

Overseas Fieldwork in HE

Practical and logistical issues in running overseas fieldwork

Wednesday, 3 April 2003

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Overseas Fieldwork in HE

- **The law and your liability**
 - **Safe and Responsible fieldwork**
 - **Inclusive Fieldwork (SENDA)**
 - **Risk Assessment**
 - **Cultural and language issues**
 - **What the RGS-IBG can do to help**
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The Law & your liability

DUTY OF CARE

Everyone is required to take reasonable care in any situation in which harm to someone else could be foreseen.

The Law & your liability

STANDARD OF CARE

This is judged as the level of competence associated with the proper discharge of one's professional duties.

The Law & your liability

HIGER DUTY OF CARE

The standard of care expected with increased experience and specialist expertise where, through training or experience, one may be expected to visualise more clearly the results of one's actions in one's areas of specialism.

The Law & your liability

NEGLIGENCE

Where it has been established that there has been a breach of duty, the organiser may be prosecuted for negligence (criminal or financial)

The Law & your liability

STATUTE LAW

- Law of the land – the country in which you are running your trip.
 - In GB – created by Parliament
 - Establishes criminal liability
 - Cases brought by Crown, police, HSE
 - Jail or fines
 - Other countries may have different systems/punishments.
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The Law & your liability

COMMON (CIVIL) LAW

- Based on judges' decisions in past cases
 - Historical precedence
 - Cases brought by private individuals
 - Civil liability
 - Financial compensation (“damages”)
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Safe and Responsible Fieldwork

OR

**Charges of negligence will be
easier to refute if**

1. The Supervisor is competent to instruct the activity



What is Competence?

Training + Experience = Competence

But must be in the context of

- the ability of the whole group
 - purpose of the fieldwork
 - the environment where it takes place
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2. You are aware of the abilities and any special needs of your group

- What might you want to know about the participants?**
 - What should you know about the others acting in a supervisory role?**
 - Inclusive fieldwork**
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Inclusive Fieldwork



www.rgs.org/inclusive

Inclusive Fieldwork

Impairment based-approach.

- Individual liaison
 - Understanding of specific impairment
 - Physical access to environment
 - Logistics (travel, accommodation etc)
 - Teaching & assessment aids
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Inclusive Fieldwork

Curriculum-based approach

- Clear, measurable learning objectives
 - Clear expectations
 - Inclusive marketing & communication
 - Mode of delivery
 - Mode of assessment
 - Methods of facilitating observations
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Inclusive Fieldwork

Be Anticipatory - planning

- Plan ahead with timely consideration of inclusive solutions, not last minute attempts to include
 - Consult with individuals from the outset
 - Allow time in planning activities / expeditions for possible increased personal care time of disabled individuals
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Inclusive Fieldwork

Reasonable Adjustments

- Anticipating – planning ahead
 - **Clear learning objectives & expectations**

 - Marketing
 - **Staff Development**
 - Accessible materials / activities
 - **Media of communication / information**
 - Evaluation - inviting feedback
 - **Equipment / assistive technology**
 - Liaison – with individual and other orgs.
 - **Welcoming climate**
 - Physical access
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Inclusive Fieldwork

**AN INCLUSIVE APPROACH
=
SIMPLE GOOD PRACTICE
FOR ALL.**



3. Clear Objectives & Expectations

- A well defined aim and learning objectives will give clarity of expectation on both sides**
 - Be clear about what you expect participants to be able to do**
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4. The group has been systematically prepared for the fieldwork being undertaken

- Skills & Techniques
 - Safety awareness training
 - Appropriate behaviour (Code of Conduct)
 - Adequate clothing and equipment
 - Progressive learning
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Learning Judgement



REFLECT
On recent experience &
look for lessons learned

PREDICT
How to improve
next experience

EXPERIENCE

Developing Judgement

NOVICE

**Unconsciously
Incompetent**

Aren't aware of what they don't know. Need basic instruction.



**Consciously
Incompetent**

Aware of what they don't know. Ask for help in making decisions.

MASTER

**subconsciously
Competent**

Confident dealing with the trickiest problems.



**Consciously
Competent**

Knows the rules. Needs uncoached experience.

5. Appropriate and adequate supervision is provided

- *Direct* supervision unless observed evidence of competence
- *Indirect* supervision still requires monitoring & an ability to intervene

Recommended Ratios 1:10

6. You have prepare and shared a Risk Assessment



Risk Assessment: 3 tips

1. Risk assessment is not a means of guaranteeing that accidents will not happen on fieldwork.
Accidents will and we must be prepared for that eventuality.
 2. How should we conduct a risk assessment?
It is not a neatly produced spreadsheet, detailing all the hazards. It is not a document to be tucked away.
It is a way of working, which is captured through individual accountability and collective responsibility.
How accountable or responsible will a student be when they have a set of rules forced upon them?
 3. The participants must be involved in the risk assessment.
Preferably in the field, where things are real. Only then does a risk assessment come alive.
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Hazard and Risk on Overseas Fieldwork

- **The Group**
 - Health & Fitness, Behaviour, Pre-existing medical conditions, Training & experience, Personal equipment
 - **The Environment & the activity**
 - Altitude, Heat, River crossings, Muggings,
 - Route selection, Equipment failure, inappropriate use
 - **Health**
 - Endemic Disease, Malaria, AIDS, Polluted Water, Contaminated Food, Environmental Health (Heat/cold related illness)
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Hazard and Risk on Overseas Fieldwork

- **Local People**

- Political instability or Civil unrest, Attitudes to Foreigners, Disease, Theft, Personal Attack – rape, Access to drugs, Games/sports activities with local people

- **Travel and Camp Life**

- TRANSPORT (Road conditions, Other Road Users, Seat belts, tired when driving, student drivers)
 - CAMP HAZARDS (fires, stoves, avalanch, wildlife)
 - FOOD AND WATER risks
 - HOTEL HAZARDS (wiring, fire exits, hygiene)
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Hazard and Risk on Overseas Fieldwork

Reducing Medical Risks

- Read DHSS *The Travellers' Guide to Health* + RGS-IBG *Expedition Medicine*
 - Medical Risk Assessment MASTA Healthline
 - Check vaccination requirements
 - Outside Europe: Malaria prophylaxis?
 - Medical histories of all participants
 - Medical consent forms
 - Medical Insurance + E111 (Europe only)
 - First Aid kits & First Aid Training
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Hazard and Risk on Overseas Fieldwork

Other health precautions

- Be careful about food, water & *Personal hygiene* (gastro-enteritis)
 - Limit exposure to sun and beware of dehydration
 - Reduce risk of insect bites by
 - *Using insect repellent*
 - *Covering up – long sleeves & long trousers*
 - *Using impregnated mosquito nets*
 - *Spraying room with knockdown insecticide*
 - Keep away from animals (Rabies)
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Hazard and Risk on Overseas Fieldwork

Remember your constraints

- Competence of the group
 - Political accessibility
 - Time in the field
 - Availability of facilities & equipment
 - Environmental conditions
 - Funding
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7. Have a Crisis Management plan

- Insurance
 - Medical Umbrella (skills, local medical services, casevac procedures)
 - Local contacts
 - Communications
 - UK back-up (Colleagues, University Press Office)
 - Share the experience (reports, near misses)
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Cultural and language issues



- "The typical research project in a developing nation in the 1950-60 period consisted of 'data-mining' by the sojourning social scientist. He (sic) came to the host country, gathered his data, and went home to complete his analysis. This 'safari' research expedition left no lasting imprint on the host country's research capability. If anything, the visitor left disappointed hosts who expected useful research results, correction of social problems, or even joint publications."

- Hursh-Ceasar and Roy (1976:8)

Linking with host country

- Helps identify priorities
 - Expands learning opportunities
 - Greater pool of knowledge
 - Avoids 'academic imperialism'
 - Makes working in country easier
 - Can facilitate the paperwork
 - More likely your work will be needed & valued
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Conduct

- Recognise & value local knowledge
 - Be aware of, and respect, local customs
 - Contact appropriate local authorities
 - Include host country students
 - Visit local schools
 - Leave interpretative materials behind
 - Write up results in the local language
 - Make available to national & local agencies
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What can the RGS-IBG do to help



Understanding the risks

- Evaluating risk through ongoing Health & Safety Survey (RGS-IBG Medical Cell)
 - Feedback through fieldwork reports
 - Monitoring Near Miss Data
 - Training in Risk Assessment and Crisis Management Techniques
 - Supporting new OCR qualification in Offsite Safety Management
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RGS-IBG Medical Cell

Advises RGS-IBG on medical matters relating to fieldwork in remote and challenging environments to ensure the associated risks of participating in such activities are kept to a minimum

- Publishes *Expedition Medicine* and advice sheets: e.g. Heat-related illness, Management of Diabetes.
 - Recommended curriculum for Far from Help First Aid Training courses . Offers training through Wilderness Medical Training
 - Recruits Medical Professionals
 - On-going Health & Safety Survey has been carried out since since 1995.
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Looking for a base to conduct field research?

www.rgs.org/fieldcentres

The World Register of Field Centres provides information on established field centres, in environments from the high Arctic to the Sahara desert that welcome international collaborators.

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