



# Environment, Health, and Safety

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**Ask Questions - A 5 W's Approach  
to Preparing for a Field Visit**



# The Key to a Safe Productive Field Visit

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## 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



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## How do we do this? – We Ask Questions

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# Who is going into the field?

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- 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?

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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?

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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
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# When will the fieldwork occur?

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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?

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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

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“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](mailto: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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