Environment, Health, and Safety

Ask Questions - A 5 W’s Approach to Preparing for a Field Visit
The Key to a Safe Productive Field Visit

Proper Preparation

▪ Assessing for Potential Hazards
▪ Developing a Strategy to Deal with these Hazards
▪ Allowing for Adequate Time to Implement your Strategy
▪ Have a Backup Plan for Critical Issues
▪ Preparing (as best you can) for Emergency Situations

How do we do this? – We Ask Questions
Who is going into the field?

- How many people are going with you?
- How experienced are they?
- Are you all prepared for potentially strenuous activities?
- Have you all received appropriate trainings?
- Are you all up to date on vaccinations for the travel location?
- Did you all provide emergency contact information?
What is going to be done in the field?

Know and prepare for any potential Activity Hazards

▪ Will you be using chemical, biological, radiation agents?
▪ Will you be collecting samples? Returning them to MIT?
▪ Are there hazards related to equipment use?
▪ How will you be traveling – ATV, Snowmobile, Boat, On foot
▪ Will you be working on or near water? Along the side of a road?
▪ Will you be conducting Interviews?
Where is the field work being done?

Know and prepare for any potential Location and/or Health Hazards

▪ Rural or Urban Areas – Culture, Laws, Crime?
▪ Remote areas – Medical facilities, communication, lodging, etc.
▪ Extreme heat – Sunburn, Heat Stroke, Dehydration
▪ Extreme cold – Frostbite, Hypothermia
▪ Falls from heights, Altitude sickness, Avalanche potential
▪ Entry into confined spaces – Oxygen deficiency or asphyxiates
▪ Local animals, insects, poisonous plants, food and waterborne illness
When will the fieldwork occur?

Know and prepare for hazards related to time of day or seasonal changes

- Working at Night – Hi-Vis PPE and light sources
- Summer – Enhanced and more widespread heat related hazards
- Winter – Enhanced and more widespread cold related hazards
- Monsoon Season – Long duration rain and wind
- Hunting Season – Wear blaze orange
Why should you plan well in advance?

It is always less stressful when you give yourself time

- Identifying activities, potential hazards, etc.—enables you to take preventive measures
- Identify proper clothing, equipment, first aid material needed
- Passport and Medical considerations
How do you organize all of your trip plans?

MIT EHS has been collecting and developing resources

▪ EHS Field Health and Safety Website – [link]
▪ Field Safety Manual – [link]
▪ Field Research Safety Planning Document
▪ Field Safety Fact Sheets – [link]
▪ ALSO,
  ▪ Contact Host Institution EHS Office and/or local officials
In Conclusion

“By failing to prepare, you are preparing to fail” — Benjamin Franklin

- EHS wants you to have **SAFE** and **SUCCESSFUL** field visits
- Asking the right questions can help you prepare for this
- Remember, we are always available to assist at **Fieldsafety@MIT.EDU**

EAPS PhD student Joanna Millstein is studying glacier dynamics to clarify how melting ice sheets will affect the planet.

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