



# USC University of Southern California

Marine and Environmental Biology

## USC MEB Field Safety Plan

Fieldwork is an integral part of the researcher's life. Certain individuals are at a higher risk as a result of prejudices when they are in the field. Therefore, having a set of rules and guidelines for mitigating risk in the field is paramount. We have come up with a few strategies in addition to those found in "Safe Fieldwork Strategies for At-Risk Individuals".

- Buddy system and team language
  - There is strength in numbers. Aim to conduct field work in pairs.
  - Rehearse safety words and gestures with buddy when going on extended trips in remote locations.
- Annual field safety trainings that incorporate basic first aid, harassment, and best practices for risk mitigation from experiences in the field (debriefs and other knowledge).
  - Hold annual trainings that incorporate old and new knowledge from experiences in the field (debriefs, not relived. See debriefs below)
- Uniform/ vest to clearly identify as an official researcher while on site
  - Identifying yourself as a researcher may help mitigate risks of implicit bias.
  - Carry identification at all times.
  - Carry PI's card/phone number at all times.
- Document incidents in the field
  - Documentation is crucial for addressing the issue as well as mitigating it in the future.
- PI and researcher are responsible to research and discuss possible risks at the field site, geographic location, or research vessel.
  - Even after the PI educates themselves, those that do not share the same identity may still be unaware of possible risk that other researchers may face. Researchers are responsible for bringing up potential risks. PIs responsible for validating their experiences and modifying the research plan such that work can be conducted safely.
  - Be aware of and abide by international customs, laws, and current political situations.
  - Location of nearest food, water, emergency services, and law enforcement.
  - Local demographics
  - Local hate groups
  - (At Sea) Who are the captain and chief scientist?

- (At Sea) Research vessel culture and traditions? Contact other colleagues that have been on the vessel.
  - o I remember crossing the equator being a thing.
- Debrief: At a minimum
  - o What of the plan went well?
  - o What did not go well?
  - o Other lessons learned