



Sponsored by



# IBM:

## Embeds Employee Safety into its CSR Strategy

### How to protect employees deployed in challenging locations

IBM Corporate Service Corps, the winner of International SOS Foundation's Duty of Care Award for Sustainability, developed detailed procedures to protect the safety of its many employees who are deployed to challenging locations to support IBM community projects.

IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) helps communities around the world solve critical problems, while providing top IBM employees with unique leadership development opportunities. The CSC selects and trains top talent and dispatches teams of 12 - 15 individuals from different countries for community-based pro bono consulting assignments. Participants spend four weeks on assignment helping to solve a range of economic and social problems. Keeping employees safe during this time is a priority.

CSC has developed a detailed programme to protect the health and safety of its employees in deployment destinations. High standards and set processes address all issues that might arise in these locations.

**Gina Tesla, Vice President, IBM Corporate Citizenship explains:**

"The primary concerns of the CSC programme management team are the safety and security of our employees. We recognise that choosing to send the company's top talent on four-week assignments to developing countries comes with a certain level of risk. But with the right preparation and security measures, the external events that could impact our programme and our people can be managed."

#### In Preparation

The CSC Programme deploys around 30 teams (approximately 500 employees) each year to emerging markets with individuals from 8-12 different countries on each team. Over the past 10 years, it has amounted to 350 teams, totalling over 4,000 employees, visiting more than 250 cities across 40 countries.

To manage the risks associated with such deployments, the IBM security team has in-country staff around the globe. It also engages with external agencies to monitor any possible safety or security concerns in a particular destination. Locations are evaluated for safety and medical resources at the start of the 12-week preparation phase prior to each team's departure. This is followed by regular checks to ensure all information is current.

During the preparation phase, programme participants are given numerous detailed briefings on different topics. These include security, travel logistics, cultural awareness and immigration requirements. One set of guidelines specifically addresses what to do in case of disasters such as an earthquake or tsunami. Other preparations check that destination hotels have adequate safety and security, fire prevention and evacuation procedures.

Team members also enter their travel plans into a database monitored by IBM global security. This means they can be advised of any incident arising in or near their deployment location.



**Above:** The IBM Corporate Service Corps (CSC) during a consulting assignment in the Philippines.

### On Arrival and on Assignment

On arrival for their assignments, team members are given further briefings by an in-country Programme Manager. They are each provided with a mobile phone so they can keep in contact at all times. The phones have pre-loaded local emergency contacts and an app giving them access to immediate medical and security advice via an emergency call centre.

Team members can stay in contact and let each other know of their whereabouts using communication apps such as WhatsApp and WeChat. Each team identifies one team member as the security focal point for their four weeks. This person is responsible for direct contact with local IBM security personnel for any updates or incidents.

If a team faces a potential safety or health issue, CSC programme management, IBM global security, local management and external medical and security experts connect via conference call. They collectively determine what action to take to ensure the team's safety and security.

In addition, local graduate students are hired to travel with the teams and act as interpreters and culture guides. It adds a layer of security to have a native language speaker accompany the team members throughout their assignment and travel with them on evenings and weekends. The students also benefit from their experience of working with the IBM team members.

The CSC programme has been very successful and participants have hugely benefitted from the experience. Building on this success the programme is now expanding to include deployments in developed markets. These plans include preparing for the particular safety and security matters which could arise in those locations.

The safety record to date is impressive as Gina Tesla concludes:

**“Our teams have safely weathered volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, fires, terrorist warnings, medical emergencies, overnight immigration detentions and petty crime. Participants often refer to their deployment as one of the most amazing experiences of their life. We are proud to have delivered not only high value and impact for the communities we serve, but also a safe environment for our employees to develop their leadership skills.**

#### KEY ELEMENTS

Co-ordination and communication across all relevant departments

Awareness of potential issues at deployment locations

Detailed briefings and preparation prior to departure

Significant support available on arrival and thereafter

Clear procedures in place to deal with emergencies

For information on the 2018 Duty of Care Awards winners in all categories, go to [www.dutyofcareawards.org](http://www.dutyofcareawards.org).