other organizations in the planning for an emergency,

— recognize that the vulnerability of individuals can change over time and that vulnerable persons might overestimate their own capabilities and so might not have an accurate estimate of their ability to respond,

— include that carers might support vulnerable persons and need assistance to do this during an emergency,

— learn from past emergencies and where vulnerable persons were located, and

— recognize the differences between vulnerable persons who live in remote, rural, urban and transient populations.

4.3   Identifying vulnerable persons

The organization should

— analyse how the impacts of an emergency might cause individuals to be vulnerable,

— develop and implement a process to identify the number of vulnerable persons and places where they might be (e.g. schools, hospitals, care homes); this process should acknowledge the changing nature of vulnerabilities and emergencies and be regularly updated, especially when major changes occur in the demographic,

— identify and prioritize vulnerable persons using databases from service providers,

— provide a system that allows vulnerable persons and their carers to voluntarily register before an emergency,

— identify contact points with vulnerable persons before an emergency as part of a communication strategy (see Clause 5),

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— assess the number of individuals who might be vulnerable to different emergencies,

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— assess the number of vulnerable persons who might benefit from particular types of support,

ISO 22395:2018

— assess the number of vulnerable persons who have prepared for an emergency and the types of preparations they have made, and
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8c80d1641be5/iso-22395-2018

— recognize that not all vulnerable persons will require assistance.

4.4   Identifying how vulnerable persons can assist others

The organization should

— determine how vulnerable persons can assist other people who are affected by the emergency,

— identify opportunities for vulnerable persons who want to provide assistance to others, and

NOTE   For further guidance on planning the involvement of spontaneous volunteers in incident response and recovery, see ISO 22319.

— support vulnerable persons as they provide assistance to ensure their own stresses are recognized.

4.5   Establishing information sharing arrangements

The organization should

— identify the stakeholder relationships (e.g. with the local emergency management organizations) needed to effectively share information for the support of vulnerable persons in an emergency,

— identify how, when and what information can be shared about vulnerable persons with stakeholders within an applicable privacy protection framework, and

— share the information with stakeholders who need to consider vulnerable persons when they conduct their work (e.g. local partners in emergency management).