Medical and evacuation procedures - Mexico 2016
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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 all volunteers and staff) may have significant pre-existing health problems or disabilities, which in the field, could potentially lead to problems.

Medical questionnaire - All participants will be required to enter their medical details onto the Operation Wallacea data portal. Details of how to log on are sent out upon receiving the booking from the participant. The data is stored securely and is initially only available to certain Operation Wallacea staff members, and, for groups of school students, the teacher leading the group.

Screening - All medical forms are assessed by Operation Wallacea. The country manager may seek to contact the participant to gather further information, which they would then enter on to the portal.

Following the initial screening by the country manager, the details are then passed to the on-site medic. He or she can ask for further information, and will have an opportunity to discuss any issues of concern at a medical meeting (between the expedition medics and Operation Wallacea staff) held approximately 3 months prior to the expedition. The team of medics will discuss any potential medical issues, advise anyone if a further consultation with a medic is required and will also suggest additions to the medical kits in light of any pre-existing health problems highlighted.

Insurance - Operation Wallacea has purchased Medical and Repatriation insurance cover to a value of £1 million for all volunteers and staff. Following the medical meeting, the medical details of any participants who have described current or past health concerns, or are taking any current medication, will be passed on to Operation Wallacea’s insurers. They may then want to talk directly to the participant if they have any further questions, and in some cases may choose to request a premium payment in order to provide cover for any pre-existing conditions.

Roles in the event of an Emergency
Carefully planned evacuation protocols are in place in all of the sites in Mexico. All staff will have training on the evacuation procedures and protocols.

Once a major incident leading to an evacuation is identified the Country Manager 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 Xpujil, Chetumal or Playa de Carmen.

High Priority – Cases where the patient’s 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 to medical facilities available in Xpujil, Chetumal or Playa del Carmen in the case of decompression sickness.

**Emergency Priority** – Cases requiring the fastest possible transfer, usually by air to Rivera Mayan in Playa del Carmen.

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 each of the field camps being operated (KM20, Hormiguero, Dos Naciones and Mancolona camps in Calakmul and Akumal marine site). Each of these medical officers has a medical kit designed to treat common conditions and to stabilise the patient in the event of a more serious case where evacuation is needed.

Anti-Venom
Anti-venom specific to the vipers and tropical rattlesnake are available in hospitals in Xpujil, Chetumal and Playa del Carmen. Chetumal is a maximum of a 3-hour drive from the forest survey sites in Calakmul and Playa del Carmen is a 30 minute drive from the marine sites in Akumal and Xpu Ha. As it is always advisable to administer anti-venom in hospital surroundings due to the risk of anaphylactic shock, and patients have up to 4-6 hours following a snake before requiring treatment, anti-venom will not be stored on site because patients can be evacuated to a hospital within 3 hours of being bitten. Checks will be made with each hospital prior to the start of the expedition to ensure that they have sufficient stock of the anti-venoms.

Facilities in Chetumal: Suitable for medium, high and emergency priority evacuations from the forest camps in Calakmul Biosphere Reserve
Clinica Carranza
Address: Avenida Venustianjo Cattanza #366, Chetumal, Quintana Roo, Mexico
Tel: +52 983 835 1440, Fax: +52 983 50440 ext. 214
Email: info@clinicacarranza.com, Website: www.clinicacarranza.com
Clinica Carranza is a large (100+ beds) private hospital which has been offering the highest quality medical care in Chetumal for the last 18 years. The hospital has a separate accident and emergency building that is fully equipped to deal with all kinds of emergencies, state of the art diagnostic equipment, including MRI scanners, ultrasound and X-ray, a separate pharmacy, laboratory for clinical analysis, several operating theatres, and very highly trained bilingual doctors.

Facilities in Xpujil: Suitable for medium, high and emergency priority evacuations from the forest camps in Calakmul Biosphere Reserve
Hospital de Xpujil
Calle Silvituc entre Becan y Balankan, Xpujil, Quintana Roo, Mexico
Tel: +52 982 87 1 61 00
Hospital de Xpujil is modern, moderately sized hospital equipped to deal with the majority of incidents. The hospital facilities include diagnostic equipment, ultrasound and X-ray, a separate pharmacy and laboratory for clinical analysis. Ambulance available for transfers to Chetumal.

Facilities in Playa del Carmen: Suitable for medium, high and emergency priority evacuations
Hospiten Riviera Maya
Address: Colonia Balamcanché, Lote 1, MZA.30, Carr. Federal, Playacar Fase II en Playa del Carmen
C.P. 77710, Quintana Roo, Mexico.
Tel: +52 984 803 1002, Fax: +52 984 803 1606

Last updated 21/09/2015
Hospiten is a small, but very well equipped, Spanish hospital group offering a full medical surface to Western European standards. The hospital contains a trauma department, state-of-the-art equipment, European-trained bilingual doctors, operating rooms, a full stock of medicines, and is suitable for all kinds of diagnosis, treatment and emergency care.

Recompression Chambers
Playa del Carmen International Clinic
SSS Recompression Chamber Network
Address: Avenida 10, esq 28 Nte, Playa del Carmen, Centro, C.P. 77710, Quintana Roo, Mexico
Tel: 984 873 1365
This clinic is on call 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The recompression chambers are run by two qualified doctors and the clinic can also provide emergency medical care, including diagnosis, X-ray, life support and surgery.

Helicopter Support for evacuations
201st Squadron Mexican Air Force Base in Cozumel
Address: Aeropuerto Internacional de Cozumel, Quintana Roo, Mexico
Tel: (emergency only) 24 Hours a day
Principal Contact & Position: General Eduardo Aldasoro Suarez Tel: 0052 987 872 6452

A helicopter can be at any of the Calakmul survey sites within 90 minutes of the call. As the hospital in Playa del Carmen is only a 25 minute drive from Akumal along the very well maintained highway, evacuation for severe injuries from the marine sites in Akumal and Xpu Ha will be managed by ambulance from Hospiten Riviera Maya.

Coordinates of each of the forest 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 Hospiten Hospital in Playa del Carmen.

3. Communications
Forest comms
Km20 base camp in Calakmul is the main operations and comms centre for the forest project. There are parts of the camp where handphone calls can be made however this can be unreliable so a ‘rural’ telephone land line has been installed at the main base camp with radio communication with both the satellite camps and reserve office in Xpujil. Each of the teams working on the transects have to take a hand held radio or runner in case an incident should take place.

Each of the forest field camps have radio or phone contact with the main base and there are pre-arranged daily comms times. All groups at each of these camps have to take a hand held radio or runner when walking the transects to communicate back to the camp in the event of an incident.
Marine comms
There is excellent land line and cell phone coverage for the entire Akumal area and so all communications will be made by telephone.

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

4. Evacuations from Various Field Sites

Camps and survey sites in Calakmul Biosphere Reserve
Evacuation from the sites is by vehicle to Hospital de Xpujil (KM20: 1-1.5 hours, KM15: 1-1.5 hours, Hormiguero camp: half an hour, Mancolona: 2 hours, Dos Naciones: 3 hours) for medium and high evacuations. Emergency evacuations such as spinal injuries may be conducted via helicopter to Chetumal or the Hospiten Hospital in Playa del Carmen (1.5 hours from initial call time to mobilize a helicopter).

Marine site in Akumal
Medium, high and emergency evacuation from the marine sites are by vehicle to Hospiten Riviera Maya Hospital in Playa del Carmen (maximum journey time 30 minutes drive). For emergency evacuations such as spinal injuries, an ambulance will be sent from Hospiten to collect the injured party and transfer them to the hospital (patient will be at the hospital within 1 hour of the telephone call to the hospital).

5. Reporting and Logging

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

6. Mass Evacuations and Disaster Management

The most likely scenario is warning of an impending hurricane. Hurricanes can occur in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico 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. Mexico has an excellent warning system with about a week’s advance notice of any hurricanes heading for Mexico. This information phase is succeeded by a Warning Phase if the hurricane is headed for Mexico. If it looks as though a hurricane is headed for Mexico the survey teams at the marine site will be evacuated to Playa de Carmen. Due to its inland location, Calakmul is less likely to be affected by hurricanes than the coastal areas. With this in mind, the survey teams will be evacuated from the forest to the town of Xpujil and the entrance of the reserve if needed.