

This resource is for all program staff. It This accompanies CARE's [GBV Guidance for Development Programs](#).

GBV integration resource:

## Safety Audits

**A safety audit is a tool to assess safety and security concerns, with a focus on women and girls. While safety audits are typically carried out in emergency settings, they can also be conducted in development settings.**

*This resource outlines the safety audit process and how this may support GBV integration.*

A proper safety audit covers “any geographic location with specific boundaries” which includes informal urban settlements, rural villages.”<sup>1</sup> The safety audit tool **uses visual observation to assess GBV risks** based on the physical layout and structures in the geographic location as well as resource availability and provision of essential services and assistance. Because one organization cannot provide all essential services to a community, **safety audits are best done in collaboration** with other organizations for better buy-in when addressing risks that are identified. It is also highly recommended to conduct **participatory safety audits** that directly include community members, particularly women, girls, and marginalized groups, as long as it does not cause any security risks or social sanctions for the community actor.

### WHY

A safety audit facilitates the identification of visible risks and the assessment of vulnerabilities to persons of all genders. The findings and analysis of safety audits then inform the design of interventions that include risk mitigation strategies and/or advocacy goals. Programs that have been designed with a contextual understanding of GBV risks and proactively work to mitigate them have a greater rate of success. Community members can access services safely, which will likely increase uptake of services and subsequent satisfaction.

A safety audit can form part of into broader gender and GBV analysis. This may be a [Rapid Gender Analysis \(RGA\)](#) during humanitarian crises or it may feed into GBV integration plans in development settings (see **Step 1** in the full [GBV guidance for Development Programs](#) for further details). The risk mitigation actions identified through safety audits and other GBV analysis can inform [proposals](#) and program design.

### WHO

GBV risk mitigation is the responsibility of all staff. Therefore, all staff across all sectors can carry out a safety audit *as long as they have been trained by a GBV specialist*. This should be a priority for staff, particularly those working in Education, Food Security, Shelter, and WASH services. Additionally, community actors should also be trained in safety audits if the activity does not pose a risk to the community. The GBV specialist should also be consulted during the risk mitigation activity planning.

Staff conducting a safety audit should be aware of referral pathways in case of spontaneous self-disclosures from survivors. See **Step 3** in CARE's [GBV guidance for Development Programs](#) for details of how to integrate this into development programming or CARE's [GBViE implementation guide: Risk Mitigation](#) for details of how this is approached in emergency settings.

### HOW

Safety audits use observation and when the geographic area is secure, it can be completed by walking around and writing down notes. In locations where there is insecurity (e.g. increased police presence or where the collection of information causes may cause alarm), data collectors should be even more oriented with the data collection to

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<sup>1</sup> UNICEF. [Safety Audits: A How-To Guide](#), 2018.

support them in taking mental notes of questions and observations. In this scenario, the safety audit form will be completed after leaving the site/community.

The focus of the safety audit tool is to reduce risks for women and girls in the site/community. Therefore, safety audits should collect information on:

- Overall layout (walkways, lighting, shared housing)
- Unsafe locations around the community (e.g., drinking dens, known gang territory)
- GBV risks linked to:
  - WASH (location, waiting times, sex disaggregated showers/ latrines, locks);
  - Access and use of essential spaces and services (health, markets, schools, community centers, etc.) and receipt of CVAs;
  - Access to resources: farms and waterpoints;
  - Movement of women and girls: e.g., to fetching firewood, laundry, employment, etc.;
  - Presence of security actors (police, local vigilantes recognized by community members);
  - Any other relevant parameter that is helpful for the community (e.g., bus routes, political rallies, etc.);
  - Sexual harassment, exploitation, abuse, and child abuse if the program location, and set up of the site, present increased risk for exploitation, harm, and abuse, either directly or indirectly, caused by engagement in the program;
  - Potential risk mitigation strategies for the identified risks.

Learn more in this practical example of [how to use a safety audit for development settings](#) and this mapping of [safety audit tools and reports in humanitarian settings](#).

**Example of a safety audit in Indonesia:** In 2018, UNWOMEN carried out a safety audit in a development setting in Indonesia as part of their Safer Cities project. The safety audit was participatory that included FGDs, KIIs and a safety walk. The safety audit also utilized [SafetiPin](#), a map based mobile phone and online application that use a safety audit to provide information to women about urban safety in public spaces. The information provided is based on data collected by women users of the application and trained auditors. The geographic location was Jakarta post sunset and parameters of the audit were along: lighting, openness, visibility, crowd security, walkpath, availability of public transport, gender diversity.

## WHEN

A safety audit should be conducted as part of ongoing assessments that are completed in the field. A safety audit can be done during the design phase of a project and will require follow-up during the implementation stage. The monitoring and evaluation process should include plans to determine the results of the audit; see UNICEF's 2018 [Safety Audits: A How-To Guide](#) for examples.

Follow-up safety audits should be done as part of continuous monitoring, evaluation, and accountability activities to assess whether the mitigation interventions are working and if there are new risks that have arisen or that are now safe to observe.

Safety audits must be carried out in line with CARE's data collection and safety and security protocols on the ground. This includes approval from the relevant officials on the ground, staff being easily identifiable on location, and contingency plans. See CARE's [GBV resource on research ethics](#) for further guidance.

After the safety audit is done, staff must be debriefed to share their observations and fill the safety audit tools. After the safety audit findings have been analyzed and GBV risks have been identified, a follow-up meeting must be held to discuss an action plan for disseminating the findings.

### WHAT NEXT

Safety audits are best done in collaboration with other organizations and/or community members thus their findings are best discussed with other organizations. Therefore, findings should be disseminated to organizations working in the community, leaders of the community, and community members. This ensures collective effort and accountability towards addressing GBV risks in the community.

Collaborative safety audit action planning is the most effective means of addressing GBV risks. Organizations and community stakeholders in the area are responsible for placing GBV risk mitigation strategies, as a result, safety audit action plans should include, the risk mitigation strategy, organization responsible, a timeline to address the issue and the resources needed. Some action points may be within the purview of government actors and can be used for advocacy.

## Further resources to support safety audits

- UN Habitat: [Women's Safety Audit: What Works and Where?](#) (2009).
- UNICEF GBViE Help Desk: [Safety Audits: A How-To Guide](#) (2018).
- Oxfam: [SafetiPin: an innovative mobile app to collect data on women's safety in Indian cities](#) (2015).