Medical and Evacuation Procedures

Guyana 2019

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1. Introduction

Medical Forms

All participants are required to complete a medical questionnaire prior to their departure. The forms are returned to the administrator at the UK, US or Canadian office. The original of these forms is sent out to the field and a copy passed to the medical coordinator in advance of the expeditions, so that any potential health problems or additions needed for the First Aid kit are identified.

Insurance

Operation Wallacea has purchased a comprehensive travel insurance policy on behalf of all of its participants which includes personal property, cancellation, curtailment and rearrangement cover as well as unlimited overseas medical and repatriation expenses. This ensures that Operation Wallacea can agree evacuation routes with the insurers prior to the expedition, thus expediting the administrative processes behind organising an evacuation.

Roles in the event of an Emergency

Carefully planned evacuation protocols are in place at the expedition sites in Guyana. All staff will have training on the evacuation procedures and protocols. Once a major incident leading to an evacuation is identified the Expedition Manager will take overall control, and will decide with the expedition medic the level of emergency evacuation required for the patient. These should be classified as **Emergency or High Priority** (requiring the fastest possible transfer, usually by plane from the closest, to Georgetown's Ogle airport, or **Medium Priority**, requiring the patient to be moved as quickly as possible by road and in some areas speedboat also.

In all Emergency or High Priority cases where a patient is being transferred to medical facilities they should be accompanied by the relevant Medical Officer or someone appointed by the medical officer as fit to accompany the patients. The absence of the Medical Officer from the site whilst the patient is accompanied to the hospital will require the suspension of all high risk activities at the site until the Medical Officer is back on site. In the case of a Medium Priority evacuation (e.g. transfer to a hospital for a confirmatory X-ray) another staff member other than the Medical Officer may be nominated to accompany the patient.

2. Medical Facilities in Country

There is a clinic at the Iwokrama Research Centre with a doctor, where patients that cannot be treated in the field camps but do not require emergency evacuation to hospital can receive attention.

Facilities in Georgetown

Georgetown Public Hospital
New Market Street
Tel: +592 227-9449 or 227-8236

This is the best public hospital in Guyana 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 can provide suitable facilities for all emergencies.

Woodlands hospital (Private) 110 Carmichael Street Georgetown Guyana

Tel: +592 225-4050

Fax: +592 225-5865

This is the best private hospital in Guyana with several doctors and surgeons capable of carrying out a wide range of major surgery and procedures. This hospital is likely to provide suitable facilities for most emergencies, and may be likely to give the fastest response time.

Facilities in field camps

There will be a qualified and experienced expedition medic in the camp at all times, who will be contactable by radio at all locations. The camp will be equipped with an expedition medical kit to deal with first aid and many minor injuries and conditions.

Evacuation Facilities

In the event of an emergency priority evacuation, air services to the closest airstrip will be used. The closest airstrip to most camps will be Fairview, but whilst in the Surama area, the closest airstrip is Annai. The following services will be utilised and are listed in order of priority.

Remote Area Medical Volunteer Corps/Wings of Hope Inc. Captain: Terrence Trapnell Tel: +592 772-2168 Cell: +592 610-9850

Trans Guyana Airways
Tel: +592 222-2525 (office hours)

After hours: Dale Hing +592 624-1693

Capt. Gonslaves +592 624-3768

3. Air Service Ltd.

Tel: +592 222-4368 / 222-4357 / 222-6739

4. Roraima Airways Ltd.
Tel: +592 225-9647 (office hours)

After hours: Learie Barclay +592 225-9648 / 665-4998 Basudewa Rupchand +592 222-4032 / 626-3001

Medical cover in field camps

All camps will have a medical officer at all times. The camp will be equipped with an expedition medical kit recommended by the Royal Geographical Society.

3. Evacuation Procedures

Once a High Priority or Emergency evacuation is called then the Expedition Manager takes control of the situation. Speedboats or vehicles will be dispatched (depending on the location of the patient) to meet the patient and either take the patient directly to Georgetown, or for Emergency Evacuations to the airstrip to travel by aircraft to hospital in Georgetown. In the worst case scenario a patient would require evacuation from one of the transects on the Burro-Burro river. Table 1 outlines evacuation times for the various field camps.

Table 1. Emergency evacuation times and methods for the various field camps.

Location	Time to airstrip (and method)	Airstrip to Ogle airport in Georgetown (Plane)	Ogle airport to hospital (Ambulance)
Iwokrama Research Centre	5 mins by vehicle	Fairview airstrip - 60 minutes	20 minutes
Turtle Mt. camp	45 mins by boat, + 5 mins by vehicle	Fairview airstrip - 60 minutes	20 minutes
Canopy Walkway camp	40 mins by vehicle	Surama airstrip - 70 minutes	20 minutes
Kabocalli camp	3 hr boat, + 10 mins by vehicle	Fairview airstrip - 60 minutes	20 minutes
Surama camp	30 mins by boat 10 mins by vehicle	Surama airstrip - 70 minutes	20 minutes
Sandstone camp	Up to 6 hours by boat	Surama airstrip	20 minutes
Rock Landing camp	Up to 10 hours by boat	- Annai or Fairview airstrip (location dependent)	20 minutes

Upon notification of a situation requiring emergency evacuation, the expedition manager will also contact the UK Office, who in turn will contact the Opwall insurance company to explain the situation and obtain the necessary approvals for the evacuation. In addition he is responsible for informing the Operation Wallacea Project Director, and the patient's next of kin, of the actions being taken and the state of the patient. He is also responsible for ensuring that all relevant staff are aware of the ongoing emergency and follow up actions.

In the event of an emergency, the team will use the satellite phone to call Iwokrama staff to arrange for air transportation (if required).

They will alert Iwokrama River Lodge or Surama Village (depending on the location of the evacuation team), to ensure that any necessary preparations are made for the incoming patient.

The Operation Wallacea head office should also be alerted 00 44 1790 763194 (24hr)

4. Reporting and Logging

During evacuations it is crucial that a log is kept by the Expedition Manager and expedition medic, 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 Expedition Manager will collate the reports of all medical treatment and evacuations and will submit the final report to the UK office. The Expedition Manager will also submit the costs and report to the insurance company for re-imbursement of costs.