



Medical and Evacuation Procedures

Everglades 2021

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Introduction

Medical screening

As with all expeditions careful planning is essential to ensure that all individuals enjoy a safe successful field course. Some members of the course team (including all volunteers and staff) may have significant pre-existing health problems or disabilities, which in the field, could potentially lead to problems.

Medical questionnaire - All participants will be required to enter their medical details onto the Operation Wallacea data portal. Details of how to log on are sent out upon receiving the booking from the participant. The data is stored securely and is initially only available to certain Operation Wallacea and Green Glades West staff members, and, for groups of school students, the teacher leading the group.

Screening - All medical forms are assessed by Operation Wallacea and Green Glades West. We may seek to contact the participant to gather further information, which they would then enter on to the portal. Following the initial screening, the details are then passed to the relevant on site staff. First aid trained staff are able to assist an injured or sick person in the first minutes after an illness or injury occurs, but they are not medical professionals. First aid trained staff are able to determine when external medical treatment is required.

Roles in the event of an Emergency

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

Once a major incident leading to an evacuation is identified, the Course 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 to the nearest appropriate suitable facilities.

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 to medical facilities available.

Emergency Priority – Cases requiring the fastest possible transfer via ambulance.

Medical Facilities in Country

Camps

There are first aid trained staff on site at Green Glades West. Staff are familiar with the local environment including risks and hazards, and are able to assess first aid situations, treat as necessary in the field, and determine the need for further specialist medical attention. Injuries/illnesses that cannot be treated in field will be transported to medical facilities in Weston (80 min) or Clewiston (70 min).

Anti-Venom

Given the time of year, snake activity and encounters will be minimal, but anti-venoms specific to the few venomous snakes of South Florida are available at Cleveland Clinic Weston. Travel by car from Green Glades West takes 80-90 minutes. Snakebite first aid will be applied on site before transfer to hospital, and the hospital will be contacted before departure to ensure anti-venom availability.

Facilities in Weston

Suitable for medium, high, and emergency priority evacuations from field courses at Green Glades West.

Cleveland Clinic Weston
2950 Cleveland Clinic Blvd, Weston, FL 33331
Ph: (954) 659-5000

Cleveland Clinic Weston provides acute services ranging from in-hospital care to specialist surgical procedures. The Accident and Emergency Department is available 24 hours seven days a week.

Facilities in Clewiston

Suitable for low, medium, and high priority evacuations from field courses at Green Glades West.

Hendry Regional Medical Center
524 W Sagamore Ave, Clewiston, FL 33440
Ph: (863) 902-3000

Hendry Regional Medical Center provides acute services ranging from in-hospital care to specialist surgical procedures. The Accident and Emergency Department is available 24 hours seven days a week.

Communications

The field course site at Green Glades West has reliable mobile phone signal which can be used for both routine and emergency communications. The most reliable service is provided by Verizon.

Transfers

All bus and vehicle transfers have mobile phones with the drivers.

Evacuations from Various Field Sites

Camps and survey sites in Green Glades West

Survey sites within the Reserve are accessible by vehicle and an injured/ill patient can be transferred easily to the main camp area, or to nearby medical facilities if necessary. Evacuation by car to Hendry Regional Medical Center is 70 min, or to Cleveland Clinic Weston is 80 min. In case of urgent attention required the ambulance service will be called.

Reporting and Logging

During evacuations it is crucial that a log is kept by the Course Manager 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.

Mass Evacuations and Disaster Management

Although the overall likelihood is very low, the most probably emergency scenarios include severe weather and the possibility of wildfire. Wildfires in Florida can occur throughout the year, with lightning being the primary ignitor. The Florida Forest Service produces and regularly updates a report on Current Wildfire Conditions, which will be referenced prior to the start of the field course for the most current risk level and conditions. You can find their report here: <https://www.fdacs.gov/Divisions-Offices/Florida-Forest-Service/Wildland-Fire/Current-Wildfire-Conditions2>

This same Current Conditions advisory contains information on any Florida County-specific fire bans, which will be observed accordingly. The likelihood of a wildfire occurring nearby Green Glades West at the time of the field course is very low; however, it is possible.

On days of extreme fire danger or predicted severe weather, scheduled activities will be modified and participants may be evacuated to a nearby suitable area toward Weston and the greater Miami region.

Access to Green Glades West is very restricted, affording relatively easy exit access in short notice should the need arise.

In the extremely unlikely event that a wildfire approaches, the field course site and evacuation is not possible, refuge may be taken amongst nearby wetlands insulated from fire danger.