Special Considerations for Reconnaissance and Equipment Use

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Health, Safety and Security

Potential issues:

- Gastrointestinal illness
- Contaminated water
- Dehydration
- Robbery and theft
- Culture and expectation of graft or "tipping" (customs, property access, violations)
- Car accidents (& legal issues)
- Rabid dog bite
- Miscellaneous open wound injuries
- Chemical release from industrial facilities
- Live wires on ground
- Radioactive gas release from damaged power plant

Note that:

- Medical services, including pharmacies, are very limited or non-existent
- International medicine specialty practices are becoming increasingly available, but may operate at a reduced level of service in disaster settings
Heath, Safety, and Security

- Ensure immunizations are up to date
  - Work with a travel medicine practice before leaving
- Take safety training, first aid, CPR courses
- Discuss plans w/ your org’s health & safety or risk management offices
- Work with in-country collaborators
- Example risk management forms will be posted on the RAPID website

International Missions

- Before and after mission be in contact with:
  - U.S. State Department; U.S. embassy officials
- Check out
  - State Department Travel Advisories
  - STEP Foreign Travel Program (register w/ embassy/consulate)
- U.S. researchers are seen to represent the reconn organization, NSF, and U.S. research community
- Having in-country collaborators is critical
- In-country collaborators may have suffered impacts
Drone Deployment in Post-Disaster Settings

- Drones may be prohibited
- Rules and regulations vary by country
- Bad weather (grounded or bad images)
- Batteries must be hand-carried on flights
- *Have a contingency plan for without drone*

Reconnaissance Research Ethics and Guidelines

- No single standard or well-recognized code of ethics for reconnaissance
- Good practice to include explicit ethics statement in work plans and proposals
- Potential reconnaissance ethics issues
  - Interactions with informants and human subjects
  - Access to disaster site
  - Quid pro quo
New Zealand Ethics Guidelines for Post-Disaster Research

Highlights
- Wear and carry clear identification
- For private property, contact owner, inform them what data, how gathered, purpose, and potential risks
- Take no for an answer
- Minimize researcher numbers/activities in the impacted area
- Ensure research teams are resource-independent (food/water/tents/fuel)


What Is Human Subjects Research?
- Both social science AND engineering research studies may qualify as human subjects research
- Federal definition of “human subject” (45 CFR 46.102(f))
  - A living individual about whom an investigator conducting research obtains...
  - ...data through intervention or interaction with the individual or identifiable private information
- Federal definition of “research” (45 CFR 46.102(d))
  - Systematic investigation, testing or evaluation
  - Designed to develop or contribute to generalizable knowledge
Internal Review Board (IRB)

- IRBs support researchers to be in compliance with federal and state laws and institution’s policy
- IRBs review & approve initiation of research projects that involve human participants
- IRB application includes, e.g.
  - Description of project in plain language
  - Methods to be used, particularly data collection
  - Informed consent procedure
  - Description of risk to subjects
- Expedited review could take 2-4 weeks
  - Unless prior plan with human subjects office

Criteria for IRB Exempt Status

- Involves survey procedures, interview procedures or observation of public behavior, where:
  - Information obtained is recorded so that human subjects cannot be identified
  - Disclosures of subjects’ responses cannot:
    - Place them at risk of criminal/civil liability
    - Damage subjects’ financial standing, employability or reputation
- With elected/appointed public officials
Criteria for IRB Exempt Status Cont.

- When there is an existing federal statute that requires complete perpetual confidentiality.

- Research involving the collection or study of existing data:
  - If these sources are *publicly available*, or
  - If the information is recorded by the investigator so that subjects *cannot be identified*.

- **Non-federally-supported** research in which:
  - Subjects are *cognitively-competent* adults, AND
  - Procedures consist *solely* of benign interventions, interactions, or observations of behavior.

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Advice

- Get to know your human subjects office contact:
  - Tell them about your research & make a plan.

- Not sure if what you are doing is human subjects research? Ask your IRB/HSD.

- Take CITI training asap:

- Delays often caused by:
  - Failing to provide necessary information
  - Not writing for a general audience

- Approval by collaborators’ IRB(s) may be required:
  - If they are also engaged in human subjects research.
Questions? Advice?