

Go Wilderness Mongolia - Risk Assessment

'There's no adventure without risk' Colin Mortlock.

Introduction.

The objective of this Risk Assessment is to look at all the stages of an expedition in Mongolia to assess the hazards and to minimise these hazards to an acceptable level, without removing the element of adventure.

Adventure travel in Mongolia cannot be undertaken without an element of risk, it is a large country with poor communications and roads with a very basic infrastructure. However Mongolia is still one of the safest and stable countries in the World to visit.

Go Wilderness Mongolia maintains a close focus on local political and environmental issues and follows the advice issued from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office of the United Kingdom.

This is in addition to the Dynamic Risk Assessment that is carried out on a daily and ongoing basis (whenever needed) by the Senior Leader, other Leaders and the participants themselves. All group members are reminded that the safety of the group is a shared process and that all members of the group are prepared to take on this shared responsibility. The Senior Leader is appointed in advance and takes overall responsibility for the safety of the expedition. Technical safety may be delegated to a technical or local leader depending upon the situation (i.e. River Leaders or Wranglers) The social welfare of the group (in the case of schools) is the responsibility of the School Leader (in charge) working in co-operation with the Senior Leader.

Who may be harmed: All - Participants and Leaders, employed agents and staff, general public.
Group - Participants and Leaders, employed agents and staff.
Others - General public.

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Mongolia Risk Assessment			
General			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Theft / mugging and general violence	Low to Moderate (Group)	Moderate	Minimum group size set to 3. After dark 5. Group have sign out/in sheet if splitting up. Take hotel card with address in Mongolian. Maintain vigilance in crowded areas. Black market: watch for pickpocket teams of boys and don't take any valuables whatsoever.
Getting lost	Moderate (Group)	Moderate	Take hotel card with address in Mongolian.
Crossing roads	Very High (Group)	Very High	Don't expect cars to stop at zebra crossings. Walk with a group of others and locals. Choose an appropriate place to cross.
Wild dogs	Moderate (All)	Very High	Participants briefed not to play / stroke or otherwise interfere with dogs. Rabies is endemic to Mongolia although very rare.
General	Low (All)	High	First Aid kit and Satellite Phone carried at all times while away from UB. Minimum group size set to 3. After dark 5.
Equipment misuse (including cookers)	Low (Group)	Very High	Leader to ensure that participants work with equipment according to an accepted safe standard.
Faulty equipment	Low (Group)	Very High	All safety related equipment is thoroughly checked in accordance with best working practice, before, during and after use.
Camping	Moderate (Group)	High	Whenever possible camps are sited according to best practice.
Disease	Low (Group)	Very High	In situations where an outbreak of disease is confirmed the Senior Leader takes appropriate action to minimise the group's exposure.
Drinking water	Low (Group)	Very High	Water sources in the wilderness are generally accepted as safe drinking water; however the Senior Leader needs to ensure that a high standard of water purity is maintained. This may mean filtering, boiling or purification by chemical means. In towns and cities the water should be regarded as suspect and the use of bottled water is recommended here.
Altitude	Low (Group)	Very High	On expeditions that climb to altitude (+3000m) the senior Leader briefs and monitors the group's acclimatisation in line with accepted guidelines. Diamox may be used.
Drugs and Alcohol	Moderate (All)	Very High	Any consumption of alcohol (if allowed by school and parents) is closely supervised by the Leader Team. The use of non prescription drugs is prohibited.

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Mongolia Risk Assessment			
Mountain Trekking and Mountaineering			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Slips, trips and falls	Moderate (All)	High	Participants briefed about good walking practices, procedure for moving on steep, loose or broken ground. Helmets used on mountaineering routes.
Falling rock / ice / snow	Low (All)	Very High	Participants briefed about good walking practices, procedure for moving on steep, loose or broken ground and action in the event of kicking loose rocks, shouting 'below' and what action to take on hearing 'below' being shouted. Helmets used on simple mountaineering routes.
Bad weather including lightning	Moderate (All)	High	Leaders maintain a close weather watch; seek local advice for geographical features that affect the weather locally. Do not set out during lightning storms, if caught out in a lightning storm then follow good practice as set by the Mountain Leader Award and seek appropriate shelter.
River crossings including falling in and flooding	Low (All)	Very High	Care to be taken while walking near rivers. Participants briefed on emergency river crossing procedures. Wait until river levels drop before crossing.
Footbridges	Moderate (All)	High	Senior leader to inspect suspicious looking bridges before allowing group to cross.
Wild and domestic animals	Moderate (All)	Very High	Participants briefed not to play / stroke or otherwise interfere with domestic and wild animals. Rabies is endemic to Mongolia although very rare.
Heat illness including sunburn	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for sun protection and adequate water intake. Leaders to observe participants during very hot spells.
Cold illness	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for weather protection, appropriate clothing and equipment and adequate food intake. Leaders to observe participants during very cold spells.
Getting lost	Low (Group)	High	Participants briefed on 'lost procedure'
Faulty equipment	Low (Group)	Very High	All safety related equipment is thoroughly checked in accordance with best working practice, before, during and after use.
Equipment misuse including cookers	Low (Group)	Very High	Leader to ensure that participants work with equipment according to an accepted safe standard.
General	Low (Group)	Moderate	Leader to brief and ensure group carry suitably appropriate clothing and equipment. Senior Leader carries the Satellite phone and First Aid kit at all times whilst away from UB. Participants are briefed on appropriate lifting techniques for heavy items such as rucksacks.

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Horse and Camel Trekking			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Bad weather including lightning	Moderate (All)	High	Leaders maintain a close weather eye; seek local advice for geographical features that affect the weather locally. Do not set out during lightning storms, if caught out in lightning storm then follow good practice and seek appropriate shelter.
Wild and domestic animals	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed not to play / stroke or otherwise interfere with domestic and wild animals. Rabies is endemic to Mongolia although very rare.
Heat illness including sunburn	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for sun protection and adequate water intake. Leaders to observe participants during very hot spells. Leader ensures that participants have an adequate intake of fresh drinking water available.
Cold illness	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for weather protection, appropriate clothing and equipment and adequate food intake. Leaders to observe participants during very cold spells.
Equipment misuse (including cookers)	Low (Group)	Very High	Leader to ensure that participants work with equipment according to an accepted safe standard.
General	Low (Group)	Moderate	Leader to brief and ensure group carry suitably appropriate clothing and equipment. Senior Leader carries the Satellite phone at all times whilst away from UB. First Aid kit carried at all times away from UB. Participants are briefed on appropriate lifting techniques for heavy items such as rucksacks.
Horses and Camels	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Senior Leader to ensure that the participants follow the guidelines for animal trekking, that are given by the Head Wrangler are followed. Specifically the control of movements and noises which could 'spook' a horse or camel and the correct procedures for approaching and getting on and off. Helmets are to be worn at all times whilst seated and trekking on an animal.

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Transport – Taxis, microbus, 4x4's etc.			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Drivers	Moderate (All)	Very High	Leaders and participants to ensure they do not get into a vehicle who's driver is under the influence of drugs, alcohol or is otherwise unfit to drive.
Vehicles	High (All)	Very high	Leaders and participants to check by looking around the vehicle at the wheels, tyres, brakes, lights etc and ensuring that it reaches a suitable standard and be fit for use.
Getting lost	Moderate (Group)	High	Take hostel card with address in Mongolian.
General	Low (Group)	Moderate	Leader to brief and ensure group carry suitably appropriate clothing and equipment. Senior Leader carries the Satellite phone at all times whilst away from UB. First Aid kit carried at all times away from UB Participants are briefed on appropriate lifting techniques for heavy items such as rucksacks.
General condition of roads, bridges etc.	High (All)	Very High	When crossing country by 4x4 there should be an adult leader in the front passenger seat of each vehicle who observes the road conditions ahead and the driver. This person needs to react and if necessary interact with the driver to avoid hazards. They should also ensure that drivers have adequate rest/sleep time and that they drive at an appropriate speed. Groups to proceed in convoy.
Trans Mongolian Railway	Low (Group)	High	Senior Leader to ensure that the group maintain good practice on the station platforms and whilst on board the carriages. Specifically – no getting on or off moving trains, care when operating the hot water 'samovar' and to watch for pickpockets at stops.

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Canoeing and Kayaking			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Bad weather including lightning	Moderate (Group)	High	Leaders maintain a close weather eye; seek local advice for geographical features that affect the weather locally. Do not set out during lightning storms, if caught out in lightning storm then follow good practice and seek shelter.
Open water Wind, fetch etc.	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Water Leader to monitor weather conditions, specifically the wind speed and direction and to take appropriate action to avoid being blown into hazardous areas.
General	Low (Group)	Moderate	Leader to brief and ensure group carry suitably appropriate clothing and equipment. Senior Leader carries the Satellite phone at all times whilst away from UB. First Aid kit carried at all times away from UB Participants are briefed on appropriate lifting techniques for heavy items such as Canoes.
Wild and domestic animals	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed not to play / stroke or otherwise interfere with domestic and wild animals. Rabies is endemic to Mongolia although very rare.
Heat illness including sunburn	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for sun protection and adequate water intake. Leaders to observe participants during very hot spells. Leader ensures that participants have an adequate intake of fresh drinking water available.
Cold illness	Moderate (Group)	Very High	Participants briefed on the need for weather protection, appropriate clothing and equipment and adequate food intake. Leaders to observe participants during very cold spells.
Equipment misuse (including cookers)	Low (Group)	Very High	Leader to ensure that participants work with equipment according to an accepted safe standard.
Faulty equipment	Low (Group)	Very High	All safety related equipment is thoroughly checked in accordance with best working practice, before, during and after use.
Moving water	High (Group)	Very High	River Leader in Position Of Maximum Usefulness, follows the Line of Sight principle and uses accepted Current Best Practice with river leading principles.
Drowning	Low (Group)	Very High	Buoyancy aids to be worn at all times when on the water. Helmets to be worn when on graded water (i.e. Class II and above or when any risk to head injury is anticipated)

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Mongolia Risk Assessment			
Projects and Social Activities			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
General	High (All)	High	All project activities are supervised by the Leadership Team. If working in different locations then a Leader should be present in each area. First Aid kit and Satellite Phone carried at all times while away from UB. Minimum group size set to 3. After dark 5.
Theft / mugging and general violence	Low to Moderate (Group)	Moderate	Minimum group size set to 3. No project work after dark. Group have sign out/in sheet if splitting up. Maintain vigilance in crowded areas. No equipment (personal or otherwise) is left unsecured.
Specialist equipment and tools	High (All)	High	Any specialist equipment (i.e. electric drills) or tools required are only to be used or operated by a participant who has been trained in its appropriate use by the Senior Leader.
Wild dogs	Moderate (All)	Very High	Participants briefed not to play / stroke or otherwise interfere with dogs. Rabies is endemic to Mongolia although very rare.
Sports and games including swimming	High (All)	Very High	Any sporting activity, games session or other activity is to be supervised by an appropriate member of the Leadership Team. When swimming this person must be competent at performing water rescues, set appropriate boundaries, use a general recall system (whistle) set up a buddy system and have a Throw Line available to hand.
Faulty equipment	Low (Group)	Very High	All safety related equipment is thoroughly checked in accordance with best working practice, before, during and after use.
Painting	High (All)	Very High	Any participant who is involved with or near to a painting area has to avoid as best as possible inhaling the fumes and takes regular fresh air breaks. A mouth/nose mask may be needed with certain types of paint. (i.e. Chinese floor paint)
Drinking water	Low (Group)	Very High	Water sources in project areas are generally accepted as unsafe drinking water; however the Senior Leader needs to ensure that a high standard of water purity is maintained. This may mean filtering, boiling or purification by chemical means. In towns and cities the water should be regarded as suspect and the use of bottled water is recommended here.
Working at heights	High (Participant)	Very High	Working at heights is to be avoided if at all possible. If a participant needs to work on a ladder then this must be 'footed' by a competent person. The ladder must be checked as to its suitability – 'fit for purpose'.

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Mongolia Risk Assessment			
Projects and Social Activities continued			
Risk or Hazard	Likelihood (who may be harmed)	Consequence (Before control measures)	Control measures
Homestay	High (Participant)	Very High	<p>On an organised home stay with local communities (whether in Tee Pees, Gers or whatever accommodation is provided) all students and participants are briefed by the Senior Leader in partnership with the Local community Head.</p> <p>This will include the following;- minimum group size, the communication system, where to summon help if needed, arrangements for sleeping, the students responsibilities and where they can / cannot go / do, the hosts responsibilities,</p>
Teaching	Moderate (Participant)	High	<p>Participants / Students are encouraged to 'team teach' preferably in pairs or threes. Students are briefed on appropriate behaviour standards and in particular on how to avoid 'compromising situations' with their students.</p>