RESEARCHER SAFETY

Researchers must take all precautions to safeguard their own safety when undertaking activities connected with their research that may place them in situations where they are potentially vulnerable. They may be interviewing research participants in their own homes, for example, or in areas where help may not be forthcoming, should they require it.

In situations like these researchers should consider the following precautions before they leave the office:

- Try, when at all possible, to arrange appointments in a place where there are other people around
- If it is necessary to visit a participant in their own home, consider working in pairs or taking a ‘shadow’
- Always have a mobile telephone with you in case you need to summon assistance, and check the signal when you arrive at the appointment
- Inform somebody of the location of your appointment and your expected time of return, and leave your mobile number with them
- Arrange to telephone them once you have left the appointment, and decide on what action they will take if you do not make contact within the allotted time
- Always carry visible identification from the institution on whose behalf you are carrying out the research
- Don’t give your address or home telephone number to participants.

Where the research is taking place in areas and with respondents where the potential risks to researcher safety are perceived to be significant, consideration should be given to the design of the project to ensure as many safeguards are put in place as possible. In some instances it may be advisable to notify the local police in writing about the nature of and arrangements for the research and to ask for a contact telephone number.

Further information on researcher safety can be found on the Social Research Association website at: [http://www.the-sra.org.uk/staying_safe.htm](http://www.the-sra.org.uk/staying_safe.htm)