



--**DRAFT**--Safety Plan - Pacific Lutheran University Geosciences--**DRAFT**--

Guidelines from URGE

*This safety plan should include **a code of conduct** as well as **a process for reporting violations**, as covered in your Complaints and Reporting Policy deliverable from Session 2. Outline **training resources** that are available and **requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training**.*

*For field work, include **a racial risk assessment of sites**, a **pre-departure checklist of discussions** within the field team, **procedures for documenting incidents in the field**, as well as **additional required or supported training**. This safety plan can (and should be) a work in progress that is revisited and refined.*

LAB AND FIELD SAFETY PLAN (Adapted from [the example URGE Provided](#), and other resources from Session 6 curriculum):

RESPONSIBILITY OF GEOS DEPARTMENT AND PLU ADMINISTRATION

1. Make field safety, harassment training and first aid courses available and mandatory for all faculty and students
2. Make a list of resources available about diversity in geosciences, barriers to entry in geosciences and safety concerns.
3. Regularly reevaluate all current department and institutional practices to remove barriers to inclusion in safe field and lab practices.
 - a. Broaden the opportunities offered to students, reconsidering values that may be inherent in our research, including remote/wilderness, or residential/overnight requirements or extended timeframes.
 - b. Develop a proactive plan to alter detrimental (anti-inclusion and equity) practices and document the process to increase transparency of decision-making.
4. Establish a culture of acting responsibly, inclusively, and with care, and champion the benefits of doing so, including
 - a. Fostering a vibrant learning community where diverse perspectives and ideas are welcome
 - b. Creating safe environments where all team members are comfortable and able to contribute
5. Provide training to faculty on how to be an effective mentor to diverse individuals, including strategies for incorporating cultural competencies. This training should provide clear lines of communication for

anyone conducting fieldwork, regardless of the researcher's institutional affiliation (e.g., a visiting researcher working with faculty and field sites managed by the institution).

6. Ensure field course locations and housing are appropriate, safe, and equitable for all identities. Solicit regular, anonymized feedback from field researchers to determine the climate and safety of field sites and accommodations, and engage supervisors in responding to this feedback.
7. Ensure that all department- or institution-managed field sites are clearly labeled as a part of the institution. On this signage, include acceptable activities allowed at such locations (e.g., birdwatching, dog walking, no public access).
 - a. We need to check about 201 sites, golf course, soil pit, hydrologic locations, 350 sites?
8. Collate information on all active or newly established field sites throughout the year and provide this information to relevant police departments.
 - a. We need to consider how to coordinate with Campus Safety, and regularly visited field sites
9. Supply an official letter of support for researchers doing fieldwork with contact information. This provides additional credibility to the researcher, if and when they are approached and challenged.
10. Work together - department, division, and institution - to recruit and retain undergraduate researchers in our field programs.

RESPONSIBILITY OF FACULTY MENTORS IN PREPARING FOR FIELD WORK

1. Talk with students about the risks, preparations to minimize risk, and reporting mechanisms. Be aware that the conversation will likely be difficult and will require mental and emotional readiness by both parties. Prepare for these conversations in advance using external resources, some of which are linked above.
2. Be aware of and abide by any laws, including state and US laws, international laws and customs, local foreign laws, current political situations, actual degree of law enforcement, and discuss an emergency contingency plan with students and colleagues in the department or division.
3. Contact others (especially those who share an at-risk identity with members of your group) that have previously used a field site at a location where there is a history of risk. It is recommended that researchers document all known cases of risk at that location.
4. Take advantage of training opportunities for you and your mentees to increase field safety and promote awareness (e.g., self-defense courses, first aid, safety aids, cultural history course about the location of the field site).
5. Know who manages your field site(s) and inform the site managers when/where you will be at those locations. Share contact information with your mentees.
6. Introduce yourself and your team to the neighbors surrounding the field property, or leave a short note informing neighbors about research being conducted at nearby locations and who will be conducting the research. It is advisable to also include contact information, preferably information that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution to provide additional credibility.

7. Avoid solo field work. When this is not possible, make sure solo researchers have a point of contact (preferably the chair, dean, or other institutional representative) who is aware of the researcher's whereabouts and expected schedule on a given day. A written communication plan that gives notice of field plans is another way to maintain communication with a point of contact.
8. Student and faculty researchers should always carry credentials in case someone challenges why they are at the field site. These include photo ID (driver's license, passports, institution ID), and relevant permits. Any additional form of identification that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution can also be helpful (i.e., University apparel, institution bumper stickers/car magnets, etc.). These items should be provided for student researchers so that their use is easily implemented.
9. Encourage your mentees to let you know when they feel unsafe. Have protocols that your group can follow when team members feel unsafe. Advocate for at-risk individuals in your group.
10. Self-educate on the experience of your team members' identities, and the corresponding risk that they may encounter in the field. This does not involve asking researchers to relive trauma surrounding their identity as a source of education. Rather, use available resources to self-educate. First-person accounts and resource compilations are available [[Need to identify and link!](#)]. Furthermore, self-educate on the politics, demographics, and culture of the areas surrounding established field site(s), in order to be fully aware of potential risks.
11. Prior to fieldwork, contact relevant institutional offices for risk management ([Dean and Sue Liden - others?](#)) on how to best manage risk in the field and identify resources for researchers to identify the social landscape in which the field site(s) is(are) situated and identify potential risks.
12. Create a field risk management plan that discusses risk at established field sites. This document should detail potential risks and identify mitigation(s) for that risk. This document should also act as a living document for recording safety incidents. Copies of these should be carried with fieldworkers on their person as well as left in the workplace/lab.
 - a. [Waivers accomplish this in part, but we should be more intentional about it.](#)
13. Provide materials to clearly identify researchers and their purpose (e.g., signs for vehicles and field sites, safety vests, etc.).
 - a. [The Department has hard hats, safety goggles, and vests](#)
 - b. [PLU Vans may have other resources.](#)
14. Have a conversation with all research team members - students and faculty - on the risks and preparations to minimize risk. This can include a statement that certain demographics may be at higher risk, and that the supervisor is available to discuss with any researcher about concerns and proactive measures. Educational resources, such as this document should be made available to all researchers, who can then self-select to engage in a conversation about safety issues surrounding their specific identity(ies).
 - a. [We need to discuss/train as a department for this.](#)
15. Create a time and space to talk to research team members specifically about fieldwork safety concerns in advance of the field season, and touch base with them throughout the season to address new concerns. As a reminder, this is an uncomfortable reality and merits the need to establish a space and time for both parties (researcher and supervisor) to be ready and willing to engage in this important discussion.

a. Could happen during class or as intro to summer research - need to normalize this!

16. Even after education, supervisors that do not share the same identity as their researchers will be unaware of all potential risk to researchers. If researchers bring up potential or experienced risk, validate their experiences and assist in modifying the project so that they can safely continue conducting research.

a. Ongoing conversation and training for faculty needs to be provided for this.

17. The scale of risk can increase dramatically in an international field site. At minimum, be aware of and abide by any international laws and customs in addition to local foreign laws, current political situations, actual degree of law enforcement, and mandate a conversation with the researcher. Furthermore, this conversation should include allies in the field - collaborators/supervisors at the international field site - to discuss any safety concerns that the researcher may not be aware of.

a. Seek assistance from the Wang Center to help prepare for and anticipate these challenges.

18. At established field sites, introduce researchers (via email or in-person) to the manager of those locations, if they exist. If there are multiple managers, researchers should be introduced to each manager to minimize any miscommunication that could lead to increased risk.

a. Applies to new faculty and to students as well.

19. When possible, show new researchers established field locations in advance, teach them about the specific concerns of that field location, and inform them of the resources in accordance with established safety plans. The resources should have contact information about field site personnel relevant to research and safety (e.g., contact information of the local police department).

a. Consider especially GEOS 201 and ENVT 350 sites

20. Work with students to establish safe housing accommodations before arriving at the field location. A safe and secure housing location includes the following: researchers are able to secure food, safe travel to and from field sites, and supportive points of contact in the local community.

a. Particularly relevant for GEOS 401

21. Review and agree upon fieldwork and safety plans with all members of your research team before any fieldwork begins.

a. Specifically for students - faculty need to be ready to:

i. clear expectations/descriptions for all field experiences for students in advance...

ii. message how much we care about their experience and safety, communicate our willingness to support them

iii. Support students with field gear and other resources: consider how to mitigate gear needs and trip costs, particularly for GEOS 401

1. we have taken some steps in the right direction for this.

22. Actively engage with researchers on how to reorganize fieldwork practices if and when there are restrictions on movement or other unexpected adjustments; for example, local ordinances limiting activity (i.e., curfew, stay-at-home orders, etc.).

RESOURCES FOR RESEARCHERS WHO FEEL UNSAFE OR AT RISK

In collaboration with the Division of Natural Sciences and the Administration, the PLU Geosciences department should:

1. Establish protocols and support networks for
 - a. reporting and documenting risk (for example, recordings of a verbal altercation, written correspondence of an inactive supervisor, photo documentation of a slur, etc)
 - b. collecting witnesses to help showcase the level of threat
 - c. reporting individuals who place researchers in unsafe situations, including students or faculty members of the team

The support group might include peers, a counselor, to established institutional services.

2. Make students aware of institutional resources and protocols available to maintain the safety of researchers

Work in progress - we need to develop this as a department/program.

Still to do:

Adapt our existing lab safety plan

Continue discussions and defining how to incorporate antiracist work into our field and lab activities.