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## Outdoor and Remote Field Research

Inherent challenges to work in remote locations are hazardous terrain, climate, and changing conditions; limited services and medical response; and often unreliable communications.

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## Five Suggestions for Field Researchers

### Register Your Trip

You are automatically registered if you book travel using UC's central travel service Connexus; otherwise, you should register trips over 100 miles from campus via the website [UC Away](#) [7]. Shortly after registration you will receive an email with UC travel insurance numbers and a destination-specific "trip brief." If conditions change during your trip (e.g. approaching storm, disease outbreak, heightened security), you will receive updated alerts via email with specific guidance for your location. You may also access iJet's travel intelligence reports directly by logging in to the [Worldcue Trip Planner](#) [8] or by downloading the mobile app Worldcue.

### Make a Plan

For field work in remote locations - or hazardous work off campus - develop a field safety plan with site information and emergency procedures. Many researchers including biologists, archeologists and engineers are using handheld satellite devices that provide GPS-tracking and emergency SOS features, for example Spot Messengers or the Delorme Inreach that supports 2-way texting globally via satellite. Your field safety plan serves as a hazard assessment tool and can include No Go criteria, refer to other protocols or training, and be used to brief your field team or course participants on trip logistics and precautions. Berkeley's [Field Safety Plan template](#) [9] is available as an example; or contact your campus EH&S office for guidance.

### Take First Aid Training

Wilderness First Aid training available on or near many campuses is an excellent option for outdoor field work and/or travel to developing countries. Basic 4-hour first aid training is also available on most campuses and Heat Illness Prevention training is now available online via the UC Learning Center (search using the keyword "heat"; course

length is 15-20 minutes; or contact your EH&S office).

## Carry a First Aid Kit

Customize the kit for your location and tasks, replenish expired materials and carry extra disposable gloves. The lightweight NOLS 4.0 med kit is a good option for outdoor work, and includes supplies for wound care, burns, and blisters; bleeding/CPR; fractures, sprains; various medications and instruments, including an irrigation syringe and povidone iodine, shears, and even a small roll of duct tape. Additional items suggested by field researchers include OcuFresh eyewash, oral rehydration salts, insect repellent, high altitude prevention medicine, a lightweight emergency blanket, extra Moleskin, a Samsplint and epinephrine autoinjectors (prescription required).

## Consider (and Discuss) Security Risks and Personal Safety

Consult with reliable local contacts, check State Department warnings, and review a “security brief” for your destination, available via the [Worldcue Trip Planner](#) [8]. If you’re teaching a field course or leading a trip, review precautions and expectations before your trip, e.g. regarding free time, leaving the group, alcohol and drug use, local crime risks, and situational awareness. Concise, clear messages keep your group aware. Effective leaders brief at the start of the day, at the start of an activity, and as conditions change. For high-risk destinations, please consult with [Phillip Van Saun](#) [10].

Last updated: 12 Dec 2016

## Getting Assistance

Contact your [Environmental Health & Safety](#) [11] department for assistance with hazard assessment, field safety plan templates, training, personal protective equipment (PPE) selection, shipping regulated materials or other safety concerns:

- [UC Berkeley](#) [12]
- [UC Davis](#) [13]
- [UC Irvine](#) [14]
- [UC Los Angeles](#) [15]
- [UC Merced](#) [16]
- [UC Riverside](#) [17]
- [UC San Diego](#) [18]
- [UC San Francisco](#) [19]
- [UC Santa Barbara](#) [20]
- [UC Santa Cruz](#) [21]

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## Safety Considerations

When planning international travel, you must also plan for your safety. Visit the [Safety Considerations](#) [22] section to learn more about food and water safety, protection against animals and insects, and other concerns you might have

while traveling abroad.

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## Additional Resources

Related University of California Programs/Services:

- Field Safety Center of Excellence [link coming soon with technical guidance topics. Meanwhile contact Sara Souza, UC Systemwide Health and Safety Advisor for Field Research: [sarasouza@berkeley.edu](mailto:sarasouza@berkeley.edu) [23].
- [Scientific Diving & Boating Safety Programs](#) [24]: [Scripps/UCSD](#) [25], [UCLA](#) [26], [UCSB](#) [27], [UCSC](#) [24], [Berkeley/Merced](#) [28], [Davis/Bodega Marine Lab](#) [29]
- UC Agriculture and Natural Resources (UC ANR): provides excellent "[Safety Notes](#) [30]" for a variety of outdoor and field activities
- International Travel Clinics: provide pre-trip immunizations and medical counseling. Make an appointment at least 6-8 weeks prior to travel
- Occupational Health Clinics: provide work-related exams, including medical clearance for respirators and immunizations for specific research-related hazards (e.g. handling bats)
- [Gump Station](#) [31]: Moorea, French Polynesia (managed by UC Berkeley)
- [UC Natural Reserve System](#) [32] – Plan your visit using RAMS

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### Links

[1] <https://www.ucgo.org/outdoor-remote-field-research>