

ITASCA APPENDIX I

It is important to remember that all of the foregoing policies and procedures in the College of Biological Science's (CBS) Lab Safety Plan (LSP) apply to the Itasca Biological Station and Laboratories as well. In a nutshell, please don't leave your lab skills behind when you move your operations to Itasca.

Some additional risks need to be covered when working under field conditions at Itasca, a very rural site remote from the main campus.

- 1) Driving safety: Automobile accidents are the leading cause of death and injury among field biologists as we move between our laboratory and our field sites. Statistics year in and year out confirm that rural, two-lane highways are ten times more dangerous than urban freeways. This may seem counter intuitive, but we need to realize that the closing speeds normally approach 120 mph on rural two-lane roads. These roads, along with the Main Park Drive within Itasca State Park, can become quite congested during the peak of the summer field season because it coincides with the peak of the recreational tourist season.
- 2) Watercraft safety, especially when using canoes and kayaks: Wear life jackets at all times. Watch the weather closely, especially the wind conditions when using canoes. Be sure that you receive canoe/kayak training from someone experienced with canoes/kayaks before venturing out onto a lake or river. It is always best if there is at least one experienced person in each canoe/kayak.
- 3) Weather safety: Each individual must be responsible for his or her own safety in the event of severe weather. Tornadoes are a rare occurrence this far north, but severe thunderstorms and strong straight-line winds occur regularly during the summer months in the Itasca region. Most storms arrive from the west (looking across Lake Itasca). The nearest storm shelter is posted in every building on the Itasca Station. These are marked with green tornado shelter warning signs. The designated storm shelters are the lower floors of the Assembly Hall (Bldg. 53), the lakeside laboratories (Bldgs. 44 and 48), cabins 2, 13, 70, and a Bath House (Bldg. 58).

- 4) **LIGHTNING:** Lightning associated with thunderstorms is the single leading cause of weather related deaths in the United States. Seek shelter immediately when lightning is present. Do not go out onto the lake when lightning is present.

- 5) **Poison Ivy:** Poison Ivy can cause severe rashes in people who are allergic to it. Ask a faculty member to point out this plant to you if you are in doubt. "Leaves-of-three-let-it-be" is a time proven adage that is well worth remembering. Poison Ivy most commonly occurs in semi-disturbed areas such as trail edges and roadside edges. Pre- and post-exposure ointments are stocked in the Itasca scientific supply room.

- 6) Rabies has been reported in bats in Hubbard County. Only those instructors and students who have been vaccinated against rabies may handle any mammals capable of transmitting rabies.

- 7) **Insect-borne diseases:** There are several serious insect-borne diseases that you need to be aware of in the Itasca area:
 - a. Lyme disease, Babesiosis and Erlichiosis are transmitted by deer ticks and possibly by wood ticks. Check for ticks on a daily basis; deer ticks are very small and can attach anywhere on your body. Use special tick repellants containing permethrin.
 - b. West Nile Virus (WNV) is transmitted by mosquitoes. It causes flu-like symptoms and mainly affects the very young and very old. Use high % DEET repellants.
 - c. If you are allergic to bee stings, it is your responsibility to report this to your colleagues and to carry a bee sting kit with you at all times.

- 8) Getting lost in the woods is a very real and unpleasant experience. Stay with your group during field trips. If you intend to work or explore the remote areas of Itasca Park, let someone such as an instructor or cabin-mate know where you are going and when you expect to return. It is best to use the 'buddy system' and take a partner along on field research projects, hikes, etc. If you become lost, **DO NOT PANIC**. S.T.O.P. is an acronym to remember. S-stop, T-think, O-observe, P-prepare. Stay in one place, especially at night. Itasca staff, with the help of the Itasca Park Patrol, will find you.