GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND SAFETY-PLAN-DEVELOPMENT CHECKLIST FOR PIS, INSTRUCTORS, AND TRIP LEADERS IN THE DEPARTMENT OF GEO SCIENCES

There is a wide range of activities conducted in the Department of Geosciences that should have safety plans. Field experiences, lab and research-group settings, courses, and conferences can pose risks to participants, particularly BIPOC people and people from minoritized and marginalized groups. This document provides an initial draft of guiding principles from which all activities should be designed and a checklist of considerations that should be evaluated and managed for each activity.

DEPARTMENTAL VALUES & GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR SAFETY AND INCLUSION

We value the safety and inclusion of all members of our community

We engage in experiences that help us grow as scientists and community members

We communicate openly and transparently about risks, needs, and ideas

We look out for one another and advocate for our own safety and the safety of others in our group

We engage with local communities and invest in relationships that support regional safety networks

We recognize that different people will face different types of risks; leaders work to become aware of these risks and design activities that prioritize learning and participant safety

We provide resources to engage safely in field, lab, research, and conference settings

We aim for universal design in field and lab experiences

We make space and time for rest and care for physical, emotional, and spiritual needs

We listen to each other and believe each other when someone has a concern

We consistently prioritize safety and enforce consequences for safety infractions

We expect the unexpected, plan buffers, and adapt flexibly if unforeseen or dangerous situations arise
CHECKLIST FOR CLASS, TRIP, OR LAB GROUP SAFETY PLANS

It is the leaders’ responsibility to identify and learn about potential risks and develop a plan for managing them that is specific to the activity. The checklist, below, outlines issues to consider.

PIs and Lab Leaders should develop and discuss safety plans for their research group activities (including lab, field, and conference activities).

Group leaders should communicate openly and frankly about potential risks or challenges in order to destigmatize discussion of these topics and model clear and open communication.

Multiple avenues of communication should be available to participants and students for reporting incidents, raising issues, and discussing concerns.

Bystander intervention training, conflict mediation skills, and basic safety training is recommended for all program facilitators.

https://eos.org/opinions/ten-steps-to-protect-bipoc-scholars-in-the-field

What are the potential risks in the activity? Consider each issue and develop a plan for mitigating the risk or acting to ensure participant safety. If risks can’t be effectively managed, develop alternate activities in safer locations.

- Other students or participants – harassment, assault risks? (Are the codes of conduct clear, emphasized, and are there specific, enforceable consequences for violations? How are violations reported? How are reports handled?)
  - Clancy et al. (2014) Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault: https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0102172
  - Check and discuss codes of conduct and reporting procedures for conferences or field trips run by entities outside Penn State
- Law enforcement risks?
  - Provide official documentation, letters on letterhead, and logo-emblazoned field gear to help convey that participants are engaging in official business.
  - Note that campus security may fall into this category for individuals that might not be profiled as “traditional” students/faculty/staff (consider introducing lab group to campus security if late-night lab visits are part of research work)
- Hostile locals / landowners?
- Specific risks to Black participants or participants of color?
  - https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-02328-y
- Specific risks to LGBTQIA+ participants?
- Specific risks to women, nonbinary, or gender-nonconforming participants?
- Specific risks to transgender participants?
- Specific risks to participants with accessibility needs?
- Mental health/stress risks?
- Driving risks?
- Wilderness risks?
Have you considered potential needs of participants? Design activities to accommodate needs of a broad range of participants.

- Religious needs (e.g., Ramadan, prayer/worship time, kosher/halal meals)?
- Medical needs (e.g., conditions that might require support or assistance or change participation status, medication access, allergies, etc.)?
- Menstruation needs of participants (e.g., supplies, time, private space)?
  - Periods + Fieldwork: [https://youtu.be/jjFZ1nzijrl](https://youtu.be/jjFZ1nzijrl)
- Bathroom needs (e.g., are there adequate stops or access to facilities)?
- Personal care needs?

Have you located and provided safety resources for participants?

- Group leader and participant contact information?
- Safety monitor/support person (someone serving in a non-instructor and non-participant role, at least temporarily or on a rotating basis)?
- Emergency contact information (local first responders; local lodging/park/land-management contacts)?
- Directions to hospitals/emergency rooms?
- Reporting information (Penn State or other relevant organizations)
  - Are there multiple pathways for reporting?
  - Is the bar for reporting low (i.e. is it acceptable to raise minor concerns)?
- Safety gear that fits each individual (hard hats, appropriate footwear, etc.)?
  - [https://www.bustle.com/articles/173930-7-tips-for-wearing-a-helmet-with-afro-textured-hair-photos](https://www.bustle.com/articles/173930-7-tips-for-wearing-a-helmet-with-afro-textured-hair-photos)
  - Cost of field gear: Ábeyta et al. (2021), [https://eartharxiv.org/repository/view/2091/](https://eartharxiv.org/repository/view/2091/)

Are any special resources or training required or recommended (e.g., for instructors)?

- Basic (Red Cross) First Aid?
- Wilderness First Aid?
- Language skills?