



Border BioBlitz 2026

Safety Recommendations

Documents for node coordinators

1. General considerations

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document was developed by N-Gen's Sonoran Desert Safety Committee to guide Border BioBlitz 2026 node coordinators in identifying potential risks associated with field activities and adopting basic preventive measures to support the safety of participants and organizers.

These recommendations are preventive in nature and not mandatory. Each node coordinator is expected to review them and, based on their local context, adapt, complement, or implement them as appropriate.

1.2 Main identified threats and risks

From our experience, the following risk scenarios have been identified. These may occur with varying intensity depending on the region where the event takes place:

Public safety and the presence of criminal groups. In certain areas, illegal activities or informal territorial control may occur, potentially leading to restricted mobility, intimidation, or risks for external participants.

Migration context and potential irregular detentions. The border region involves complex dynamics related to deportation and human mobility. This may include the presence of authorities, checkpoints, or irregular actions directed toward migrants or individuals perceived as such.

Harassment or intimidation by local actors. Field activities conducted by participants not from the region where they are working may generate mistrust, questioning, or confrontation from local community members. Work near military installations or security operations requires

additional caution; in some cases, prior communication with authorities or outright avoidance is needed.

Risks associated with outdoor activities. These include prolonged sun exposure, dehydration, contact with wildlife, accidents, lost participants, adverse weather conditions, and limited access to emergency services.

Each node should assess which of these risks apply to its specific site and consider appropriate preventive measures.

1.3 General preventive safety recommendations

BEFORE THE EVENT

- Monitor local news and recent reports in the days leading up to the activity to identify changes in the security context.
- Develop a route plan through prior site reconnaissance, verifying:
 - Current safety conditions.
 - Access routes, roads, and meeting points.
 - Cell phone signal coverage.
 - Presence of relevant local actors.
- Identify a local contact person, preferably someone known and recognized in the area and share with him the planned route.
- Clearly define and delimit monitoring areas, avoiding movement outside agreed sites.
- If you are planning to use a drone to document the activities, please be aware of the state and federal regulations and restrictions.
- Gather basic site information:
 - General map of the area.
 - Restricted zones.
 - (U.S.: be aware of National Defense Areas – NDAs).
 - (U.S.: consider contacting the local Customs and Border Patrol if you will be working directly along the border wall– CBP [office directory](#)).
 - Evacuation routes.
 - Nearest hospital or health center.
 - Police station or local authority.
 - Emergency contact directory.
- Ask each one of the participants for their emergency contacts.

- Ask participants to review this “disclaimer” for their participation in the Border BioBlitz, also available on the N-Gen website ([link](#)).

DISCLAIMER:

All teams are independently organized. N-Gen and/or collaborating organizations are not responsible for organizing teams.

Any and all views, information, or opinions expressed by teams, team organizers, or team members are their own and do not necessarily reflect the views of N-Gen, partner organizations, other participating individuals, or any other agency.

Each team and/or participant is responsible for securing licenses and/or permits and alerting or coordinating with authorities if necessary.

All BioBlitz participants are individuals participating on a voluntary basis and assume any and all risks involved.

N-Gen and/or collaborating organizations are not responsible for participants’ actions during the BioBlitz.

- Consider using identifying elements (t-shirts, badges, or visible markers) to facilitate group recognition.
- Inform colleagues and local authorities in advance about the activity. When appropriate, issue a notice or request support, including date, time, and location as specifically as possible.
- Ask participants to consider their participation due to their immigration status and to be informed about their rights (U.S.: [rights along the border](#)).

DURING THE EVENT

- Assign one person as the designated spokesperson, responsible for communication with authorities if needed.
- We suggest providing a distinctive identification to all vehicles and, when possible, sharing the work schedule in advance.
- Plan routes with support from local contacts and strictly respect designated work areas.
- Maintain respectful relations with the local community and explain the purpose of the activity when appropriate.
- Establish an external communication channel and check-in schedule.
- Ask each team to share their real-time location with a trusted contact outside the site.

- Wear appropriate clothing:
 - Long sleeves and long pants
 - Closed, durable footwear
 - Hat or cap
 - Sunscreen
- Bring:
 - Sufficient water
 - Light food or snacks
 - Personal medication
 - Basic first aid kit
- Confidentially inform the node coordinator of any relevant health conditions in case of emergency.

AFTER THE EVENT

It is recommended to document and share any incidents, risk situations, or relevant lessons learned with the N-Gen organizing committee at nextgensd2012@gmail.com to strengthen planning and safety protocols for future editions.

2. What to do in case of an emergency

During field activities, situations may arise that require special attention, route modification, or full cancellation. Always prioritize the safety of yourself and participants.

2.1 Accident or medical emergency

- a) Stay calm.
- b) Identify the threat and inform the group.
- c) Check whether anyone has medical or first-aid training.
- d) Notify the nearest emergency service.
- e) Consider transporting the person to a health center if possible.

2.2 Encounter or intimidation by criminal groups

- a) Stay calm.
- b) Avoid recording or documenting with your phone.
- c) As the person in charge, lead communication and avoid confrontation.
- d) In case of gunfire, take cover behind solid objects or lie on the ground.
- e) Prioritize safety at all times.
- f) Consider suspending activities.
- g) Leave the area and account for all participants.
- h) Notify authorities.
- i) Consider emotional support if needed.

2.3 Intimidation by local groups

- a) Stay calm.
- b) If safe, ask someone to document the situation.
- c) As the person in charge, handle communication and avoid confrontation.
- d) When appropriate, acknowledge local ownership and request permission to continue.
- e) Prioritize safety.
- f) Consider suspending activities.
- g) Leave the area if necessary and account for participants.

2.4 Detention or harassment by immigration agents

- a) Stay calm.
- b) Ask someone to document the situation.
- c) As the person in charge, communicate directly with the authorities.
- d) Assign someone to contact the local authorities (county police).
- e) Ensure the detained person has access to translation and understands their rights.
- f) Prioritize safety.

- g) Consider suspending activities.
- h) Notify family members or emergency contacts of the detained person.

2.5 Encounter with undocumented migrants

- a) Stay calm.
- b) If appropriate, ask about medical needs.
- c) Do not assist with transportation.
- d) In emergencies, notify relevant authorities.

3. Border BioBlitz Node-Specific Protocol

(To be completed by each coordinator)

3.1 General information

- Node name: _____
- Node coordinator: _____
- Location: _____
- Dates and times of activities:

3.2 Local Safety Context

- General description of the area:

- Known or possible threats in the area:

- Focus area of BioBlitz effort:

- Local contact person and their info:

3.3 Emergency Contacts

- Closest Hospital / Urgent Care :

- Local Police or Sheriff and their contact info:

- Federal Emergency Management Agency:

- Regional trusted contact:

- Others:

3.4 Team Leader Checklist

- Attendance list with emergency contacts
- Local news reviewed
- Preliminary site reconnaissance completed
- Delimited monitoring areas and a map shared with all participants
- Local contact confirmed
- Notice or request to authorities issued
- Designated spokesperson
- Vehicle distinction or stickers for identification
- Communication channel defined
- Real-time location shared
- Participants briefed on security measures
- Emergency contact info of participants
- Node-specific information shared with all participants
- Supply of water and electrolytes