

Field Safety for TB Staff

Wild Dogs, Accidents & Gangstas, Oh My!



**ATTENTION
OBSERVATION/AWARENESS**



CAR SAFETY

STREET SAFETY

**INTERPERSONAL
SAFETY**

Car safety – Plan and be prepared...



- **Car maintenance**
 - Oil changed, tires filled with air, seatbelts in working condition, flats fixed...
- **Gas-plan stops for long DOT drives**
- **GPS/Maps/Phone**
- **A locking trunk-for charts, etc.**
- **First Aid Kit, spare tire/jack...etc.**
- **Food/Snacks/Water**



Car safety



- **Recording Mileage**
- **Seatbelts**
- **Defensive Driving**
 - Mirrors and turn signals are your pals
 - Don't fear the U-turn!
 - That's someone's Aunt Ida on the road, be polite!
- **Avoid Speeding**
- **Avoid Distracted Driving**

Parking Tidbits



- Park in well-lit areas
- Check in/around/under car
- Keep car doors/windows locked & valuables hidden
- Walk with confidence & purpose
- Do not park in isolated locations, or behind obstacles that will block you from others
- Lock doors immediately after getting into vehicle
- Have your keys in your hand as you approach your vehicle
- **Never leave your mail visible within your vehicle (name, address, gender)**



Distracted Driving

🔹 The Three Main Types of Distraction



VISUAL



MANUAL



COGNITIVE

DISTRACTED DRIVING IS **ANY NON-DRIVING ACTIVITY** A PERSON ENGAGES IN THAT MAY DIVERT ATTENTION FROM DRIVING & INCREASE THE RISK OF CRASHING.

Distracted Driving



WHILE ALL DISTRACTIONS CAN
ENDANGER DRIVERS' SAFETY,

TEXTING

IS THE MOST ALARMING BECAUSE IT
INVOLVES ALL THREE TYPES OF
DISTRACTION.

Distracted Driving

Other Distracting Activities Include...

Eating and drinking

Using cell phones, even for work related calls

Talking to passengers

Grooming

Reading, including maps

Using a GPS or navigation system

Changing the radio station, CD or MP3 Player

Watching a video



Field & Interpersonal Safety



- ◆ Taking the opportunity to assess problems is the first step in reducing the potential to becoming involved in a dangerous situation

General Appearance-staff and client

Self Assessment

Assessment of the Dwelling

The Environment: People

Elevators

The Environment: Noise Level

Attitude

Assessment of People in the Dwellings

General Appearance of DOT and field staff

- Don't change attire to try to blend into the neighborhood. If a DOT worker is recognized as someone who does not belong there but is attempting to blend in, their motives are likely to be questioned.

- DOT workers should dress appropriately: patients may not want a person coming to their house in scrubs to protect confidentiality

- Use N-95s or other protective gear in a discreet yet protective manner

- Limit jewelry, valuables, etc.



The Environment: People DOT workers come into contact with



- **What could a sudden change in the environment's conditions mean?**
- Acute changes in the environment could be an indicator of a potentially dangerous situation.
 - For example, a group of people who suddenly leave or enter an area could indicate that something is amiss.

The Environment: Noise Level



- **What should you do if you are in the field and the area suddenly becomes very quiet or very loud?**
 - Be aware of sudden changes in noise levels.
 - Loud noises: may indicate an unsafe situation is developing close to where you are conducting business.
 - Sudden unexpected quiet: an unsafe situation may be developing.



Staying alert, being aware of the changes, and finding a safe haven before you start your fieldwork will help you to remain safe in potentially dangerous situations.

Assessment of the Dwelling



- **Does the building have evidence of graffiti?**

- Graffiti on a building may indicate the presence of a gang. When gangs are active in a neighborhood, crime and violence increase.

- **Is the building well lit?**

- To assess the safety of a building, you must observe entrances, exits, doorways and hallways.

- An individual is less likely to be undetected in a well-lit building compared to a poorly lit one.

Assessment of the Dwelling



- **Is the building a single-family home, an apartment home, or a public housing project?**
 - Knowing what type of home you are visiting will help to make you safer.
 - Larger numbers of people living in a building increase the chances of a potentially harmful situation.
 - Isolation is a factor when visiting a single family home, leading to a situations where you need help but on one is available.

Call ahead of time, agree on time and place to meet the patient; prepare and have an idea of what to expect

Assessment of the Dwelling



- **How many exits does the building have and where are they located?**
 - An easily accessible exit may be very important to you if a problem arises while conducting your fieldwork
 - An exit should lead you to safety

Assessment of People in the Dwellings



- **Where are the people located: porch, hallway, stairs, or street?**
 - When approaching a client's residence be aware of the people who are in the general vicinity.
 - Porches or hallways are sometimes used as hiding places.
 - Dogs or other animals may be lurking under a porch, behind a fence, under stairs, or roaming the streets.

Assessment of People in the Dwellings



- **What activities are the people involved in?**
 - Assess constantly your surrounding to recognize trouble or the potential for trouble.
 - **Know your own policy/protocol** for what to do if you witness or suspect illegal activity.

What should you do if you are attacked in a building?



- A. Start yelling, “Fire!”
- B. Activate a fire alarm (which you should have already located)
- C. Pound on doors of offices, apartments, or other occupied buildings
- D. Avoid being forced into an office or a room. Stay on a main walkway.
- E. All of the above

And the answer is.... **E. All of the above**

Elevators



- Look in the elevator before getting on
- Stand next to the control panel; an emergency phone is usually located there
- Hit the alarm and as many floor buttons as you can if you are attacked. **DO NOT PUSH THE STOP BUTTON.**
- Do not get on the elevator if you are suspicious of the person(s) next to you.
- Get off immediately if someone suspicious gets on to the elevator.

If you suspect someone is following you...



- Attract someone's attention.
- Do NOT go home.
- Drive to a fire station, a 24-hour grocery store, restaurant or gas station – any place with bright lights and lots of people!

'Cause it just makes sense...



- Always carry ID (and business cards), and DSHS credentials
- Always carry some cash (snacks too)
- Do not wear a lot of jewelry
- Dress appropriately with comfortable footwear that will allow you to run if the moment arises!
- Be polite and courteous – Remember good customer service!

Be alert, aware, and sober for your fieldwork.

Field Safety: Final Points

Field visits may be challenging anytime, but TB programs should take steps to ensure that DOT staff and other field workers are protected

Final summary points:

- ◆ **1. Safety first-it's important to provide DOT, find contacts, test patient suspected of having TB, but our staff are number one and safety is a priority.**
- ◆ **Ensure your DOT workers and field staff have plans in place: call ahead, have sign-out boards, ensure at least one co-worker knows where staff are, and when they are expected to return.**
- ◆ **Be prepared-for change in weather, environment, patient status, car troubles...plan ahead.**



Questions?? Comments??

