

Investigating the Safety and Life-Saving of Aid Workers in Disasters Based on the Standards of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

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Date of submission: 4 Oct. 2025

Date of acceptance: 18 Oct. 2025

Original Article

Abstract

INTRODUCTION: The safety of aid workers in relief and rescue operations is of particular importance due to the exposure to life-threatening, physical, and psychological risks. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has provided frameworks for reducing risks and saving the lives of aid workers by providing standards such as the Sphere Project and the Pinheiro Principles. This study aimed to examine these standards and their application in relief operations in Iran in order to provide solutions to improve and promote the level of aid worker safety.

METHODS: This descriptive-analytical study was conducted with purposive sampling of 20 authentic documents and the data were analyzed using thematic content analysis. Key sources included the Sphere handbook (2018), the Pinheiro principles (2005), ISO 45001 and ISO 14001 standards, and IFRC reports (2023-2024). The validity was confirmed by triangulation of sources and reliability by recoding (85% agreement).

FINDINGS: According to the findings, four main components of supporting standards were identified, namely participation (Sphere), competence and training (ISO 45001), communication and participation, and operational control. Sphere standards reduce operational risks by 30%, ongoing incident training by 25%, and equipment inspections reduce technical risks by 40%. Challenges of the current situation in Iran include the lack of specialized training and digital reporting systems.

CONCLUSION: The results show that integrating IFRC standards with local practices can improve the safety of aid workers, along with strengthening specialized training, creating digital reporting platforms, and continuously reviewing guidelines.

Keywords: Aid worker safety; IFRC standards; Sphere project; Pinheiro principles; crisis management.

How to cite this article: Nateghi M, Azimi Garekani H, Masoumi J. **Investigating the safety and life-saving of aid workers in disasters based on the standards of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.** Sci J Rescue Relief 2025; 17(4):

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