11.6.3.1 Personal Locating Beacons (PLB) and Emergency Position-Indicating Radio Beacons (EPIRBS)

Emergency or radio beacons are tracking transmitters which aid in the detection and location of boats, aircraft, and people in distress. The basic purpose of the distress emergency beacon is to get people rescued
p. 277 within the first twenty-four ↳ hours following a traumatic event, when the majority of survivors can still be saved. Every botanical collecting trip, especially to remote areas, should carry an emergency beacon.

11.6.3.2 Contact arrangements

It is essential that a regular and frequent contact schedule is developed so that emergency rescue authorities can be informed of potential problems if the team fails to make contact at a designated time. The most important safety action is to ensure that people know where you are planning to be and where you actually are so that they can monitor the progress of the fieldwork. Therefore, make sure that there is a reliable contact person that the field team can contact regularly. The primary organization requires agreed emergency procedures and protocols that will be activated when there has been no contact with the field team after a set amount of time.

11.6.3.3 Global positioning systems and maps

A Global Positioning System (GPS) is an instrument that provides spatial coordinates and should be used in conjunction with good maps. A GPS is an excellent way of obtaining accurate coordinates for a locality, but they should not be viewed as a replacement for detailed maps. Always select the best map, at the best scale, for the area that you are visiting. In the event of an emergency, an accurate geocode reference of the team's locality will help rescue agencies to provide rapid assistance.

11.6.3.4 Vehicles to be used, vehicle recovery, and safety equipment

For motor vehicles it is important to list personnel with recovery training or substantive experience; assess physical strain risks for potential recovery tasks; list recovery equipment items being taken, such as gloves, snatch strap, tree strap, chain, shackles, spare tyres.

Other considerations include:

- Boat: record boat registration and ownership; review boat operator licences, radio skills, radio schedules, motor service status, navigational skills and equipment, safety gear, general equipment status—including mandatory certifications.
- Dive equipment and skill (review Divemaster and SCUBA certifications, equipment status—including mandatory certifications, and dive schedules with regard to personnel experience and capabilities.
- On foot: although most of the fieldwork requires considerable amount of time and often involves a considerable distance to be walked, frequently whilst carrying heavy equipment and supplies, there is a
p. 278 tendency not to consider the ↳ risks and hazards associated with this aspect of the work. Review on-track and off-track work expected, with regard to personnel experience, capabilities, and navigational skills/equipment, tree- and rock-fall hazards, and likelihood of danger from animals and poisonous plants).

When working in developing countries and remote communities, the available vehicles (including boats) may not be of a standard that will provide the maximum safety. However, it is still important to ensure that the vehicle, the driver, and the recovery equipment are as good as possible. It is also an excellent opportunity to increase the awareness of general safety issues for within-country agencies if that is