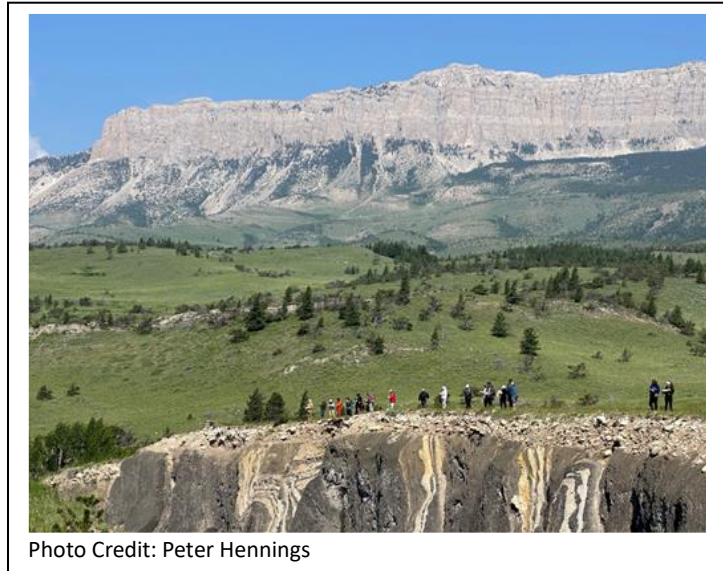


Jackson School of Geosciences

Field Safety Manual

Introduction

In the geoscience community, fieldwork is a fundamental aspect of our education, along with educational or professional research assignments. Fieldwork can involve a wide array of activities conducted beyond our institution's boundaries, ranging from single-day excursions to extensive domestic and international trips. These field sites may cover dedicated research stations, State or Federal lands, natural preserves, coastal areas, bodies of water, or controlled settings such as quarries, construction sites, or mines.



As recognized by the [AdvanceGeo Partnership](#), participation in fieldwork exposes individuals to unique challenges. These challenges include an increased potential for encountering environmental hazards and unfamiliar risks; engaging in physically demanding work that participants may not be accustomed to; limited access to transportation, sustenance, and medical resources; exposure to unfamiliar cultural norms or languages; geographical detachment from personal support networks at home; and unfamiliarity with codes of conduct and reporting procedures.

The primary objective of this field guide is to offer guidelines and resources for facilitating safe and successful field experiences and expeditions for both students and researchers alike.

Part 1: Pretrip Planning

Written safety plan

Safety planning is absolutely crucial when it comes to preparing for fieldwork. It helps us identify and prevent potential dangers, ensuring that everyone stays safe during our activities. Whether we're in a familiar place or exploring unfamiliar territory, having a well-thought-out safety plan helps us respond to emergencies and minimize risks.

Create a written safety plan for your trip. Distribute a copy to each member of your team, and retain another copy with a responsible individual. This plan should encompass

- Itinerary: Include locations you plan to visit, arrival and departure dates, and the names, addresses, and contact numbers of all fieldwork participants.

- **Emergency Contact:** Specify a contact person's name and phone number for emergency situations. This individual could be a spouse, partner, parent, friend, or a designated campus contact.
- **Kind of Activities:** Describe the general nature of the activities you will be undertaking.
- **Local Contacts:** Provide the names of individuals situated at or near your fieldwork location who can reach you if necessary. Additionally, outline your check-in and check-out procedures.

For more information on pre-trip safety planning, and to view a sample of a field research safety plan, please review the [Safety Guidelines](#) for field researchers compiled by Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) at The University of Texas at Austin.

Participant medical information

Prior to participating in any field activities, all participants must complete a medical information page to the extent that they are comfortable. This page serves as a crucial component of ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone involved. It enables us to be better prepared for any unforeseen medical situations by collecting vital information such as emergency contacts, insurance details, allergies, relevant medical histories, special beliefs, and emergency medical authorizations.

Additionally, we strongly recommend utilizing the resources provided by The University of Texas at Austin's Health Services:

- **HealthyHorns:** The HealthyHorns website (<https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/>) offers a wealth of valuable health-related information and resources. Participants are encouraged to explore this site for guidance on maintaining their well-being during field activities.
- **Nurse Advice Line:** In case of any health-related inquiries or concerns, the Nurse Advice Line is a valuable resource. You can reach a nurse at 512-475-6877, offering access to professional medical guidance and assistance.
- **Travel Vaccinations:** If you are planning field activities that involve travel, it is essential to consider any necessary vaccinations or health precautions. The University of Texas at Austin's Travel Vaccinations webpage, <https://healthyhorns.utexas.edu/travel/index.html>, provides valuable information on travel-related health measures and vaccinations.

Safety equipment

Fieldwork frequently involves locations with limited amenities such as running water, dependable communication, or quick access to medical assistance. It's vital to gather safety equipment and first aid provisions prior to embarking on any fieldwork. These resources function as a critical safety backup. In the field, unexpected situations and potential risks can arise, but having the correct gear and first aid supplies on hand enables us to promptly address injuries, emergencies, and unforeseen challenges.

First aid supplies

Every field expedition should include basic first aid supplies as a fundamental safety measure. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidelines outline the minimum required

quantity and types of first-aid supplies suitable for small work teams consisting of up to two or three individuals. If a larger group is involved in fieldwork, it is imperative either to provide additional kits containing the listed supplies or augment the existing kits with extra quantities or necessary items. These supplies should include

- Four or more gauze pads (at least 4" x 4").
- Two large gauze pads (at least 8" x 10").
- One box of adhesive bandages.
- One package of gauze roller bandages (at least 2" wide).
- Two triangular bandages.
- Wound-cleaning agents such as sealed moist towelettes.
- Scissors.
- At least one safety blanket.
- Tweezers.
- Adhesive tape.
- Latex gloves.
- Resuscitation equipment, such as a resuscitation bag, airway device, or pocket mask.
- Two elastic wraps.
- One splint.
- Instructions for requesting emergency assistance.
- Additional supplies to consider adding to your first aid kit:
 - Pain-relieving medications:
 - Nonsteroidal, anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDs): ibuprofen (Advil), aspirin, naproxen (Aleve).
 - Acetaminophen (Tylenol).
 - Antiemetic medications (nausea, vomiting): bismuth subsalicylate (Pepto-Bismol)
 - Antidiarrhea medication: loperamide (Imodium).
 - Acute mountain sickness (AMS) medication: dexamethasone (Maxidex, DexPax).



Stock Image

While there's no such thing as a perfect first aid kit,

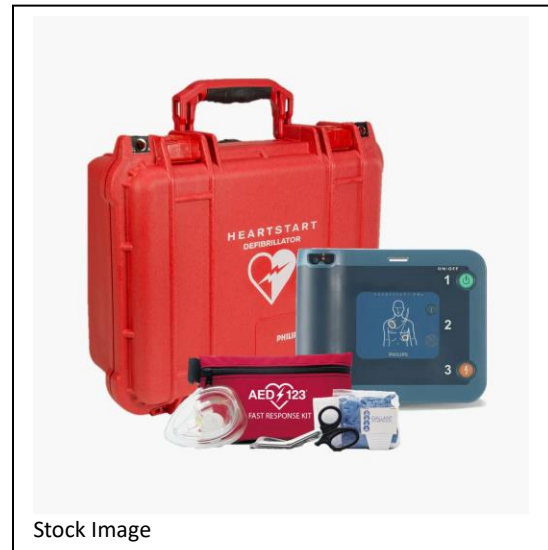
- Remember that it's people who save lives, not just kits. So, get proper training and ensure you know how to use all items in your kit effectively.
- Keep in mind that commercial first aid kits, like those available at the NOLS Store, REI, and Adventure Medical Kits, provide solid starting points, especially for outdoor adventures with different group sizes. For educational trips, take advantage of the 15% discount on first aid supplies and books at the NOLS Store using the coupon code Educate2018. This code is reusable and gets updated annually (Educate2017, 2018, 2019...).
- Tailor your kit to match your specific destination, tasks, group size, and your level of training.
- Don't forget to pack extra gloves; they're essential.
- Prior to each trip, repack your first aid kit and replace any used or expired items.

- Be vigilant about checking expiration dates on medications and sterile items and replace any items that may have been torn or damaged. Many vendors offer refill kits.
- Include an empty plastic bag in your kit for trash and ensure everyone using the kit disposes of their trash properly.

Special considerations: cardiac arrest and stopping bleeding

Consider incorporating an automatic electronic defibrillator (AED) into your first aid equipment. AEDs are remarkably effective in treating sudden cardiac arrest, and when applied promptly, an AED can deliver an electric shock to the heart, potentially restoring its normal rhythm. This rapid response is critical because every moment without treatment reduces the chance of survival. AEDs are user friendly and guide even nonmedical personnel through the process with clear instructions. Having an AED on hand can make a significant difference in the outcome of a cardiac emergency, increasing the chances of saving a life.

Pressure bandages with hemostatic agents could be a vital addition to your first aid kit. These bandages are designed to control severe bleeding, particularly in cases of deep wounds or arterial bleeding. Hemostatic agents, often impregnated into the bandage, promote clotting and stem bleeding more effectively than standard dressings. In emergencies in which time is of the essence, such as severe accidents or injuries, these bandages can be crucial in preventing life-threatening blood loss. By rapidly applying pressure bandages with hemostatic agents, you can help stabilize a victim's condition and significantly improve their chances of survival.



Personal safety equipment

Here's a list of essential safety equipment to carry:

- Personal First Aid Kit.
- Navigation Tools: Map, compass, and GPS.
- Communication Devices: Cell phone, field radios, satellite phone/device, or personal locator beacon, along with extra batteries or chargers.
- Water Supply: Extra water and water-purification methods.
 - Filter-based purification systems, such as Katadyn, are consistently dependable, unlike chlorine or iodine tablets, which don't expire, and they don't rely on batteries such as UV-light filters.
- Food: Additional food/snacks during extended fieldwork.
- Sun Protection: Hats, sunscreen, and sunglasses.
- Emergency Shelter: Shade canopy, lightweight tarp, bivy sack, or emergency space blanket for protection from extreme weather.
- Appropriate Clothing: Footwear and layered clothing suited for varying weather conditions.
- Illumination: Flashlight or headlamp for visibility in low-light situations.
- Fire-Starting Tools: Matches or fire starter in multiple forms for warmth and signaling.
- Signaling Devices: Signal/mirror and a whistle for attracting attention if needed.

- Multipurpose Tools: Knife or multitool and duct tape for basic repairs.
- Field Safety Plan: A written plan detailing emergency procedures and relevant protocols.
- Specialized Equipment: Any additional equipment specific to your fieldwork or research needs.

Vehicle safety equipment

Here's a list of important safety equipment to take with you in your vehicle when heading out into the field:

- Vehicle Emergency Kit: This kit includes items such as jumper cables, spare tire, jack, and lug wrench for basic vehicle maintenance.
- Windshield Ice Scraper.
- Extra First Aid Kit.
- Extra Water and Snacks.
- Safety Goggles.
- Toolbox. This box includes items such as shovel, pliers, screwdriver, and hex wrenches.
- Fire Extinguisher.
- Tire Repair Kit: This kit includes tire plug kit and air compressor.
- Tow Straps and Recovery Gear.
- Reflective Safety Vest: This vest is for visibility in roadside emergencies.
- Flashlight or Headlamp, with Extra Batteries.
- Emergency Triangle Reflectors or Flares.
- GPS or Navigation Device.
- Charged Cell Phone or Satellite Phone for Emergencies.
- Physical Maps of the Area You'll Be Traveling through.
- Extra Dry Clothing, Safety Blanket, and Sleeping Bag.



Photo Credit: Miriam Barquero Molina

Part 2: Risk Mitigation during Fieldwork

Risk mitigation during fieldwork is critical. It safeguards the well-being of team members, enhances project success, and ensures a safe and productive working environment.

Guidelines for safe fieldwork

The following participant guidelines were adapted from the Society for Sedimentary Geology (SEPM).

Participant guidelines

- Remember that field safety is a collective responsibility and every participant is responsible for it. Your prompt action in addressing safety concerns can prevent accidents and save lives.
- Always heed safety warnings and instructions provided by trip leaders.
- Immediately report safety concerns to trip leaders or fellow participants.
- Confidentially disclose any relevant medical conditions that may affect your fieldwork performance, such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy, vertigo, heart conditions, allergies, or medication needs, to the trip leader.

- Strictly adhere to clothing, equipment, and hydration requirements tailored to the specific weather and terrain of each field excursion because they are crucial for safety.
- Prior to leaving the field party, make sure you inform a field excursion leader of your intentions.

Vehicle guidelines

- **Seatbelt Use:** Wear seatbelts at all times when the vehicle is in motion. No exceptions.
- **Speed Limits:** Obey posted speed limits and adjust your speed according to road and weather conditions.
- **Safety Distance:** Maintain a safe following distance to allow for sudden stops if necessary.
- **No Cellphone Use:** Do not use your cellphone while driving, including texting or talking without a hands-free device.
- **Designated Front Seat Passenger:** Designate the front seat passenger to be responsible for any radio communication or navigation to minimize distractions for the driver.
- **Sobriety:** Ensure that you are sober while operating university-owned vehicles. Consuming alcohol or other substances that impair your ability to drive is strictly prohibited.
- **Rest and Breaks:** Confirm that you are well rested before driving, and take reasonable breaks during long trips to combat fatigue.
- **Traffic Laws:** Adhere to all State and Local traffic laws, including stopping at stop signs, obeying traffic signals, and yielding the right of way when required.
- **Emergency Situations:** In case of an accident or emergency, follow university procedures for reporting incidents and aiding others involved.
- **Defensive Driving:** Practice defensive driving techniques to anticipate and react to potential hazards on the road.
- **Use of Headlights:** Use headlights during low-visibility conditions, such as rain, fog, or nighttime driving.
- **Pedestrian Safety:** Always yield to pedestrians at crosswalks, and exercise caution in areas with heavy pedestrian traffic.
- **Inclement Weather:** In adverse weather conditions, reduce speed, increase following distance, and use headlights as necessary.

Roadside-stop guidelines

- Maintain constant awareness of traffic to prevent any obstructions, distractions, or hazards for fellow road users.
- In low-traffic areas, signal the presence of approaching vehicles or cyclists to others.
- Employ measures to notify road users of your presence, such as wearing reflective jackets and employing warning triangles when suitable.
- Always stay behind safety barriers if available, and only cross the road safely at designated locations.
- Refrain from interacting with protective rock-fall netting on roadcut exposures because any movement may dislodge loose rocks from above.



Wildlife Encounters

- **Before Heading Into the Field:**
 - Identify potential wildlife risks in your field area and plan for emergency response.
 - Consider the nearest hospital location for wildlife encounters, which may not be the one you passed en route.
- **General Guidelines:**
 - Avoid interactions with wildlife during fieldwork, respecting local laws and permitting requirements.
 - Familiarize yourself with venomous and poisonous animals and plants in your field area.
- **Mammals:**
 - Be cautious around potentially dangerous mammals such as bears, bison, javelina, boar, and large cats.
 - Small mammals can transmit diseases; avoid interaction and be aware of your surroundings.
- **Birds:**
 - Some birds like cassowaries, emus, rheas, and ostriches can be dangerous; avoid surprising and interacting with them.
 - Stay clear of nesting areas used by these birds.
- **Amphibians and Reptiles:**
 - Beware of 'dart-poison frogs' in Central and South America; avoid handling them.
 - Admire amphibians from a distance, and do not handle toxic newts.
- **Snakes:**
 - Familiarize yourself with venomous snakes in your area.
 - Leave snakes alone if encountered; be cautious in and around caves, rock ledges, and under cover objects.
 - When turning over rocks, grasp the edge and avoid placing fingers underneath.
 - Avoid reaching into holes or dark recesses without clear visibility.
- **Additional Considerations:**
 - In cave environments, wear masks to reduce inhalation risks from bat guano and protect against hantavirus.
 - Be aware of ticks and mosquitoes, potential carriers of diseases such as Lyme disease and West Nile virus.
 - Stay vigilant for other organisms like spiders and scorpions; exercise caution to prevent bites and stings.
 - Remember, prevention is key, and understanding the wildlife in your field area enhances safety. Stay informed and take necessary precautions to minimize risks.

Environment and property guidelines

- Show consideration for private property and equipment.
- Maintain a litter-free environment by checking the area for any leftover trash before departing, and encourage others to leave the site cleaner than they found it.
- Exercise caution to avoid unnecessary disruption to wildlife; in national parks, it is illegal to disturb wildlife and collect plants.
- Minimize the use of geologic hammers, and, if necessary, ensure others are at a safe distance and using them responsibly. Note that in National, State, and Provincial parks, removing any materials, including rocks, is generally prohibited.
- Always remember to wear safety glasses or sunglasses while using any geologic hammer or sledgehammer.

Land access

- Obtain comprehensive permissions for access to public (State and Federal) and private lands, both in the United States and internationally, before commencing geologic fieldwork.
- Ensure explicit consent for sample collection, if necessary, as part of a diligent approach.
- Take these measures to ensure legal compliance and ethical research practices.
- Remember that respecting landowners' rights and adhering to regulatory guidelines upholds research integrity and fosters positive collaborations.
- Ensure that permissions are adequate so as to form a solid foundation for geologic investigations, promoting fruitful and respectful interactions while maintaining responsible field research principles.



Part 3: Emergency Response and Administering First Aid

Predicting every possible injury or incident in uncontrolled environments is impossible. However, equipping yourself with first aid skills and establishing emergency protocols can effectively manage such situations and potentially reduce their impact.

Disclaimer:

The emergency response and first aid procedures provided in this guide are intended solely as general guidelines for informational purposes. They are not a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. The authors and publishers of this guide are not liable for any actions taken based on the information presented herein. Users of this guide are encouraged to seek appropriate medical assistance and training for emergency situations.

Medical emergencies

Initial response to medical emergencies

In case of a medical emergency, follow these procedures:

- Evaluate the Scene Using S-E-T-U-P:
 - Safety: Prioritize your own safety. If the scene is unsafe, immediately report the emergency and request assistance.
 - Environment: Examine the surroundings for potential hazards.
 - Traffic: Consider traffic conditions if you need to move the victim.
 - Unknown Hazards: Be aware of gases, electrical wiring, or other potential dangers.
 - Protection: Ensure your safety and that of the victim.
- Conduct an Initial Assessment:
 - Check Responsiveness: Tap the victim on the shoulder and shout, "Are you OK?"
 - Assess Airway: Perform the head-tilt chin technique and inspect the mouth for foreign objects.

- Assess Breathing: Use the look, listen, and feel technique (check for breath approximately every 5 seconds).
- Assess Circulation: Check for a pulse in the neck or wrist (normal range: 80–100 beats per minute).
- Activate the Emergency Response Procedure (ERP):
 - Designate a first aid responder to state the problem and provide the emergency location to outside medical assistance. That designee should:
 - Contact an ambulance by dialing 911 if the following conditions are present: severe bleeding, broken bone, allergic reaction, breathing difficulty, suspected heart attack, severe burn, or sudden illness. Advanced medical personnel will determine the need for air transport.
 - Identify the nearest accessible road and gate to the incident site, and relay this information to the 911 operator.
 - Appoint someone familiar with the area to meet the ambulance and guide responders to the victim.
- Administer First Aid:
 - Ensure the first aid responder provides immediate first aid and/or CPR to the victim until paramedics arrive.
 - Ensure an open airway, monitor breathing and circulation, and control bleeding as necessary.
 - If in a remote environment, use a splint to stabilize an injured extremity.



Note: Do not transport an unconscious person or anyone with a suspected head or neck injury without the presence of advanced medical personnel for assistance.

First aid: immediate care for accidents and sudden illness

First aid entails the prompt and provisional care administered to accident victims or those experiencing a sudden illness until professional medical assistance is available. Effective first aid relies on practicality and a handful of straightforward principles.

Employ immediate, basic life-support procedures in the following scenarios:

- Severe Bleeding: In cases in which major blood vessels are severed, a life-threatening amount of blood can be lost within minutes, leading to potential fatality.
- Absence of Breathing/Circulation: A mere 4 to 6 minutes without breathing or circulation restoration can result in death or brain damage.
- Poisoning: When poisoning is suspected, every moment is critical in preventing further harm.

The primary aim of first aid is to preserve life through the application of basic life-support techniques, including:

- Maintaining an Open Airway.
- Sustaining Breathing.
- Preserving Circulation.

- Controlling Bleeding.
- Addressing Shock.
- Seeking Medical Assistance for the Victim.

First aid providers must remain composed, provide assurance, instill confidence, and perform only actions that are absolutely necessary until professional medical help arrives.

Basic first aid reference guide

Condition/Emergency	Signs & Symptoms	Basic First Aid Principles
No pulse (cardiac arrest)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unresponsive victim • Absence of normal breathing and pulse 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call 911 immediately. • Begin CPR: Start with chest compressions (push hard and fast) and rescue breaths. Use an automated external defibrillator (AED) if available.
Severe bleeding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blood loss, visible wound, or soaked clothing • Rapid heart rate, weakness, confusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply direct pressure using sterile gauze or a clean cloth. • Elevate the injured area if possible. • Use a tourniquet if manual pressure fails to control the bleeding.
Shock	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weakness and/or pale, cool, clammy skin • Rapid breathing and heart rate • Confusion or altered mental state 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the victim lying down with legs elevated, if no spinal injury. • Maintain normal body temperature. • Seek immediate medical assistance.
Allergic reaction/ anaphylaxis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hives, itching, and/or swelling, especially of the face and throat • Difficulty breathing, wheezing • Rapid pulse, drop in blood pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer an epinephrine autoinjector (EpiPen) if available and prescribed. • Call 911 or seek emergency medical help. • Offer reassurance and monitor the victim's breathing and circulation.
Heat illness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscle cramps, heavy sweating, weakness • Rapid pulse, nausea, confusion • Heatstroke: Hot, dry skin, loss of consciousness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move victim to cooler place. • Provide victim fluids, preferably water. • Remove any excess clothing. • Use cool compresses or immerse victim in cool water for heatstroke.
Snake Bite	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Immediate pain, redness, and swelling at the bite site • Difficulty breathing • Nausea and vomiting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the victim calm and encourage them to stay still to slow down the spread of venom.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blurred vision • Weakness or dizziness • Numbness or tingling • Excessive sweating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remove tight clothing or accessories near the bite site to allow for swelling. • Gently clean the bite area with soap and water if available. • Splint the limb to minimize movement and keep it at the level of the heart. • Do NOT: Cut the wound, suck out venom, or apply a tourniquet.
Poisoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea • Dizziness, confusion, difficulty breathing • Burns or stains around the mouth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call Poison Control (1-800-222-1222) or 911. • Provide information on substance ingested. • Do not induce vomiting unless directed by medical professionals.
Burns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redness, blisters, swelling, charred skin • Severe pain or loss of sensation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For minor burns, cool the area with cold, running water. • Cover with sterile dressing. • Seek medical attention for severe burns.
Hypothermia/ cold injury	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering, cold skin, numbness • Slurred speech, confusion, fatigue • Weak pulse, slow breathing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Move victim to warmer environment. • Remove victim's wet clothing, and replace it with dry, warm layers. • Wrap victim in blankets. • Seek medical care for severe hypothermia.

Environmental safety

Inclement weather procedures

In the event of inclement weather, follow safety steps under these conditions:

- **Lightning:**
 - Monitor lightning.
 - If lightning is spotted, determine its distance by counting the seconds between the lightning flash and the sound of thunder. Divide this number by 5 to estimate the distance in miles.
 - Avoid tank batteries, cable fences, and tall objects such as trees and power lines.
 - Seek shelter inside vehicles, if available, until the lightning passes.
- **Severe Weather:**
 - In case of severe weather, such as severe thunderstorms, hurricanes, or tornadoes, assess the situation.
 - Decide whether to wait out the storm, move to a safer area, or return to town after ensuring that all personnel are accounted for.
- **Tornado:**
 - In open areas, lie flat in the nearest depression such as a ditch or ravine while remaining alert to potential flash floods.
 - In a populated area, seek shelter indoors, away from doors and windows. Take cover against inner walls or under sturdy furniture, if possible.
 - If basements or tornado shelters are available, prioritize them, ensuring proper ventilation and a clear area free of gas, debris, and water.



Photo Credit: Miriam Barquero Molina

Fire procedures

In the event of a fire,

- **Survey the Fire Scene by Noting the Following:**
 - Location of the fire (proximity to buildings or trailers).
 - Fire's direction of travel.
 - Its speed (e.g., fast or slow).
 - Size of the fire (e.g., length, width, acres).
 - What is burning (e.g., buildings, oil, gas, trees, grass)
- **Attempt to Extinguish with Fire Extinguishers:**
 - If you cannot control the fire using extinguishers, immediately evacuate the area or building.
- **Notify Key Personnel:**
 - Call emergency services to report the fire.

Psychological first aid

Health and mental well-being challenges that can arise in urban settings are equally relevant during remote fieldwork. Although not often discussed openly, mental health disruptions, ranging from heightened stress to anxiety, depression, mania, psychosis, or drug-related reactions, can occur in the field. Severe incidents may require intervention by experienced mental health professionals in controlled environments.

Psychological conditions

- **Stress:** Stress occurs when the mind and body must adapt to changes in the environment or within oneself. It can exacerbate existing physical conditions, such as blood pressure fluctuations, and lead to anxiety and depression symptoms. Stress may also worsen persistent mental disorders.
- **Anxiety:** Anxiety includes acute anxiety disorders, phobias, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, and PTSD. It often accompanies stress-inducing situations, potentially hindering the assessment of physical injuries. Symptoms may involve fear, apprehension, and physical manifestations such as palpitations. Try soothing the individual and perform a patient assessment (PAS). Evacuation may be necessary if anxiety persists.
- **Depression:** Depression manifests itself in situations such as isolation, reduced engagement, fatigue, cognitive challenges, and alterations in eating and sleeping patterns. It may also involve restlessness and compulsive actions. If depression impacts group well-being or fieldwork, evacuation may be required.
- **Mania/Psychosis:** More severe than anxiety or depression, these conditions often necessitate onsite consultation with mental health specialists and potential evacuation. They can be triggered by stress, environmental changes, substance use, or medication discontinuation, disconnecting individuals from reality.
- **Suicidal Behavior:** Suicidal thoughts are a significant concern. Be sure to engage the patient in dialogue, asking specific questions to help assess risk levels. Policies may dictate actions, but evacuation is always a possibility.

Treatment principles

- Conduct a comprehensive patient assessment (PAS).
- Investigate potential physical causes.
- Consider medications' influences.
- Practice attentive listening, patience, and reassurance.
- Assess potential risks.

Evacuation criteria

- Evaluate whether the negative impact on the field campaign outweighs the benefit to the victim.
- Consider the capacity for managing the condition in the field.
- Assess the impact on group cohesion, functioning, and safety.
- Weigh the victim's threat to him or herself or to others.
- Consider the victim's perception of safety and capability to continue. Affirmative responses may warrant evacuation and seeking professional assistance.

UT Austin mental health resources

Resource	Description	Website/Contact
Crisis line (24/7)	Affords immediate support 24/7 for crisis situations.	Dial 512-471-2255
UT Counseling and Mental Health Center	Provides comprehensive mental health support and resources to students.	CMHC Website

MDLive virtual visits	Furnish virtual visits with doctors via an app, which are available 24/7 for nonemergency medical or behavioral issues.	MDLive Information
Behavior-concerns advice line	Offers a safe space to discuss concerns about UT faculty, staff, or students' behavior, providing guidance and referrals to address each situation.	Behavior Concerns Hotline
Additional mental health resources	Provides a comprehensive list of other mental health resources available on campus.	CMHC Resources

Part 4: Safe Field Environment

Exclusionary behaviors can inflict profound harm on others, fostering professional and social isolation that makes individuals more susceptible to hostility. It is vital to cultivate awareness of how individuals from all backgrounds are perceived and treated in various settings to ensure that field experiences are safe and valuable educational experiences for everyone. Embracing broad acceptability of others not only enriches the learning environment but also empowers each person to contribute their unique perspectives and talents, fostering a more equitable and welcoming community.

Building a safe field environment

Safety and support for targets

- Prioritize the safety and well-being of targets of harassment or discrimination. Ensure that they can continue their fieldwork with minimal disruption.
- Provide clear guidelines for handling incidents, including immediate support for the target, if needed.

Accessible transportation and communication

- Guarantee that all fieldworkers always have access to transportation and communication devices, eliminating any gatekeepers or restrictions.
- Ensure that communication methods are accessible to all, regardless of abilities or needs.

Multiple reporting avenues

- Establish multiple channels for reporting incidents, allowing individuals to choose the method they are most comfortable with.
- Ensure that anonymity is an option when reporting to protect privacy and encourage open reporting.



Photo Credit: Matt Malkowski

Bystander-intervention awareness

- Share bystander-intervention training with field participants, empowering them to intervene when witnessing harassment or discrimination.
- Encourage bystander-reporting mechanisms to facilitate timely responses to incidents.

Zero-tolerance policy

- Implement a zero-tolerance policy for harassment, discrimination, or any form of misconduct in the field.
- Clearly define consequences for violators, emphasizing the seriousness of such actions.

Welcoming and non-exclusionary leadership

- Promote an understanding of anti-discrimination practices and openness in leadership roles, ensuring that decision-makers are fully aware of the need for a welcoming and non-exclusionary fieldwork community.
- Encourage the reporting of any issues related to discrimination within leadership.

Regular training and education

- Conduct training for all fieldworkers and leaders to create a culture of awareness and understanding.
- Provide resources for self-education on these topics.

Confidential reporting and support resources

- Maintain confidential reporting mechanisms, such as a dedicated hotline or online platform, for individuals who wish to report incidents privately.
- Offer access to support resources, such as counseling services, for targets and witnesses of harassment or discrimination.

Documentation and accountability

- Implement thorough incident-documentation procedures, ensuring that all reports are recorded and investigated appropriately.
- Hold individuals accountable for their actions, with fair and impartial investigations.

Regular review and improvement

- Continuously assess and improve field safety policies based on feedback from fieldworkers, leaders, and stakeholders.
- Adapt to evolving best practices and research.

Community engagement

- Engage with local communities and organizations in the fieldwork area to foster mutual respect, collaboration, and cultural sensitivity.
- Establish guidelines for respectful interactions with community members.

Publicize policies and resources

- Ensure that all fieldworkers are aware of policies, reporting avenues, and available resources for addressing harassment and discrimination.
- Regularly communicate updates and reminders.

Jackson School of Geosciences community guidelines

Faculty, research scientists, students, and staff of the Jackson School of Geosciences at The University of Texas at Austin are dedicated to creating a positive, work environment that embraces non-exclusive behavior in all forms and rejects any form of hostile workplace, discrimination, or bullying. Fieldwork is an extension of on-campus work. Please visit the [JSG Guidelines](#) for more information.

Bystander intervention: empowering change

Introduction to the bystander

A bystander is someone who witnesses a situation without directly being involved. Bystander intervention is about recognizing the power we hold in these moments to be effective when we see something wrong happening around us. It's about taking action to help, support, and prevent harm.

Why bystander intervention matters

Bystander intervention matters because it can prevent harm, promote safety, and create a culture of empathy and support. It's a way for all of us to actively contribute to a more caring and just community. By speaking up or stepping in, we can stop harmful situations from escalating and help those in need.

Ways to be an intervening bystander

- **Disrupt/Redirect**: Sometimes a simple distraction or redirection can defuse a situation. You can change the topic, suggest a different activity, or help divert attention away from harm.
- **Confront**: If you feel safe and comfortable, directly addressing the issue can make a significant impact. Speak calmly but firmly and express your concerns. Let the person causing harm know that their actions are not acceptable.
- **Get Help from Someone Else**: If you're unsure how to handle a situation, it's okay to seek help from others. Find someone you trust, whether it's a friend, authority figure, or security personnel, and let them know what's going on.



Photo Credit: Matt Malkowski

Set the expectation to speak up

Create an environment in which bystander intervention is encouraged and expected. Let your friends and peers know that you value their support in tricky situations. By setting this expectation, you empower everyone to be part of positive change.

Understand your privilege and step up

Recognize the privileges you have, such as being in a position of influence, having a strong voice, or feeling safe in certain situations. Use your privilege to advocate for those who may not have the same advantages. Stand up for justice and equality whenever you can.

Be proactive

Don't wait for a harmful situation to unfold before taking action. Be proactive by educating yourself about bystander intervention and by actively looking out for potential issues. Remember, prevention is often the best approach.

Take care of and support the target

If you witness someone experiencing harassment or harm, offer support and empathy. Check in with them afterward, listen without judgment, and let them know they're not alone. Your compassion can make a world of difference.

UT Austin reporting procedures for violence, misconduct, harassment, or discrimination

Emergency contacts

Dial 911 when danger is immediate.

Behavior and safety concerns

- Behavior Concerns and Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050
 - Available 24/7 to assist with behavior concerns, offering options and strategies.
 - Callers can be anonymous.
- Report behavior concerns online via BCAL's online form (not anonymous; requires valid UTEID).

Sexual misconduct

- Title IX Office
 - Supports a safe environment free from sexual misconduct.
 - Report online: [Title IX Online Reporting](#)
 - Dial 512-471-0419.

Discrimination

- Department of Investigation and Adjudication (DIA)
 - Investigates discrimination, harassment, and prohibited conduct.
 - Report online: [DIA Online Reporting](#)
 - Dial 512-471-3701.
 - Email: dia@austin.utexas.edu
- Office for Civil Rights (OCR): 214-661-9600
- Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC): 800-669-4000
- Texas Workforce Commission (TWC)

Student organization hazing

- Office of the Dean of Students
 - Investigates and resolves hazing complaints.
 - Report hazing online via [Hazing Report Form](#)
 - Illegal or unethical activities
- University compliance
 - Report unethical or illegal activities online via [Compliance Reporting](#).
 - Dial (English) 877-507-7321.
 - Dial (Español) 800-216-1288.
- UT Police Department (UTPD)
 - Assists in filing criminal reports.
 - Dial 911 if danger is immediate.
 - For nonemergencies, dial: 512-471-4441.

Additional referrals and resources

- Behavior Concerns and Advice Line (BCAL): 512-232-5050
- University Ombuds Office
 - Confidential help for students: 512-471-3825
 - Confidential help for staff: 512-471-3825
 - Confidential help for faculty: 512-471-5866
- University Health Services: Student healthcare
 - 24/7 Nurse Advice Line: 512-475-6877 (512-475-NURS)
 - SAFE Alliance Hotline: 512-267-7223 (512-267-SAFE)
- Counseling and Mental Health Center: Counseling for students
 - Student counseling and mental health crisis line: 512-471-2255 (512-471-CALL)
 - Voices against Violence: 512-471-3515

- Student Emergency Services: Help for UT students in crisis
 - Crisis support: 512-471-5017 (Mon–Fri, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
- UT Employee Assistance Program (EAP): Help for UT staff and faculty in crisis
 - Staff and faculty assistance: 512-471-3366 (Mon–Fri, 8 a.m.–5 p.m.)
 - Email: eap@austin.utexas.edu
 - In-person help at UTA building Room 2.304 at 1616 Guadalupe Street

Part 5: International Travel

UT Austin prioritizes the safety of its employees during university-related international travel. To facilitate this goal, all employees are required by the UT system to register their international travel in the UT Austin International Travel Registry (ITR). This registration process enables UT to connect your trip with On Call International, their contracted emergency medical and security assistance provider. To complete the registration, simply email a copy of the confirmation page to grs@austin.utexas.edu. This initiative-taking step ensures that UT can provide you with the support and assistance necessary while abroad.

Additionally, we strongly recommend that travelers register with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP). STEP notifies the U.S. Embassy of your presence in the host country, allowing them to provide you with important alerts and valuable travel and security advice. Non-U.S. citizens are encouraged to register their trips in their home country's equivalent of STEP.

To further enhance your awareness and preparedness for international travel, explore the wealth of resources provided by UT Austin's Global Risk and Safety website:



- Travel Safety Resources: The Travel Safety Resources page (<https://global.utexas.edu/risk/resources/travel-safety>) offers valuable guidance and information on ensuring a safe and enjoyable international travel experience. From tips on health precautions to advice on navigating unfamiliar environments, these resources are designed to support you throughout your journey.
- UT Austin Resources: Our university is dedicated to providing the necessary tools and support for a successful international trip. The UT Austin Resources page (<https://global.utexas.edu/risk/resources/ut>) offers a comprehensive list of resources that cover various aspects of international travel, including safety, health, and logistics.