



The following safety plan-in-progress includes a racial risk assessment of Toolik Field Station and surrounding field sites and some suggestions to mitigate these risks. In addition, it includes Toolik Field Station's current code of conduct, the complaints and reporting procedure, and suggestions for next steps.

Racial Risk Assessment of Toolik Field Station & Research Sites

Toolik Field Station is located in an extremely isolated part of Alaska, adjacent to the Dalton Highway, but hundreds of miles from the nearest permanent community. The community of people at Toolik Field Station is highly seasonal: individuals come for durations ranging from a couple days to several months, sometimes with on/off week schedules. Researchers, students, and staff interact within the Toolik Field Station community itself as well as other Dalton Highway users. This section aims to address the racial risk of interacting with other Dalton users.

While overall encounters are rare, the most common include truckers servicing Prudhoe Bay, Alaska DOT workers maintaining the highway, pipeline and pump station workers, and hunters who camp out near the road from mid August to mid September. These groups tend to be predominantly white and male. In particular, hunters are often visibly armed with crossbows and guns for the caribou hunt. The fact that hunters are armed can present a safety concern and risk, particularly for researchers of color and non-male identifying or presenting researchers. The following points address the most common forms of interaction between researchers and other Dalton users and suggest ways to mitigate risk, specifically to BIPOC researchers.

1. **Vehicle Breakdowns.** Flat tires, cracked windshield, and other vehicle issues are common problems on the Dalton. It is common for Dalton travelers to pull over to assist broken down vehicles, but this situation can be uncomfortable and unsafe, especially for researchers of color and non-male presenting researchers.
 - a. To mitigate risk, all trucks that leave camp should have a working satellite phone with a charged battery, so researchers can call camp for help in case of a breakdown. Researchers are encouraged to drive to and from field sites in groups of at least two.
 - b. **In the event of a breakdown, field teams should notify the on-duty camp manager via satphone. They should not attempt to perform any repairs unless they are fully trained and confident in doing so. Teams should also be aware of the physical hazards of conducting vehicle repairs on the side of the highway (soft shoulders, flying rocks).**

- c. Toolik Field Station could offer truck maintenance classes several times throughout the summer, so that people are able to start repairs on their own. Sometimes looking busy and confident can deter a potential “helper” from pulling over to help and head off a dangerous situation.
- 2. Approached by threatening individuals at a side road or pull off.** It is common to encounter a hunter camped at a pull-outs that researchers use to park and access field sites (e.g Imnaviat). This can be challenging as researchers must routinely spend several minutes loading and unloading trucks and often interact with the same individuals camped at these locations over the course of several days or weeks. This leads to extended interactions between researchers and hunters which are often friendly, but can feel threatening and unsafe.
- a. To mitigate risk, again, no one should ever be in the field alone. Toolik should also consider developing pamphlets or similar material with information about the station and contact information for complaints. Researchers who feel threatened or otherwise want to end an interaction with hunters can hand these materials out and direct further questions to the pamphlet.
 - b. **Should a field team feel unsafe due to the presence of an outside party they should attempt to notify the on-duty camp manager via satphone and start making their way back to camp.**
 - c. Creating magnetic Toolik Field Station stickers to put on unmarked trucks is also a strategy Toolik should consider to make it clear to everyone on the Dalton that researchers are affiliated with an established local institution and someone is looking out for them.
- 3. Approached while at a field site away from the road.** Being approached by a hunter or other individually while working at a field site out of sight of the trucks is potentially the most threatening and unsafe scenario.
- a. Working in groups, or at least pairs, and carrying a satellite phone into the field is encouraged as a way to mitigate risk further in the field.
 - b. **Should a field team feel unsafe due to the presence of an outside party, they should attempt to notify the on-duty camp manager via satphone and start making their way back to camp.**
 - c. **Toolik staff will announce the start of the Fall hunting season so that other staff and researchers will be more aware of how their work environment has changed and what precautions should be taken.**
 - d. During hunting season, Toolik should provide high visibility vests with the Toolik name and logo both to reduce the risk to researchers and to lend legitimacy to their interactions with hunters who may approach them.

As previous deliverables have addressed, Toolik is a predominantly white space that can feel isolating and unsafe for many reasons for people of color. Deliverable #2 attempted to directly address the code of conduct and safety in camp within the Toolik community. We have identified some spaces in camp that are especially prone to safety concerns:

1. The Sauna
 - a. Sauna operating procedures, rules, and expectations should be made clear during the user orientation. Additionally, a list of rules should be posted outside the sauna to reinforce sauna hours and appropriate forms of conduct.
2. The bonfires/social circles
 - a. We feel the most effective way to promote safety, tolerance, and inclusivity at bonfires and other off-duty social activities is to foster a culture of inclusivity within camp generally. Previous attempts to directly police behavior and attitudes in these spaces have been counterproductive. Instead focusing on creating a social environment in camp that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity is the best way to positively reinforce good behavior and negatively reinforce dangerous or exclusive behavior through negative social pressure.
3. 6+ person weatherports
 - a. Make it clear in orientation that the Scientific Liaisons are prepared to listen to and assist with housing problems of any kind

Current Code of Conduct

Responsible and respectful conduct is expected at Toolik Field Station. The camp management team has the ability to remove any staff member, contractor, or member of the scientific community from camp if that person's behavior raises concern for the community.

- Persons will be asked to leave camp immediately if they engage in:
 - Physical or verbal abuse or assault
 - Intimidation
 - Coercion
 - Threats
 - Gender, racial, or sexual harassment
 - Sexual misconduct
 - Behavior that endangers the health and safety of oneself or others
 - Repeated infractions of camp rules may also result in expulsion from camp if these behaviors are not corrected after being brought to the person's attention.

Formal warning(s) for "minor" infractions may be issued before removing that person from camp. The camp manager will keep a record of who has been warned.

Examples of minor infractions:

- Disregard for quiet hours i.e.: loud party in residential area
- Smoking in any building
- Dangerous driving
- Disregard for the personal property of others
- Loud and obnoxious behavior
- Entering restricted areas (such as the kitchen)

Procedures for responding to bad behavior

It is the responsibility of project leaders/PIs to respond first if the behavior of a member of their group is inappropriate at Toolik. The camp management team also has the authority and ability to remove any staff member, contractor, or member of the scientific community from camp if that person's behavior creates a serious problem for the community. The camp management team (station manager and assistant station managers), the Scientific Liaisons, and members of the Toolik Management Team all have the authority to issue formal warnings to any member of camp whose conduct is causing problems for the community. Anyone who feels they have been dismissed from camp unfairly may contact members of the Toolik Management Group or appropriate University of Alaska officials. Such grievances will be addressed in a timely manner.

For more community goals with respect to reporting and responding to racial discrimination, see [URGE Deliverable #2: Racism Complaints Policy](#). An important next step is to reformat Deliverable #2 into clear guidelines from the perspective of someone intending to report an incident.

Next Steps for the Safety Plan:

This safety plan is a work in progress that will be revisited and refined. The following are some next steps:

- Promoting discussions on DEIA issues at Toolik Talking Shops to encourage open and deliberate conversation
 - The transience of the Toolik Field Station community can be a barrier to inclusion as quick turn-over in people can increase the risk of misunderstandings and decrease opportunities for conflict-resolution.
 - Mechanisms to help antiracism and allyship be part of open dialogue at Toolik Field Station throughout the season will be important for ensuring the safety of a diverse community.
- Proper field gear/in-house gear repair clinics
 - Individuals often come to Toolik Field Station with a diversity of background and comfort working in outdoor environments.
 - Being safe in the field often depends on having adequate and quality gear. This would be a great way to build skills and solidarity within the community.
- A Toolik Field Station suggested pre-departure checklist of discussions within field teams:
 - Who is in charge of the field team during the trip?
 - Does everyone on the team have one or two people to “buddy up” with?
 - What hazards might present themselves at the field site location? Do any of these hazards pose an unusually high risk of presenting themselves?
 - What is the plan if someone gets injured?
 - What is the plan if an outside party is present at the field site?
 - How long will it take to get from the field site to the vehicle by foot?
 - Does the field team have a fully charged satphone?
 - Does the vehicle have enough fuel? Does the dashboard have any hazard lights flashing?

- Has the sign-out board been updated with the field team's trip information?
- Procedures for documenting incidents in the field, as well as additional required or supported training.
 - Depending on which institution(s) are involved, multiple incident reports may be necessary. At a minimum, all incidents that occur should be brought to the attention of the on-duty camp manager and filed through Origami Risk (The incident reporting software used by UAF Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management). Origami can be found [here](#) - the on-duty EMT can assist with completing the incident report. Additionally, incidents involving discrimination should be filed with the UAF Department of Equity and Compliance discrimination reporting form found [here](#). Additional reports should be filed with each individual's home institution depending on their reporting policies.