## Mexico Specific Safety Equipment and Information

The town of Bahía de los Angeles has limited communication access, although this continues to improve with each year. The remote location of the program paired with the number or participants with the program requires additional supplies communication devices and safety supplies. These are outlined in the following sections:

* Cell Phone: Cell phone coverage current extends as far south as San Felipe. In BLA where WiFi is available (e.g., in the field station), WiFi calling, imessage, FaceTime, WhatsApp may be used.
* Marine Radio: Two-way radio used for communication when WiFi is not available for one or multiple groups.
* Satellite Phone: Phone used for communication from remote locations that do not have cell coverage.
* EPIRB: Satellite beacon that alerts the US Coast Guard to initiate a rescue in the case of water emergencies.
* Traveler’s Insurance: For trips both with and without students to Bahía de los Angeles, travel insurance is secured. Coverage includes emergency assistance and transportation, 24/7 emergency assistance services, and on demand medical care. The insurance policy is available in the “Insurance” section of the **Emergency Response Binder** with the group traveling and a copy at the Living Lab.

### Cell Phone

If you're using your cell phone in Baja, chances are that you have one of the four main US wireless services: T-Mobile, AT&T (Cingular), Sprint or Verizon. You may have an easier time calling throughout Mexico with T-Mobile or AT&T, since they cover a lot more territory.

All of the major wireless networks will charge you extra to roam internationally, from as little as $0.59 to $1.49 per minute plus a monthly flat fee. More importantly, most plans require you to activate the international roaming service before you even leave the United States. To be safe, it is a good idea to check with your own wireless carrier before you leave for Baja to make sure that your phone has been activated for international roaming.

Once you are in Mexico with a successfully activated phone, you should have no trouble calling either locally or home to the United States.

General guidelines are below to set up your cell phone for use in Mexico. Baja Bound (<https://www.bajabound.com/before/permits/cellphonebaja>) has detailed information for activation and use for each cell phone carrier.

* On your phone go to “Settings” followed by “Cellular” then “Roaming” and make sure “Voice Roaming” and “Data Roaming” are turned OFF. Make sure “International CDMA” is turned OFF.
* Or if you have international service - your phone automatically picks up that you are in Mexico and will send you a text message asking if you would like to accept “travel pass” and your answer is YES. This will allow you to use service in Mexico.
	+ Once you accept yes, change the following settings on your phone.
		- Go to **settings-cellular-cellular data options-roaming**
		- Turn *voice roaming* and *data roaming* **on** (make the button green)
		- Turn *International CDMA* **off** (make the button white)
		- Turn your phone off completely and back on to make sure changes stick.
	+ Your phone will work normally under our current data/voice/text plan.

**Dialing Instructions**

| * **Country Code**
 | **From** | **To** | **Dial Network** | **Instruction** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 52 | Mexico | U.S. | GSM | Dial Plus (+) Sign then 1 then ten digit U.S. number |
| 52 | Mexico | Local | GSM | Dial Plus (+) Sign then Country Code then mobile number with Area Code (if applicable) |
| 52 | Mexico | Other Countries | GSM | Dial Plus (+) Sign then Country Code then International Number |
| 52 | Mexico | Customer Service | GSM | Dial Plus (+) Sign then 1 then 908-559-4899 |
| 52 | Mexico | Customer Service from a landline | None | Dial 001-8442528672 |
| * On most devices, the Plus Sign (+) appears when you press and hold the 0 key or the \* key. [Find your user guide online](http://www.verizonwireless.com/support/) if needed.
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|  |

* To call and text a cell phone in Mexico
	+ Press and hold the 0 to get a “+”, then press 52 followed by the area code and cellphone number. Ex. +52 (###) ###-####
* To call a landline in Mexico
	+ Press and hold the 0 to get a “+”, the press 52 followed by the area code and cellphone number.
* To check voicemail,

### Marine Radio

The field station is equipped with a Marine Radio. Marine radios are also brought into the field with each group travelling to a different location.

The Safety Officer and Manager on Duty will be available via radio on Channel 16 either by the Field Station radio or handheld radio when off-site.

**Channel 16** is used to establish communication with the Field Station, Safety Officer, Manager on Duty, boat guide, and/or to notify others in case of emergency. This is the same channel that is used for boat communication throughout the community. The channel may be switched for conversation once communication has been established.

**Channel 8** is used for communication between groups who are in the field together (e.g., three boats that are on the same trip together and need to communicate). You may also use this channel once communication has been established on channel 16 for further conversation.

### Satellite Phone

All groups traveling to/from Bahía de los Angeles in an Ocean Discovery vehicle will have a satellite phone in their Travel Safety Kit. In addition, a satellite phone is kept at the Field Station for the duration of trips with students. During overnight stays which are off-site, a phone may be sent with the group as determined on a case-by-case basis.

**Making calls within Mexico**

* Turn satellite phone on.
* Be certain the battery is fully charged prior to use. Battery capacity is indicated on the LCD display on the phone.
* Gently pull out the telescoping antenna.
* Be certain the antenna is as vertical (upright) as possible. Antenna must make line of sight connection to satellite (needs to be outside with unobstructed view of sky).
* Signal strength is indicated in the upper left hand corner of the display. The phone will go into a “search mode”, then “registering mode”. A small HOUSE icon will appear at center bottom screen.
* The word “IRIDIUM” appears on the display when the satellite signal is locked. The signal strength indicator should show five bars (upper left corner of display.)
* You are now ready to make and receive calls.
	+ **To make call within Mexico** DIAL (O+) + (01152) + (PHONE NUMBER)
	+ **To make calls to the US** DIAL (0+)(0+) + (1) + (PHONE NUMBER) + (OK)
* To end calls, simply press the “C” red button on left top side TWICE.

### Epirb



An EPIRB is brought on all boat trips while in Baja. It is worn by a field trip lead and remains with the group for the duration of an outing (i.e., it does not stay on the boat if the group disembarks for a hike on an island.) The EPIRB is set off in two ways, manually or automatically (if it gets wet/submerged). A signal is sent from the EPIRB to satellites and then to a land unit which processes the signal and sends it to NOAA. At NOAA, our registration information is attached and sent to the US Coast Guard, which initiates the response and communication with Ocean Discovery in the U.S. In the case of emergencies in BLA, the Coast Guard will coordinate a response with the Marinos (Mexican Navy). The process is summarized in the flow chart below:



Throughout the duration of the emergency, San Diego staff will remain in contact with the US Coast Guard and BLA staff.

**EPIRB Registration Information**

We have 406MHz EPIRBS, each with the password: aquatic-1

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Beacon ID** | **Date Expires** |
| ADCE02371941C01 | 1/5/2024 |
| 2DCE36A7D0FFBFF | 6/5/2024 |
| 2DCE369506FFBFF | 4/5/2023 |
| 2DCC814EE0FFBFF | 3/8/2024 |
| 2DCE6868DEFFBFF | 4/5/2023 |
| 2DCE686032FFBFF | 2/22/2024 |
| 2DCC8E0382FFBFF | 4/5/2023 |

Lindsay McKay and Elvia Meza are listed as the emergency contacts for these beacons. The Ocean Discovery main office number and their cell phones are registered with the beacons for contact in case of emergency.