

GSA Field Safety Policy

The Geological Society of America (GSA) runs numerous trips and events into the field throughout the year. Participant safety is GSA's first priority. For well-being of all participants, and for maintaining the high quality standard of GSA field experiences, all participants, both leaders and attendees, are expected to follow the laws and customs of the country/state in which the trip/event is operating, GSA's Field Safety - Code of Conduct, and the rules and regulations of the properties, structures, areas and vehicles at and on which activities take place. Trip/event leaders are responsible for ensuring a safe and positive environment for all participants at all times on the trip/event. If a participant does not observe all GSA and leader rules, including the Code of Conduct, GSA and/or a leader, at their discretion and at the participant's expense, may take actions in response to such violations, including removing the participant from the trip/event or any trip/event activities, returning the participant to the trip/event accommodation/camp or point of trip/event origination, and requiring the participant to forfeit any amounts paid by the participant with respect to the trip/event.

Forms: All participants are required to sign and return trip/event forms provided by GSA. The forms provide leaders and GSA staff information that may be needed in an emergency, assure participant acknowledgement of safety, agree to the Code of Conduct, agree to various releases, assumptions of risk and indemnities, and provide other trip/event rules and guidelines. Completion and submission of the required forms is mandatory for participation.

Transportation: Depending on the trip/event type, participants may be riding in buses, vans, or SUVs. All drivers must sign and return driver agreement forms (including providing relevant documentation, such as a drivers' license) in the forms provided by GSA, its insurance company or rental company. If vans are being utilized, no more than 12 individuals are permitted to travel in a van at any time. All drivers should be age 25 or older. Drivers should have taken a defensive driving, high-occupancy-vehicle driving course or hold a high-occupancy vehicle (bus) driver's license. These courses are often offered by employers, including universities. All attendees must use the transportation provided. No personal vehicles will be allowed on the trip/event. All passengers and drivers must wear seat belts at all times if equipped in the vehicle.

First aid: An appropriate first aid kit must be taken with the group on all field trips/events, regardless of the duration of the trip/event. One of the trip leaders must have current certified basic first aid skills. All trip leaders who are taking participants into wilderness/off-trail areas should have a higher-level field-based course such as Wilderness First Aid. Leaders need to be aware of the location of the nearest medical facility while on the trip.

Second-in-command: A trip leader should always have another trip leader who is designated second-in-command in the event of accident or injury to the trip leader. This individual should also be certified with minimum basic first aid skills at a minimum. One trip leader should not be the only person who knows the itinerary, emergency contact information, and location of cell phone(s) and first aid supplies.

Avoiding missing persons: Each time a trip leader departs from any location, he/she should do a head count to make sure that all participants are present and safe.

Report of accident, injury, or illness: In the event of an accident/injury/illness during a field trip/event, a trip leader should first ensure the safety of all participants, while making the necessary arrangement to tend to the injured. A leader should then get in contact with an official GSA representative and fill out the Incident Report Form. The official GSA representative's information will be supplied to the trip leaders before departure.

Alcohol consumption: During scheduled in-field activities, and transportation to and from the activities, no alcohol consumption is allowed, including during mid-day breaks. Any person consuming alcohol during free time must adhere to the Code of Conduct guidelines.

Illegal drugs: Participants may not possess or use illegal drugs while on the trip/event.