



Operation
Wallacea
Conservation research through academic partnerships

Medical and evacuation procedures for
Honduras 2011

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1. Introduction

Medical screening

As with all expeditions careful planning is essential to ensure that all individuals enjoy a safe 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. 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 their GP to sign the declaration on the reverse of the form.

The forms are returned to the administrator at the UK, US or Canadian office. 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 has purchased medical and evacuation insurance cover for all volunteers and staff to a value of £1 million per person.

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 Country Manager (Alex Tozer) 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 patients 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 from the various forest sites to the CEMESA hospital in San Pedro Sula for forest sites, or to the D'Antoni hospital in La Ceiba for the marine sites.

In the case of an Evacuation, the Country Manager will be responsible for contacting the insurance company.

2. Medical Facilities In Country

Camps

There are medical officers (doctors, nurses, paramedics) at Base Camp, accompanying jungle training and at each of the field camps being operated. In addition there is a medical officer on Cayos Cochinos and another on Utila. Each of these medical officers has a medical kit designed to treat the commoner conditions and to stabilise the patient in the event of a more serious case where evacuation is needed.

Antivenin

There is a store of 20 vials of antivenin specific to the Vipers. 10 of these vials are held in the fridge at Base Camp with 5 being moved to the river at Cantiles or Guanales whenever these camps are open. A further 10 vials are held in the river at Danto or Cortecito whenever these camps are open or at San Carlos in the fridge whenever Santo Tomas is operating. These vials are to accompany any patient being evacuated because of snake bite and are also available to be administered in the field in the event of prolonged evacuation times. Note epi-pens are also held at these sites in case of anaphylactic shock in the highly unlikely event that the anti-venom has to be delivered in the field. Cemesa Hospital in San Pedro Sula also has a store of antivenin in the event of a venomous snakebite.

Rabies

All those volunteers and staff involved in bat and small mammal handling must have the rabies pre-exposure vaccinations prior to departure. Rabies post exposure boosters are available via ESAC, and the Cemesa hospital in San Pedro Sula has the complete treatment of rabies (both immunoglobulin and post-exposure vaccinations).

Facilities in San Pedro Sula

Suitable for evacuations from East Cusuco and Cofradia

CEMESA Hospital

Address: Colonia Alta Mira, Boulevard del Sur, San Pedro Sula

Tel: 556 7401 extension 111 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 full treatment for rabies and has its own supply of anti-venom.

Facilities in Puerto Cortes

Suitable for evacuations from West Cusuco

Hospital Policlinica Portena

Address: San Ramon, 2 Calle entre 2 y 3 ave., N.O Edif, Puerto Cortes

Tel: 665 -0342 Fax: 665-6353 or 665 6354

This is a private clinic, with an emergency room, operating theatre, delivery suite, x-ray facilities and a stock of common medicines required in an emergency. The facilities are clean. There are a number of specialist doctors available including surgeons, orthopedics, radiologist, and paediatrician.

The clinic is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Antibiotics, strong painkillers and intravenous fluids are available, as well as a supply of sterile surgical equipment (including needles). A supply of antivenin is also available.

Facilities in La Ceiba

Suitable for evacuations from Cayos Cochinos and Utila

Hospital Vincente D'Antoni

Address: Ave Morazan, Barrios Solares Nueves, La Ceiba

Tel: 443 2264 Fax: 443 2254

E-mail: dantonihn@yahoo.com Website: www.hospitaldantoni.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.

Recompression Chambers

Bay Islands Diving Centre, Utila

One of the main operators of this chamber is Rich Astley who is the Dive Operations Manager for the Opwall teams on Utila. The chamber is a 5 minute transfer from Coral View and a 30 minute speedboat transfer from Cayos Cochinos.

Cornerstone Chamber and Medical Services, Roatan Island

Tel: 445 1049 Out of hour's telephone: 445 1003 or 445 1026 or 445 1274

Radio: Channel 88 Call sign: Anthony's Quay

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

Principal Contact & Position: Major Jason Clark Tel: 234 2634 or 234 4149 or (emergency mobile) 391 4878.

email: jason.clark@jtfb.southcom.mil.

A helicopter can be at any of the seven Cusuco sites in 90 minutes of the call.

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. Flight time to Cayo Menor is 1 hour.

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 m²) or via a winch hole (>15 X 15m²). 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. The helicopter will take the patient directly to the CEMESA Hospital in San Pedro or the Hospital Vincente D'Antoni in La Ceiba.

3. Communications

Forest communications

Base Camp is the main operations and comms centre for all the forest projects. There is internet connection at the camp and parts of the camp where handphone calls can be made. In addition there is a base station radio that can speak to each of the field camps operating as well as Cofradia. Each of the teams working on the transects around Base Camp have to take a hand held radio which communicates back to Base Camp.

On the western side the main camp is Santo Tomas. There is a radio at this camp, which is manned by ESAC staff and used to maintain contact with the Danto and Cortecito camps when they are operating. There are no direct comms between Santo Tomas and Base Camp by radio, so daily contacts are made at pre-arranged times by the ESAC Camp Manager walking to a ridge where handphone contact can be made with Base Camp cell phones. In the event of an emergency there is a 24 hour telephone number at San Carlos (a village at the base of the mountain). The operator at this house also has a USB radio that can communicate directly with Santo Tomas.

Each of the field camps (Danto, Cortecito, Cantiles and Guanales) have base station radios set up so they can communicate either with Base Camp (eastern camps) or Santo Tomas (western camps) and there are pre-arranged daily comms times. All groups at each of these camps have to take a hand held radio when walking the transects to communicate back to the camp.

In Buenos Aires and Las Piñitas there is hand phone signal at most locations and a base station radio that can communicate with Base Camp. In Cofradia where the monkey team are based there is a base station radio for reporting back to Base Camp and cell phone coverage. When the monkey students are in the field they have cell phone coverage so they can make contact in an emergency and they also have hand held radios for talking between the groups.

Marine communications

Rio Esteban has cell phone coverage. The boats crossing to Cayos Cochinos from Rio Esteban all have cell phones or radios to talk back to the Rio Esteban centre.

Cayos Cochinos has a base station radio that can talk back to the HCRF office in La Ceiba where there are land lines and cell phone coverage. Each of the dive boats has a radio that communicates with the island operation centre. There is also cell phone coverage in most parts of the Cayos Cochinos islands.

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

Transfers

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

4. Evacuations from field sites

Cusuco Base Camp, Buenos Aires, and Las Piñitas

All levels of emergency are evacuated using the standby vehicle at Base Camp down the mountain to the CEMESA hospital (2 hours)

Eastern Camps

At Guanales it is generally faster to carry the patient out to Base Camp and evacuate down the mountain to the CEMESA hospital than it is to organise a helicopter evacuation. At Cantiles non-emergency evacuations will be done by carrying the patient back to Base Camp and then evacuating by vehicle. Emergency evacuations at this site require helicopter evacuation with a winch.

Santo Tomas

All levels of emergency are evacuated using the standby vehicle at Santo Tomas down the mountain to the Puerto Cortes hospital (2 hours) or the CEMESA hospital (3 hours).

Western Camps

At Danto and Cortecito non emergency evacuations will be done by carrying the patient back to Santo Tomas and then evacuating by vehicle. Emergency evacuations from Danto or Cortecito require helicopter evacuation with a winch.

Cofradia and Manacal Forests

Evacuation from the sites is by vehicle to CEMESA hospital (30 mins).

Cayos Cochinos

Evacuations are done by speedboat to the D'Antoni hospital in La Ceiba (1.5 hours) or the recompression chamber on Utila (30 mins). If the seas are too rough for an evacuation by sea then there is a helicopter landing pad on the island and evacuation is by helicopter to La Ceiba (2 hours from initial call time).

Utila

Evacuations are done by the twice daily ferry to La Ceiba (1 hour). In emergency situations then there is a small airport on Utila (30 mins from Coral View) that can be

used for evacuations. The recompression chamber on Utila is 5 mins from Coral View.

5. Reporting and Logging

During evacuations it is crucial that a log is kept by the Honduras Country 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.

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 insurance company for reimbursement 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 OpWall 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 forest teams will be evacuated down the mountain to San Pedro Sula or Cofradia. The marine teams will be evacuated back to La Ceiba.