

GUIDELINES FOR MANAGING RISKS IN THE FIELD

As part of ongoing risk management orientation, we at the Soltis Center ought to provide a risk management orientation to the field site, including an overview of the inherent risks of each site and the strategies for managing those risks. Get to know the Center staff and coordinate with them on all routine logistical matters. Make sure you know who to contact at the Center – and how to reach him or her – in the event of an emergency. Also, make sure the Center staff knows who the course coordinators are, so they can contact the appropriate person in the event of a problem with the students. Teaching staff should always be housed within walking distance from the student dorms, and at least two professors are recommended be in the field at all times with the students. Make sure you tell the students where you are staying, so they can find you in the event of an emergency.

Additional guidelines to follow include:

- ***All emergencies must be communicated to the Director of the Center or his designee before taking any action.***
- To reduce the risk of venomous snakebite, visitors to the Center may not enter the rainforest unless they are wearing rubber or hiking boots, or snake gaiters. In addition, always wear rubber boots and carry a flashlight with you after dark. It will be the responsibility of the group leader to enforce this rule with the students, and sanction students who do not observe this rule.
- ***Do not***, under any circumstances, handle snakes. ***Do not*** allow students to handle snakes of any kind, and ***do not*** allow students to handle venomous or other dangerous animals, except under the direct supervision of the center staff.
- No one may enter the forest surrounding the center alone. Ideally each group entering the forest will be comprised of at least three people.
- No group can enter the forest without first notifying the group leader and/or center staff member on duty.
- Always pack water, a bit of food, a cell phone or radio, and a flashlight with extra batteries when you go for a hike, even if you plan to come back early. If possible, carry with you a small first aid kit. Be sure the faculty leader or center staff member knows your cell phone number, or how to contact you by radio while you are in the forest
- Provide a sign-out sheet for students to let you know where they are going and when they plan to be back during free days and weekends. Do not allow students to go out alone; encourage them to go out in groups of at least three. This way, if an accident happens, there will be one person to stay with the injured student and one person to go for help.
- Familiarize yourself with the trail or path system, as well as trail markers that can help orient yourself, before going into the forest with students.
- If a student does not return as expected, either from the forest or from a town trip, inform your fellow Professors and the Center staff immediately and work with them to organize a search party. Do not go look for the student(s) alone.
- The Center has a four-wheel drive car that may be used for transport in the event of any emergency. Make sure you know where the Manager-on-duty-is and how to reach him/her.