

DRAFT SAFETY PLAN FOR WVU G&G FIELD ACTIVITIES

This document should be shared and discussed with all field-trip participants prior to departure.

Code of Conduct

Fieldwork is often an essential component of geoscience training and practice, and should be a positive experience that helps participants grow as scientists. However, fieldwork is fraught with opportunities for those same experiences to be negative, regressive, discriminatory, and threatening: history bears this out (*Pickrell, 2020; Demery & Pipkin, 2021*). Just as physical safety in the field is the responsibility of all participants, so too is maintaining a safe, non-threatening, and equitable environment where everyone can participate and thrive. Students of color and transgender students are particularly vulnerable to discrimination and threats to their safety.

Student, staff, and faculty safety and security are paramount in all our educational and research activities, and supersede all other requirements and responsibilities. To that end, no scenarios where safety and security are threatened are acceptable and will not be tolerated. All participants should:

- behave in a professional and disciplined manner at all times, and expect the same of their colleagues;
- act consistently in ways that support safety, security, accessibility, and equity for their colleagues and the general public;
- support and look-out for their colleagues, especially colleagues of color and other minoritized groups, and [be prepared to step-in](#) should the need arise;
- identify and report instances of inappropriate behavior or language within or towards the group, including overt slurs, [coded racism](#), shaming, and [microaggressions](#) (for example, 40% of female students reported inappropriate comments in the field compared to 25% of men (*Clancey et al., 2014*));
- make themselves aware of potential threats and scenarios where they or any of their colleagues may feel threatened or uncomfortable;
- make themselves aware of practices to identify, intervene, and de-escalate threatening scenarios;
- familiarize themselves with the risk assessment for each excursion before departure, including physical, security, and racial threats and risks;
- avoid or minimize social activities (e.g., [consumption of alcohol](#), etc.) and locations (e.g., bars, casinos, etc.) that are not inclusive or acceptable to all participants;
- recognize that not all participants have the same backgrounds and experiences, especially in the outdoors, and that what is fun and exciting for you [may be intimidating](#) for them;

- hold themselves, colleagues, and field excursions leaders accountable for their actions and commit to improving the fieldwork experience for all participants.

Violation of these rules will result in immediate removal from the field setting. The situation will be reported to the Department Chair and both Associate Chairs. Depending on the deliberations of the department leadership, additional sanctions may be incurred. These sanctions may include: additional training, grade modifications, expulsion from course, or unforgivable F.

To be added to Field Safety Protocol (for trip leaders):

- Recommendations for trip leaders related to enhancing safety for students who may be vulnerable to social threats: LGBTQ+ concerns, racial, ethnic, religious concerns
 - Buddy system
 - Reminders about the socio-political environment of the field site and how the group needs to work together to be sure everyone stays safe.
 -
- Field trip facilitators should make participants aware of the facilities available before the field trip and make all effort to plan restroom facility visits into the field trip plan.
[Bathroom Best Practices for Field Trips](#)
- Develop a safety plan including details guaranteeing that all members will be accompanied by another person during field work or provide an alternative safety plan that suits the field setting (eg regular check-ins with supervisor, sat phone, or local accompaniment).
- Field safety plan should include identification of and distance to medical facilities
- Check on reflective vests, hard hats for outcrops

Training Resources

To support faculty, staff, and students in fulfilling their responsibilities under the Code of Conduct, the following training and educational resources are available:

General:

- [Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | Resources and Training](#)
- [Field Safety Policy & Procedures Aug 2020 Final](#)
- [NAGT: Safety in the Field](#)
- [Field Trip Safety](#)

Prevention & Bystander Training:

- [Bystander Intervention | Well WVU | West Virginia University](#)
- [Prevention | Division of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion | West Virginia University](#)
- [Bystander Intervention Resources | Hollaback! End HarassmentHollaback!](#)
- [AAG Policies and Practices for Inclusion and Respect](#)

Alcohol:

- [Alcohol culture perpetuates hyper-masculine stereotypes that keep geology white, male, & able-bodied](#)
- [Want to be more inclusive? Stop making geology conferences about the beer. - GeoEd Trek](#)
- [Geologist](#) - a satirical description of geologists but it emphasizes many of the problems that lead to legitimate negative stereotypes.

Readings:

- [Scientists push against barriers to diversity in the field sciences](#)
- [EOS: Ten Steps to Protect BIPOC Scholars in the Field](#)
- [Racism and harassment are common in field research — scientists are speaking up](#)
- [Survey of Academic Field Experiences \(SAFE\): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault](#)
- [The Challenges of Fieldwork for LGBTQ+ Geoscientists](#)
- [GSA Today - Groundwork - Obstacles to the recruitment of minorities into the geosciences: A call to action](#)
- [GEO REU HANDBOOK](#)
- [Safe-Fieldwork-Strategies-for-At-Risk-Individuals.pdf](#)
- [Barriers-to-fieldwork-in-undergraduate-geoscience-degrees-2.pdf](#)
- [Mental-Health-in-the-Field.pdf](#)
- [the-true-cost-of-field-education-is-a-barrier-to-diversifying-geosciences.pdf](#)

Support Services - Where to Get Help and Report Incidents

Before Leaving Campus

If you have concerns about an upcoming field excursion, raise them with the field trip leader(s) or another faculty member or colleague that you trust.

Specific concerns about the safety or security of a destination (e.g., [discriminatory local laws](#), a history of violence against African-Americans, etc.) should be brought to the attention of the field excursion leader(s). Do not expect that the leader(s) are fully aware of every potential problem, but do expect them to act on your concerns.

During a Field Excursion

If you are in a dangerous or escalating scenario try to remove yourself to safety and call 9-1-1 for help.

The field trip leader(s) are responsible for your safety and equal opportunity to participate in all the activities. They are also responsible for documenting and acting upon all reports of inappropriate behavior. All participants are responsible to themselves and their colleagues to support one another.

If you feel uncomfortable or threatened during an excursion, regardless of the cause, inform someone you trust and feel comfortable with. If this cannot be the field trip leader(s) it can be anybody in the group, a friend or colleague back on campus, or as a final resort local law enforcement.

Upon Returning to Campus

All incidents of violence, abuse or discrimination, or the threat of such, whether it is physical, sexual, racial, or homophobic, should be reported to the WVU Division of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion through their website - <https://diversity.wvu.edu/>. The process for filing a complaint also starts on their website. You can also call (304-293-5600) or email (james.goins@mail.wvu.edu) **James Goins Jr.** the WVU Director of Equity Assurance and Title IX Coordinator.

Reporting by a victim or complainant is voluntary but encouraged - it is not mandatory. To make an anonymous report call **304-906-9930** (24 hours a day). Reports and complaints are handled by the Title IX Office and not by the Department of Geology and Geography.

WVU faculty and staff, including graduate teaching assistants, **MUST REPORT** any and all incidents they have witnessed or have been informed about. Faculty, most staff (except counsellors, therapists, pastors, etc.), and graduate teaching assistants cannot guarantee confidentiality to students.

Pre-Field Excursion Safety Checklist and Risk Assessment

For leaders:

- Hold pre-excursion meeting with detailed discussion of safety protocols and expectations
 - Each lab will have a meeting once a year to make sure all students participate and sign before any fieldwork
 - Specific meetings should be held for fieldcamp
- Assign and discuss reading list on topics related to inclusion and equity in the field (see resources above)
- Check and restock first aid kit
- Address individual student pre-trip concerns, as needed
- Be aware of potential issues at fieldsite(s) and make contingency plans

For Students:

- Review and sign Safety Plan
- Attend pre-excursion meeting and do related readings
- Consider any potential personal risks and communicate with leaders, as needed
- Have charged cell phone with appropriate emergency contacts listed
- Pack all needed medications, food, water, and clothing