



MAY 20th, 2024

TRAVEL COMMUNICATION

Notification of recent incident in Rosarito, MX

DEAR FAMILIES, VOLUNTEERS, AND STAFF,

As you know, we are preparing for the 21st year of our research program in Bahía de Los Ángeles, Baja California, MX. The excitement of our preparation was interrupted recently by news of a tragic occurrence near Rosarito. On Friday, May 3rd, 2024, we learned that an American and two Australian tourists were victims of a homicide in northern Baja on the Pacific coast. This news is shocking, and we extend our greatest sympathy to their families.

Ocean Discovery Institute prioritizes the safety of its participants above all else. We regularly implement an Emergency Preparedness Plan that includes preventative measures as well as emergency response and recovery procedures should any unexpected event occur. When we receive new information such as this, we assess our current plans and if appropriate, make modifications based on guidance.

We want to take this opportunity to share our comprehensive safety protocols with you.

- **Accountability** – We ensure the accountability of each participant at all times. Mechanisms include:
 - Enrolling in the State Department’s Smart Traveler Enrollment Program
 - Confirming all designated arrivals and departures to and from Mexico
 - Check-in and out procedures for students for all activities
 - Constant oversight with a low ratio of staff to students

- **Safety** – We prevent injury and illness when possible and respond quickly and with the best resources at our disposal. Mechanisms include:
 - Every staff member has First Aid/CPR training
 - Safety Officer present with the designated role of prevention and response (EMT when possible)
 - First Aid kits at the field station, with each group in the field, and during transit
 - AED device at the field station
 - Regular communication and strong relationships maintained with the local authorities and with the US Consulate
 - Field station base within the town and near neighbors and resources
 - Drive the safest route possible in daylight hours
 - Avoid unknown areas
 - Follow the Department of State and other relevant social media information regarding conditions and review travel advisories
 - Evacuation insurance and multiple-scenario evacuation plans in place

**4255 Thorn Street
San Diego, California 92105
619-795-8365
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- Communication – We maintain communication between San Diego and Mexico and within in Bahía de Los Angeles. Because there is no cell service in Bahía de Los Angeles and during a portion of the drive there and back, we maintain communication with all participants using:
 - Radios with each car/student group
 - Satellite phone with each car/student group

We are recommending that all staff and volunteers:


- Avoid the display of signs of wealth (such as expensive cars, watches, or jewelry); they are not needed in Bahía
- Stay in groups if leaving the premises for any reason
- Should they witness or experience any robbery activity, do not resist or become involved but immediately report such activity to staff or authorities

If we receive new information from the U.S. Consulate and other experts, we will continue to develop and implement additional precautions as needed and communicate with you.

We welcome your questions and concerns. Please inquire and/or contact our Executive Director, Shara Fisler at sfisler@oceandi.org / 619.665.3861 or Ocean Leader Program Manager, Carolina Barraza, at cbarraza@oceandi.org / 619.200.5017.

Sincerely,

SHARA FISLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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San Diego, California 92105
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