

Field-based teaching best safety practices checklist - for instructors

ESPM field safety committee - Autumn 2024

Recommended best practices

- Obtain and carry emergency contact information for all participants.
- Write and use a field safety plan for the class.
 - A template is available at <https://ourevironment.berkeley.edu/service-portal/field-safety>.
 - Example plans from the department are available at <https://ourevironment.berkeley.edu/service-portal/field-safety>.
 - Consider the role of identity-based risks for students (e.g., if traveling to communities/locations very different from their own/Berkeley).
- Submit the field safety plan to the department (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3UZzu3rVTW0DS9GFrxM4pSQR1yFsnYkbEPApLbis6cCkUg/viewform?usp=sf_link) to help with emergency response and communication.
- Review the field safety plan with GSIs prior to field teaching.
- Review the field safety plan with students prior to field teaching, at minimum ensuring they have an adequate understanding of the risks involved in participating.
- Post the field safety plan on bCourses or distribute to students in another way such that it is readily available throughout the semester.
- Create a means of communication (e.g. Google form) where students/GSIs can provide feedback directly or anonymously as the course progresses. This may be relating to near-misses, safety-related incidents, or causes of major discomfort.
- Review the field safety plan on a regular basis (e.g. annually) to make updates and incorporate student feedback.
- Provide students with alternative options from the default field-based learning if (within reason) some students feel that the risks of participation are too high.
- Remind students about your expectations for their conduct (what is / is not acceptable), and their opportunities to provide feedback or ask for help if something is not right.
- Ensure that students can obtain necessary safety-related items without incurring additional out-of-pocket costs (e.g., sleeping bags, if required, are available through the instructor upon private request).
- Ensure that details of sleeping arrangements, bathroom access, etc. promote participant safety and privacy (e.g., by asking for lockable doors), and communicate these details in advance with students.
- Make a course code of conduct that includes expectations for how students will behave and other policies they are expected to abide by. Solicit feedback or contributions from students on developing this code of conduct.
- Clearly articulate class policy/ expectations around drug or alcohol use off campus.

Pre-semester planning and course prep:

1. Assess or review risks that students and instructors could encounter during field based teaching.
2. Write and use a field safety plan for the class.
 - A template is available at <https://ourevironment.berkeley.edu/service-portal/field-safety>.
 - Example plans from the department are available at <https://ourevironment.berkeley.edu/service-portal/field-safety>.
 - Consider the role of identity-based risks for students (e.g., if traveling to communities/locations very different from their own/Berkeley).
 - If you already have a field safety plan, review and update the plan on a regular basis (e.g. annually) to make updates and incorporate student/GSI feedback.
3. Submit the field safety plan to the department (<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSd3UZzu3rVTW0DS9GFrxM4pSQR1yFsnYkbEPaPLbis6cCkUg/viewform>) to help with emergency response and communication.
4. Post the field safety plan on bCourses or distribute to students in another way such that it is readily available throughout the semester. This should always be accessible online and in person.

First three weeks of the semester:

- Obtain and carry emergency contact information for all participants.
- Review the field safety plan with GSIs prior to field teaching.
- Review the field safety plan with students prior to field teaching, at minimum ensuring they have an adequate understanding of the risks involved in participating.
- Make a course code of conduct that includes expectations for how students will behave and other policies they are expected to abide by. Solicit feedback or contributions from students on developing this code of conduct.
- Clearly articulate class policy/ expectations around drug or alcohol use off campus.

Throughout semester:

- Provide students with alternative options from the default field-based learning if it is reasonable for some students to feel that the risks of participation are too high.
- Remind students about your expectations for their conduct (what is / is not acceptable), and their opportunities to provide feedback or ask for help if something is not right.
- Provide opportunities for students/GSIs to (anonymously) provide feedback on safety-related incidents or near-misses on trips.
- Ensure that students can obtain necessary safety-related items without incurring additional out-of-pocket costs (e.g., sleeping bags, if required, are available through the instructor upon private request).
- Ensure that details of sleeping arrangements, bathroom access, etc. promote participant safety (e.g., by asking for lockable doors), and communicate these details in advance with students.