

RICE UNIVERSITY FIELD SAFETY PLANNING TOOL



Background: This tool is designed to facilitate field safety planning for Rice University personnel conducting off-campus research and education. The underlying goal is to help faculty engaged in research and teaching off-campus identify required resources, both physical and instructional, to safely carry out the intended goals. This tool raises questions for consideration in the planning process, allowing time to carefully assess potential hazards and think through potential challenges before leaving the campus. This tool also allows supervisors, including department chairs and relevant faculty, to assess the off-campus activities taking place in their academic unit. ***This fully executed tool (put N/A if an item is not applicable) is to be submitted to the Department Chair two weeks prior to a trip where emergency services are not readily available to allow time for adjustments if required.***

Before embarking on an off-campus activity, contact the Office of Risk Management for relevant information well before your field trip to report your planned off-campus activity and ensure you have all relevant information: <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/>. For insurance purposes, this contact is particularly important (especially for driving vehicles and for international travel).

NAFSA | Association of International Educators has a planning booklet that is useful for travel (including international), and these may be obtained from the Study Abroad Office or directly from NAFSA (<https://www.nafsa.org>).

In planning the trip, be careful to ensure that everyone is aware of unallowable costs that cannot be reimbursed by Rice University or federal/other sponsor and understands Policy 806 for reimbursement of allowable expenses (see final section of this Field Safety Planning Tool).

Key issues: Harassment and alcohol use are the most common problems that are reported during field trips. Ensure that all participants are fully apprised of Rice's policies on these and other relevant issues and that these policies are in force on any Rice-sponsored activity even if it occurs off-campus or in another country. Any non-Rice individuals participating in a field trip must sign a document that indicates that they will abide by Rice policies throughout the trip, including travel. Coercing a participant to take the trip or to do something while on a trip is not allowed. If Informed Consent is required for a particular location due to dangerous or other circumstances, this document should be completed by participants and submitted with this tool to the Department Chair.

Signatures: Each individual going on the trip should sign this planning tool to indicate that relevant information has been provided.



GENERAL INFORMATION FOR ALL OFF-CAMPUS FIELD TRIPS

Individuals In Charge of Trip and Purpose of Trip: *Identify the Rice employee(s) in charge of this field trip/activity and its relationship to a course or to research. At least two individuals should be identified as leaders should one become incapacitated.*

Research and Educational Activities: *Briefly describe the goal of your field operations, e.g. collection of samples, observation of animals/environment, interviews with human subjects, etc.*

Personal Safety, Security & Sexual Harassment: *Personal safety risks during free time at an off-campus site should be considered and discussed in advance, including the hazards of alcohol or drug use, leaving the group, situational awareness, sexual harassment, or local crime/security concerns. Review expectations and set the tone for a safe, successful trip. Check the U.S. State Department travel site for current travel alerts. NOTE: Rice University policies related to drugs, alcohol, and sexual harassment remain in effective regardless of the location. Under federal law and Rice Policy, the use of recreational drugs is prohibited, even if legal in the local of activity. Under Rice [Policy 848](#), it is acceptable to follow local laws regarding the consumption age or limits on alcohol intoxication, though anyone participating in a Rice function must nonetheless maintain responsible and respectful behavior. The Rice University Sexual Harassment policy and training information can be found at the following link: <https://eeopaa.rice.edu/sexual-harassment>. In an emergent situation, the Wellness Center can be contacted 24/7 at 713-348-3311 or Rice University Police Department at 713-348-6000.*

Field Site location: *Descriptive name of research location (e.g., Houston Arboretum; Big Thicket, TX; Carrizo Plain, CA; Tortuguero, Costa Rica); if not easily recognized, provide GPS specifications.*

RICE UNIVERSITY FIELD SAFETY PLANNING TOOL



Trip Duration: *Start date or time (if day-trip), duration, expected return to campus.*

Field Trip Roster: *Names of Research Group or Course / Trip Leader / All participating parties. This information should be provided to the Department Chair and, if remote area without cell phone service or international travel, to the Office of Risk Management. A final list is required before leaving Rice campus.*

Minors in University Activities and Research: *Will minors (persons under 18 years of age and who are not enrolled in a Rice degree program) be participating in these research or educational activities? Have you filed the appropriate paper work with the Office of Risk Management? Please see the Rice University Policy Regarding Minors and Research and ensure all requirements have been completed prior to trip (requires Rice login: https://riceuniversity.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_eR5fe6AtDd39iHL Information on programs with minors: <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/minors-university-approved-activities>*

Activity Overview: *Type, length, and purpose of activity (e.g., collecting specimens and assessing rock structures, hiking 3-4 miles over a 2-day period). For class trips (or research trips), where accommodations cannot be made, efforts to ensure an equivalent experience for any such students are important, and the **Disability Resource Center should be consulted well in advance of the planned activity for assistance in finding effective alternatives/equivalent experiences.***

Site Information: *Elevation, terrain, environment.*

RICE UNIVERSITY FIELD SAFETY PLANNING TOOL



Travel to Site: *How will participants get to the field site? Are the vehicles to get to site insured and driver(s) is(are) qualified and covered by insurance. Note any dangerous roads and other potentially dangerous conditions.*

Insurance: *Insurance coverage for any unanticipated incident may be identified through <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/insurance-policy-information>. Some coverage for faculty, staff, or students does not apply if outside the US or under specific circumstances, so knowing what insurance is needed for health (including local resources and/or for necessary urgent return to the US) is important.*

Communication from Site: *How will communication occur if problems are encountered (e.g., is wireless phone service available and reliable, or is a satellite phone required for communication)? If participants will be alone, how will they seek assistance?*

Site Access: *Are there any particular restrictions or challenges to accessing site? Note any alternate routes or suggested parking areas; gate access codes, etc. Make special note if isolated or remote: How will communication occur if problems are encountered (e.g., will communication require a satellite phone or is wireless phone service available?).*

Environmental Hazards: *Describe any dangerous wildlife, insects, poisonous plants, etc. that participants may encounter. Identify intended mitigation measures and discuss these dangers and mitigation measures with participants prior to trip. If water and food are required, ensure that any participant concerns (e.g., allergies, mitigation of severe allergic response, etc.) are addressed. For remote areas, taking epinephrine is strongly advised, even if not requested by participant(s).*



Physical Demands: List carefully and share information with participants regarding any physical demands required for this trip and training/certification provide (e.g., diving, swimming, hiking, climbing, high altitudes, respirators, heights, confined or restricted spaces, etc.). (Consult with EH&S regarding appropriate training and documentation and with Disability Resource Center for accommodations for physical or emotional challenges). If any hazards from tools, equipment, or materials are present, please review sections below relevant to these issues. [For trips with diving, see below.]

Personal Protective Equipment: Identify equipment that will be required — e.g., boots, safety glasses, PFDs (personal flotation devices), hardhats, etc. Identify equipment that will be recommended — e.g., walking sticks, gloves, long pants, hats, insect repellent, sunscreen, etc.

Participant Information

Field Team/ Participants	<p>Is anyone working alone? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No </p> <p>If yes, develop a communications plan with strict check-in procedures; if cell coverage is unreliable, carry a satellite communication device or personal locator beacon.</p> <p>Primary Field Team Leader: <i>Name, phone number</i></p> <p>Secondary Field Team Leader: <i>Name, phone number</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Field Team/Participant list is attached as training documentation</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Other attachment: e.g., course roster</p>
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Emergency Services/Daily Contact Information with Individuals Not Travelling

Local Contact	<p><i>Name, address & phone #, may be a local colleague/institution, reserve manager, US Forest Service office, etc.</i></p> <p>Lodging location: <i>name, address, phone number</i></p>	University Contact	<p><i>Name, phone number, email; may be a Professor/PI, department contact, supervisor back on campus, etc.</i></p> <p>Frequency of check ins: <i>daily, at end of work day, etc.</i></p>
		<p>Not on trip. Provide a copy of this plan.</p>	



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR TRIPS TO REMOTE AREAS WITHOUT USUAL ACCESS TO FOOD/WATER/OTHER SERVICES WITHIN US & INTERNATIONAL

Site Location (Note that site location will impact transportation, communication, legal compliance, et al.)

Name of Recognizable Location OR	
Latitude: XX.XX (from GPS MAP)	Longitude: XX.XX (from GPS/Map)

Emergency Services/Daily Contact Information with Individuals Not Travelling

Local Contact	<i>Name, address & phone number, may be a local colleague/institution, reserve manager, USFS office, etc.</i> Lodging location: <i>name, address, phone #</i>	University Contact	<i>Name, number, email; may be a Professor/PI, department contact, supervisor back on campus, etc.</i> Frequency of check ins: <i>daily, at end of work day, etc.</i>
Not on trip. Provide a copy of this plan.			

Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Identify procedures for contacting emergency medical services.

Nearest Emergency Department (ED). Prepare an evacuation plan and transportation options to the nearest Emergency Department; include estimated transport time, contact information and driving directions from the site to the nearest provider of emergency medical care. Attach map with specific directions.

Cell Phone Coverage	Primary Number: Coverage: <i>good, spotty, none</i> Nearest location with coverage:	Satellite phone/device	Device carried?
		More than one device may be required for safety.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Type/Number:

Nearby Facilities: What facilities are available at or near the site: restrooms, water, gas, public phone, store? If not, where are the nearest services along the route?



Side Trips: *Are side trips planned or allowed during free time? Before or after the planned activities? Are there restrictions, specific rules, or expected code of conduct? Trip leadership must ensure that all participants are aware of and consent to observing all local customs and mores.*

Physical and Emotional Limitations: *Identify physical and/or emotional limitations for individuals on the field trip. These may include, for example, physical limitations in walking or climbing, food allergies, anxiety disorders, or other types of limitations. Remind participants to bring any required medications for the duration of the trip (with a little extra just-in-case). Taking a source of epinephrine to remote sites for serious allergic reactions is advised (e.g., Epi-Pen), preferably multiple doses. For class trips (or research trips), where accommodations cannot be made, efforts to ensure an equivalent experience for the students are important, and the Disability Resource Center should be consulted for assistance in finding effective alternatives/equivalent experiences.*

Medical and Personal Supplies: *Ensure that participants know what medical and personal supplies they must bring sufficient for unexpected delays. Examples include individual medications and supplies (e.g., tampons, sanitary napkins). Include any medications that may not be taken daily.*

Research and Educational Tools: *Briefly describe tools or equipment that will be used to access the site or during activities. Indicate specific training required before use, e.g., sharps (knives, razors, needles), hand tools, chainsaws, power tools, heavy machinery, tractors, specialty equipment, firearms, lasers, portable welding/soldering device, other hazardous equipment or tools. What training is required and has been provided for use of these tools?*



Other Research/Educational Hazards: Describe other potential hazards (e.g., handling or shipping hazardous materials — chemical, biological, radiation, and explosives), handling animals, climbing or working at heights, rigging, shoring/trenching, digging/entering excavations, caves, other confined space, drone use — and how these will be managed on this trip.

Training Needed for Hazards: Describe other potential hazards utilized for any activity and indicate the training requirements for their handling/use and how oversight to ensure safety will be managed on this trip. Examples include power tools; handling or shipping hazardous materials (chemical, biological, radioactive, and explosive); handling animals; climbing or working at heights; rigging; shoring/trenching/ digging/entering excavations, caves, other confined spaces; utilizing drones.

Personal Protective Equipment: Identify equipment that will be required — e.g., boots, safety glasses, PFDs, hardhats, etc. Identify equipment that will be recommended — e.g., walking sticks, gloves, long pants, hats, insect repellent, sunscreen.

Research or Class Involving Diving: Will diving in bodies of water or scuba diving be required for your research project/class activity? If so, do all participants hold a scuba diving certification? Please describe the activities below.



ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR INTERNATIONAL FIELD TRIPS

International Activities: *If you are traveling internationally, have you consulted with the state department travel website, and Rice Office of Risk Management?*

<https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/international-travel-announcement>
<https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/international-travel-checklists>
<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/traveladvisories.html>

Passport and Visa Issues: *Ensure that participants are aware, if needed, that passport and visa are required for the trip. International students **must** speak with the Office of International Students and Scholars as soon as possible, but at least two weeks before embarking on a trip outside the United States or near US borders with other countries, to ensure their visa status and safety.*

Check-in Schedule: *Create a schedule for checking in with relevant parties (parents, oversight person at Rice, et al.) so that relevant parties are apprised regularly with a mutually agreed schedule regarding safety of participants.*

Data and Currency Security: *Ensure that participants are aware of steps to be taken to ensure passport, visas, identification, computer and currency security (e.g. taking a computer that does not contain all their personal information and securing cash or other valuables effectively). Prepaid cards may be useful where appropriate.*



Identify risks and consult International SOS and State Department for information: *When traveling outside the United States, registration of each person with International SOS at the website <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/traveling-abroad-intl-sos> is required. This site provides information on local conditions and services for individuals. If traveling outside the US, contact Office of Risk Management for more information. Ensure that there is informed consent from participants where risks are elevated. Local mores are different in other countries (e.g., bribes, corruption, et al.). Identify any known risks and mechanisms developed to address these risks. What is the worst case scenario and what would you need to do prior to the trip (including materials to take along) and during the trip? The trip should be registered with the Smart Traveler Enrollment Program (STEP) of the US State Department at <https://step.state.gov> .*

Immunizations, Vaccinations or Medical Evaluation: *Before embarking on a trip, ensure that all participants receive any relevant immunizations, vaccinations, prophylaxis, or required evaluation, if applicable, prior to the trip.*

Effective Means of Communication at the Site (and during transport to the site): *This category may include direct supervision, the buddy system, reliable cell phone, SAT phone, or radio contact, etc.*

Security: *High risk for harassment or violence? Review intended mitigation measures with participants; discuss prior to trip. For international travel, check the U.S. State Department travel site for current travel alerts. Consult Office of Risk Management for assistance.*



No Go Criteria: *What are the conditions under which approach to — or activities at — the target site should be stopped or canceled? Examples include heavy rains, electrical storms, snow, temperatures above 100 degrees, within 2 hours of high tide at store, wave heights over 1 meter, local violence in the area, etc. Under some conditions, an individual may decide not to go on the trip due to personal or medical issues; these issues should be discussed by the leader and the individual in making the final decision.*

Expected/Usual Regional Weather: *Note extreme conditions that could impact the trip or require additional planning, (e.g., high heat, wind, rain, cold, snow, approaching storm). Are there backup plans/supplies/materials to address an unexpected loss of resources. Knowing “What do I need to survive in environment X” is an important question to explore with participants.*

Drinking Water Availability: *Is there plumbed water available, is a water cooler with ice provided, is bottled water provided (how much would be needed?), or, if are you using a natural source available, how you will treat the water before consumption (e.g., filtration, boiling, chemical disinfection)?*

Access to Shade/Shelter: *If forecast exceeds 80°F, shade should be provided by natural or artificial means for rest breaks. This shade can be accomplished by building structures, natural trees, using a temporary canopy/tarp, vehicle with A/C, et al.*



High Heat Procedures (when temperatures are expected to exceed 95°F): *If possible, limit strenuous tasks to morning or late afternoon hours. Rest breaks in shade should be provided at least 10 minutes every 2 hours (or more if needed). Effective means of communication, observation, and monitoring for signs of heat illness should be on-going at all times. Pre-work safety discussion recommended.*

Cold Weather Provisions: *Do you have the appropriate provisions (e.g., clothing, heaters, tents, etc.) for the cold temperatures you are expecting to experience on the trip? Will there be substantial swings in temperature in the field?*

Mental Demands: *List carefully and share information with participants regarding any unique mental demands required for this trip, e.g., long travel days, high stress environments, different cultural norms, etc. If someone seems emotionally ill-equipped for the trip, have a frank discussion to avoid a crisis while away. If assistance is needed, the Wellbeing Center phone (713-348-3311) is answered 24/7.*

First Aid Training & Supplies: *Identify clearly the team members trained in first aid and the type of training received. Identify for participants the location and description of the group's medical/first aid kit: Who is carrying it, where is it stored, brief description of contents.*



Field Transportation: *What vehicles will be used during field operations? Identify before departure who is qualified to drive/operate the vehicle(s). All those operating vehicles should be licensed and demonstrably qualified for the specific vehicle. Examples: chartered boat, paddle craft, car, ATV, truck with trailer, snowmobile, chartered plane or helicopter, etc. Rice University Office of Risk Management manages a variety of insurance programs. Please consult their website for assistance in ensuring coverage for your field trip: <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/vehicle-safety-guidelines>*

Research and Educational Tools: *Briefly describe tools or equipment that will be used to access the site or during activities. Indicate specific training required before use, e.g., sharps (knives, razors, needles), hand tools, chainsaws, power tools, heavy machinery, tractors, specialty equipment, firearms, lasers, portable welding/soldering device, other hazardous equipment or tools. What training is required and has been provided for use of these tools? The leader for the field trip must ensure training is provided prior to departure for the trip.*

Other Research/Educational Hazards: *Describe other potential hazards (e.g., handling or shipping hazardous materials — chemical, biological, radiation, and explosives), handling animals, climbing or working at heights, rigging, shoring/trenching, digging/entering excavations, caves, other confined space, drone use — and how these will be managed on this trip.*

Training Needed for Hazards: *Identify any hazard (e.g., see list above) and indicate the training that will be required of anyone that will be engaged in use of hazardous tools, animals, or circumstances.*



Personal Protective Equipment: *Identify equipment that will be required — e.g., boots, safety glasses, PFDs, hardhats, etc. Identify equipment that will be recommended — e.g., walking sticks, gloves, long pants, hats, insect repellent, sunscreen. Ensure that all protective equipment is appropriate for the intended use.*

Insurance: *Insurance coverage for any unanticipated incident may be identified through <https://riskmanagement.rice.edu/insurance-policy-information>. Some coverage for faculty, staff, or students does not apply if outside the US or under specific circumstances, so knowing what insurance is needed for health or accidental event (including local resources and/or returning to the US) is important.*

Research or Class Involving Diving: *Will your research project/class activity require diving in bodies of water or scuba diving? If so, do all participants hold a scuba diving certification from a licensed organization? Please describe the activities below.*



PERMITS FOR IMPORT, WILDLIFE AND GAME, AND MATERIAL TRANSFERS

USDA-APHIS import Permitting: *Assure that you have secured all appropriate USDA-APHIS import permits if you are importing any of the following from other states or countries: soil, invasive species, plant agricultural pests, any animal, plant or soil materials from other countries, or bacteria, fungi and viruses which infect plants.*

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/permits/regulated-organism-and-soil-permits>

<https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/permits/plants-and-plant-products-permits>

https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/planthealth/import-information/permits/plants-and-plant-products-permits/sa_transit/ct_transit

CDC Import Permits: *Will you be importing biohazardous materials from other countries, if so, a CDC import permit must be secured from the CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/phpr/ipp/index.htm>*

Wildlife and Game Permitting: *Is a wildlife and game permit necessary, including importation of plants, insects, feathers, birds, butterflies, etc.. If so, a wildlife and game permit must be secured for this purpose.*

<https://www.fws.gov/permits/ApplicationMain.html>

Material Transfer Agreement (MTA): *If transferring intellectual information or materials to another party or receiving intellectual information or materials from a another party including rDNA constructs and genetically modified organisms, an MTA must be secured from the Office of Technology Transfer:*

<https://ott.rice.edu/forms>.



REIMBURSEMENTS FOR EXPENSES — POLICY 806

Cash Advances, Reimbursement for Charges to Personal Credit Cards, and Filing Expense Reports on P Cards: Review Policy 806 (<https://policy.rice.edu/806>) prior to travel so that expenses can be covered or reimbursed appropriately. Prior to travel, to ensure reimbursement, set up an expense report and provide an end date to make clear expenses incurred in advance or on the trip (e.g., cash advances and reimbursement for charges on a personal card) are for an event that ends at a future time. File any expense reports or other reporting required by the department or the sponsoring agency for the trip within 30 days of the trip end. Delays of 45 days or more in filing an expense report will result in suspension of P card, and if expenses are not cleared in 60 days income will be imputed equal to the expense amount with tax consequences to the P card owner.

NOTES: