

THE ITGEL FOUNDATION

VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK

2009

THIRD EDITION

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INTRODUCTION & LETTER TO VOLUNTEERS

June 2009

Dear Volunteers,

Each of you has been selected to be a part of the Itgel team based on your backgrounds, experience, and ability to enhance Itgel's organizational capacity. The selection process for Itgel volunteers is extremely competitive, so you represent the most qualified and enthusiastic among a large pool of candidates. Congratulations and welcome!

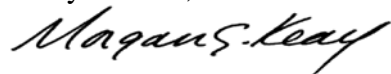
All Itgel volunteers can expect to have an exciting and unique experience, full of new challenges, life-changing experiences, and opportunities we hope you'll never forget. Whether you are arriving in Mongolia for the first time, or have been a resident here for years, we believe Itgel will expose you to many new elements of this wonderful country. And whether you are a recent college graduate, or a seasoned professional, we believe you will walk away with new skills, knowledge, and experiences. Each of you represents an important part of our organization, and I am deeply grateful for the commitments you have made to be here, and excited by what you will bring to our organization.

To help ensure that your service with Itgel is as successful, rewarding, and productive as it can possibly be, I've compiled this handbook to introduce you to our organization and the elements involved with volunteer service. This handbook presents critical information with which all volunteers are expected to be familiar, and also provides you with a resource to enhance your time in Mongolia. Volunteers are expected to read the ENTIRE handbook carefully, and will be expected to adhere to the guidelines, suggestions, and expectations outlined herein.

I hope this handbook helps answer many of the questions you may have regarding volunteer service with Itgel. However, I expect that each of you will have many more questions that may not be included in this book. Please always feel free to ask questions or make comments. I encourage you to talk with me at any time, as I am deeply committed to being a resource for each and every volunteer.

Thank you for your help in making this season one of great accomplishments, personal fulfillment, and a lot of fun! If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to talk to me at any time.

Many Thanks,



Morgan G. Keay
Executive Director
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Coding in this handbook:

ED = Executive Director
TCVC = Tsaatan Community & Visitor's Center
SDS = State Department Store
UB = Ulaanbaatar capital city



THE ITGEL FOUNDATION

Protecting Mongolia's Cultural and Environmental Legacy through Grassroots Projects

ORGANIZATIONAL INFORMATION:



The Itgel Foundation is a US-registered 501(c)(3) charity and Mongolian NGO, committed to protecting Mongolia's cultural and environmental legacy through grassroots projects. Founded in 2002 in response to direct requests for assistance, Itgel has since grown into a globally-recognized organization that utilizes dynamic approaches to promote sustainable development. Itgel's activities include veterinary and medical research and training programs, sustainable agriculture consultations, economic development initiatives, social justice work, artistic preservation, and much more.

ABOUT ITGEL:

- Jointly based in Boulder, Colorado and Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia.
- Funded by private donors, foundation grants, and corporate sponsorships.
- Virtually no administrative overhead (Fully volunteer staff, extensive in-kind support).
- Constituents include 600+ donors and friends in 15 countries, 10-member expert advisory board, 4 research institutions, 20+ business partners, and 40+ NGO and government partners.

ACCOMPLISHMENT HIGHLIGHTS:

- Conducted cutting-edge research on infectious diseases affecting humans and animals in herding communities.
- Sponsored the exchange of world-leading experts to Mongolia for training, treatments & research.
- Developed first-ever income generating opportunities for impoverished rural families.
- Produced and distributed specially-requested educational resources to communities in need.
- Participated in reform activities to improve human rights and environmental protection for ethnic minorities.
- Established the first-ever rural music school for the endangered Long Song vocal tradition.
- Published reports, journal articles, and media features that advance global knowledge and increase awareness.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION:

New York Times (Dec. 21, 2004)
 National Public Radio (NPR) (Nov. 26, 2004)
 Boulder Magazine (June 2004)
 Chappaqua Magazine (May 2005)
 Mongol Countryside News (Sep. 2005)

National Geographic News (Oct. 2004)
 British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) (Nov. 2004)
 Colorado Daily (May 2004)
 Onodoor Mongolian Newspaper (Aug. 2005)
 Wind FM Mongolian Radio (Sep. 2004)

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1. Regarding Duties & Service:

Volunteer service is unique in that it consists of an elective commitment to an unpaid position that often requires as much or more dedication than a paid job. Please understand that while you are a volunteer, it is volunteers that make up the majority of Itgel's staff. As such, you are expected to meet certain standards such as safety protocol, cultural sensitivity guidelines, and the ability to follow directions and contribute to the advancement of Itgel's objectives. In general, volunteers are expected to:

- Contribute to the advancement of Itgel's objectives through specific assigned tasks
- Know the mission statement of The Itgel Foundation verbatim and answers to FAQs
- Demonstrate unwavering respect for Mongolian individuals, in particular the Tsaatan community
- Demonstrate maturity and adaptability in difficult situations
- Listen carefully to instructions and in seminars and meetings
- Assist with tasks such as cooking and cleaning
- Participate in periodic review and evaluation sessions
- Conduct themselves according to Mongolian social norms and traditions
- Not interfere with financial, procedural, or technical matters of the organization

In addition to general expectations, volunteers will have specific assigned duties. These will be different for each volunteer and will consist of both objective-related tasks (ORT) and support-related tasks (SRT). ORT could be developing a herd demographic model based on interviews and data collection, or developing a curriculum for the TCVC based on herder surveys and observation. SRT might be packing gear at camp, planning and preparing meals, or helping with laundry in the city. To ensure that both kinds of tasks are completed efficiently, effectively, and in keeping with Itgel's philosophy, volunteers are expected to record their efforts through written reports, as well as participate in oral reviews and meetings.

Written Reports:

Volunteers may be expected to utilize these methods of written recording:

1. Daily/Weekly Log Sheets: These record the nuances in brief of what you do, who you met, what you accomplished, and how you filled your time. They should contain information on ORT and SRT.
2. Project Reports: Project reports are more formal documents used to chronicle ORT and will be used for internal and potentially external purposes. They outline the goals, findings, and conclusions of your ORT, and are formatted in such a way as to promote or catalyze progress towards Itgel's stated objectives. Length, style, content, and formality will vary greatly, and to a large degree these decisions are up to you. Topics and deadlines will be set with ED interaction. Consider these reports a tangible legacy of your efforts.

Oral Reviews & Meetings:

Volunteers are expected to participate in group meetings, spontaneous gatherings, as well as one-on-one reviews and check-ins. Group meetings will take place regularly, schedule permitting, and are a great occasion for discussing business and personal matters. Having regularly-scheduled meetings allows you to anticipate a forum for discussing ideas, and allows the team to check-in with each other so as to enhance group dynamics. Spontaneous gatherings will occur often, and may focus on personal or business matters. One-on-one reviews will be scheduled with each volunteer, and will be a time to discuss ORT accomplishments as well as performance, and personal experiences, concerns, etc.

2. Regarding Team Dynamics:

You will find that an intensive group volunteer commitment demands a significant amount of adaptability and patience. As a team, we will be spending a lot of time together in work, travel, and living situations. Your help is requested in finding the balance between being a friend, colleague, and volunteer.

Understanding the leadership structure of Itgel is critical to having a smooth volunteer experience. While your independence and individuality will be honored and respected, it is important to understand that as a volunteer, you have made a decision to follow instructions, accept the responsibility of assigned tasks, and respect the authority of those in a position of leadership. If ever you are feeling uncomfortable or uncertain about your role, the best thing to do is communicate openly. Here are the three best ways to address a problem or question:

1. Try to seek a solution or answer by referring to the volunteer handbook or other available resources.
2. Discuss the problem directly & privately with person(s) involved. Do not gossip or let problem fester.
3. Request to the ED that the problem be brought up at a team meeting if it is appropriate for group discussion and/or if mediation is necessary.

For more on team dynamics please refer to “Expedition Behavior” for fun guidelines and suggestions.

3. Regarding Standards of Conduct:

For the duration of your time as a volunteer with Itgel, you are a representative of our organization. Therefore, it is critical that volunteers uphold the “cultural reputation” and “business reputation” of Itgel. By “cultural representation” we mean acting in a way that is culturally sensitive and in keeping with our philosophy. This includes respecting new or unfamiliar cultural traditions or customs, allowing for the strong possibility that you may not understand interpersonal decisions or cultural behaviors but agree to learn about and abide by them, and that you will adhere to the specific guidelines outlined in the “Dos and Don’ts” section. By “business reputation” we mean acting in a manner that reflects positively on the organizational competency and caliber of Itgel. This includes being conscientious of your appearance, speech, and writing, and projecting a degree of professionalism, awareness, and dedication in all business affairs.

Tips for upholding Itgel’s “Cultural Reputation:”

- Respect cultural differences and attempt to deepen cultural understanding whenever possible
- Recognize and respect the distinctness of all Mongolians, and avoid generalizations or assumptions
- Adhere to interaction, monetary, gift-giving, photography, and other protocol outlined by Itgel
- Always ask questions if you are unsure of what is culturally sensitive

Tips for upholding Itgel’s “Business Reputation:”

- Dress appropriately (i.e. business attire when necessary)
- Use language that is in keeping with Itgel’s philosophy and is appropriate for the occasion
- Be familiar with organizational terms, activities, and accomplishments
- Strive to build capacity through networking, PR, and education whenever possible
- Understand your role in the organization

It is critical that you adhere to the above guidelines and standards that Itgel has developed to ensure that our culturally sensitive, grassroots, community-based philosophy and our professional, efficient, international reputation is maintained at all times.

4. Regarding Dismissal of Volunteers:

If a volunteer is found to be in breach of any of the stated guidelines or expectations, or if for any reason their service is found to be unfavorable, he or she may be dismissed with no guarantee of advance notice. Upon dismissal, he or she will no longer be eligible for the benefits of volunteer service such as the provision of transportation, food, lodging, or other services, nor will he/she be permitted to continue specific activities as outlined by The Itgel Foundation or represent the organization in any way. If dismissal occurs in the countryside, there is no guarantee of provision of return transportation to Ulaanbaatar or to a volunteer’s home country. The dismissed individual will be responsible for all costs and arrangements necessary for their return to the capital or out of Mongolia.

Examples of strictly prohibited activities that are grounds for dismissal include, but are not limited to:

- Showing a lack of respect for Mongolian culture, its people, and/or environment
- Not following instructions or adhering to protocol, or not contributing to the fulfillment of objectives
- Overly negative attitudes, gossip, dishonesty, or behavior that is disruptive to Itgel activities
- Practicing any kind of religious proselytizing or propagandistic activities
- Interfering with financial matters of the organization
- Unwillingness to assist with activities beyond assigned tasks or personally selected activities
- Drinking or partying in excess
- Lack of interest in learning about Mongolian culture, language, or about Itgel's philosophy
- Demonstration of slovenliness, disorganization, or lack of professionalism
- Inability to "click" with other team members, or a desire for a non group-oriented experience

5. Documentation of Volunteers:

All Itgel volunteers are required to read and complete a copy of the "Itgel Agreement, Release and Information Form" before commencement of service. This form contains information about the risks and expectations of Itgel volunteers, and stands as both an informed consent and release of liability document. The form also requires provision of personal insurance information and emergency contact details. A fully completed, original signed copy of this document must be handed in to the ED prior to volunteering with Itgel. To request a copy, please e mail morgan@itgel.org

Some volunteers, based on citizenship, may be required to have a work contract with Itgel for the duration of volunteer service. See the visas & registration section of this handbook for more information on work contracts and additional documentation needed for nationals of various countries.

Housing:

Housing arrangements vary based on the assignment. Some years, group housing is provided, others volunteers may be required to furnish their own accommodations. Regardless, at some point during your volunteer experience with Itgel, you will likely be sharing housing of some kind with others staff, volunteers, or community members. To make sure everyone feels comfortable in shared spaces, everyone must do their part. For example, volunteers will likely be responsible for housekeeping chores, cooking, etc. A few simple rules to keep in mind when living in shared housing arrangements include the following:

1. If you purchase personal groceries, mark them with your name or put them in your designated area.
2. Throw out food that is old or unwanted.
3. Clean up after yourself in the kitchen, bathroom, and common areas.
4. Ask before borrowing someone else's things, and return items to proper place in good condition.
5. Be considerate of quiet times, differing sleeping patterns, and personal space.
6. Take out the trash if it is full.
7. Keep doors closed and locked, and be mindful of open windows because of dust and sandstorms.
8. Let others know if you plan to have guests over. Be security conscious if you do!
9. Always use a calling card for international calls on office or shared phones.
10. Drain wash water out of tub, washing machine or basin and rinse with clean water after use.
11. Keep electronic devices covered or stored properly because of dust and sand.
12. Be courteous to neighbors, and be aware of lock-out hours.

Itgel Duties in UB:

In UB, vital Itgel work occurs such as meetings, capacity building, gathering supplies, developing programs with partner organizations, and conducting critical research. You will receive assignments for UB-based tasks, and may be involved in setting goals independently or as part of a team for project work in UB. In addition to project-based assignments, all volunteers are requested to do the following while in UB:

1. Network, network, network! Gather business cards, record them, and pass them along to the ED. Follow these up with meetings or info sessions.
2. Think of UB as a place to expand Itgel's capacity in the areas of PR, fundraising, and technical capacity. Find your niche in one of these areas and pursue a goal. For example, if you are interested in PR, write a press release on one of Itgel's latest accomplishments and set up an interview or press conference with the media. Or, if you're interested in program development, organize a site visit to a facility that will enable you to draw from existing successes to develop a component of the TCVC.
3. Deepen your knowledge of Mongolian language and culture through planned outings, info sessions, or lectures. See the section on "Entertainment & Culture" for more.
4. Constantly consider what needs to happen before the next field season, or even the next year. Ask yourself, "Is how I'm spending my time in UB directly advancing Itgel's objectives?"

Work Hours & Free Time:

Itgel hours in UB can be unpredictable, and they seldom follow a typical work week schedule. In general, volunteers are expected to begin work at an appropriate hour. (Typically no later than 10 am.) Length of work days will vary. Itgel does not set a quota on work hours, so volunteers are asked to communicate their scheduling wishes with the ED on a regular basis. Each volunteer is permitted to request one full day per week, and two evenings per week while in UB, as free time. Days off should be planned in advance to avoid conflicts with essential Itgel duties. This is not to say these times will be your only free time, but these are days that are formally allotted in advance for you to schedule personal activities, etc.

MONEY, EXPENSES & TRANSACTIONS

Money can be a tricky and awkward topic, especially when living and working as a group. In order to avoid embarrassment, confusion, or unpleasant situations, it is important to read the following section carefully so that you are aware of the financial policies of The Itgel Foundation.

Financial Responsibilities of Itgel & You:

The following table contains a list of expenses that will be a part of your stay in Mongolia. The table provides information regarding Itgel's policy on coverage of each expense. PLEASE review the table carefully and plan accordingly. Note that for select staff members (i.e. technical experts and special guests) some additional expenses are covered by Itgel. These arrangements are made on a case-by-case basis and should be clarified with the ED in advance of service with Itgel.

Expense	Covered by The Itgel Foundation?
Dining out in UB	Not covered.
Groceries in UB	Not covered.
Groceries in the field	Covered.
Taxis in UB	Not covered, unless official Itgel business.*
Transportation in the countryside	Covered.
Internet fees	Not covered, unless official Itgel business.*
Phone calls	Not covered, unless official Itgel business.*
Accommodations in UB	Depends on volunteer assignment.
Accommodations in the countryside	Covered.
Supplies for project use	Covered, with approval prior to purchase.
Gifts for families	Not covered.
Visas, registration fees, etc.	Not covered, except border patrol registration.
Translator fees	Covered for official Itgel business only.
Field trips and cultural visits	Not covered, unless Itgel special occasion.
Entertainment in UB	Not covered.
Snacks in the countryside	Not covered.
Medical insurance, treatment, or evacuation	Not covered.
Horses in the field	Covered.
Expenses incurred due to emergency	Not covered.
Fees for changes in travel	Not covered.
Personal gear, supplies, or products	Not covered.
International airfare	Not covered, unless specifically agreed upon in advance.
Domestic airfare	Depends on volunteer assignment.
Field and lab supplies	Covered.
Overweight baggage fees	Covered for approved Itgel supplies and baggage only.
Cell phones and minutes	Covered for official Itgel business only.

**Keep a detailed record of money spent on these line items and submit to ED for reimbursement.*

Volunteer Expense Overview				
	Low Est.	High Est.		
TRAVEL				
International Airfare (From N. Amer.)	\$1,100	\$1,700		
Visas, airport fees	\$50	\$200		
Medical/Travel Insurance	\$50/mo	\$150/mo		
LIVING				
Housing in Ulaanbaatar (UB)	\$5/day	\$40/day		
Food in Ulaanbaatar (UB)	\$2/day	\$15/day		
Shopping, incidentals	\$15/mo	\$50/mo		
Taxis, buses in UB	\$1/day	\$3/day		
Internet, phone	\$1/day	\$5/day		
Entertainment in UB	\$15/mo	\$50/mo		
TOTALS				
For 1 month of service	\$1,350	\$2,840		
For 2 months of service	\$1,400	\$2,990		
For 3 months of service	\$1,495	\$3,500		
For 4 months of service	\$1,650	\$3,980		
For 5 months of service	\$1,850	\$4,870		
For 6 months of service	\$1,900	\$4,870		
*For multi-month service periods, typically only half of your time will be spent in UB.				
** All prices are in USD				
*** Some minor additional expenses may be incurred				
<i>If serving 2+ months, opportunities for earning money in UB may be considered. (i.e. teaching English)</i>				

Accessing Money in Mongolia:

It has become increasingly easy to access funds in Mongolia. However, it is still advised that you be prepared for various circumstances and have various means of accessing funds. Note that nearly all transactions in Mongolia occur in local currency (tugruks), so you should always carry some cash on you at all times, preferably in small denominations. To access cash in Mongolia, these are your options:

Traveler's Checks: Can be exchanged for currency at banks in UB and in most provincial centers with a valid passport. It's a good idea to have an emergency supply of funds in traveler's checks.

ATMs: There are a limited number of ATMs in Mongolia, most or all of which are in UB. ATMs offer a fast, convenient way of accessing funds from your bank account in your home country, but there is no guarantee what services fees will be, nor is there any guarantee that your ATM card will actually work in Mongolia. Call your bank to inquire about ATM access in Mongolia. In UB, ATMs locations are Bayangol Hotel, Trade & Development Bank, Seoul Street near Golomt Bank, and SDS.

Credit Cards: Credit cards are not widely accepted in Mongolia. Typically only expensive hotels, boutiques, and restaurants have the capability of accepting cards. However, several banks in UB, and some in provincial centers, offer credit card advances so it is worth while to bring a credit card. The fee for this service is significant, but it is a good way to access funds periodically.

Wire Transfers: You can receive funds by Money Gram and Western Union in Mongolia. There is a fee associated with this service, and locations are few and far between.

Bank Withdrawals: If you bring a large amount of cash with you to Mongolia you may want to consider opening a personal bank account at Khaan Bank, which offers branch locations in nearly every village in Mongolia. This allows you to make deposits and withdrawals throughout Mongolia.

Organizational Transaction Policy:

Money negotiations and transactions in any culture can be awkward and uncomfortable, especially when there are other people around. Therefore, Itgel maintains a policy that requests that volunteers leave the area when a payment for services is being made or negotiated. Sometimes, this is as simple as leaving a room, but other times we may be in a moving vehicle together, making it difficult to facilitate a private transaction. In these circumstances, volunteers are asked to “talk amongst themselves” and allow the transaction to occur in relative privacy. Please try to anticipate this type of situation and respond accordingly.

Please also note that in almost any culture it is inappropriate to ask someone how much they earn, how much they pay, or other questions of this nature. Volunteers will rarely, if ever, be expected to assist with financial matters, and are therefore asked to avoid discussions or inquiries on this topic. Financial decisions are at the sole discretion of the ED. Any dispersal of Itgel funds must be authorized in advance.

Souvenirs, “Stuff,” and Optional Services:

Itgel encourages volunteers to spend money in Mongolia, supporting local individuals and businesses whenever possible. However, we do maintain certain policies that limit the nature and extent of monetary exchanges to some degree. For example, herders in the taiga may approach you hoping to sell handicrafts and other items as a source of cash income. Because Itgel is involved with the development of a handicraft marketplace at the TCVC, we would like to encourage herders to sell their items through this facility. If possible, try to facilitate a transaction that supports this system and encourages equitability and sustainability in the handicraft industry. If you do choose to purchase items directly from a herder, we ask that you be aware of certain cultural sensitivity issues such as competition and value. If possible, try to purchase items from various herders at various camps, so all families can benefit from your visit. If an item is not definitely priced, refer to others for norms, then suggest a price that is fair (not too high, not too low).

One of Itgel’s most important philosophies is that we do not believe that giving “stuff” to rural herders does not promote sustainability, self-reliance, and equitability. Instead, Itgel believes in providing resources and services that offer lasting benefits, which in turn enable herders to buy their own “stuff” if that is what they choose. For example, while some organizations provide herders with flour, canvas, or sugar, Itgel provides herders with economic opportunities that help generate longer term income so families can buy flour, canvas, and sugar for a lifetime, rather than rely on others for meeting their basic needs in the short term. Volunteers are expected to uphold this philosophy, and are therefore discouraged from giving expensive items, gifts, or “supplies” to herders, even if they are requested of you.

If you choose to contract or secure services in Mongolia, you are expected to adhere to proper cultural standards, and furnish payment lawfully, fairly, and in a timely fashion. For example, if you want to hire a tailor to sew you a custom jacket, you should determine a fair wage, make the negotiation in advance, and complete the transaction in a timely and honest manner. If you are suspicious about a service, its price, or the provider of a good or service, ask someone. Remember, there are no returns in Mongolia!

Bribery & Illegal Transactions:

It should go without saying that volunteers under no circumstances are permitted to engage in bribery, the purchase or sale of illegal items, transporting of illegal paraphernalia, or unlawful transactions of any kind. If someone infers that a bribe is desired or necessary, walk away and alert the ED.

Insurance Policy:

In March 2007, The Itgel Foundation adopted the following policy regarding insurance coverage for volunteers, visiting researchers, and staff (collectively “volunteers”):

Volunteers are expected to possess insurance or a comparable legal service for the duration of their involvement with The Itgel Foundation in Mongolia. The policy must offer reimbursement coverage for medical emergencies and in particular offer financial coverage for bush evacuation, including helicopter transport. Insurance coverage for trip cancellation, delay, or baggage loss/damage is optional. Volunteers are required to provide proof of insurance prior to service with Itgel. Itgel can provide assistance with the selection or acquisition of insurance. Fees for coverage range from \$129-\$1,000, and vary based on age, citizenship, and policy benefits.

When in the field, a designated member of the Itgel team will be in possession of all team members’ insurance documentation, a bundle of information we refer to as “Code Blue.” All volunteers should know where Code Blue is located, so that in the event of an emergency the necessary information can be accessed.

Safety in UB:

Although UB is a relatively safe city, you should avoid walking alone at night. Drunk people sometimes have a habit of harassing passersby, and street fights are not uncommon. Take taxis or walk with others. If someone bothers you, firmly say no and walk away. Always use caution when reacting in an unfamiliar situation. Getting pick pocketed is the primary threat in UB. Pick pocketers are usually teenage boys or intoxicated men. Be wary on buses, in crowds, at the market, and in discos. Never carry passports or excess money with you unless necessary. When you do, keep them in a security pouch close to your body. Please do not put your wallet in your back pocket! The black market is the primary area for pickpockets and other harassment. Avoid going alone if you are not familiar with the market.

Sexual Health:

STDs are infrequently talked about but are a reality in Mongolia. If you are engaging in sexual activities, ALWAYS practice safe sex. It is strongly advised that you do not solicit prostitutes.

Sickness and Injury in the Countryside:

The countryside presents many possibilities for injury and illness. Adhere to these tips and you have a better chance of being safe and healthy during your time in the countryside.

- Follow horse guidelines as instructed, without exception.
- Avoid petting dogs. Rabies is very common.
- Never handle or approach a sick animal without professional supervision and safety measures.
- Stay hydrated but do not drink unfiltered or untreated water even if it looks clean.
- Do not lie down in the back of vans, as this can cause extreme nausea with delayed onset.
- Cover mouth/nose in vehicles if dusty or you smell gas. This prevents sinus infections or worse.
- Stay clean and well-rested. Wash hands at least 3 times daily. Change socks/underwear regularly.
- DRESS APPROPRIATELY! Wear layers, stay dry, wear a hat, and cover extremities.
- Use insect repellent and sunscreen.
- Place a clean cloth or piece of clothing under your head when sleeping to avoid ticks and lice.
- It is strongly advised to avoid guns, as they can sometimes discharge unexpectedly.
- Take vitamins or supplements, and be sure to pack snacks as an emergency food source.
- Avoid foods that may be spoiled, raw, contaminated, moldy, or simply hard on your stomach.
- Understand lightning danger and familiarize yourself with lightning strike prevention procedures.

Brucellosis Prevention:

Brucellosis is an infectious disease that affects people and animals. It can trigger flu-like symptoms and damage to joints and reproductive organs. To avoid contracting this disease, follow these steps:

- Never drink un-boiled milk or milk products of any kind, or eat uncooked meat, especially organs.
- Never make contact with wounds, sores, or genital areas on an animal without gloves, masks, etc.
- Avoid overtly sick animals and blood, placenta, or other bodily fluids on the ground.

Securing Your Belongings:

With few exceptions, volunteers will invariably lose something in Mongolia. The combination of lots of gear, a great deal of traveling, and being in unfamiliar territory, makes it hard to keep track of your belongings at all times. To avoid losing items or being the victim of theft, stay as organized as possible. Mark your items with nametags or stickers. Make lists of things you are storing and leaving behind. Never leave belongings loose in a family's home or in vehicles. If you must leave things unattended, put them neatly in a bag, ask permission to leave them behind, and then place the bag in a discreet location.

Avoiding Theft, Harassment, & Crime:

Fortunately, Mongolia is a nation with an extremely low crime rate, and ethical standards that are conducive to relative safety and peace. However, all volunteers should be aware of the potential for theft, harassment, and crime. Some mal-intended people sometimes perceive foreigners as being vulnerable, easy targets. The best way to avoid this label is to actively make yourself aware of your surroundings, and adapt to cultural, social, and behavioral norms in Mongolia. For example, walk as though you know where you are going, and speak or ask questions with confidence. Avoid drawing attention to yourself by wearing inappropriate clothes, making rude or offensive remarks, or blatantly disregarding cultural norms. Show potentially threatening individuals you are not a mere tourist, but rather a trained NGO worker with language skills and a deeper understanding of Mongolia. This will do wonders to stave off problems. If a threatening situation arises, remain calm. Often, friendliness and humor can dissipate an impending threat. For more serious situations, signal for help, or get to a public area as quickly as possible.

If you feel sick, exhausted, or confused...Tell someone! Ignoring symptoms could result in a dangerous situation.

If you are the victim of a crime, or experience a threatening situation...Tell someone!

EMERGENCIES

Emergencies are a possibility in both the city and the countryside. Sickness, injury, security issues, circumstances back home, or even death are all possible, and should be evaluated in advance so that the entire team can be prepared to handle situations as they arise. In order to avoid unnecessary crises, and to limit the potential for extreme financial burdens or expenses, it is critical that each volunteer be familiar with the information contained in this section.

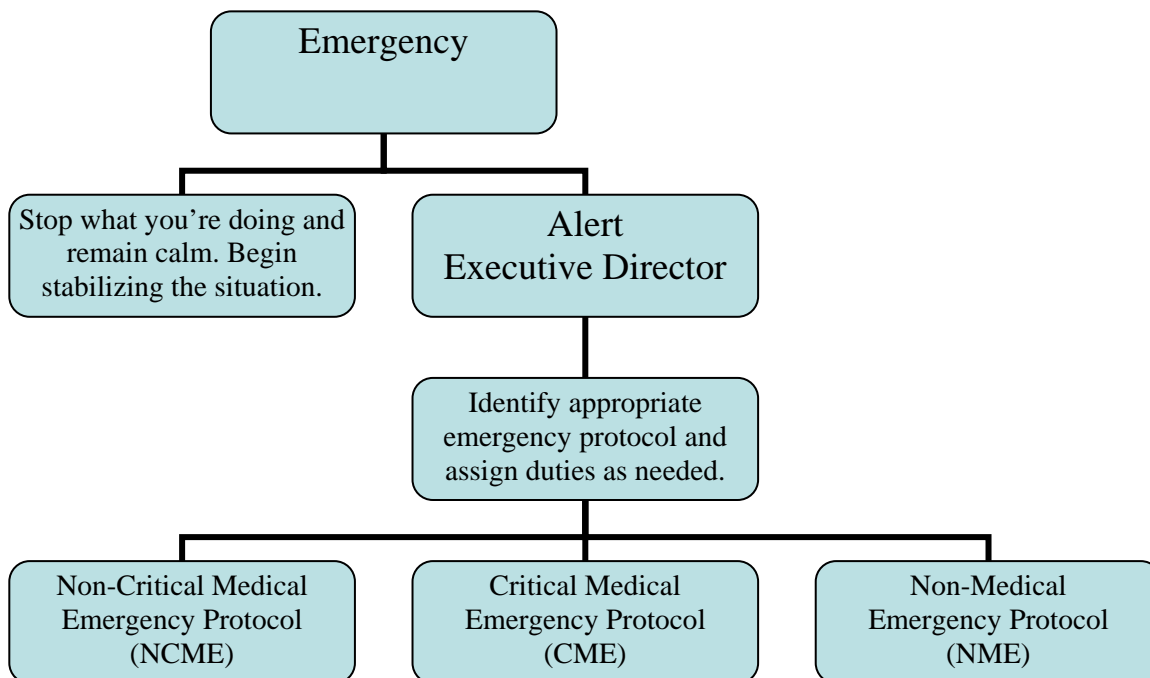
Because good preparation is key to avoiding or coping with emergency situations, it is critical that you provide the ED with the following prior to beginning volunteer service with Itgel:

1. Photocopy of your passport and other travel documents (visas, license, tickets, itinerary)
2. Completed and signed Itgel Agreement, Release, and Information form
3. Insurance documentation including policy number, emergency contact hotline, and policy coverage
4. List of special instructions or needs if applicable (allergies, who to contact, payment info, etc.)

These documents will typically be in the possession of the ED, in the Code Blue bundle. It is your responsibility to know the location of these documents as well, so that in the event that you are separated from the ED, or if the ED is incapacitated you can access emergency documentation. As a team, we all must be aware of each others' personal information to be able to help one another in the event of an emergency.

If an emergency situation arises, be it medical or not, please refer to the following flow chart to instruct you on the initial steps of how to respond:

Emergency Flow Chart:



Specific Emergency Protocols can be found on the next page.

Non-Critical Medical Emergency Protocol:

A non-critical medical emergency (NCME) may include cold or flu, twisted ankle, minor wound, or other non life threatening conditions. Follow these steps for NCME:

1. Assess situation and identify problem areas by referring to First Aid Handbook
2. Utilize necessary supplies from First Aid kit and seek local medical support if appropriate
3. Adjust schedule as needed and reassign duties to accommodate injured/sick party
4. Alert necessary parties. Preferred communication: landline or e mail.

Critical Medical Emergency Protocol:

A critical medical emergency (CME) may include severe illness, broken bone, severe wound, or other life and/or limb threatening conditions. Follow these steps for CME:

1. Assess situation and stabilize victim by following ABCDE's as outlined in First Aid Handbook
2. Utilize necessary supplies from First Aid kit and seek local medical support if appropriate
3. Initiate evacuation plan (determine victim's insurance, call emergency numbers, prep for evac.)
4. Alert necessary parties. Preferred communication: satellite phone
5. Adjust schedule as needed and reassign duties to accommodate response to CME.

For both NCME and CME, assign someone to each of the following positions as needed:

1. **Medic:** Stabilizes situation, stays by victims side, monitors victims conditions
 - a. Make the victim as comfortable as possible.
 - b. Stay with victim at all times or finds substitute medic.
 - c. Keep an ongoing record of victim's stats and any meds given.
 - d. Keep a close eye on victim for the following:
 - ♥ Signs of shock which include pale skin, rapid pulse, rapid respiration
 - ♥ Cessation of heartbeat, breathing
 - ♥ Reoccurrence of bleeding
 - ♥ Blockage of airway
2. **Recorder:** Records info on time, location, conditions of incident in writing & photography
 - a. Prepare and complete emergency incident report
 - b. Document location on map and GPS, and inform ED of coordinates
 - c. Coordinate with medic to help record vitals, changes in victim's condition, etc.
 - d. Record incident, conditions, and site by taking photographs
3. **Messenger(s):** Assists with communication of necessary parties on or off site of incident
 - a. If on site action possible, locate and utilize available communications at request of ED
 - b. If off site action needed, take equipment for camping and pack out to nearest phone.
 - c. Call resources as instructed by ED and be sure to have all necessary numbers.
 - d. Always mark the route and location of incident if you leave the site.
 - e. Coordinate meeting time and place and communicate with ED.

Non-Medical Emergency Protocol:

A non-medical emergency (NME) may include a death in the family, criminal activity or threat, or other scenario that disrupts or jeopardizes the continuity of planned Itgel activities. Follow these steps for NME:

1. Assess situation and stabilize security and well being of all team members.
2. Assign emergency positions as needed. (i.e., recorder, messenger, moral support)
3. Document specifics of NME through writing and photography. Inform team of situation.
4. Adjust schedule and reassign duties to accommodate those involved with/affected by NME.
5. Alert necessary parties. Preferred communication: landline, e mail, or sat. phone based on severity.
6. Initiate evacuation plan if necessary.

For more info on medical/ non-medical resources in UB, please refer to "Resources & References" section in handbook.

RESOURCES & REFERENCES

Language:

All volunteers are expected to learn the Cyrillic alphabet prior to beginning service with Itgel. Volunteers are expected to make a continual effort to acquire Mongolian language skills for the duration of their service period. For month service periods or shorter, this may be limited to basic words or phrases, but for multi-month service periods, volunteers will be expected to acquire basic conversation skills and master sentence construction and grammar rules. Itgel will facilitate group lessons, but independent learning is strongly encouraged. It is recommended that you keep a small notebook for writing down new words or recording phrases you hear but can't understand. Carry this with you wherever you go. Practice Mongolian whenever possible. No one will think it is rude or strange. With moderate effort, it is possible to learn enough Mongolian to be functional within a couple of weeks. PLEASE, make this a priority!

Communications:

Cell phones are the main mode of communication in UB. They can be purchased for about \$50 US, with a basic connection charge starting around \$20. Talk time is pre-paid and can be acquired by purchasing unit cards. Rates are 250-400 T/min. International calls can be made from hotels, post office, or internet cafes. Buy an international phone card at the Central Post Office or from Magicnet for best rates. Domestic calls can be made from street phones, internet cafes, hotels, or the post office. Dial 99 for cell phones, and 11 for UB land lines. Standard rate is 100-300 T/min.

Internet is widely available. High-speed is available at internet cafes for 600-1000 T/min. Dial up is available on laptops with a Mobicom card which can be purchased at the Central Post Office. Wireless internet is available at select locations (a few cafes and in Sukhbaatar Square). Mail can be posted and received at the Central Post Office. Rates to mail letters internationally are 500-1000 T. Stamps and stationary are available at the central kiosk in the post office. Packages can be shipped by DHL, Mongol Post, and a few others. DHL is located just west of the Lion's Bridge on the south side of Peace Ave. Faxes are available at hotel business centers, post office, and some internet cafes.

Restaurants:

Mongolian	Botz cafes are located everywhere in UB. Cheap but greasy. Modern Nomads is located on Ekh Toiroo just E of Chinggis Rest.
Indian	Taj Mahal is located in the south tower of the Bayangol Hotel Hazara is located just east of the wrestling palace
Chinese	Anujin is a hotel restaurant located slightly east of the wrestling palace. There is a great Chinese rest. on the street just to the east of the SDS
Korean	Seoul Club is located in the children's park near the Bayangol hotel. Sky is located on Flower Center St. just across from UB City Bank
American	California Rest. is located on Seoul St. slightly west of the circus Millie's Café is on a little street near Khan Brau towards Choijin Lama museum UB Deli is located on Seoul St. just across from the circus Chinggis Rest. is located north of Peace Ave. on the Ekh Toiroo. Pizza King and Planet Pizza are located on "Circus Street"
Italian	Pizza Dela Casa is located a couple blocks W of SDS. Marco Polo is located on Seoul St. just W of the circus.

Shopping:

The State Department Store (SDS) has everything you could ever want, and is centrally located on Peace Ave. The Sky Shopping Center is located next to the Chinggis Hotel north of the wrestling palace and is good for nicer clothes and specialty items. The Exhibition is a clothing market located just south of Khan Brau and is good for cheap clothes and shoes. UB Mart is a nice mall located behind this for nicer clothes

and shoes. The Black Market has everything including antiques, live animals, fabric, food, souvenirs, and house wares. Watch your pockets and never bring too much money or your passport! Third District is great for cheap clothes shopping and house wares. This is north of Gandan Monastery. Mongolian souvenirs can be found at little shops along Peace Ave and on the top floor of the SDS.

Groceries:

For basic snacks and items, look for a “24” on an awning or sign which is typically a sign of a market. For specialty items, try Mercury Market located just SW of the circus, Good Price located on Seoul street next to California Rest., or the State Dept. Store. The Black Market is good for meat and bulk items.

Entertainment & Culture:

There is no reason to ever be bored in Ulaanbaatar! There are dozens of cultural and entertainment venues that will enrich your experience and understanding of Mongolian life. It is strongly recommended that you take advantage of down time by visiting some of the following:

Choijin Lama Museum	Located across from Millie’s. Old temple complex, museum, great photo opps.
Natural History Museum	Located NE of UB City Bank. Small Fee. Dinosaurs, flora, fauna, geology
Gandan Temple	Located NW of central UB. Small Fee. Active monastery, shops, & more.
Museum of Persecution	Located E of Choijin Lama. Small Fee. Covers soviet history and purges.
Intellectual (Puzzle) Mus.	Located near black market. Fun, hands-on museum. Great gift shop. Small fee.
Zanabazar Art Museum	Located just W of Flower Center St. Great displays, Buddhist art. Small fee.
Mongolian History Museum	Located on W side of Sukhbaatar Sq. Small fee.
Bogd Khan Winter Palace	Located just over Peace Bridge. Educational, but a bit rundown. Small fee.
Art Galleries	Located throughout UB. Many sell art and have artists in residence. No fee.
Mong. Calligraphy Gallery	Located just N of Peace Bridge. Educational. Art for sale. No fee.
Tornado	Located in Sansar. Young Crowd. Late night shows and dancing. Cover.
Strings	Night club with live music near Gandan. Rock bands and dancing. Cover.
Riversounds	Located S of central Peace Ave. Night club with live music, often Jazz. Cover.
Chinggis Jazz Club	Located on central PA. Good hang out for drinks and conversation. No cover.
Brau Haus	Located on Seoul St. Live music, upscale cocktail atmosphere. No cover.
Irish Pub	Located directly W of cultural palace. Good food and music. No cover.
Casablanca	Located in the Bayangol Hotel. Often has live music. Sometimes a cover.
UB Video	Located on central PA. Movie rental and viewing establishment. Fee.
FPMT Buddhist Center	Located directly across from Zanabazar. Free events. Good library.
Tumen Ekh	Located in children’s park. Holds shows nightly. Fee.
Cultural Palace	Located across from post office. Nightly shows. Fee.
Opera House	Located on Sukhbaatar Sq. Holds periodic shows. Fee.
Quiz Night	Located on steps of opera house. Summer only. Ex-pat crowd. Small fee.

Weather:

Mongolia is a higher-latitude nation that is landlocked. This means it experiences a “continental climate,” characterized by hot dry summers, and cold, windy winters. Summers are short but gorgeous, with Fahrenheit temps in the 60s and 70s, and sunny skies typical. However, always be prepared for rain and even snow in summer, and severe drops in temperature. Fall is crisp and muddy, particularly in Hovsgol. Temps vary greatly. Expect rain and snow and some sun. Winter is cold and windy. Expect temps below freezing consistently. Dress as though you were climbing Everest! Spring is cool and rainy, and can also vary greatly.

Attire:

Business attire is essential for meetings, special events, and some social occasions. Men should wear nice slacks and a button down shirt (coat and tie optional). Women should wear nice slacks or skirt with a blouse or sweater. Wearing appropriate shoes and belts reflects highly on your appearance in Mongolia.

Transportation:

Virtually every car in Mongolia is a taxi. Hail a cab by putting one arm out, palm down. The standard rate is 250-350 T per km. Keep track of distance by looking at the odometer. Tipping is not necessary. Buses are also available. Fees are nominal. Schedules and routes are tricky to figure out, but a day or two of experimentation could save you lots of money on cab fare. Walking is always a great way to get around UB.

Tipping:

Tipping is generally not part of Mongolian culture. At restaurants or with some services you can tip by rounding up the total amount a bit. Special services such as bellmen or train station attendants expect tips. No more than a few thousand T is necessary.

Laundry:

Metro Express is a franchise of Laundromats throughout UB owned by an Israeli named Boaz. Good service, but give specific instructions if you really care about your clothes. Rates are 5,000-12,000 T/load.

Medical Care or Emergencies:

SOS Medica Mongolia Clinic is located southwest of Peace Bridge near “Tsaagan Haluk” (White Gate). They have regular business hours but are available for emergency calls. Membership plans are available for 6 months or 1 year. The Russian Hospital is located on the east end of Peace Ave on the north side of the street in Sansar District just before the Anujin Hotel.

Non Medical Emergencies:

Contact the police in the event of an emergency or crime. Police stations are located throughout UB. Be sure to carry the phone number of the police with you at all times.

Most foreign embassies have emergency numbers. Contact your embassy if your passport is lost or stolen, if you are arrested, or if you need other consular services. Keep the number for your home embassy with you at all times.

PHONE NUMBERS:

Please take a bit of time to fill in the following phone numbers, and then copy this section and place it in your wallet or purse so these contacts are with you at all times!

Your home country embassy	
SOS Medica Mongolia Clinic	
Your insurance company emergency number	
General information line in UB	
Mongolian Police	
Itgel apartment phone	
Morgan cell	
Translator	
Satellite phone	
Other _____	
Other _____	

ESSENTIAL DOS AND DON'TS IN MONGOLIA

GENERAL ETIQUETTE:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover your head & wrists when presenting gifts/money • Pass and accept things with right hand and palms up • Shake hands if appropriate • Accept food or drink that is offered to you • Try to speak Mongolian if you can • Dress neatly and appropriately for the occasion • Address elders/authorities with “Ta” not “Chee” • Indicate object/direction with open palm facing up • Try to sing when asked (ability doesn’t matter!) • Flick alcohol in traditional manner when appropriate • Keep track of belongings and stay organized! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write in red ink • Pass or accept anything with left hand • Point with your finger • Talk or joke about bad things that may happen • Point your feet at someone or show your soles • Touch a man’s upper body without express permission • Whistle inside • Enter a vehicle from its left side • Let blood touch the ground • Wash dirty dishes or clothes in an outside waterway • Go to the bathroom without establishing proper area • Compliment a child with strongly positive words • Say thank you too much or for small gestures • Write on someone’s business card in their presence • Say you will do something that you don’t intend to do • Place a hat or other “open” object face up

GUIDELINES FOR VISITING A FAMILY:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proceed to the left as you enter a ger or ortz • Offer to help by DOING not just by ASKING • Keep belongings neatly organized and in proper area • Offer a gift if appropriate • In cities, remove shoes if appropriate • Grow accustomed to sitting in silence and just observing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step over food or objects on the ground • Talk in a foreign language excessively in front of others • Point the spout of a tea pot at someone or at the door • Proceed to the right as you enter a ger or ortz • Put anything in a family’s stove without asking • Pass anything between or lean against the poles in a ger • Block the sacred area in a family’s home • Refuse to try food or tea • Throw objects, especially inside • Knock on a ger door • Pass the “midpoint” of a ger or ortz without permission • Place objects in ger/ortz poles without permission

GUIDELINES FOR DEALING WITH HORSES:

DO	DO NOT
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mount a horse only from its left • Say “choo” for go, pull back on reins to stop • Follow the path and pace of the guide or team leader • Lean forward when going uphill • Lean backwards when going downhill • Keep your heels pointed down in stirrups • Keep track of things tied to you and your saddle • Avoid mud and ice! • Use firm gestures and signals to control your horse • Monitor position of saddle and signal if slipping • Slow down when approaching a group of horses • Wait for guide to assist in tying and packing horses • Stop your horse and dismount if terrain is difficult 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change clothes or adjust luggage while riding a horse • Mount a horse or other animal from its right side • Put more than the balls of your feet in the stirrup • Go on a path or at a pace ahead of guide or team leader • Shout or make abrupt movements around horses • Stand behind or on the right side of a horse • Approach at a fast pace to a group of horses • Start to go while others are mounting stopped horses

COMMON CONCERNS: WHAT TO EXPECT

Riding:

You will be riding horses extensively, which Itgel horsemen will hand select for each of you. Saddles will be Russian style saddles. Riding will be in open and wooded terrain, almost entirely at a walking pace. If you want to go faster, you can, if not, you don't have to. Rides will be 3-9 hours at a time, sometimes for multiple days in a row. Horsemen and Itgel staff are there to help you with riding, and if there is a problem, the team will stop to handle the situation. The horses are smaller than western horses, and are easier to handle in some ways, harder in others. An instruction session, mandatory for all volunteers, will take place before we start riding. Expect to be sore and challenged by all the riding. Almost all volunteers fall off at least once. But as the saying goes, "If you fall off a horse, the best thing to do is get right back on."

Food:

In the countryside, we eat meals like pasta casserole and fried rice, and a lot of milk tea and bread from host families. We stop along the way in countryside towns for food like spaghetti, fried steak, or cole slaw. You will have the opportunity to try unfamiliar foods like boiled goat, etc. but it is rarely going to be a mandatory part of your diet. Volunteers are encouraged to bring their own snacks (from UB) to supplement Itgel group meals in the field. In UB, you can eat anything from hamburgers to caviar. Name a cuisine, and UB has it: French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, American, etc. Mongolian food is not spicy or strange, but it is rarely the highlight of most foreigners' experience in Mongolia. Expect lots of meat, dairy, salt and fried foods. No accommodations can be made for those with special dietary needs, including vegetarians.

Accommodations:

In the countryside, you may stay in guest houses, gers, tents, teepees, or cabins. In the taiga, expect camping conditions, with possible stays in a family's teepee. You will be sleeping on the ground, and should therefore have a good sleeping bag (rated to zero degrees Fahrenheit or lower) and foam mat. At "base camp" and while traveling, we stay in gers, cabins, and teepees, equipped with stoves. It gets quite cold at night. In UB, you'll likely be staying in an apartment equipped with hot water, appliances, and indoor plumbing. Expect a variety of living conditions, from quite rugged to quite comfortable.

Driving:

Vehicular travel is a big part of Itgel service, and can sometimes be tough, but not unbearable. We drive in Russian vans for up to 24 hours at a time. Starting a drive well rested and feeling good helps make the journey much more enjoyable. Some folks take Dramamine or other anti-motion sickness medicine, which works wonders. We listen to music, enjoy breathtaking scenery, and the best part is, if you ever have to stop, you don't even need to wait for an exit ramp! You'll be able to stop and take a break, stretch, or just get some fresh air anytime you want. Getting stuck in the mud is almost a guarantee, and it takes everyone's help pushing the vehicle out, but it's all part of the experience. Expect some rough travel days, but a great deal of incredible scenery and adventure.

VISAS & REGISTRATION

Mongolian Visas & Work Permits:

Mongolian visa requirements vary based on the applicant's citizenship. Contact the Mongolian embassy/consulate in your home country for exact, up-to-date requirements.

- US citizens: Can stay in Mongolia for up to 90 days without a visa. If staying more than 30 days, must register with Immigration Service within 1 week of arrival. Visas for up to 90 days can be obtained at the airport upon arrival. Visas for longer stays must be obtained either at the Mongolian embassy in D.C. in advance or upon arrival in UB. Extensions, if done within 1 week of initial arrival, cost \$100. If you miss this window of time, you may be fined at a daily rate, which adds up fast!
- Canadian citizens: Can stay in Mongolia for up to 30 days with a valid invitation letter. If staying 30 days or more, you must register with the Immigration service within 1 week of arrival. Visas for up to 30 days can be obtained at the airport upon arrival. Visas for longer stays must be obtained at the Mongolian embassy/consulate in Canada in advance.
- All other citizens: Contact the Mongolian embassy or consulate in your home country to inquire about requirements. Most foreign nations are required to obtain a Mongolian visa in advance of arrival. Make sure you apply for the correct visa type (HG for Itgel volunteers), because it is difficult to change visa type once you arrive.

All volunteers will be required to register with local authorities in UB within 1 week of arrival.

All Itgel volunteers, including US volunteers staying in Mongolia for 90 days or more and Canadian volunteers staying in Mongolia for 30 days or more, must obtain an HG visa **and** a labor permit issued by the Dept. of Labor to work for Itgel. Itgel will assist you with this process in advance of your arrival. Exact requirements and procedure vary based on your citizenship, but most will be asked to provide the following:

- Photocopy of your passport & extra passport photos
- Signed work contract with Itgel & official invitation letter with stamp
- Certificate of graduation or academic diploma (highest earned)
- Mongolian visa application form

When arriving at the Mongolian port of entry, all citizens other than Americans will be asked to present documentation of their intended purpose of stay. For most of you, this will be a stamped invitation letter from Itgel. Make sure you have this handy when going through immigration/customs in Mongolia.

Registering with your Embassy:

Itgel volunteers are advised to register with their home country embassy in UB. In case of emergency, this allows the embassy to contact you with information. Registration can typically be done over the phone or online at the embassy website. If your home country does not have an embassy in UB, check if there is a "covering embassy." For example, Swiss citizens are served at the French embassy in UB.

Visas for Other Countries:

Please also be aware that if you are traveling through additional countries en route to Mongolia, you may be required to obtain transit visas. For example, most foreign nationals need a transit visa if passing through China for more than 24 hours. These must be obtained in advance.

SUGGESTED PACKING LIST FOR ITGEL VOLUNTEERS

A few things to consider before reading the packing lists...

- Mongolians, like most Asians, dress very well. You may be surprised to see men and women wearing high fashion outfits in the capital. To fit in and be respectful of those we will have meetings with, please bring clothes that are appropriate. Nice jeans with a blouse and dressy shoes are good for casual days in the capital, but business attire is mandatory for meetings and special events. All volunteers must bring at least one business outfit!
- The countryside is 180 degree difference from the capital. Fashion is sacrificed for functionality. Be prepared for extreme weather. It may be 80 degrees or it may be snowing. Layers, lightweight, and compact are critical. You may not be able to change clothes for a week at a time, so bring good work clothes, strong boots, and anything you need to function and be comfortable in rugged conditions.
- As for luggage, backpacks are often difficult to maneuver with and hard to pack on horses and in tight vans. They're okay as *one* of your bags, but it's good to have other options. Duffels with wheels work great for international travel, while softer duffels and little packs work great for excursions in-country. Keep in mind you will be packing and repacking several times, leaving stuff in the city or at different field stations. At times you may just have your sleeping roll and a tiny bag with you for a few days.
- Electronics and technology are one of the harder things to consider when traveling in Mongolia. In the city you can have a hair dryer, laptop, anything you'd ever want, but in the countryside, power supplies are virtually non existent. If your item has the option of alkaline batteries instead of chargers, that's great! If you need to plug items in, you will need to bring a converter and transformer that changes voltage to the Mongolian 220 v. Contact me with questions about electronics use in the countryside.
- If you are using 35 mm film, bring a lead bag in which to store film. Despite what they tell you at security gates, your film may get ruined with the number of X rays you will be passing through. **Have all your film and your camera (if it has film in it) hand-checked!** You always have this right, and if you prepare your film by taking it out of the canisters and putting it in a clear plastic zip lock bag the process will go much faster. Don't be shy, photographs are important. Always ask for your film to be hand checked, whether it be in the US, China, Mongolia, or anywhere else en route.
- You can buy just about anything in the capital, so don't worry if you forget something. However, items you cannot readily find are tampons, brand name cosmetic products, specialty food items, oatmeal (total bummer), specific charging units or devices, good sleeping bags, rain pants, or an extensive English language book selection.

PACKING LISTS:

For the field...

- Sleeping bag (rated to around 0 degrees, must have compression sack, not just stuff sack)
- Ground pad/sleeping mat (cheap foam ones work great, must have straps or stuff sack)
- Tent (optional, but must be compact)
- Smallish duffle or backpack for field excursions and/or a daypack (small and stuffable is great)
- Money pouch or money belt for keeping passport and money on you at all times
- Very warm jacket (down jacket that stuffs into a small sack is best)
- Full raingear (jacket, pants, hat)
- Long underwear (not cotton) and other layers such as fleece
- Warm socks, wool or Smart Wool are great
- Clothes you can work in, but that don't look too tattered (Looking presentable is important)
- Sturdy boots (riding boots, hiking boots, or rubber boots are good. You can buy boots in Mongolia)
- Insect repellent
- Pocket knife
- Sunglasses with strap or chord
- Water bottle with clip, string, or carabiner (to clip onto your saddle)
- Water pump, filtration device, or iodine tablets
- Hat, gloves, scarf
- Flashlight (head lamp is great if you have one)
- Plastic bags/zip locks of many sizes for wet gear, electronic device protection, etc.
- Slippers or sleeping bag socks
- Gifts for families (calendars, key chains, flashlights, cards, homemade gifts or things that represent your home)

For the city and international travel...

- Nice clothes. Business suit or slacks and nice shoes are essential for meetings and certain events
- Casual everyday clothes for the city
- Passport, extra passport photos, visas, photo copies of credit cards, passport, contact info, etc
- Traveler's checks
- ATM card that you have confirmed will work in Mongolia (call your bank ahead of time!)
- Journal, field notebook, pens, books, movies, CDs, etc.
- Please bring something for storing your passport and documents like a passport case/document pouch

Personal Medical Kit...ESSENTIAL!

- General antibiotic (Cipro or other) good for sinus infections, traveler's diarrhea, etc. Ask your doctor!
- Dramamine or other motion sickness medicine
- Advil/Aspirin/etc. (prescription painkillers optional)
- Anti-histamine (and other medicine if you have allergies, such as epinephrine for severe allergies)
- Cold and sinus medicine (sinus infections are common in Mongolia due to dust and other factors)
- Anti-diarrhea medicine AND anti-constipation medicine (You'll need both!)

** Itgel has a general-use med kit with bandages, basic pharmaceuticals, and splint materials. However, it is highly recommended that you bring your own supplies as listed above. Remember to ALWAYS carry the prescription for RX drugs with you!*

Optional Technology Items...

- Laptop (highly useful in the capital)
- Camera (digital is great. Bring extra battery packs and memory sticks)
- Voice recorder (for interviews, research, or notes iPods or minidisk players are great)
- Flash drive or mass storage device (for work in the capital and storing images, documents, or music)
- Video cameras are always great. Bring appropriate chargers, cases, and extra tapes
- Portable DVD player/CD burner (for burning memory cards or making CDs to free memory sticks)
- MP3 players or music equipment. (Bring a car adapter and charger for your device if you have them.)
- GPS unit or digital compass/thermometer/altimeter
- Hairdryers, electric razors, coffee grinders, etc....you can bring anything you like as long as you have an adapter and plan to leave it in the capital when we go out in the field. Mongolian operates on 220 V AC current.

Other Optional Items...

- Saddlebags for horse travel
- Binoculars
- Clipboard
- Gators
- Specialty food items like granola bars, power bars, peanut butter, etc.
- Supplements or vitamins
- Field guides or reference material for flora/fauna
- Mongolia guide book
- Mongolian-English dictionary or phrase book
- Camping cooking dishes/mess kit
- Photos of friends and home to show host families
- Crazy Creak or other camping chair
- Musical instrument

Despite the huge packing list, pack light and be prepared to leave stuff behind.

Remember, you can almost always find what you need in Ulaanbaatar.

When packing, think versatile, extreme weather, lots of moving, horse travel, and urban life too.

EXPEDITION BEHAVIOR

The Finer Points

By Howard Tomb

(Slightly revised for The Itgel Foundation)

A good expedition team is like a powerful, well-oiled, finely tuned marriage. Members cook meals, carry burdens, and face challenges together and finally go to bed together. A bad expedition, on the other hand, is an awkward, ugly, embarrassing thing characterized by bickering, filth, frustration and crispy macaroni.

Nearly all bad expeditions have one thing in common: poor expedition behavior (EB). This is true even if team members follow the stated rules, such as Don't Step on the Rope, Kerosene and Food, No Soap in the River, No Raccoons in the Tent, Keep your Ice Axe Out of My Eye, etc.

Unfortunately, too many rules of expedition behavior remain unspoken. Some leaders seem to assume that their team members already have strong and generous characters like their own. But judging from a few of the team members we've encountered, more rules ought to be spelled out. Here are ten of them.

RULE #1 Get the hell out of bed.

Suppose your tent mates (or ortz-mates) get up early to fetch water and fire up the stove while you lie comatose in your sleeping bag. As they run an extensive equipment check, pack gear, and fix your breakfast, they hear you start to snore. Last night you were their buddy; now they're drawing up lists of things about you that make them want to spit. They will devise cruel punishments for you. You have earned them. The team concept is now defunct. Had you gotten out of bed, nobody would have had to suffer.

RULE #2 Do not be cheerful before breakfast.

Some people wake up perky and happy as fluffy bunny rabbits. They put stress on those who wake up mean as rabid wolverines. Exhortations such as "Rise and shine, sugar!" and "Greet the dawn, pumpkin!" have been known to provoke pungent expletives from rabid wolverine types. These curses, in turn, may offend fluffy bunny types. Indeed, they are issued with the sincere intent to offend. Thus, the day begins with flying fur and hurt feelings. The best early morning behavior is simple: Be quiet.

RULE #3 Do not complain.

About anything. Ever. It's ten below zero, visibility is four inches and wind driven hailstones are embedding themselves in your face like shotgun pellets. Must you mention it? Do you think your friends haven't noticed the weather? Make a suggestion. Tell a joke. Lead a prayer. Do NOT lodge a complaint! Your saddle is hard as a rock, your cheap raingear is soaked through, and you haven't eaten, slept, or pooped in 48 hours. Were you promised a personal sherpa or a luxurious holiday? Did somebody cheat you out of the all-you-can-eat buffet option? We're in this together, so let's try to make the best of it!

RULE #4 Learn to cook at least one thing right.

One expedition trick is so old that it is no longer amusing: on the first cooking assignment, the clever cook prepares a dish that resembles, say, Burnt Socks in Toxic Waste Sauce. The cook hopes to be relieved permanently from cooking duties. This is the childish approach to a problem that's been with us since people first started throwing dead lizards on the fire. Tricks are not part of team spirit. If you don't like to cook, say so. Offer to wash dishes and prepare the one thing you do know how to cook. Even if it's only tea. Remember that talented camp cooks sometimes get invited to join major expeditions in Nepal, all expenses paid.

RULE #5 Either A) Shampoo, or B) Do not remove your hat for any reason.

After a week or so in the taiga without shampooing, hair forms angry little clumps and wads. These leave the person beneath looking like an escapee from a mental ward. Such an appearance could shake a team's confidence in your judgment. If you can't shampoo, pull a wool hat down over your ears and leave it there, night and day, for the entire expedition.

RULE #6 Keep track of your stuff, and the group stuff for which you are responsible.

Experienced adventures have systems for organizing their gear. They very rarely leave it strewn around camp or lying back on the trail. One of the most damning things you can do is ask your teammate if they've seen the tent poles you thought you packed 20 miles ago. Even in the unlikely event you get home alive, you will not be invited on the next trip. Should you ever leave the tent poles 20 miles away, do not ask if anybody's seen them. Simply announce, with a good-natured chuckle, that you are about to set off in the dark on a 40 mile ride to retrieve them, and that you are sorry. It's unprofessional to lose your spoon or your toothbrush. If something like that happens, don't mention it to anyone.

RULE #7 Don't be a pest by saying "Are we there yet?" every 5 minutes.

If you want to know where you are, look at the map or better yet, learn how to use the GPS unit. Try to figure it out yourself. If you're still confused, feel free to discuss the identity of landmarks around you and how they correspond to the cartography. If you A) suspect that a mistake has been made; and B) have experience in interpreting topographical maps, and C) are certain that your group leader is a novice or on drugs, speak up. Otherwise, follow the group like a sheep.

RULE #8 Always do more than your fair share.

When the trip is over, would you rather be remembered as a rock or a sissy? Keep in mind that cooking an extra meal or two or fetching water more often than others won't make your body any more tired than it already is. In any given group, somebody is bound to bicker about petty duties and group tasks. When an argument begins, volunteer to go the extra mile yourself. Then shake your head and gaze with pity upon the slothful one. On the trail that day during a break, steal the tasty granola bars out of the tenderfoot's stash. This is the mature response to childish behavior.

RULE #9 Do not get sick or injured as a result of stupidity.

Sickness and injuries are not only dangerous and unpleasant, but they can cause inconveniences that destroy the entire trip. Most green horns think they know more than they do, but when you fall off the back of a horse going up a hill, all those fun facts you thought you knew about riding crash and burn alongside your ego in a muddy heap on the trail. Once you're injured or sick, it's too late to start your education on countryside wellness. Take the time to learn about health and safety with humility and diligence before something bad happens. Of course, accidents and mishaps can happen to the best of us, but having them happen as a result of sheer stupidity is just bad form!

RULE #10 Do not get killed.

Suppose you make the summit of K2 solo, chain-smoking Gitanes and carrying the complete works of Hemingway in hardcover. Pretty macho, huh? Suppose now that you take a vertical detour down a crevasse and never make it back to camp. Would you still qualify as a hero? And would it matter? Nobody's going to run any fingers through your new chest hair. The worst thing to have on your outdoor resume is the list of the possible locations of your body.

All expedition behavior really flows from this one principle: Think of your team, the beautiful machine, first. You are merely a cog in that machine. If you have something to prove, forget about joining an expedition. Your team will never have more than one member.

MONGOLIAN LANGUAGE WORKSHEETS
SECTION I

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Hello		
Goodbye		
Thank you		
Yes		
No		
Here/This		
Dumpling		
Tea		
Fried noodles		
Salad		
One		
Two		
Three		
Four		
Five		
I		
You (formal/informal)		
Name		
Who		
To be		
My		
His/her		
Your		
Where		
'From' suffix (ex. where from)		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
What is your name?		
My name is Leslie.		
His name is Stephen.		
Where are you from?		
I am from Canada.		
He is from Switzerland.		

LESSON:

#1 Sentences are built in this order: SUBJECT OBJECT VERB

For example, *Een botz bain* (*This dumpling is*)

#2 To form who/what/why/where/when question, add the "question word" to the end of phrase.

For example, *Tanni nir hen BE?* or *Ta haanas irsan BE?*

SECTION II

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Right/West		
Left/East		
Straight ahead		
To go		
To stop		
Turn		
Friend		
Food		
We		
What		
To need		
State Department Store		
Circus		
Post Office		
Road		
There/That		
Six		
Seven		
Eight		
Nine		
Ten		
Maybe		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Where are you going?		
I am going to the circus		
He went to the circus		
What do you need?		
I need ...		

LESSON:

#1 To conjugate a verb, use these endings:

Infinitive	Verb	To go	yavax
Present simple	Verb base + “deg”	I go	Be yavdeg
Past simple	Verb base + “can”	I went	Be yavcan
Future simple	Verb base + “na” or “an”	I will go	Be yavan
Present continuous	Verb base + “j-bain”	I am going	Be yavj bain
Past continuous	Verb base + “j-baicán”	I was going	Be yavaj baican
Imperative	Verb base + “arai”	Go!	Yavarai!

SECTION III

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Countryside		
City		
Okay		
Cool (as in "neat")		
Horse		
Reindeer		
Car		
To like		
To ride		
To have		
'Have' or 'with' suffix		
'In' suffix as in location		
Mother		
Father		
Brother		
Sister		
One hundred		
One thousand		
Good		
Bad		
Beautiful		
Ugly		
How many		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
How many reindeer do you have?		
I have five reindeer		
Do you like the countryside?		
I like the city		
I will ride my horse		

LESSON:

- #1 Mongolian has few if any prepositions. Instead, suffixes are added to verbs AND nouns.
 For example, instead of saying 'I am IN countryside' You say 'I countryside(in suffix) am'.
 So, *Be hoodooT bain* or *Ta machineD baican*
 Also, instead of saying 'I am with (or have) 3 reindeer,' you say 'I 3 reindeer(with suffix).
 So, *Be gooruv tsaaboktay* or *Ta hooyer aahtay.*
- #2 For yes/no questions, the 'yes/no suffix' is added to the end of the phrase.
 For example, *Ta tsuuivan dortay oo?* (Literally, 'You tsuuivan with like, yes?')

SECTION IV

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Hot		
Cold		
Table		
Chair		
Building/house		
Livestock		
Meat		
River		
Stone		
Medicine		
Herder		
Doctor		
Student		
Price		
To make/do		
To be able to		
To take/buy		
To have		
When		
What		
What kind of		
Why		
Because		
Without/isn't		
Not		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
What are you doing?		
How much is it?		
Do you have medicine?		
I can ride a horse		

LESSON:

- #1 *To make a verb negative, add the 'negative suffix' to the end of verb with appropriate base.*
 For past simple negative, drop suffix & add 'aa-gwee' (*I did not sleep=Be ontaagwee*)
 For future simple negative, drop suffix & add 'gwee' (*I will not sleep=Be ontgwee*)
 For present continuous, drop suffix & add 'aagwee bain' (*I am not sleeping=Be ontaagwee bain*)
 For past continuous, drop suffix & add 'aagwee baican' (*I was not sleeping=Be ontaagwee baican*)
- #2 For professions or positions, add "ch" or "cheen" to the end of the base word.
 For example, 'em' is medicine, so 'emch' is doctor. 'Mal' is livestock, 'malcheen' is herder.

SECTION V

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
China/Chinese		
UK/English		
USA/American		
Netherlands/Dutch		
Switzerland/Swiss		
Korea/Korean		
Asia/Asian		
Inside		
Outside (foreign)		
Dog		
Cow		
Sheep		
Goat		
Camel		
Corral/fence		
Bathroom		
Water		
To be tired		
To study		
To understand		
Saddle		
Hat		
Gloves		
Shirt		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Are you tired?		
Goodnight		
Did you sleep well?		
Can you understand?		
I don't understand		

LESSON:

- #1 To make something possessive (as in 'Fabien's table' or 'Chinese food'), add 'een' or 'nee' to the end of the word. This is called the *genitive* case.
For example, *Fabiennee shiiree* or *Hyututeen haal*
- #2 Often, Mongolians will condense phrases by dropping pronouns and slurring words together. 'Are you tired?' is a great example. Try to pick up on patterns and decipher what is said.
For example, '*Yatrajeeno?*' Is actually '*Ta yatraj bain oo?*'

SECTION VI

WORDS:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Bag		
Box		
Mountain		
Cloud		
Where to		
Whose		
How		
Question		
Phone		
Me		
Much/A lot/Great		
School		
Little shop		
Child		
Job		
Black market		
To work		
To speak		
To know		
To play		
To help		
'by/by means of' suffix		
If		
Then		

PHRASES:

<i>English</i>	<i>Mongolian Transliteration</i>	<i>Mongolian Cyrillic</i>
Do you know...?		
Will you help me?		
Can I help you?		
Can I ask a question?		
Whose camel is this?		

LESSON:

#1 TENSES transform VERBS, and CASES transform NOUNS. Here are the cases we've learned:

Nominative	infinitive	<i>Machine</i>	(car)
Genitive	possession	<i>Machinne</i>	(car's)
Locative	at/in/on	<i>MachineD</i>	(in car)
Ablative	from/than	<i>Machineaac</i>	(from car)
Instrumental	by/by means of	<i>Machineaar</i>	(by car)
Commutative	possession with	<i>Machinetay</i>	(with car)