

Medical and Evacuation Procedures
Bay Islands 2027

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1. Introduction

Medical screening

As with all expeditions careful planning is essential to ensure that all individuals enjoy a safe and successful trip. Some members of the expedition team (including volunteers and staff) may have significant pre-existing health problems or disabilities, which in the field, could potentially lead to problems. All participants are required to complete a medical questionnaire prior to departure (via the online portal). All those participants who are diving during the expedition are also required to complete a PADI medical questionnaire. On these forms all those who have answered yes to any of the questions are required to get a GP or specialist dive medic to sign the declaration on the reverse of the form.

These medical forms are then checked by the Operation Wallacea appointed Expedition Medic to check for any conditions that may cause problems on the expedition and to suggest additions to the medical kits in light of any pre-existing health problems highlighted.

Operation Wallacea requires all participants to purchase medical and travel insurance for their expedition. Details of these are provided in advance of their expedition so they are available to operational staff in the event they should be required. Operation Wallacea evacuation procedures are designed so that there is no delay waiting on insurers before providing care thus expediting the administrative processes behind organising an evacuation.

Roles in the event of an Emergency

Carefully planned evacuation protocols are in place in all of the sites in Honduras. All staff will have training on the evacuation procedures and protocols.

Once a major incident leading to an evacuation is identified the appropriate manager will take overall control and will decide the level of emergency evacuation required for the patient. These are classified as either **Medium Priority**, **High Priority** or **Emergency**.

Medium Priority

Cases in which the patient is in no immediate danger but the onsite facilities are unable to cope were their condition to deteriorate. An example of this would be dehydration due to sickness. This requires the patient to be moved as quickly as possible without the need to hire special vehicles or boats to the nearest appropriate suitable facilities in San Pedro Sula or La Ceiba.

High Priority

Cases where the patient's health is at risk if immediate action is not taken. An example of this is a broken bone. This requires transportation, via specially arranged vehicles and boats to medical facilities available in San Pedro Sula or Utila.

Emergency Priority

Cases requiring the fastest possible transfer usually by air to the CEMESA hospital in San Pedro Sula, or to the D'Antoni hospital in La Ceiba. In the case of an Evacuation, the Country Manager will be responsible for contacting the Opwall Office UK.

2. Medical Facilities in Country

Camps

There is a doctor and clinic on site at Bay Island College of Diving in Utila. The doctor also has a a medical kit designed to treat the common conditions and to stabilise the patient in the event of a more serious case where evacuation is needed.

Rabies

Rabies post exposure boosters are available via ESAC, and at the CEMESA hospital in San Pedro Sula. If a volunteer or staff member is suspected to be at risk of infection due to exposure to an animal (bite/scratch/other), the level of risk will be assessed by the on-site medic and the appropriate path of action will be taken as outlined in the 'Bite Assessment and Treatment Proforma' document. The path of action will depend on whether the patient has had the three pre-exposure vaccines or not, as well as the type of animal that the patient was in contact with. In most cases, the patient can be treated with an appropriate course of anti-rabies vaccines in country. However, in the unlikely event of a volunteer or staff member, that has not had the three pre-exposure vaccines, being bitten or scratched by a bat, Human anti-Rabies Immunoglobulin (HRIG) may be necessary. HRIG is not available within Honduras and, therefore, the patient would be evacuated immediately to Miami, USA, for appropriate treatment. Because staff and volunteers on the Bay Islands expedition will not come in to contact with bats or small mammals, the risk of this scenario is very low.

Facilities in San Pedro Sula

Suitable for evacuations from the expedition arrival point in San Pedro Sula.

CEMESA Hospital
Address: Colonia Altamira, Boulevard del Sur, San Pedro Sula
Tel: (504) 2516-0174 / (504) 2556-7401 for the Accident and Emergency department
E-mail: cemesa@sigmanet.hn

This is one of the best private hospitals in Honduras with a large group of leading specialists capable of carrying out a wide range of major surgery and procedures. Facilities include operating theatres, X-ray, body scanner and magnetic resonance equipment, laboratories, a diagnostic centre etc. This hospital is likely to provide suitable facilities for most emergencies. CEMESA has both the treatment for rabies (with the exception of Human anti-Rabies Immunoglobulin) and has its own supply of anti-venin.

Facilities in La Ceiba

Suitable for evacuations from Utila.

Hospital Vicente D'Antoni
Address: Ave Morazan, Barrios Solares Nueves, La Ceiba
Tel: (504) 2443-2264/ (504) 2443-1335; Emergency: (504) 2443-3335
E-mail: atinfo@hvdantoni.com

The hospital is the best in La Ceiba with 56 beds and a landing spot for helicopters. There are 30 resident doctors and another 20 visiting doctors. There is a laboratory, X-ray, ultrasound, endoscopes and surgery facilities. The hospital is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Facilities in Tela

Suitable for evacuations from Tela

Centro Medical Lancetilla
Address: Centro Medical Lancetilla, Tela, Atlantida, Honduras
Tel: (504) 2448-3222/ (504) 2448 1634

The hospital is the best in Tela, offering high quality private facilities including x-ray, operating theatre, laboratory, private rooms and emergency room open 24 hours per day 7 days per week.

Facilities in Roatan

There are numerous medical clinics on Roatan.

Cornerstone Hyperbaric Chamber and Clinic
Anthony's Key Resort, Sandy Bay, Roatan
Tel: (504) 2445-3049/(504) 2445-1049
Out-of-hours telephone: (504) 2445-1003/(504)2445-1026/(504) 2445-1274
Radio: Channel 88, Call sign: Anthony's Key

Clinica Esperanza, Sandy Bay, Roatan
Tel: (504) 2445-3234
Email: info@clinicaesperanza.org

Wood Medical Centre, Main Street, Coxen Hole, Roatan
Tel: (504) 2445-1031

Recompression Chambers

Utila Hyperbaric Chamber
Utila Lodge
Tel: (504) 2425-3378

Cornerstone Hyperbaric Chamber and Clinic
Anthony's Key Resort, Sandy Bay, Roatan

Tel: (504) 2445-3049/(504) 2445-1049
Out-of-hours telephone: (504) 2445-1003/(504)2445-1026/(504) 2445-1274
Radio: Channel 88, Call sign: Anthony's Key

Centro Medico Hiperbarico la Bendicion, La Ceiba
Colonia Irias Navas, Calle Principal, 1 Cuadra al Norte de la Iglesia Mormona, La Ceiba, Atlantida
Tel: (504) 2442-1149
Out-of-hours telephone: (504) 9894-2746

Helicopter Support for Evacuations

228th AR American Military Air Base in Soto Cano
Address: Soto Cano, near Comayagua
Tel: Joint Operations Center - 234-4635, ext. 4149 (emergency only) 24 Hours a day
Commanding Officer: Coronel David Wolken
Principal Contact: Dr Guillermo Saenz Tel: (+504) 9830 5304 or (+504) 2234 4634
Email: guillermo.saenz@jtfb.southcom.mil

Honduran Military Air Base
Base Aerea de San Pedro Sula. Phone 668 30 09 / 668 30 12 Cell. 9908 78 50
Military contact: Colonel Hermida Alvarez Commander of Air Force Base in San Pedro Sula Mobile 9979 68 23

Helicopteros del Norte, Puerto Cortes
Address: Frente Colonia Los Pinos, La Lima, Cortes
Tel: 668 1291 or 668 1293
Monday - Thursday 8 - 12 and 1 - 5: Friday 8 -12 and 1 - 4.
Out of hours: Pilot Capt Sergio Salgada 995 1933
Owner Juan Aramendia 991 5122
A helicopter can be activated within 60-120 minutes of the call.

Coordinates of each of the camps is provided in advance with the UTM, Lat/Long and Degree Minutes Seconds coordinates. Evacuation can be by landing (> 30 X 30 m^2) or via a winch hole (>15 X 15m^2). On-board medical facilities include life support to stabilize the patient en-route to hospital. Short description of patient injury is necessary prior to departure. Note this option can only be used for incidents which are life threatening or may result in loss of limbs or eyesight. Note also that helicopter evacuation is generally only possibly during daylight. The helicopter will take the patient directly to the CEMESA Hospital in San Pedro or the Hospital Vicente D'Antoni in La Ceiba.

3. Communications

Marine Sites

Utila has land lines, cell phone coverage, email and internet connections. Each of the dive boats carries a fully charged cell phone that communicates back to the Utila operations centre.

Transfers

All bus and vehicle transfers have cell phones with the drivers and Operation Wallacea members of staff.

4. Evacuations from field sites

Utila

Evacuations are done by the twice daily ferry to La Ceiba (1 hour). There is also a small airport on Utila (10 mins from Bay Islands College of Diving) that can be used for evacuations in the event of an emergency. The recompression chamber on Utila is based at Bay Islands College of Diving.

5. Reporting and Logging

During evacuations it is crucial that a log is kept by the Manager coordinating the evacuation detailing times, personnel involved and all relevant details of each step of the evacuation process.

A full safety assessment must be carried-out after all evacuations and if a similar incident is likely all activities must be stopped until the situation has been rectified.

The Honduras Country Manager will collate the reports of all medical treatment and evacuations and will submit the final report to the UK office. The Honduras Country Manager will also submit the costs and report to the Operation Wallacea Office UK for re-imbursement of costs.

6. Mass Evacuations and Disaster Management

The most likely scenario is warning of an impending hurricane. Hurricanes can occur in Honduras at any time from June to November but are most likely in October followed by September which are both months outside the Operation Wallacea survey season. However, it is possible that a hurricane will occur. Honduras has an excellent warning system with about a week's advance notice of any hurricanes heading for Honduras. This information phase is succeeded by a Warning Phase if the hurricane is headed for Honduras. If it looks as though a hurricane is headed for Honduras, the marine team in Utila will be evacuated back to La Ceiba.