



Unlearning Racism in Geoscience



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## DRAFT | OET Safety Plan and Fieldwork Strategies for At-Risk Individuals

### Code of Conduct

During the time that you are traveling and working under the auspices of the Ocean Exploration Trust, you are representing OET and the sponsors and partners that are supporting our exploration and education programs. As a member of OET's Corps of Exploration and expedition team, you are acting as a role model and are expected to act in a professional manner at all times, both at sea and ashore. Prohibited conduct includes:

- Theft or inappropriate removal of property.
- Falsification of timekeeping records.
- Possession, manufacture, distribution, sale, dispensation or use of alcohol or illegal drugs.
- Fighting or threatening violence.
- Negligence or improper conduct leading to damage of Company-owned or customer-owned property.
- Violation of safety or health rules.
- Sexual or other unlawful or unwelcome harassment and touching.
- Bribery of officials or providing gifts to clients, vendors, or others with whom OET does or may do business.

### [OET Anti-Harassment & Anti-Discrimination Policy](#)

### Safety Policy

Vessels operated by the Ocean Exploration Trust are working vessels with operations that involve heavy equipment and machinery. Safety rules and guidelines should always be heeded and taken seriously. You will be briefed shortly after arriving on board about the safety guidelines and emergency procedures of the vessel on which you are sailing. You are expected to follow all directions from the Captain, Crew and Expedition Leader regarding safety and emergencies and you will also be expected to attend any required safety meetings or emergency drills. You are also expected to act in a courteous, safe and professional manner while in port. Blatant disregard for safety aboard any vessels operated or under charter by the Ocean Exploration Trust will result in the immediate termination of your participation in the expedition.

Aboard all vessels, the main deck, laboratories, and any working areas require appropriate closed-toe shoes. Alternative footwear may be allowed in recreational areas aboard the vessel as instructed by the Captain/Expedition Leader. Steel-toed shoes, hard hats, life jackets and other safety gear, as designated by the Deck Chief, are required during launch, recovery and other deck operations, including operating the winch, high power equipment or any heavy/dangerous items/equipment in any area of the ship. Only OET contractors, full-time employees, and volunteer members of the technical team (ROV pilots, navigators and video engineers) are allowed on the back deck during launch and



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recovery operations. Final decisions on personnel allowed on the back deck at any given time will be made by the Deck Chief.

We reserve the right to terminate your participation with the OET and its expeditions if this code of conduct is breached.

## Next steps needed to advance field safety

- Provide more detailed resources, “What is the experience of going to sea?” available with applications/ job postings, ahead of selection.
- Advocate for staff and mentor training (not currently offered): implicit bias, bystander intervention, de-escalation training.
- Touch points for anti-racism and identity-based safety in expedition onboarding
  - Staffing -- Code of Conduct, Anti-Harrasment and Anti-Discrimination Policies are shared; considerations noted for gender-based berthing requirements
  - After staffing — Introduction to specific cruise and travel considerations, supervisors field questions
  - Pre-cruise briefing — details further developed for expedition, another opportunity to talk about onboard expectations and travel safety risks
  - All-Hands Meeting — Briefing about ship culture, anti-harassment, conduct expectations, reporting procedures
  - Final day of the expedition — reminder ahead of entering a new port about expectations and safety risks

## Safety Considerations on expedition & in-port

### What will OET do to minimize risk to participants while they are in port?

1. Direct Expedition Leaders to talk with all participants 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. Ensure individuals know they can continue conversation with EL, dept heads, and additional mentors.
2. Create an expedition risk management plan that discusses known risks at annual port calls and expedition sites. This document should detail known potential risks and identify personal and organizational mitigation(s) for that risk. Inform all participants of safety incidents and ensure up-to-date copies are included in pre-expedition briefings and available on the ship for review.
3. The scale of risk can be higher at international field sites (e.g., identities may be criminalized). OET logistics team will conduct research about port safety and risk due to any international laws and customs in addition to local foreign laws, current political situations, actual degree of law enforcement, and develop a briefing for all participants. In situations of elevated risk, establish an emergency contingency plan and communicate it to all participants.
4. Contact others (especially those who share an at-risk identity) 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. Consult with other ship operators to share background



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information about ports.

5. Encourage team members to travel in port with another person, when possible. When this is not possible, have a point of contact (preferably the supervisor) who is aware of your whereabouts and expected schedule on a given day.
6. Issue ship ID cards or shipyard lanyards that clearly demonstrate affiliation with OET for use in port.

### **What can participants do to minimize risk to themselves while in port?\***

1. Take advantage of training opportunities to increase field safety and promote awareness (e.g., self-defense courses, first aid, cultural history course about the locations).
2. Always carry credentials in case someone challenges why you are at the field site. These include photo ID (driver's license, passports, institution ID) and ship ID card. Any additional form of identification that clearly demonstrates affiliation with the research institution can also be helpful.
3. When possible, travel in port with another person. When this is not possible, have a point of contact (preferably the supervisor) who is aware of your whereabouts and expected schedule on a given day.
4. If at any time you feel unsafe, contact your supervisor to discuss ways to modify the situation. It is paramount that at-risk individuals advocate for themselves.

### **What can mentors/ OET supervisors do to support at-risk participants?\***

1. Self-educate on the politics, demographics, and culture of the areas surrounding expedition areas and ports, in order to be fully aware of potential risks.
2. Self-educate on the experience of your team member's identity, and the corresponding risk that they may encounter.
  - a. OET assembled resource libraries, including:
    - i. URGE readings and takeaways
    - ii. Fieldwork: diversity, equity, and risks
      1. [In the Field](#)
      2. [The Geological Society- Confronting Barriers to inclusion - Opening the gate to accessible fieldwork](#)
      3. [Scientists push against barriers to diversity in the field sciences](#)
      4. [Field courses narrow demographic achievement gaps in ecology and evolutionary biology](#)
      5. [Volunteer field technicians are bad for wildlife ecology](#)
    - iii. Perspectives on the visibility and discrimination of diversity in STEM
      1. [power, privilege, and everyday life.](#)
      2. [I Am One of You: A Gay Wildlife Biologist's Perspective on Our Profession](#)
    - iv. Pacific and Oceania (current primary field area for OET) resource library  
In development