



Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

Protocols and Tips for Working in American Samoa



The mission of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center (PIFSC) is to conduct high-quality, timely research to support the stewardship of fisheries resources, protected species, and ecosystems in the central and western Pacific Ocean.

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Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center Protocols and Tips for Working in American Samoa

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About this Document

The primary audience of this document is PIFSC staff. The purpose of this document is to provide important information to the NOAA Fisheries staff (specifically, PIFSC) that conduct work in American Samoa. It describes how to plan and conduct your work in a culturally appropriate manner and describes the resources available to assist in your efforts. Some tips are provided on how to dress, behave, and keep yourself healthy and safe while in the region.



Talofa and welcome to American Samoa –

The Leaders and Staff of the Office of Samoan Affairs (OSA) have been working together with NOAA, specifically PIFSC, on this informational booklet as a guide to familiarize you with some of the more important traditional and cultural courtesies of the people of American Samoa during your official travel to the Samoan Islands. My hope is that this booklet can help you enjoy your tour of duty to the Samoan Archipelago, and when possible, you will take some time to enjoy our island, join the activities of our people, enjoy our local cuisines, and learn and take some of our “Fa’a Samoa” (the Samoan Way) home with you. Your work is vital to the sustainability of Samoa’s marine resources and fisheries and their economic and subsistence value to the people of our islands. Though you are here on official travel, the Staff of the OSA wishes you a joyous and safe visit to our Samoan Islands and look forward to your next visit.

- Paramount Chief “Mauga” Tasi Asuega, Secretary of Samoan Affairs

Before You Go

PIFSC Field Office Liaisons

PIFSC employs a Field Office Liaison, Mr. Gataivai “Vai” Talamoa, based in American Samoa, whose primary role is to provide support for any PIFSC activity in American Samoa. Vai also works with the NOAA Earth System Research Laboratory’s Global Monitoring Division, where he assists with operations at the American Samoa Observatory in Cape Matatula.



Gataivai (Vai) Talamoa

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Vai’s job is to prevent any unintentional acts which may be misconstrued as disrespectful. These may be caused by failing to recognize *matai* (the holders of family chief titles) and non-*matai* in the American Samoa Government and the local community.

ASSISTANCE

- cruise planning
- preparation
- permitting
- visa entry / “ok board” requirements
- fuel logistics
- purchasing supplies

ADVICE AND SERVICES

- cultural protocols
- translation
- interpretation
- communication
- coordination with partners and the public

Vai and his counterparts in Guam (Eric Cruz) and Saipan (Mike Trianni) are remarkable resources for PIFSC staff. They have well-developed networks and a keen sense of local customs, norms, and politics. These liaisons should be considered your first stop when planning travel to the territories. Even if they are not involved, they will likely be asked about your activity, so it is in your best interest to ensure they have accurate information. The liaisons are often asked to participate in cruise activities and provide other assistance as needed while the cruises are underway.

How to Best Use the Liaisons

Vai is there to help PIFSC staff, so you should give him advance notice of your trip and your specific needs. Be sure to communicate clearly, early, and often for best results. If you want help from Vai, you must initiate requests directly with him.

- ☐ Prior to your arrival, plan to **provide a short (one page) written summary** of what you plan to study, where you plan to go, etc.

Vai can help with translating, interpreting, and communicating this information to the OSA, the Governor’s Office, the Fono (Legislature), the media, and other important partners on the ground. The liaisons are the local face of PIFSC and are expected to be able to answer questions from a variety of people about what PIFSC research is occurring in their region.

- ☐ **Please help Vai and our other liaisons stay informed about your work.** They can better assist with emergencies and other tough situations if they are apprised before and throughout your operations.

Communications

In general, your **mobile phone** from Hawaii or mainland will not work in American Samoa.

- ☐ If you want to use your phone, you **must unlock it from your carrier and purchase a local SIM card**.
- ☐ **For ship-based operations, the Port Agent has 15 mobile phones available for rental (\$15 each)**. The ship's Operations Officer should arrange phone rentals with the Port Agent.

There are frequently problems calling in and out of American Samoa. If you try to connect once and you do not get through, try again. Sometimes calls that go to voicemail never ring on the other end. If visitors need **local phones**, they can often reach out to Vai and others in the NOAA and local community to provide them with spares for use during their visit.

Mobile phones and phone cards can be purchased at **Blue Sky at Forsgren's Laufou Shopping Place** in Nu'uuli or **American Samoa Telecommunications Authority (ASTCA)** locations in Fagatogo and Nu'uuli.

- ☐ Keep in mind that **American Samoa does not have very specific items** available for purchase, such as electronic cords and chargers, so plan ahead and bring what you need.

In addition, **internet connections** at the hotel and on the ship will likely be spotty and slow.

- ☐ **Download any cloud-based information you will need** to a local drive and print copies as necessary to be best prepared for your work there.

You may need to request that the hotel staff reset the wireless router or give you updated internet passwords multiple times during your stay. If your work requires a **conference call**, inquire with the OneNOAA staff (Appendix I) about how they can best assist you, as this function is not widely available.



Forsgren's Laufou Shopping Place

Call and Plan Ahead

Relying on email as your only means of communication with the territories is not always sufficient. Due to the cultural and communication barriers, you are encouraged to not only use email, but also make telephone calls to ensure effective remote planning. You should also **meet with liaisons in-person** upon arrival to ensure a smooth trip. These folks get a lot of off-island visitors and competing requests for their time, so it is important to show respect and plan ahead.

- ☐ If you are starting a **new project**, please coordinate with Hoku Johnson and Risa Oram (Science Operations Division).
- ☐ Please **give advance notice (at least a month) to Vai** that you are going to American Samoa and work with him to set up meetings in advance with the appropriate people locally (formal meetings with leaders and other natural resource management people) in American Samoa. Any PIFSC staff member should feel free to contact the liaisons directly for help or assistance. However, be sure to get clearance/approval from your Team Lead or Chief Scientist first to avoid any duplicative or conflicting requests. Best practice is designating one person that will communicate with Vai and share that information amongst the team.
- ☐ One of the first things you should do upon learning that you'll travel to American Samoa, is to **arrange for a teleconference call with Vai** so that he can provide a cultural briefing to your team prior to travelling.

Uncommon Supplies

There are a few larger grocery stores (**KS Mart**, **Forsgren's Laufou Shopping Place**, **TSM** and **CostULess**) that sell food, some over the counter medicines, and other dry goods. If you have specific dietary restrictions, you should plan to bring your own food (e.g., you probably will not find almond butter on island, but plenty of canned corned beef). The freshness and selection of fruits and vegetables may not be what you are accustomed to in Hawaii; be prepared to have older foods and limited selection.

In general, the restaurants provide good food and should keep most people happy. Vegetarians should be fine, but may want to bring their own source of proteins. There are not many stores to buy clothing items you may have forgotten, so try to remember to pack everything you need. This also goes for electronics and fishing gear. The variety of supplies may be limited. **ACE Hardware** and **Tropik Traders** carry fishing supplies. These suggestions are not official endorsements of these establishments, and are only offered to assist you in your planning. Ask Vai or other locals for further assistance.



Language and Translation

The most common languages you will hear spoken day to day are Samoan and English. You are highly encouraged to plan your messaging in advance and use Vai for translation and interpretation during all interactions with the public. Although many people understand English, they prefer to hear messages in Samoan. It is a sign of respect to prepare your messages in advance and make them available in the local language. Elder members of the public may insist on only speaking in Samoan, and they represent an important and influential sector of society.

☐ **You are encouraged to provide written materials in advance** to Vai so that he can translate these and make them available to the public.

You are also highly encouraged to do your part to make more science outreach resources available in the Samoan language. Please contact Science Operations staff for advice and services. Learning some key Samoan phrases will certainly help in day-to-day activities and make your immersion into Samoan culture more enjoyable. There are many references available online.

Getting into the Territory

Passports

- ☐ All visitors to American Samoa require a **passport that is valid for six months** or more and sufficient funds to support their stay.

If you arrive aboard a NOAA vessel without a passport, you will not be allowed off the ship. This is very important to remember, particularly if you plan to fly out.

Entry Fees

- ☐ **It is wise to keep \$100 on hand**, and expect this fee if you are a foreign national.

The rule on entry fees to American Samoa is ever changing. U.S. citizens should not have to pay a fee, but the policies of American Samoa Immigration could change tomorrow.

Entry Permit Request and “OK Board” Approval

If your trip involves arriving via one method and departing via another (e.g., arrive air / depart ship, arrive ship / depart air) then your Chief Scientist or Team Lead will need to request an “OK Board” notice from the Attorney General’s office on your behalf.

- ☐ Prepare the following information for **FAX to Vai at (684) 633-1400**. Be sure to **call (684) 256-0231 or email him Gataivai.Talamoa@noaa.gov** so he knows to expect the fax, and you get confirmation that he will hand deliver the request to the AG’s office.

If **arriving by air** / departing by ship, include:

1. The entry permit request letter
2. A copy of traveler’s passport
3. An e-ticket or itinerary

If **arriving by ship** / departing by air, include

1. The entry permit request letter
2. A copy of traveler’s passport
3. Operations schedule for the ship

It is very important that **the name on the request and tickets match the name on the passport**, including suffixes (Sr, Jr, III, IV, etc.). At the very least, the request and passport need to match. **Vai will hand-deliver the suite of forms to the Attorney General’s Office**, which returns an “OK Board” to Vai and to the airline. **Vai will communicate this back to the research program**. Please note the airline will not allow the traveler to get on the plane or off the ship without first receiving this.

- ☐ To **submit an entry permit request** for an “OK Board” approval, the research program (e.g., Ecosystem Sciences Division’s (ESD’s) Living Marine Resources Program, and Fisheries Research and Monitoring Division’s (FRMD’s) Life History Program) is responsible for writing a letter to the Attorney General.

This letter should include specifics about who is arriving via what method, on what dates, when they are departing, and via what method (**see Appendix III: Template - Entry Permit Request Letter**). Multiple persons can be put on the same request, but for clarity, it is recommended that a different request be made for every arrival day or departure day. Make sure to complete these requests with plenty of time to spare (suggested minimum: one week), as this usually takes at least five business days.

Foreign Nationals

- ☐ Programs are responsible for getting the required foreign national (non-U.S. Citizen) paperwork completed for their scientific party that allows the foreign national to enter the ship/Pago Pago/Apia. Please see the **NOAA Foreign National Registration System requirements** at <http://www.wrc.noaa.gov/wrso/foreignnationals.htm>.

Foreign national travelers arriving in American Samoa need an entry permit in addition to being on the “OK Board” approval every time they plan to enter the territory, regardless of mode of arrival/departure. Foreign nationals will be denied entry to American Samoa and Apia, Independent Samoa without the proper entry documents. If a foreign national plans to arrive in American Samoa via Apia, or plans to depart American Samoa and travel to Apia, then the Consulate General in Apia, Independent Samoa and Immigration in Pago Pago, American Samoa must also clear the “OK Board” approval. Foreign nationals may be required to submit medical and police clearance from their home country. Vai can assist with this process, but be sure to give plenty of notice (several months is preferred). If foreign nationals fail to prepare a timely request for an “OK Board” approval, they may be denied entry into American Samoa, causing significant and costly delays.

- ☐ **For emergency assistance call: Vai: (684) 256-0231 or HC Luafalealo (OSA) Cell: (684) 254-2511 Office: (684) 633-5201.**

Securing Research Permits and Entry to Villages

A permit is required for all marine research involving resource extraction or collection in the Territory and can be applied for by contacting the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources. American Samoa has several types of marine protected areas with different managing agencies, restrictions on allowable use, and permit and entry requirements (see Appendix IV for Maps of Marine Protected Areas in Tutuila and Manu'a). Please contact the managing agencies listed for the areas in which you plan to conduct research to secure permits and permissions to enter the villages (see Appendix II for further details and contact info). Vai can assist you with this process.

Cultural Sensitivity and Etiquette

Samoans are meticulous about courtesy, particularly toward the elderly and holders of chiefly titles. **One does not stand or speak while others are seated, and if one enters a room where others are sitting on the floor, it is proper to bend slightly and say “tulou lava” (“excuse me”).** A respect vocabulary is used when speaking to chiefs. Reciprocal courtesy and etiquette are characteristic at ceremonial and political events.

American Samoa is a traditional island nation where the land is controlled and managed by the leading family chief (*matai*). American Samoa is a conservative culture and you are expected to show respect and use good judgement during all interactions. You represent NOAA in your every action, whether on- or off-duty, and are expected to adhere to NOAA policies and procedures for good conduct. See Appendix VI for the PIFSC Conduct Policies.

To quote a statement from the OneNOAA American Samoa group to the Commanding Officer of the Hi'ialakai and Chief Scientist dated March 20, 2015:

Please note: when celebrating your arrival in port, we respectfully ask that the crew and scientists pay respects to the Samoan culture and traditions. The conduct you display in public as our guests speaks volumes to the community when showing the respect and professionalism that surrounds NOAA employees worldwide. When we bid the vessels farewell, we want to be sure NOAA vessels and all NOAA visitors are always welcome back in the community and held at the highest regard.

Working in American Samoa is like being invited to a formal dinner at someone's house. You need to dress and act in a way that shows respect for your hosts. These islands are very small and formal social networks spread news and gossip across the island quickly. It is extremely obvious when new people come on island. Everyone's activities are largely on public display, and anonymity is not guaranteed, or even likely. It is a good rule of thumb to assume your actions will be known to all, so behave accordingly. People in American Samoa do not distinguish between NOAA groups, so a single poorly behaved/poor mannered group reflects poorly on us all.

Vai and the other Field Office Liaisons are ready and willing to be helpful, but please use common sense and be courteous and respectful toward them. Keep in mind that although these liaisons can function in a NOAA world and may seem very similar to you, they may be culturally sensitive to the way you talk to them, including the way you ask questions, and your general posture overall. You may not be aware of your own biases and the way your actions may be perceived. If in doubt, reach out to the other people from the Science Operations Division, ESD's Living Marine Resources Program, or FRMD's Western Pacific Fisheries Information Network (WPacFIN) Program. WPacFIN has a lot of experience working in American Samoa and makes quarterly visits. They can provide information about recent events or other issues that may affect your work.

Cultural sensitivity is of utmost concern and the actions of every person visiting these regions reflect on all the people that visit after them. **Your speech, communication, dress, and mannerisms should always come from a place of respect.** Avoid overbearing requests or insulting demands. Please use humility, be kind, empathetic, humble, and courteous in your requests to the liaisons and your interactions with other people in American Samoa. **If you ask someone “how you are doing” or “how is it going,” be prepared to stop and listen to an answer.** Do not expect things to work like they do in Hawaii or the mainland. **Leave yourself more time. Slow down. Temper your expectations of goods and services knowing this is a small island with limited resources.** Do not get negative, confrontational, or impatient. Often, things take more time in American Samoa. The liaisons will know what is right and how your actions will be perceived locally, so it is very critical to listen to them and to take their advice seriously. Risa Oram (PIFSC Science Operations Division) can also offer advice on navigating this issue.

Introduction and Group Discussions

When meeting for the first time with anyone in American Samoa, always initiate and extend the common courtesy of the “hand shake,” using both hands, and bowing body and head slightly. Make eye contact, smile and say “*Talofa lava.*” If you enter a room with a small group, introduce yourself to everyone. Treating someone too casually or without the same respect afforded others will be considered an insult. It can be considered insulting or disrespectful to challenge or contradict people in front of their peers. If you are involved in a discussion with a group, do not directly attack a person’s position; always behave respectfully and deferentially to the opinions and expertise of people living on the island.

American Samoa Perception of NOAA

People of American Samoa do not distinguish between the different parts of NOAA. It is in your best interest to understand the local perception of NOAA at large before conducting work in the area. Please ask Vai, OneNOAA staff, or others whether there are any issues you should be aware of before conducting your work in the area. You are advised to research local news sources (e.g., Talane, Samoa News, Samoa Observer, 93KHJ) to learn about current affairs and NOAA in the local news.

Holidays

Flag Day is celebrated during the week of April 17 to commemorate when the islands became a U.S. Territory. Planning for the event normally begins about a month prior. Activities include traditional group dancing and singing, speeches, cricket games, and races in long canoes, each with about 50 oarsmen. It is best to avoid scheduling activities in the territory during this time and during other holidays (particularly around Christmas) if the activities rely on local participation.



When You Arrive

This section describes the protocols required for working in American Samoa.

First Stop: Vai

Vai should be the first person you contact in American Samoa when you arrive. His office is on the second floor of the Pago Plaza (blue building in Pago Pago) and contact information is in section Before You Go.

Next Stop: Required Formal Meetings

To launch a new project, begin a new field season for an ongoing project, hold a public comment hearing, or hold any other meeting regarding changes to fisheries management in American Samoa, it is expected that you first host a series of formal meetings with local traditional and government leaders. The highest “ranking” person from your program or institution should attend these meetings.

If you are planning a formal meeting with members of the American Samoa Government or with local community leadership, representatives from each of the **NOAA Fisheries satellite offices in American Samoa should be given the opportunity to deliver a formal traditional Samoan introduction**. These meetings are with the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, American Samoa Government Department Directors, Secretaries and Deputies, members of the American Samoa Senate, House of Representatives, and Village Mayors. Vai can provide advice on this. Upon completion of the traditional introduction, please be seated and situated before beginning any dialogue with your host (please do not speak to your host while standing).



Briefing 1: Office of Samoan Affairs



The first series of meetings are with the OSA. **If you plan to do work in the villages or throughout the Territory, it is recommended that you hold three meetings at minimum in the West, Central, and East locations**. The OSA is responsible for the traditional management of the lands and seas in American Samoa and must be consulted prior to doing any work in American Samoa.

An update for each trip, regardless of location (e.g., on land or at sea), is expected even if your work is ongoing and you contacted them in the past. OSA provides important access to the areas and network of people you need to conduct your work. Not contacting them or making them aware of your activities can have negative repercussions for you and other NOAA staff. The importance of contacting OSA cannot be overstated.

HC Luafalealo Keneti Tanuvasa is the point of contact for communicating

all NOAA activities in the Territory. Vai should be given the opportunity to work with HC Luafalealo to schedule presentations for NOAA projects, programs, and services to local government, community leaders, and the public on your behalf. HC Luafalealo will accompany you to the villages to explain your project and gain acceptance from the mayors to conduct your work there. If you arrive in American Samoa to work as Lead on a project, program, or service, you are Chief of that effort, and a gesture of food may be expected. Please see section on Food and ask Vai for assistance with protocols.

Briefing 2: Governor and Lieutenant Governor

- ❑ After meeting with the OSA, the next step is to meet with the **Governor and Lieutenant Governor**. Vai can assist with arranging this meeting.

They should be briefed on your plans and consulted on the best approach for outreach. They should also be given an opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback on your proposed approach.

Briefing 3: *Fono* (Legislature, includes Senate and House of Representatives)

- ❑ The final set of formal briefings is with the *Fono* (Legislature includes **Senate** and **House of Representatives**). Vai can assist with arranging these meetings. Please keep in mind that Vai has a Chief title and must accompany you in order to access the *Fono*.

Similar to the previous two sets of meetings, this group should be briefed on your plans and consulted on the best approach to outreach.

Other Notifications and Courtesy Visits

It is customary and expected that you visit with Directors of ASG agencies and other federal partners that work on issues related to your PIFSC work. This might include the Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources, American Samoa Department of Commerce Coastal Management Program, American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency, National Marine Sanctuaries of American Samoa, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Parks of American Samoa, Department of Parks and Recreation, and Department of Administrative Services. **For ship-based operations, the Commanding Officer will take lead in coordinating with the American Samoa Port Authority.**

Vai maintains **an electronic list of scientists, managers, and other important contacts in American Samoa**. Please contact Vai to assist you with setting these meetings up in advance. You should plan for these visits and secure meeting times before your arrival.

Understand that these people are very busy and may need to cancel or reschedule meetings. Please allow flexibility in your schedule for additional meeting times. Please plan to wear formal attire (see Clothing section below). If you are unable to schedule many one-on-one meetings, please consider asking Vai to facilitate a special OneNOAA meeting so you can provide a briefing there. Non-NOAA people could be encouraged to attend as well. The onus is on you to maintain relationships and provide updates on the status of your work. You may find it easier to conduct your work when you have local advocates of your research.

Media and Outreach

After the formal required meetings with the dignitaries, the media should be notified of your plans.

- ❑ You are highly encouraged to **produce a press briefing about your trip prior to your visit**. Prepare a few major talking points and **be ready to speak with the media when you arrive**.

The primary media outlets are radio and newspaper (See Additional Resources section for Media Contacts). You are encouraged to prepare and conduct **outreach presentations for students** about your research while you are on island. If you are leading a research cruise, Vai will likely request an opportunity for dignitaries, students, and the community to **tour the ship or to interact with the science party** and ship crew. If you have a visiting scientist on your research cruise, you are encouraged to **invite him or her to write a guest PIFSC blog** about the research trip. PIFSC Communications staff, Amanda Dillon, may offer additional advice and support on how to communicate effectively with the public about your cruise.



ASG Executive Office Building



National Park Service and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service



NOAA NMSAS Ocean Center

Life on Land

Clothing

Clothing for Formal Meetings

Business with Traditional and Government Leaders is formal in nature; therefore, it is critical that you wear formal attire when conducting business. **For meetings with the Fono (Legislature), men are required to wear a tie** (Vai has spares to borrow), a collared dress shirt, formal dress pants and **closed-toe shoes**. The tie and closed-toe shoes can be omitted for other non-*Fono* formal meetings, but are still a nice touch.

Women, should dress the way they would for a formal business meeting. Modest clothing covering shoulders and skirts that go at least to their knees. Avoid wearing shorts that go above the knee. If in doubt, buy a simple *lava lava* (sarong wrap) and wear this over your shorts. This is appropriate and respectful dress for both men and women. This is considered a sign of respect when attending village meetings, so have one handy. You can find *lava lavas* at many of the stores on Tutuila.

If you are planning to spend a significant amount of time in the villages interacting with the community, you might consider getting formal local Samoan outfits made. Men would get a collared aloha shirt and an *i'e faitaga* (men's tailored skirt with pockets). This is very formal and a respectful thing to wear. Women would get a *pulatasi* made (a dress that consists of a top and matching bottom). The top covers the shoulders and is not too low cut or revealing. The bottom is a full-length skirt. Inquire with locals for advice on where to buy material and where to get these made. Custom outfits are relatively affordable and can be made in less than a week.

NOAA Corps Dress

NOAA Corps Directives on Uniforms and Awards (dated 04/26/2004)¹ say "The Uniform of the Day shall be similar to that prescribed for the Naval District in which the Command is located." The Navy wears Summer Whites year-around in Hawaii. For air conditioned office work where you are often interacting with others, and official meetings with high ranking representatives, Summer Whites are proper. Summer Whites are also appropriate for ship tours featuring high ranking dignitaries.

Field and Beach Attire

Clothing worn at the beach or in the field should be modest. Bikinis in the water are acceptable as long as you cover up on shore. Avoid wearing short shorts without cover-ups. Rash guards and surf leggings are recommended for modesty and protection from the sun and ocean creatures. Surf trunks are appropriate for men. When you leave your hotel, walk around, go back to your room, or to use a restroom, the best practice is to throw on a *lava lava* or shorts and a t-shirt. Modesty and respect is very important at public places in American Samoa, especially if elders or young children are present. While most of the beaches are sand, keep in mind this is a volcanic island so walking over rock should be expected. Water shoes, such as neoprene booties, are recommended.



¹ http://www.corpscpc.noaa.gov/procedures/corps_directives/chapter_12/ncd_ch12part1th3.pdf

Lodging

Sadie's by the Sea hotel in Utulei (near many of the government offices in Pago Pago) and **Tradewinds** hotel in Ottoville (near the airport) are two of the larger hotels available. These both have a restaurant nearby. Note that there is also a regular "Sadie's" (locally, and jokingly, referred to as "Sadie's by the Street"). Be sure to book at Sadies by the Sea if you want access to the pool and restaurant.

There are also several smaller family-owned bed and breakfast establishments, including **Moana 'O Sina**, **Fale Pule**, and **Marge's Lodge** on Ofu. These suggestions are offered to assist you in your planning are not official endorsements of any of these establishments. Inquire with Vai if you have any specific questions.



Health and Safety

Contact Vai and other locals to inquire about current health concerns in addition to checking the Center for Disease Control's (CDC's) American Samoa website. The CDC's website describes vaccines and medicines you may need, how to stay healthy and safe, healthy travel packing lists, travel health notices, and what to do after your trip:

<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/traveler/none/american-samoa>

- ☐ You are highly encouraged to read this website and consult a doctor in tropical medicine at least 3 months prior to your departure to ensure you are adequately vaccinated.

Staphylococcus aureus ("staph") bacterial infections are very common in American Samoa and may be correlated with runoff of piggery waste and septic systems in the nearshore waters. Methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) are a type of staph bacteria that have become resistant to many of the antibiotics used to treat ordinary staph infection.² MRSA is also known to occur in American Samoa. Minor first aid and cleanliness should never be ignored. You should remain hyper-vigilant in cleaning cuts and using antibacterial cream. While grocery stores and the hospital have supplies, it is recommended to have basic first-aid supplies with you. If you have specific medical needs, do not assume you can get the necessary drugs or equipment on island—bring what you will need plus extra.

Climate

Dry Season is between July and September and Rainy Season is October to May. The wettest time is between December and March, which is also the period when cyclones can occur. The warm season lasts from mid-December through end of April with an average daily high temperature above 87 °F. The hottest day of the year is in mid-March with an average high of 88 °F and low of 78 °F. **Remember to pack a water bottle and stay hydrated. Bring a hat, spare sunglasses, sunscreen, lip balm with SPF, and stay covered up.** A *lava lava* is an essential piece of field equipment that can act as a quick sunshade, a towel, a cover up and a blanket. Be sure to protect yourself from the sun. American Samoa is roughly 600 miles closer to the equator than Honolulu so sun-protection shirts and pants, hats, and lots of sunscreen are necessary if you plan to be outside during the day.

² <http://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/mrsa/basics/definition/con-20024479>

Dogs and Jogging

Be aware that feral dogs can be a problem in American Samoa. They have been known to congregate in packs and attack and bite people, especially while jogging past. It is advisable to carry a stick with you while walking or jogging. Bending over to pick up a rock or winding your hand back as if to throw it may ward off some hostile dogs. While the territory is making good progress on addressing this issue through employing a local veterinarian, it is advisable to remain vigilant. The main highway stretch along the coast from Nu'uuli to Pago Harbor is a good option for jogging. If you are jogging, shorts above the knee are fine; however, ladies should wear a shirt. Jogging/sports bras by themselves are not appropriate.



Drinking Water

While traveling in American Samoa, buy bottled water, boil your water, or bring a filter that can eliminate pathogens. Sawyer 0.1 micron filter eliminates many bacteria and protozoa, while their 0.02 filter eliminates viruses. A UV filter and boiling are effective methods in killing pathogens. Water sourced from "village water" is village groundwater and, in general, should be boiled prior to drinking. Avoid drinking municipal tap water.

Driving

Driving etiquette in American Samoa is quite different from Hawaii or mainland U.S. Drive the posted speed limit, and be courteous and patient with other drivers. Honking is generally used as a greeting, rather than for defensive driving. Do not honk because you are impatient or in a hurry. This will reflect very poorly on NOAA if you are noticed. Please use the horn for an emergency only.

Hospitals

Health care is extremely limited in American Samoa. The LBJ Hospital is in Faga'alua and the Veterans Affairs (VA) Outpatient Clinic is in Tafuna. NOAA Corps Officers and Veterans can use the VA Outpatient Clinic. Phone number for LBJ Hospital is 1-684-633-1222 or dial 911 for emergencies.



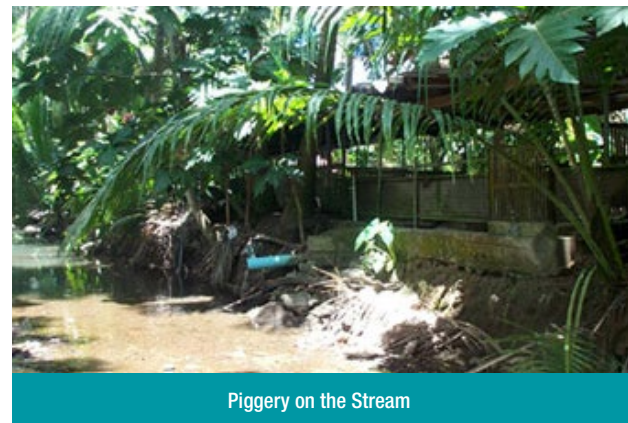
Department of VA Outpatient Clinic, Tafuna



LBJ Tropical Medical Center, Faga'alua

Nearshore Water Quality

The American Samoa Environmental Protection Agency conducts water quality monitoring of over 50 nearshore beaches in Tutuila. Their website contains many good resources; however, the data may not be up to date. If you have questions or concerns about the water quality in an area where you plan to work or play, it is highly recommended that you first contact the AS EPA to inquire about their recent testing results and to get recommendations for your safety. Avoid going into nearshore waters after heavy rains when brown water occurs. Runoff from septic systems and piggeries will wash out of the streams and into the bays. These may include raw sewage and other debris in the water that may attract sharks and other predators.



Piggery on the Stream

Mosquito-Borne Diseases

Mosquito-borne diseases, such as Dengue Fever, Zika, and Chikungunya all occur in American Samoa. **In 2017 a public health emergency was declared in American Samoa due to dengue fever outbreak. In December 2017, four deaths have been confirmed in the latest dengue fever outbreak in Independent Samoa which was detected in October 2017.** Those who travel to Pacific countries frequently are at risk of repeat infections with different strains of the dengue virus. This can lead to dengue hemorrhagic fever, which can be fatal.

Symptoms of dengue fever include the sudden onset of fever for two to seven days, intense headache, muscle and joint pain, pain behind the eyes, nausea, stomach ache, vomiting, skin rash and leucopenia (reduction in white blood cells). People who develop dengue hemorrhagic fever may also develop symptoms of bleeding such as bruising and nose bleeds, and internal bleeding can also occur.

There is no vaccine currently available in the Pacific for dengue fever; nor does vitamin B prevent mosquito bites. **The only way to prevent infection is to avoid being bitten by mosquitos.** Although the most common time for bites is early morning and late afternoon, dengue-carrying mosquitoes also bite all through the day.

Take precautions to ensure you avoid being bitten by mosquitos:

Indoors

- Use screens on doors and windows.
- Use insect sprays.
- Use mosquito coils.
- Use a mosquito net over your bed at night. This may be sprayed with insecticide.
- Using an air conditioner is very effective at keeping mosquitos out of a room.

Outdoors

- Wear a repellent cream or spray containing less than 35% diethyltoluamide (DEET). High concentrations are no more effective and can be harmful.
- Products containing 20-25% picaridin or 30% lemon eucalyptus oil are also effective.
- When using sunscreen, apply repellent over the top of sunscreen.
- Wear light colored protective clothing such as long-sleeved shirts, long pants and hats. Clothing can be treated with repellent.
- Avoid hiking in the forest during early morning and late afternoon.

Prevent the spread of Dengue Fever



The mosquito is the most common carrier of the Dengue Virus.

Dengue Fever can be DEADLY.



Land and People

Please ask for permission before entering any property no matter how isolated the location may be; the majority of lands in American Samoa are family-owned. If entry onto a property is required in order to access a shoreline or reef for official work, Vai will mediate with the ASG, OSA, Village Mayor, and the family to gain access. You should always ask permission for all other subjects too, such as photographing or audio- and video-recording members of the public, properties, or traditional events in villages. If you want to access a beach or property for leisure or personal interest, please approach the home on the land and request entry.

The “Sa” Curfew

The **Sa Curfew is typically observed daily for about 15 minutes at dusk between 6:00pm – 7:30pm, but is extended on occasion.** Sa is a time traditionally dedicated to family and prayer every day of the week in every village of American Samoa. The curfew is strictly enforced by the village “Aumaga” (association of the village men with no matai title). If you happen to be driving through a village at the time of the curfew, please **drive slowly and turn down your radio. Do not pull off the road** because once you leave the main road you will not be allowed out of your car or back on the main road until the curfew has expired.

Similarly, if you are walking through a village when the Sa bell rings, **you will be asked to sit quietly until after Sa.** If you will be walking or jogging through a village in the evening, plan accordingly.



Sa Bell

Sunday is a Day of Prayer

Sunday is a day of prayer and quiet rest. American Samoa is a very religious community; therefore, **Sunday should be a day of rest for all NOAA employees**, and activities should be limited to the grounds of the hotel. However, if you wish to drive on Sunday, **limit driving to the main road only, and drive slowly through villages**. Aside from Lions Park in Tafuna and the beach at Utulei adjacent to Sadie's by the Sea, **consider all shoreline areas on American Samoa off-limits** on Sunday. The correct protocol is to enjoy the drive and view, but not make any stops.

Posture

If seated in a chair during a meeting, plant your feet directly below your knees – remember not to leave your legs stretched out and do not point your feet straight out toward any person at any time. If seated on the floor in a *Fale Tele* (meeting hall) and you cannot fold your legs underneath you, please ask for a *lava lava* or another mat that can be used to cover your outstretched legs and feet.

Food

Food is culturally important in American Samoa. When two chiefs meet, no matter the rank, there is always the expectation of food being served as a gesture of welcome, pride, honor, and respect. NOAA Representatives in American Samoa for official work receive information and speak on behalf of NOAA, which makes them Chiefs in Samoan culture. If you arrive in American Samoa to work as Lead on a project, program, or service, you are Chief of that effort, and a gesture of food may be expected. Federal funds cannot be used to pay for refreshments, and pooling per diem funds may not be a popular choice. There is a protocol in Samoan culture for not being able to provide refreshments, and Vai can advise you on the specifics. Do not comment on local fare being gross or strange – treat food you are offered with respect. Do not stand or walk while eating. If you are offered food, sit down to eat it, and do not eat or chew while walking.



Fale Tele

Located in the epicenter of every village is the *Fale Tele*. If there are men and/or women meeting inside the *fale* with their legs folded, this is a good indication that a family or village traditional event is in session. **Do not drive by the hall at this time**. If you pass the hall, do so quietly, and be sure to slightly bow and state “*tulou lava*”.

Gifts

The exchange of gifts is a very important part of the Samoan culture; gifts can be monies, clothing, assorted candies, canned goods, or beverages. Samoans enjoy giving gifts to visitors. Federal employees are limited to what they can give to not create a conflict of interest; therefore, if your duties involve dealing with local government or village leaders, the safest gifts are candies and coffee.

Donating Fish to Charities

The PIFSC Life History Program successfully arranged to donate the fish they caught during their research trips to Hope House and other charities. Please contact Vai to assist with donating fish if you are collecting them as part of your research.

Rule of Thumb

Samoans, like many Pacific Island nations, have a long, rich traditional history of which they are very proud and still practice today. There are many cultural nuances in day-to-day life and cannot all be addressed here. We strongly encourage all visitors to research Samoan culture before visiting. When in doubt, ask an English-speaking Samoan adult about appropriate practices for any situation in which you may find yourself. Your interest in the “*Fa’a Samoa*” (the Samoan way) will be greatly appreciated. The people of Samoa are very proud of their culture and traditions, and explaining the unique Samoan way to a person with sincere interest in the Samoan way is always a joy for them.

Recreation:

Recommended Beaches

Some of the best beaches to explore for hiking, snorkeling or relaxation include Vatia Bay, Fagaalu Bay, Fagaitua Bay, Two Dollar Beach, Tisa's, Massacre Bay, Masefau Bay, Fagatele Bay, Alao Beach (pictured on right), Jesse's Beach in Lauli'i Village (pictured below), and Cape Taputapu (beware of a rock slide that makes this place accessible only from Poloa via a treacherous cobblestone hike).

- ☐ Be sure to ask permission to park, and do not park under coconut trees!
- ☐ Please also ask permission before entering the water, and remember that most beaches are closed on Sundays.

For parking and basic beach lounging, asking permission can include simply asking a Samoan adult in the village. If you are planning to work, check with Vai about protocol and who to ask.

Hiking

There are a number of hiking trails in American Samoa that range in difficulty from relatively easy to strenuous. While some are well marked, such as **Mount Alava**, others can be challenging to navigate due to the quick rate with which vegetation can overgrow the trail. It is best to learn about trail conditions and tips before embarking. Be sure to bring ample water and sun protection and let someone who is not going with you know where and when you are going, and when you expect to return. You may be able to stop at the National Park Office in Pago Pago to ask for hiking maps and recent trail conditions.

Life Aboard a Ship

The "Life Aboard a Ship - Things to Know and Bring" handout (Appendix V) should be made available to all parties that will participate in your research cruise. This provides tips about required documents, clothing guidelines, items to pack, and other information you need before you sail.

When Field Work is Complete

Prepare an Informal Fieldwork Brief for Constituents

American Samoa partners often ask NOAA Scientists for informal (2-page) briefing papers that can help to keep interested constituents informed. The briefing paper can include:

- ☐ purpose of the research
- ☐ fish caught
- ☐ lessons learned
- ☐ locations sampled
- ☐ photos of operations, etc.

The timeliness of the brief is important. Vai often receives requests for materials related to your field effort after cruises are completed. **For multi-year projects, it is best practice to build outreach and communication into your funding proposals and project workflows.**



Acknowledgements

The authors would like to thank many people for their input, suggestions, and review of this document.

- Paramount Chief Mauga Tasi Asuega, Secretary, American Samoa Government, Office of Samoan Affairs (OSA), and OSA Administrative Officer, High Chief Luafalealo Keneti Tanuvasa, for their extensive Samoan cultural and traditional knowledge and council lent to this document.
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- Hideyo Hattori for providing many helpful comments on early drafts and for answering clarifying questions along the way.
- Kelley Anderson Tagarino for providing helpful feedback on early drafts, providing recent updates on immigration procedures, and for answering clarifying questions throughout the process.
- Fatima Sauafea-Leau, Arielle Levine, and Jeremy Raynor for providing information and review of the marine protected area maps and other content.
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- We apologize for anyone we missed, but please know your questions and feedback have really helped shape this document.

Additional Resources

Media Contacts

93 KHJ Radio

Mailing Address: 93KHJ Radio, PO Box 6758, Pago Pago, AS 96799

Physical Address: Pago Plaza in Suite 223

Telephone: (684) 633-7793

Fax: (684) 633-4493

E-Fax: (208) 567-6865

Website: <http://www.khjrado.com/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/pages/93khj/128809230520721>

Samoa News

Newspaper print and online

Mailing Address: Samoa News, Box 909, Pago Pago, American Samoa 96799

Telephone: (684) 633-5599

Fax: (684) 633-4864

Website: <http://www.samoanews.com/>

Contact Us: <http://www.samoanews.com/contact#sthash.jlfECRgg.dpuf>

Samoa Observer

Newspaper print and online - from Independent Samoa

Newsroom:

Email: news@sobserver.ws

Telephone: +685 23078

Online:

Email: online@sobserver.ws

Telephone: +685 31929

Website: <http://www.samoaoobserver.ws/>

Talane

Newspaper print and online

Website: <http://www.talane.com/>

Cultural Orientation Films

Office of National Marine Sanctuaries “Stories from the Blue” Films (2017)

Two short films from the Office of National Marine Sanctuaries’ “Stories from the Blue” give you a glimpse of life in American Samoa. One is by Peter Taliva’a (The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa’s Boat Captain) and the other by Paula MacDonald.

<https://sanctuaries.noaa.gov/stories/>

Jean-Michel Cousteau’s Ocean Future’s Society - American Samoa Culture and Ocean Conservation Film Series (2015)

Respect, humility, and service are important cultural tenets practiced by the people of American Samoa. There are five short films that focus on community, caretakers, serving your village, church, and family- parts of culture that pull us together rather than show our differences. These themes also show ocean stewardship practiced by a community that lives by the sea.

<http://oceanfutures.org/exploration/films/american-samoa-culture-ocean-conservation-film-series>

Fagatele Bay National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa Film

<http://oceanfutures.org/exploration/films/american-samoa-culture-ocean-conservation-film-series/fagatele-bay>

Penina Tutasi I Amerika Samoa (Our Ocean Precious and Unique American Samoa) Film (2013)

The National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa’s first film describes the Sanctuary units and the people of American Samoa and their relationship with the ocean.

https://drive.google.com/a/noaa.gov/file/d/1tJhNF-VrBNyZDZS9r7pUFBhTb_ukfxFf/view?usp=sharing

Research Resources

American Samoa Historic Preservation Office

<http://www.ashpo.org/>

Corals of the National Park of Samoa

<http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/basch/uhnpscesu/htms/NPSAcorl/index.htm>

Fishes of the National Park of Samoa

<http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/basch/uhnpscesu/htms/NPSAfish/index.htm>

Environmental Reports and Publications American (and western) Samoa

This is an index to all known environmental reports and publications compiled by the park's inventory and monitoring staff as of 2008.

<http://www.botany.hawaii.edu/basch/uhnpscesu/picrp/complbibCont.htm>

Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries Programmes Digital Library

<http://www.spc.int/DigitalLibrary/FAME>

Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) Virtual Library

<http://library.sprep.org/Pein/home/home.aspx>

Federal Government Partners

National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa

<https://americansamoa.noaa.gov/>

National Park of American Samoa

Stopping by the National Park office is good practice. They are interested in education, outreach, and awareness of American Samoa.

<https://www.nps.gov/npsa/index.htm>

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration - Rose Atoll Marine National Monument

http://www.fpir.noaa.gov/MNM/mnm_roseatoll.html

United States Fish and Wildlife Service - Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge

https://www.fws.gov/refuge/Rose_Atoll/

Appendices

Appendix I: OneNOAA American Samoa Contact List



National Marine Fisheries Services (NMFS), Office of Law Enforcement, American Samoa Field Office Alexander Sise (Mobile)	(684) 633-7629 (684) 733-2459
NMFS, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Science Operations Division Gataivai Talamoa (Mobile)	(684) 633-5328 (684) 256-0231
NMFS, Pacific Islands Regional Office (PIRO), Habitat Conservation Division Fatima Sauafea-Leau	(684) 633-5326
NMFS, PIRO, Fisheries Observer Program / International Fisheries Division Steve Kostelnik (Mobile) Michael Marsik (Mobile) Derek Kuda (Mobile) Elia Henry loelu Fouvale	(684) 633-5325 (684) 252-2567 (684) 256-9339 (684) 258-5120
National Weather Service, Office Pago Pago Elinor Lutu-McMoore, Meterologist In-Charge (MIC) Hans, Malala Carol Baqui Imoasina, Solomona-Tilo Marcus, Langkilde	(684) 699-9130
National Ocean Service, Office of National Marine Sanctuaries, National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa	(684) 633-6500
Office of Oceanic and Atmospheric Research, Earth System Research Laboratory, Global Monitoring Division, American Samoa Observatory LTJG Benjamin, Kaiser (Mobile)	(684) 622-7455 (684) 258-2848
Office for Coastal Management, Coral Reef Conservation Program / Coastal Zone Management Program Hideyo Hattori (Mobile)	(684) 770-9468

Appendix II: Agency Contact Information for Permits

American Samoa Coastal Management Program	a. For research permits in Special Management Areas including Leone Pala, Nu'uuli Pala and Pago Pago Harbor.	(684) 633-5175
Department of Legal Affairs (Immigration) Attorney General Talauega Eleasalo V. Ale Attn: Cita Pene	a. For entry permit requests and “Ok Board” approval. b. Vai can assist with delivering your requests.	(684) 633-4163
Department of Marine and Wildlife Resources	a. For research permits to “take” or extract any marine samples anywhere in the territory. b. Please note if you plan to conduct work in any of the villages participating in the Community-based Fisheries Management Program or No Take Area Program, extra protocols must be followed. Best practice is to bring your research permit granted from DMWR to OSA when you conduct your required briefing. OSA will introduce you to the Village Mayors.	(684) 633-4456
Department of Parks and Recreation	a. For research permits in Ofu-Vaoto Marine Park.	(684) 699-9513
National Marine Sanctuaries of American Samoa Office	a. For research permits in National Marine Sanctuary Management Areas.	(684) 633-6500
National Park of American Samoa	a. For research permits in National Parks of American Samoa land or water areas. b. Stopping by the National Park office is good practice. They are interested in education, outreach, and awareness of American Samoa and things to do.	(684) 633-7082 ext 22
Office of Samoan Affairs High Chief Luafalealo Keneti Tanuvasa is the point of contact for communicating all NOAA activities in the Territory	a. Contact HC Luafalealo for Immigration emergencies. b. Vai can assist you in setting up a required briefing with Office of Samoan Affairs to provide access to any shoreline area in the Territory. c. HC Luafalealo will go with you to the villages to explain your program and assist in getting permissions from Village Mayors.	C:(684) 254-2511 O:(684) 633-5201
Rose Atoll Marine National Monument PIFSC Marine National Monuments Science Program	a. For research permits in Rose Atoll Marine National Monument. b. NOAA staff do not require a research permit.	(808) 725-5323
Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge United States Fish and Wildlife Service	a. For research permits within Rose Atoll National Wildlife Refuge.	(684) 633-7082 ext 15

Appendix III: Template - Entry Permit Request Letter



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE

Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
1845 Wasp Blvd. Bldg. 176 · Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
Ph: (808) 725-5360 Fax: (808) 725-5475

January 10, 2018 *<date of request>*

The Honorable Talauega Eleasalo V. Ale *<Address letter to him out of formality>*
Attn: Cita Pene *<Vai will hand deliver letters to Cita who will process the request>*
Office of the Attorney General
Department of Legal Affairs
American Samoa Government

RE: Entry Authorization / OK Board – Travelers arriving by ship / departing by air on March 1, 2018 *<date of travel>*

Talofa Mr. Attorney General,

NOAA's Ecosystem Sciences Division will be conducting coral reef surveys in American Samoa aboard the NOAA Research Vessel HI'IALAKAI. We are requesting OK to Board Authorization for the following individuals/personnel who will arrive in Pago Pago, American Samoa onboard the R/V HI'IALAKAI *<list vessel name>*, but will now be departing on Hawaiian Airlines flight HA466 at 11:30 p.m., on March 1, 2018 *<date of travel>* and returning to his/her permanent station in Honolulu, Hawaii or United States.

I have attached the operations schedule for the ship, a copy of each individual's passport. Below are their personal details.

1. Name: LASTNAME, FIRSTNAME *<EXACTLY as it appears on passport>*
Citizenship: UNITED STATES
Date of Birth: August 05, 1977
Passport Number: 123456789
Passport Exp. Date: August 05, 2021

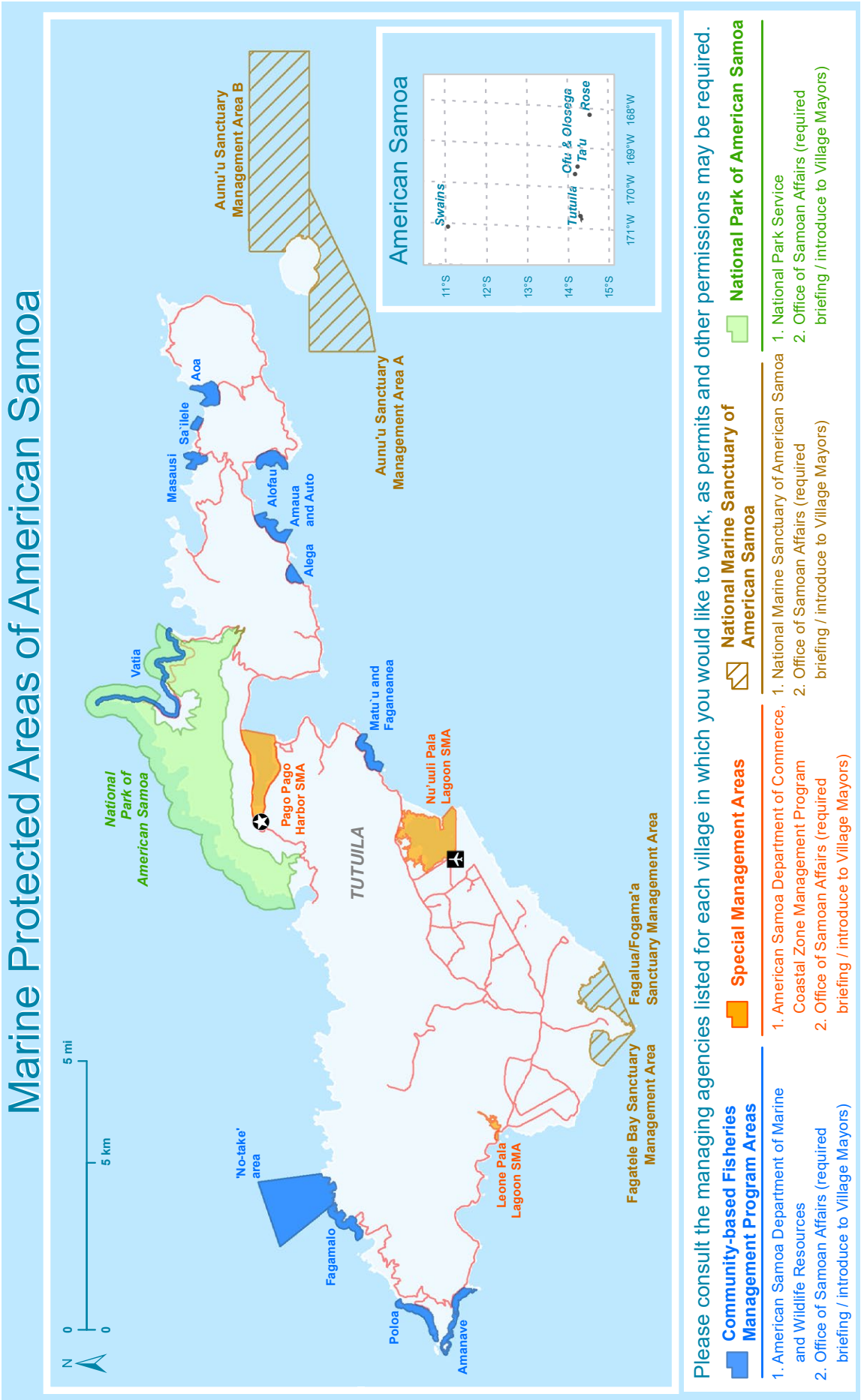
The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center, Science Operations Division, Field Operations Office Representative (Vai) Gataivai Manu Talamoa is our American Samoa based point of contact and can be reached at (684) 256-0231 or via email at gataivai.talamoa@noaa.gov. Should you have any further questions, please do not hesitate to contact my assistant, Shannon Fong at 1-(808) 725-5492 or via email at shannon.fong@noaa.gov.

Very Respectfully,

Chief, Ecosystems Sciences Division *<Chief or Deputy Chief of Division>*

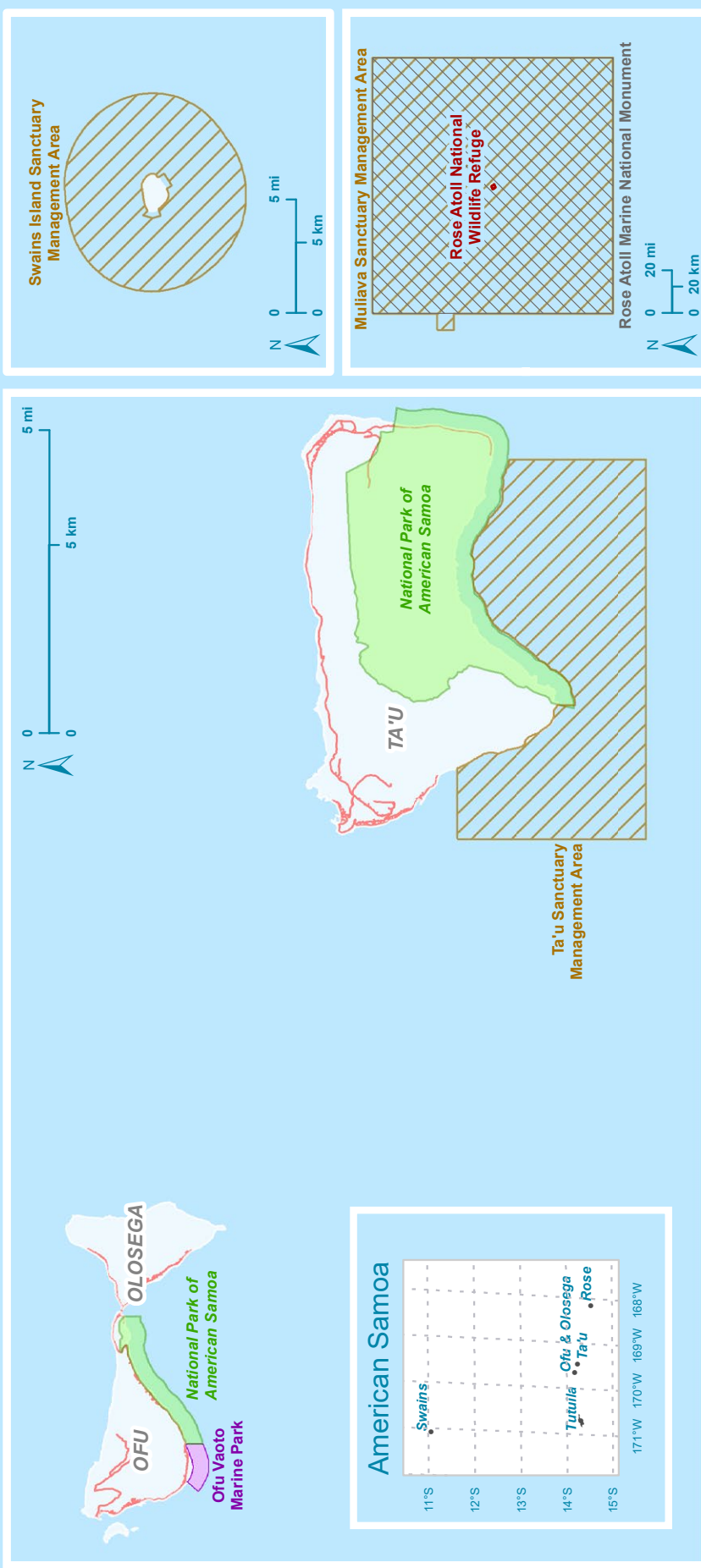
Appendix IV: Maps

a. Marine Protected Areas of American Samoa - Tutuila



b. Marine Protected Areas of American Samoa - Manu'a, Rose Atoll, and Swains

Marine Protected Areas of American Samoa



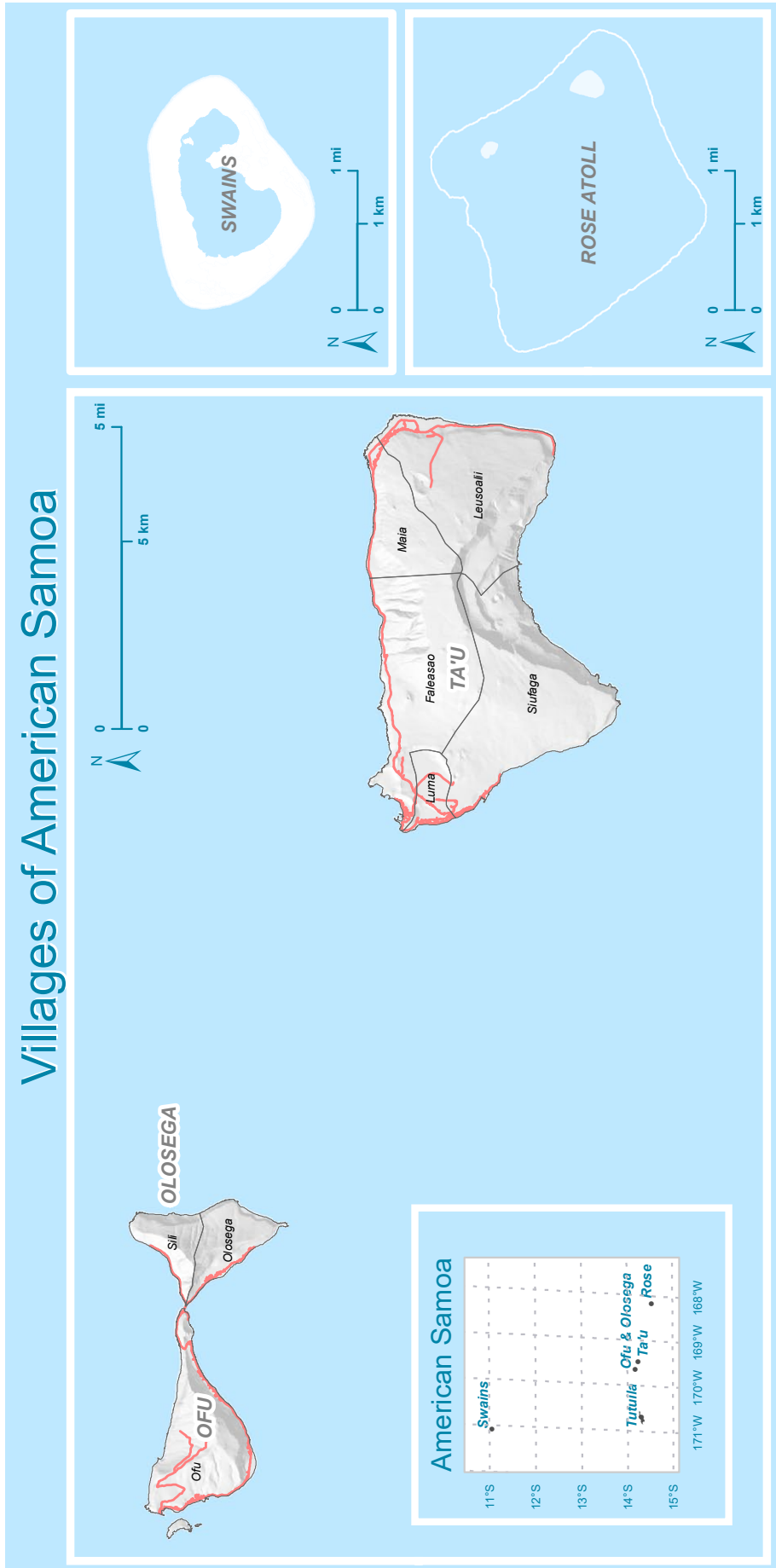
Please consult the managing agencies listed for each village in which you would like to work, as permits and other permissions may be required.

Marine Park	National Park of American Samoa	National Marine Sanctuary of American Samoa	Rose Atoll Marine National Monument	National Wildlife Refuge Program
<ol style="list-style-type: none">American Samoa Department of Parks and RecreationOffice of Samoan Affairs (required briefing / introduce to Village Mayors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">National Park ServiceOffice of Samoan Affairs (required briefing / introduce to Village Mayors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">National Marine Sanctuary of American SamoaOffice of Samoan Affairs (required briefing / introduce to Village Mayors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">PIFSC Marine National Monuments Science ProgramOffice of Samoan Affairs (required briefing / introduce to Village Mayors)	<ol style="list-style-type: none">United States Fish and Wildlife ServiceOffice of Samoan Affairs (required briefing / introduce to Village Mayors)

Villages of American Samoa



d. Villages of American Samoa - Manu'a, Rose Atoll, and Swains



Appendix V: Life aboard a Ship - Things to Know and Bring

* Required items.

Documents:

- *Passport (for both U.S. citizens and non-citizens)
- *Driver's license, green cards, other IDs, etc.
- *Copies of Immunization Records (TB clearance)

Clothes: In general, clothes should be moderately conservative as there are certain rules pertaining to clothing onboard the ship (i.e., no tank tops, hats, or dirty or ragged clothes in the galley). In addition, there are laundry facilities and free detergent available on the ship but they can stain clothes occasionally, so do not bring anything valuable.

- Brimmed hat or baseball cap
- *Closed-toe shoes are required everywhere on the ship, except for your stateroom. Crocs or Keens are allowed on decks but they are not allowed on deck during operations (any scientists involved in operations or in general vicinity of operations should wear fully enclosed shoes). At this time, wearing slippers/sandals inside your stateroom is allowed, but this rule changes from time to time, depending on the ship's Standing Orders on Footwear. If you wear closed-toe shoes in all areas of the ship, you will be fine.
- Shorts are permitted, but bring warm clothes (sweatshirts, sweatpants, hat, thick socks, etc.). The ship is air-conditioned, and the labs -- where workstations are located -- are kept very cold.
- Bathing suits (no bikinis or Speedos, unless worn under a wetsuit or rashguard)
- Foul weather gear (can be helpful if weather is rainy, windy, etc. while conducting field work)
- Shorts, t-shirts, and rashguards (or whatever you are comfortable wearing for field/ deck work)

Ditch Bag Items: Clothes **required** for the abandon ship drill, can be part of everyday wardrobe or stored separately in a small bag:

- *Brimmed hat
- *Long sleeve shirt
- *Long pants
- Socks

Other Essentials:

- Basic toiletries (the ship provides bar soap, wash clothes, towels, and linens as well as clothes washing detergent. The ship store can supply items that you forget).
- Sunglasses (polarized are best for being on the water, and bring at least one spare)
- Sunscreen (SPF 30+)
- Water bottle (or 2)
- Medication for motion sickness
- *Prescription or special Medications (ship has a medical officer who is on call 24/7 and can assist with any medical needs; most common medications and first aid are available through the medical officer; please let the Chief Scientist and/or Ship Medical Officer know of any pertinent medical conditions that could affect your work or comfort during the cruise.)
- Necessary reference materials

Extra Items:

- Dry bag (small)
- Camera
- Flashlight or headlamp – can be handy for reading or getting up in the dark without bothering roommates.
- Laptop computer and Ethernet cable (and other office needs: flash drive, field notebook. NOAA IT Security policies apply, so non-NOAA computers will have to be cleared prior to connecting to the ship's network).
- Some cash for the ship's store (t-shirts, candy, sundries, etc.)
- Workout clothes (ship has a small gym)

Appendix V: Life aboard a Ship – Things to Know and Bring continued

- Reading materials
- Movies/music (there is a movie room where DVD's can be shown, and the ship already has a very large movie inventory)
- A spill-proof mug if you would like to take beverages (coffee, hot cocoa) out of the galley (cups, plates and utensils are not allowed outside of the galley).

Other Helpful Information:

Communication:

The ship has internet access, but it can be weak or intermittent. You will be able to send and receive email. All government rules apply to the use of the internet while abroad. In addition, the ship does not allow streaming audio or video. Do not download any large files like movies or TV shows, and do not participate in on-line chatting or phone calls as they use a lot of bandwidth and slow down service. There are several shared computers that can be used for email, and personal laptops can be connected to the network. Cell phones may work and have reception when the ship is in range but this is inconsistent. The ship also has a cell phone, which can be used with the permission of the Chief Scientist if the ship is in cell range. There is a satellite phone which can be used with permission, but is limited to short calls at certain times. This will all be explained in detail during the ship orientation meeting once you are aboard.

Emergency Contact Numbers:

While at sea, e-mail is the best way for your family/friends to contact you. The following numbers can be used in the event of an emergency:

- The Iridium phone is the next best means of emergency contact (although service can be spotty and calls get dropped).
 - Sette - Iridium phone: (808) 434-9588
- If the Iridium does not work, your family/friends can also call the Inmarsat B line (this is very expensive so it should only be used if there is a true emergency).
 - Sette – Inmarsat line: 011-870-763-644-039

Food:

Meals are served three times a day. If you have a special diet (vegetarian, etc.) or have food allergies, please let the Chief Scientists and/or cruise coordinator know ASAP.

Accommodations:

Scientists are assigned a 2-6-person room aboard the ship. When you board the ship, your name along with your room assignment will be posted. There are bathrooms with showers and toilets off each room, shared with adjoining rooms. The ship provides a bath towel, a pillow, and sheets/blankets. There is limited storage on the ship, especially in the rooms, so please pack in collapsible duffle bags and not rigid suitcases if possible. Most rooms are equipped with a single desk, and there is additional desk space in the dry lab.

The SAD Rule:

NOAA ships are Federal Vessels, so no sex, alcohol, or drugs (SAD) are allowed on board.

Appendix VI: PIFSC Conduct Policies



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
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 Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center
 1845 Wasp Blvd. Bldg. 176 • Honolulu, Hawaii 96818
 Ph: (808) 725-5360 Fax: (808) 725-5475

May 27, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: All PIFSC Staff

FROM: Michael P. Seki, Ph.D. 
 Director, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

SUBJECT: Professional Conduct

Attached are several documents pertaining to the conduct of personnel sailing on NOAA vessels or on work-related travel. These expectations apply to NOAA and non-NOAA personnel and include behavior while in off-duty status while on ship or in port. Personnel must conduct themselves in a professional manner at all times and not engage in any behavior that would cause embarrassment or bring discredit to the Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center or the National Marine Fisheries Service.

On research cruises, designated chief scientists will be held accountable for making sure staff are aware of appropriate conduct onboard and behaviors that may be perceived as offensive in the different territories in which we operate. Chief scientists will also assure appropriate and timely action is taken in response to any reported or observed instances of misconduct by scientific party personnel.

Please be advised that it is my expectation that these policies are to be followed without exception and that any violations will result in disciplinary action, up to and including removal. For non-NOAA personnel, misconduct will be reported to the sponsoring institution for appropriate action. Incidents involving volunteers will result in a ban on any future service.

I also want to assure all staff that you are entitled to work in a professional environment, free from harassment or other offensive behavior. If you feel you are a victim of harassment or other behavior which makes you feel uncomfortable, please report it immediately to your chief scientist, supervisor or ship captain, who will take appropriate steps to ensure your concerns are addressed.

All personnel embarking on vessels are to receive a copy of these regulations and must sign and date an acknowledgement prior to their departure. If an acknowledgement is not received, the individual will not be authorized to participate in the cruise.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I acknowledge receipt of the policies on *Sexual Harassment*, *Workplace Violence*, *Professional Behavior* and *Use of Illegal Drugs and Alcohol*. I understand that it is my responsibility to adhere to these policies and that any failure to do so will result in disciplinary or other appropriate action.

 Signature

 Date

 Print Name

 Cruise #


Appendix VI: PIFSC Conduct Policies continued



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May 27, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: All PIFSC Staff

FROM: Michael P. Seki, Ph.D. 
Director, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

SUBJECT: Occupational Health and Safety Policy

We are committed to protecting the health and safety of each employee as the overriding priority of our organization. Our goal is zero injuries and illnesses. There will be no compromise of an individual's wellbeing in anything we do. The implementation of actions to help realize a healthy, injury free work environment is a leadership responsibility. To help ensure that policy commitments are translated into appropriate actions, we recognize the importance of employee participation. We have a commitment to continual improvement of employee health and safety. Finally, the PIFSC must conduct operations in compliance with applicable law and regulations, as well as in conformance with its own health and safety standard.

NMFS management and safety officials use risk analysis to identify and eliminate or mitigate hazards whenever possible. The basic tenets of a safety risk assessment include determining the possible hazards by assessing both the likelihood and consequence of an identified hazard. Based on that assessment, decisions can be made about addressing specific risks -- through prevention, mitigation, avoidance, and/or transfer of risk, or acceptance. For all activities, particularly those involving field work, we expect staff to implement appropriate risk assessment and threat mitigation prior to conducting their work.

All of us are responsible for treating every accident, including near misses, seriously. Once the injured are attended to, the focus must shift to reporting and investigating what happened in order to prevent future recurrence. When incidents or near misses occur, please notify your supervisor or Susan Kamei, OMI Director, as soon as possible for reporting instructions. The full reporting requirements are in the [NOAA Safety Policy](#).

These actions are the responsibility of employees, supervisors, and senior managers. We all have a hand in promoting a "people first" attitude toward safety.



Appendix VI: PIFSC Conduct Policies continued



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May 27, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: All PIFSC Staff

FROM: Michael P. Seki, Ph.D. *Michael P. Seki*
Director, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

SUBJECT: Workplace Violence

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center is committed to preventing workplace violence and to maintaining a safe work environment. As part of our commitment to maintaining a safe work environment, we have updated our policy on our expectations and responses to deal with violence, threats of violence, intimidation, harassment, and other disruptive behavior.

All employees, including supervisors, JIMAR staff or contractors, should be treated with courtesy and respect at all times. Conduct that threatens, intimidates or coerces another employee, a vendor, or any other member of the public at any time will not be tolerated. Such behavior can include oral or written statements, gestures, or expressions that communicate a direct or indirect threat of physical harm or other inappropriate behavior that makes someone feel threatened or frightened.

An employee who believes that the actions or words of another individual constitute physical harm, property damage, intimidation, harassment or a threat of violence should report it as soon as possible to their supervisor/sponsor, the OMI Director or any other member of management.

To report immediate threats of harm to persons or property, call 911. To ensure that a safe work environment is maintained at all times, staff should read all security alerts which are issued and also follow established security protocols for admittance of visitors. Never permit the entrance of someone you do not know. Refer visitors to proper entry points.

All complaints of intimidation, harassment, violence or threats of violence will be investigated promptly and will be kept confidential to the extent possible.

Anyone who is found to be responsible for threats, violence or other conduct that is in violation of this policy will be subject to prompt disciplinary action, up to and including termination, liability for property damage, and may also be subject to arrest or criminal prosecution.

Investigations and actions on complaints made by or involving non-federal employees will be coordinated with the appropriate employing office. JIMAR staff and contractors should refer to their employer's policies and may also make complaints directly to their employers.

I will support all efforts made by supervisors and staff in dealing with violent, threatening, harassing, intimidating or other inappropriate behavior in our workplace and will monitor whether this policy is being implemented effectively. If you have any questions about this policy statement, please contact either me directly or Susan Kamei, Director, OMI.




Appendix VI: PIFSC Conduct Policies continued



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May 28, 2015

MEMORANDUM FOR: All PIFSC Staff

FROM: Michael P. Seki, Ph.D. 
Director, Pacific Islands Fisheries Science Center

SUBJECT: Zero Tolerance of Harassment (Sexual and Non-Sexual)

We are committed to a workplace free of harassment, including sexual harassment. Harassment based on race, color, religion, sex and national origin, is illegal and a form of discrimination that violates Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 as amended. Harassment based on age, sexual orientation, and mental or physical disability is a prohibited personnel practice. Title II of the Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act of 2008, makes it illegal to harass a person because of his or her genetic information, which of course includes gender. Any harassment based on these factors whether committed by a supervisor, co-worker, contractor, peer or manager is strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated.

We are dedicated to maintaining a professional work environment for all employees, and I know you can be relied on to work towards eliminating behavior not conducive to such an environment. Our work takes place in many locations and it is important to treat all of these locations, whether onboard a vessel, on remote islands, or in the office, as places where courtesy, respect and professionalism guide our behavior.

Employees are strongly encouraged to report any incident they perceive to be harassment, including incidents personally experienced or those witnessed. Supervisors and managers are expected to maintain standards that promote a work environment free from discrimination, harassment, retaliation and unprofessional or disrespectful conduct. Therefore, when an incident is reported, supervisors must take immediate and appropriate corrective action to stop the conduct that violates this policy or could be subject to disciplinary action.

PIFSC will not tolerate anyone being subjected to unsolicited or unwelcome sexual overtures, slurs, jokes or other verbal, graphic or physical conduct that is discriminatory in nature. All employees, regardless of their position, will be held responsible for their conduct. Any violation of this policy will result in disciplinary action.

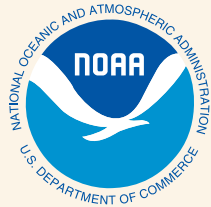
If you believe you have been subjected to any form of harassment, you should notify someone immediately. You can seek help from your supervisor, sponsor, the OMI Director, Chief Scientist, EEO Counselor, or Workforce Management Advisor.

Information for federal staff, including how to file a complaint can be found at:
<http://www.nmfs.noaa.gov/employment/>

Information for RCUH staff is located at <http://www.rcuh.com>, Section 3.120

If you have any questions regarding this policy, please contact the OMI Director, Susan Kamei, 808-725-5353, or the Deputy Director, 808-725-5301.





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