



Smithsonian Environmental Research Center

SERC Safety Overview for Volunteers

Thank you for volunteering with SERC! Please review the following safety guidelines before beginning lab or field work.

There are some hazards inherent to environmental science lab and field work (e.g. chemicals, open water, uneven or rough terrain, extreme temperatures, insect bites and stings, etc.). Therefore, it is important that you use common sense and good judgement when in these environments.

Your supervisor will provide you with project and activity specific safety information, but here are some general safety guidelines and expectations for all SERC volunteers:

- Pay attention to your surroundings and do your best to avoid potentially unsafe situations.
- Check with your supervisor before beginning any new task (like working with an unfamiliar chemical or piece of equipment).
- Always wear any personal protective equipment that is relevant to your volunteer activities. If you are unsure about the necessity for such equipment, consult your supervisor.
- Inform your supervisor immediately if you are injured while volunteering on the job.
- Inform your supervisor immediately if you observe any conditions that raise safety concerns.
- Be sure to dress appropriately for the activity that you will be participating in. If you are uncertain about appropriate clothing for a given activity, consult your supervisor.
- If you are working in the lab, be sure to wear shoes that completely cover your feet (no flip flops or sandals).
- If you are working in the field, know the weather forecast and prepare accordingly. Be mindful of possible sudden events such as high winds or thunderstorms.
- For all emergencies, call 911 and contact your supervisor.
 - If you are volunteering on the SERC campus:
 - Calling 911 from a SERC phone will alert SERC Security so that they can direct emergency responders to your location.
 - Calling 911 on a cell phone from the SERC campus does not alert SERC Security. If you call from a cell phone, you will either need to be sure that someone also contacts SERC security (443-482-2298) so that they can direct emergency responders to your location or you will need to be able to describe your location (nearest intersection, GPS coordinates, etc.) to the 911 dispatcher.

Please contact SERC Safety Officer Liza Hamill (HamillL@si.edu) if you have any concerns about the safety conditions in which you are working.