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### **Deliverable – Draft Safety Plan**

The safety plan below is a general plan for the EAS department. Individual labs and research groups are expected to supplement this plan with additional details relevant to their work, field sites, and laboratory procedures. The full, synthesized group plan should be presented to all new members of a research team when they join and are undergoing initial training, as a component of the usual required safety training procedures. Both this department-level plan and research group plans are works-in-progress to be regularly revisited and refined.

### **DRAFT CODE OF CONDUCT FOR EARTH AND ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES, UNL**

Please note that this Code of Conduct is not a legal document, and it supplements but does not supersede Department, College, or University policies.

#### **Overview**

We value the participation of every member of our community and want to ensure everyone has an enjoyable and fulfilling experience, both professionally and personally. Accordingly, all members of the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (EAS) are expected to show respect and courtesy to others at all times.

#### **Inclusivity and diversity**

Enjoyable, high-quality work can only be conducted when you feel safe, secure, and supported. All department members are thus expected to foster a harassment-free experience for everyone, regardless of gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, age, and/or religion. We do not tolerate harassment by and/or of members of our department in any form, and we ask all members of the community to conform to the following rules:

- Be respectful to others, and do not insult or put down other members of EAS.
- All communication, be it online or in person, should be appropriate for a professional audience, and should be considerate of people from different cultural backgrounds. Sexual language and imagery are not appropriate. Harassment and sexist, racist, or exclusionary jokes are not tolerated.
- Harassment includes offensive and insulting comments or language related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, race, religion, sexual images in public spaces; deliberate intimidation, stalking, following, harassing photography or recording; sustained disruption of discussions; inappropriate physical contact; and unwelcome sexual attention. Participants asked to stop any harassing behavior are expected to comply immediately.



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- Contribute to discussions with a constructive, positive approach.
- Be mindful of talking over others when discussing in groups, and be willing to hear out the ideas of others.

In addition to making group members feel safe and secure, diversity and inclusivity benefits us all. The greater the mix of people in our department, the greater the mix of skills, experiences, perspectives, and ideas. But the benefits of diversity and equality cannot be fully achieved without creating an inclusive environment.

A faculty member or, if needed, the ombudsperson(s) or Chair of the Department will discuss this Code of Conduct with any members who violate these rules, no matter how much they contribute or how senior their position in EAS. If inappropriate behavior persists after this discussion, formal processes will commence (see below). Any issues related to this Code can be reported to the Chair or ombudsperson(s) and will be treated as confidentially as possible within legal and university requirements. If a member of EAS is uncomfortable approaching any of these people, they may instead file a report directly with the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (IEC), which is the UNL Title IX office (see below for details).

### Mental Health

There is increasing evidence that certain attributes of academic research may challenge peoples' mental health. Specific factors driving this include:

- Quality-of-life issues, including financial stress
- Feelings of isolation in your research; e.g. everyone has their own topic and it can sometimes feel as if you are working on your own
- Uncertainty in research and so-called "negative" results (e.g., a question is more challenging to answer than expected, results are not statistically significant, or months of work do not produce the results hoped)
- For students and postdoctoral scholars, uncertainty about their post-UNL career
- Burnout, i.e., working endless hours without sufficient breaks and the resulting physical and mental exhaustion

All may encounter these hurdles, and members of EAS are encouraged to take an active and pre-emptive approach towards the maintenance of their physical and mental health, including reaching out to university and local resources, scheduling reasonable breaks, and discussing your needs with a supervisor, ombudsperson, or the department Chair. Likewise, supervisors are encouraged to accommodate supervisees' reasonable breaks and other measures intended to maintain physical and mental health.

### Research guidelines

Faculty members and research teams should openly discuss authorship expectations and ethics in their team meetings. Those who have made a significant contribution to the work for a



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publication, including external collaborators and students, should generally receive authorship and be involved in the writing and publication of manuscripts and other products. Faculty research leaders are expected to develop and communicate clear guidelines regarding what constitutes a “significant contribution” and about ethical practices in publication and presentation of research.

In line with federal requirements and university expectations for research, all computers and data sets should be backed up regularly and saved to each research team’s data storage. Faculty research leaders are expected to communicate clearly how data are to be saved and backed up to avoid data loss and maintain the integrity of their research. Researchers are likewise encouraged to develop and communicate policies to their teams regarding placing data and metadata in professional repositories.

Faculty research leaders should develop policies and communicate clearly with their teams regarding conference and workshop participation for team members, including the level of funding support available, any expectations that members will supplement or prepay the costs of attendance (which should be minimized to avoid hardship), and presentation expectations. Faculty should also communicate explicitly regarding submission and publication of abstracts, pre-approval by coauthors and collaborators, and similar practices.

### **Working hours**

Members of EAS are expected and recognized to have personal responsibilities and obligations in addition to their jobs and studies. At times, research, teaching, and service demands may require an atypical work schedule, rather than the traditional ‘9-to-5’ scheduled work day. In many cases, the number of hours worked or times for them may not be explicitly stipulated (with the notable exception of student hourly wages or fellowship appointments based on contracted hours). Faculty leaders are expected to communicate clearly with members of their team and any graduate TAs involved in their courses about work expectations, reasonable work hours, expectations when extenuating circumstances (such as illness) arise, and planned vacations and breaks. Work expectations should be developed with an awareness of the mental health needs of all team members.

### **Mentorship guidelines**

Faculty members and research team leaders are encouraged to consider adapting their mentorship approach to better address the impact of racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination on students. [Chaudhary and Berhe \(2020\)](#) suggest the following approaches, which PIs should consider implementing:

1. Confront racial inequities in your research field directly and with members of your research team.
2. Lead your group in informed discussions about the impacts of racism and discrimination.
3. Immediately address any discriminatory or problematic incidents that occur in your group, research team, or class.



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4. Write explicit lab, office, and field safety guidelines that directly address racism and discrimination.
5. Collaborate with diverse colleagues, but do not tokenize: collaboration must be equitable and genuine.
6. Amplify the voices of underrepresented scholars in your field.
7. Maintain a flexible and collaborative research agenda that is open to new approaches and ideas.
8. Advocate for diverse leadership in your field.
9. Hold others accountable for their behavior, but do not expect anything in return.
10. Ask underrepresented and minoritized group members what they might need to be safe and to avoid harassment or danger in the field, on campus, or while visiting external facilities.
11. Provide work partners for anyone who feels at risk in their work setting.
12. Encourage group members, particularly minoritized members, to seek out diverse mentors. They can also be encouraged to speak with ombudspeople, DEI committee members, and the office for Students with Disabilities if it would help them.

This Code of Conduct (CoC) was adapted from several open source Codes, including BahlaiLab CoC (Christine Bahlai); WhitakerLab (Kirstie Whitaker); Hill Lab (Jon Hill); Krevorlab (Sam Krevor); MicroMicEng (Ben Britton), and BSG (Chris Jackson).

### UNL EAS REPORTING PROCEDURES

#### Reporting Policies:

##### University Policy Links:

- [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout\\_id=116](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout_id=116)
- <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system/>
- <https://care.unl.edu/welcome>
- <https://www.unl.edu/equity/title-ix>

##### Department Policies:

- EAS has one or more departmental ombudspersons who can receive complaints.
- Reporting policies are reviewed approximately every five years. Changes are made by the faculty and department chair.
- Rates of reported incidents are made publicly available (e.g., # of reports each year) by the university. Significant incidents that could affect others are reported to the university community immediately, and a report listing all incidents is released annually.

#### Formal University Reporting Mechanisms:

- The designated individuals/positions for reporting incidents are the Office of Institutional Equity and Compliance (IEC), which is the UNL Title IX office.



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- Reports can be made online using either of the links below, including anonymous reports:
  - <https://www.unl.edu/tips-incident-reporting-system/>
  - [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout\\_id=116](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?UnivofNebraskaSystem&layout_id=116)
- In-person and online reports are routed to a coordinator, compliance officer, or specialist in IEC.
- NOTE: Police are only involved in the university reporting process if there is an alleged criminal complaint.

### REQUIRED AND RECOMMENDED TRAINING RESOURCES

- We can make a general field safety, harassment training, and first aid course available and mandatory for all researchers and field instructors.
- Develop requirements for antidiscrimination, bystander intervention, and de-escalation training. Consider how effective a given training is, how and how often it is offered and how often/when we may want to require it, and how we can make it more effective.
- Training should include strategies to reduce the risk of discrimination and harassment in the field, which can be very serious. One relevant strategy is to actively counter misinformation and provide correct information about groups like LGBTQIA+ people, to eliminate and counter negative stereotypes.
- Share these requirements as well as any additional recommended training with all new faculty, graduate students (especially TAs), and research team members when they join the department or a group. This should be communicated as a standard, normal requirement, similar to the safety trainings already required with employment at the university.
- Consider implementing or using professional training workshops offered by SERC/On the Cutting Edge.
- We could implement or require fieldwork training for instructors (faculty and TAs), such as those offered by <http://fieldworkinitiative.org/>.
- AGU recommends that all faculty and instructors take anti-discrimination training and learn effective ways to address discrimination against their students, such as de-escalation and protecting students from violence.

### SAFETY GUIDELINES

#### Safety at the university:



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- All employees and members of research and scholarly teams should complete the required EHS training modules appropriate to their work.
- Research groups and the department should further communicate about local safety, such as guidelines for working late in the lab or office (e.g., having a person to check in with for after-hours work), important campus phone numbers, resources if a risky situation arises on campus, and guidelines for interactions with campus and city police. These guidelines and recommendations should consider the higher risk to minoritized people in such interactions.
- Faculty members should consider what might make each work space or practice unsafe or uncomfortable for some members of their team, and consider any additional training that might help to require or offer.
- Safety planning for work at UNL should extend to other external facilities that members of a research team may visit and collaborate with. This includes careful planning for housing, guidelines for campus and facility access, and contact points at the external facility, particularly when graduate students will be visiting facilities without their supervisors. Ideally, any student who travels to an external facility for research will be introduced to a local supervisor/mentor in advance who will assist with guaranteeing that visitors have safe housing and any necessary safety training and precautions while visiting.
- The department DEI committee should, as part of its charge, regularly reevaluate department practices and documents (including this Code of Conduct) to remove any barriers to inclusion in safety practices.

### **Fieldwork:**

Training and working in the field is an important component of many research projects and careers in Earth and atmospheric sciences, but it presents unique safety and inclusivity concerns. Instructors, research team leaders, and field participants should be educated about these concerns and develop advance plans for risk reduction and safety responses. A comprehensive list of recommended strategies and approaches is provided below. All trip leaders, whether for research or teaching, should develop a careful and explicit safety plan in advance of any trips, receive pre-approval of their plan by a department supervisor, and communicate the details of that plan to all trip participants.

To be fully inclusive, EAS further recognizes that not all careers in geoscience require traditional fieldwork, and that some people are disproportionately unsafe in some field environments. This can be exacerbated where a masculine fieldwork culture persists. Instructors and research team leaders are expected to be sensitive to students' diverse needs, and to design programs and opportunities that are safe without penalties, including non-field opportunities. This applies to graduate student research projects as well as students in a class or seminar group.



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Likewise, there are some field locations that may not be a safe choice for all participants. PIs and instructors should give serious second thought to bringing team members or students to such locations. Many departments and groups have reduced or halted travel with groups or research teams to intolerant areas that may be unsafe for their group members, and this is an acceptable choice. For example, some locations have severe legal consequences, even the death penalty, for being gay; and some states in the U.S. police and/or penalize restroom choice for trans and gender-nonconforming people.

- Field safety plans must include advance planning for basic trip logistics. For educational trips, this includes the necessary university insurance form, careful planning for vehicle reservations and university drivers (for local trips accessed by car), housing plans, clear driving directions and maps, contingency plans (e.g., responses to hazardous weather, blocked road access, participant injuries, or dangerous encounters with local residents or wildlife).
- Whenever possible, research team leaders should be present in the field to lead and introduce any local hosts. Even when this is not possible, solo field work should be avoided if possible. If it is necessary for someone to remain in the field alone for any period, that participant should have a point of contact and check in daily with them, with a clear communication plan.
- Emergency contact tools should be provided for members of the department going into the field for classes or research whenever possible. Some field areas are remote and have poor cell phone access, and include mountainous terrain that limits the functionality of two-way radios. One option is for the department to maintain a few satellite phones that can be checked out by faculty and graduate researchers for more remote trips.
- Field plans should include a racial risk assessment for all sites. When possible, it is ideal to document cases of prior risk exposure for a given field site, and to maintain a list of such incidents. For research teams, that list can be shared in advance and provided in hard copy to carry during the trip. Pre-trip racial risk assessments should be included with any pre-approval documents.
- All field trips should include a pre-departure checklist of discussions to have with the class or field team, including how to document incidents in the field and completing any necessary training. These discussions can include a basic summary of any local cultural expectations that may be unfamiliar in the field area.
- For field trips with optional stops that include a fee, check in with the group in advance to invite students to confidentially approach the trip leader if they would privately need those fees subsidized. Otherwise, this presents a barrier to participation for those with economic restrictions.





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- First aid kits should include pads and tampons, extra toilet paper, hand sanitizer or wipes, and zip-loc bags for discreet field disposal. Trip participants should know where this kit is kept and have free access to it. Trip leaders should check and restock the kit before every trip and regularly while in the field.
- As part of the field safety plan, trip leaders should carefully consider disability access issues in advance of the trip for all planned stops. In their advance discussions with the group, they should communicate with participants about the ruggedness of terrain. Leaders should have a backup plan for any participants who unexpectedly arrive for the trip with a mobility-limiting injury or condition, either because it is a new condition or because they were uncomfortable about confidentiality. One approach for this contingency for local field trips is to bring an extra TA or faculty member who can operate one of the vehicles and relocate any students if necessary, and to incorporate field stops that are accessible directly from vehicles where possible.
- Trip leaders should have a thoughtful field safety plan. This means planning out resources and strategies for responding to threatening people who approach any members of the team or class, even when isolated or remote without cell service.
- Trip leaders can consider requiring “buddies” for going to the bathroom, and/or for an instructor to be told before anyone wanders off. For minoritized group members, one approach to assist with safety when separated from the rest of the group is to encourage them to select a non-minoritized member as a field buddy, if they are comfortable doing so. This can place other trip participants in the role of an ally and help to build trust.
- Easily visible credentials and advance notice can sometimes help deter external threats to trip participants. Trip leaders can inform any local property owners or field managers when the group will be there and where they will be going. Neighbors can be informed of planned field visits using a brief note that the team will be conducting research or training nearby, with contact information that clearly identifies a legitimate research affiliation. Likewise, identifying markers can be added to any vehicles that lack them (such as a magnetic sign for rented, non-university vehicles). Departments can also supply an official letter of support for researchers doing fieldwork with contact information, to add credibility if participants are challenged.
- Trip leaders should implement a strict policy that they discuss with each research group or class regarding abuse, with a clear code of conduct for the field that is presented in writing and verbally before departing, and that any inappropriate incidents will be reported. Policies should include consequences for retaliation. As part of the participant code of conduct, trip leaders should stipulate clear policies and limits around drug and alcohol use and possession.
- Harassment in the field is serious. If at all possible, trip leaders should be encouraged to include sufficient funds to permit separate rooms in indoor lodging accommodations.





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Leaders should also take requests for moving rooms or having an individual room seriously.

- Sometimes, despite advance planning and precautions, a high risk, hostile, and/or race-related incident or encounter may occur while in the field. Faculty should discuss such incidents with the group when they occur and conduct and encourage bystander intervention. All hostile encounters should be documented, even if they are not severe, and they must be addressed immediately. If it becomes necessary, the team should have a plan for departing dangerous locations or relocating to safety.
- Likewise, those conducting work in the field without a team leader present should be instructed to inform a supervisor immediately if they feel unsafe in the field. The supervisor should assist in any way possible to ensure their participants' safety.
- For group trips, trip leaders should plan and include visits to convenience or grocery stores in case of private needs for emergency supplies, if at all possible. Any personally communicated needs that make an additional trip to such facilities necessary should be treated as confidential.
- Likewise, toilet access and related issues should be addressed directly. Trip leaders should not assume their participants have experience with or know how to eliminate comfortably in the outdoors or primitive facilities. They should understand that elimination in unfamiliar environments entails a learning curve and is intimidating for many; this can be made much more comfortable by sharing explicit instructions for each field area. Inadequate access to or knowledge about what to expect in terms of toilet access causes significant stress, sometimes leading to participants drinking less water because they are afraid of a lack of access to needed facilities. This is a safety issue, and one that is particularly difficult for those who squat to urinate, on trips with large groups, and in landscapes with little privacy. Instructors should carefully plan and communicate about regular toilet stops on trips, even if it seems inconvenient, and never appear frustrated at requests or members may avoid asking for their needs. Field guidelines should address these issues with clear policies and protocols for different areas.
- Similarly, trip leaders should not assume that people who menstruate know how to handle this in a field environment or without access to full restroom facilities and showers. Individuals who menstruate need to change products frequently for sanitation and basic safety, so regular access to facilities and instructions about how to handle menstruation without them is necessary.



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## Example Field Trip Code of Conduct - 2019 ISU/UNL Field Camp CoC

### ISU/UNL Geology Field Camp Agreement

Students attending the ISU/UNL Geology Field Camp agree to the following terms and conditions:

1. Students will behave in a professional and courteous manner at all times during the field course. Each student is expected to conduct him/herself in a spirit of cooperation, respect and thoughtfulness for other students, drivers, staff, instructors, and for the environment.
2. Students will not use alcohol or illegal drugs (or be under the influence) during class sessions or in the field. Binge drinking at any time may result in being sent home.
3. Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are committed to creating a safe, diverse and inclusive work and learning environment free from unlawful discrimination, harassment and violence.

The field camp has a zero tolerance policy with regards to sexual harassment. We abide by Section 703 of Title VII of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, wherein sexual harassment is defined as:

Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature constitute sexual harassment when 1) submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of an individual's employment, 2) submission to or rejection of such conduct by an individual is used as the basis for employment decisions affecting such individual, or 3) *such conduct has the purpose or effect of* unreasonably interfering with an individual's work performance or *creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive working environment* (emphasis is ours).

Furthermore, all students, faculty and staff are protected by Title IX (regardless of gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, full or part-time status, disability, race or national origin) in all aspects of our educational programs and activities.

4. Students will abide by all rules and regulations of the camp as set forth by Aaron Wood (Field Station Director) and the instructors.
5. Students will abide by all rules and regulations regarding state vehicles, including never transporting alcohol or illegal substances in any state vehicle.
6. All University of Nebraska Policies and Procedures apply to UNL students in the field, including the UNL Code of Student Conduct Handbook (<http://stuafs.unl.edu/ja/code/>); all Iowa State-enrolled students must abide by the ISU Code of Student Conduct (<https://www.policy.iastate.edu/policy/SDR>).
7. All classes, lectures, and field days require attendance. Failure to attend will result in lowering of student's grade.
8. Any transgression from professional conduct may result in the student being sent home, at his/her own expense, assigned an "I" (incomplete) or "F" for the course (at the discretion of the instructors), and the forfeiture of the scholarship and all fees.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to comply with the above stated policies and to follow any instructions provided in order to ensure the safety of all participants.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_