

SECTION 1: Information on Travel Alert

Department of State

There has been a Travel Alert Issued for Mexico by the U.S. Department of State (1/31/2022): <https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/international-travel/International-Travel-Country-Information-Pages/Mexico.html#Baja%20California>

Per this report *the U.S. Department of State* revealed the following details regarding travel in Mexico:

Crime in Mexico occurs at a high rate and can be violent, from random street crime to cartel-related attacks. Over the past year, Mission Mexico has assisted U.S. citizens who were victims of armed robbery, carjacking, extortion, homicide, kidnapping, pick-pocketing, and sexual assault. Increased levels of cartel-related violence have resulted in territorial disputes and targeted killings, injuring or killing innocent bystanders. Travelers who find themselves in an active shooter scenario should flee in the opposite direction, if possible, or drop to the ground, preferably behind a hard barrier.

Drivers on roads and highways may encounter government checkpoints, which often include National Guard or military personnel. State and local police also set up checkpoints in and around cities and along the highways to deter criminal activity and enforce traffic laws. In some parts of Mexico, criminal organizations and other non-governmental actors have been known to erect unauthorized checkpoints and have abducted or threatened violence against those who fail to stop and/or pay a "toll." When approaching a checkpoint, regardless of whether it is official, cooperate and avoid any actions that may appear suspicious or aggressive.

CDC

As of 1/31/2022 COVID-19 risk in Mexico is at "Level 4: Very High".

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/notices/covid-4/coronavirus-mexico>

- *Avoid travel to Mexico.*
- *If you must travel to Mexico, make sure you are vaccinated and up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines before travel.*
- *Even if you are up to date with your COVID-19 vaccines, you may still be at risk for getting and spreading COVID-19.*
- *Anyone 2 years or older should properly wear a well-fitting mask in indoor public spaces.*
- *Follow all requirements and recommendations in Mexico.*

SECTION 2: Response to Alert

Based on best practices, Ocean Discovery Institute will travel through Calexico to arrive at our field site in Bahía de los Angeles, Mexico about 450 miles south of the border.

Additional safety precautions taken by Ocean Discovery Institute include:

To address travel:

- *Register travelers with the U.S. State Department prior to travel in Mexico.*
- *Stay in groups and within visual proximity while traveling and carry a satellite phone.*
- *Assign a “Car Captain” to sit in the front passenger seat to provide directions, support the driver, and act as an additional person watching the road.*
- *Drive only during daylight hours.*
- *Drive with the following safety equipment:*
 - *Satellite phone*
 - *SPOT GPS emergency locator*
 - *First aid*
- *Avoid unknown areas.*
- *Travel to safe locations like Bahía de los Angeles and Punta Abreojos.*
- *Contact police in Bahía de los Angeles to get updates on local safety issues.*
- *Use good common sense.*

To address COVID-19:

- *All travelers will follow Ocean Discovery Institutes policies for residential programs including:*
 - *All participants will be “up to date” with vaccinations*
 - *Provide a negative PCR test prior to traveling*
 - *Wear masks when indoors or riding in Ocean Discovery vehicles*
 - *Utilize outdoor meeting spaces and well ventilated areas as much as possible.*
 - *Wash hands frequently.*
 - *Monitor themselves for any COVID-19 symptoms during the trip.*
 - *Bring Antigen tests to use as needed during the trip.*