

# School of BioSciences

## Field Work Safety Requirements

Field work can present serious and varied hazards. With so many BioSciences personnel involved in all types of fieldwork from plant collecting in local gardens to large student excursions and international marine diving, it is important that consideration is given to the assessment of hazards and planning of risk control measures prior to departure.

The UoM [Travelling and Working Off-campus](#) site provides much of the information you will need regarding fieldwork. The UoM [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#) is a detailed booklet on issues you should consider.

### Procedure

Before you do any field work you must complete/attend:

- [Risk Management online training](#) (required every 3 years)
- [Field Work Risk Assessment](#)
- [Field Work Plan](#) (this includes reporting medical conditions/fitness, itinerary, communication and emergency plans)
- Field Work Briefing (pre-departure safety/logistics meeting with all participants)
- online travel registration for insurance [Travel Registration](#) (students - air and international travel only) / [Travel Portal](#) (staff)
- Field Work Equipment checklist (optional and editable) – available on BioSc server

You will need to have at least two copies of your Field Work Risk Assessment and Plan.

Copies are for:

1. Taking with you into the field
2. Supervisor (may prefer an electronic copy)  
*and/or*
3. UoM Communications Contact (see below; this maybe your supervisor)  
*and/or*
4. Work Area Safety Notice board

Your supervisor or communications contact may choose to post their copy of your field work documentation on your Work Area Safety Noticeboard or equivalent. This is a good idea so other colleagues also know who is where in the field and when they're due back.

When field trip participants return, one copy of all fieldwork documentation needs to be stored in the work area safety folder.

### Risk Management online training

This training is compulsory for anyone working in a laboratory or undertaking fieldwork. The training accreditation lasts 3 years, following which time you will only be required to undertake a short refresher course. The course can be accessed via [Themis](#) and [UoM Safety website](#). Always keep a copy of your training certificate upon completion.

If you are not sure whether you have previously completed Risk Management training or if your training has expired, check your Themis Learning History or contact your local EHS Coordinator.

### Field Work Risk Assessment

It is essential that the [Field Work Risk Assessment](#) form is completed prior to heading out into the field. The form must be signed and dated by the:

- Person Responsible for implementing the controls (usually Field trip leader)
- Management representative (your supervisor)
- HRS/employee representative (only required if applicable)
- Field Work Participants (students on excursions do not need to sign but must provide contact details for the Field Work Plan)

A good time to get everyone to sign the forms is at your pre-departure briefing. If you are unable to get people to sign the form, type in their name and the date is when you sent them an electronic copy of the form.

See the example [Field Work Risk Assessment – Bush Walking](#) and [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#) for help filling in the form.

### **Field Work Plan**

The [Field Work Plan](#) includes participants list, itinerary and communications plan. A communication plan is a vital part of the Field Work Plan. Prior to departing it should be arranged who will be your Communications Contact at UoM and when you will contact them. Your UoM Communications Contact should also be given copies of your Field Work Risk Assessment and Plan so that they know when to expect to hear from you. If you fail to contact them as per your communication plan, emergency search and rescue services may be engaged.

You will also need to check that there is [mobile phone reception](#) at your field site/s and on all transport route/s. If there is no reception or breaks in reception, you will need to take an alternative communication device/s (eg satellite phone, radio, emergency beacon). These can be booked and borrowed from the School via Outlook online bookings. Speak to your local EHS Coordinator or Reception for assistance.

### **Medical Fitness**

Staff and students must be 'reasonably fit' and declare any pre-existing medical conditions that may effect participation in the field. These should be reported to the field trip organiser/leader. Reporting may be done via the [Medical Questionnaire for Off-campus Activities](#) or the Excursion form (for undergraduate excursions), especially when field work activities that do not require authorisation through the travel portal eg by students on excursions and volunteer field workers.

See the section 4.10.1 Medical Preparedness in the [Fieldwork OHS Guidelines](#).

### **Volunteers**

Volunteer Field Assistants must be included in all fieldwork risk assessments, pre-departure briefings and should also complete a [Medical Questionnaire for Off-campus Activities](#). They must be registered via the Volunteer Registration form to be covered by University insurance. If they need to drive a vehicle while on the field trip they must also complete the Vehicle Smart Fleet registration prior to departing on the field trip.

### **Driving and Vehicles**

Vehicles are managed through "Smartfleet Online Pool Car Booking System" and a Smartfleet Account is required to use the vehicles. To register with Smartfleet provide a copy of your driver's license and completed registration forms to [Jess Salvador](#) (x59973, [jessica.salvador@unimelb.edu.au](mailto:jessica.salvador@unimelb.edu.au)).

Vehicles can also be hired through AVIS. See [Third-party Vehicle Bookings](#) for further information.

If your fieldwork requires off-road or four-wheel driving you should undertake specific Off-road or Four Wheel Driver training prior to the field trip. See your local EHS Coordinator to organize this.

People wishing to take their own vehicles on field trips should note that University insurance does not cover privately owned vehicles on field trips. See [UoM Insurance information](#) for more information.

### **First Aid**

At least one person on each excursion/field trip should have first aid training. The first aider requirements increase with increase in the number of trip participants. Refer to the [Fieldwork OHS Guidelines](#) for recommendations.

There are several small Hikers First Aid Kits and large First Aid Kits available for using in the field. These can be booked and borrowed from the School via Outlook online bookings. Speak to your local EHS Coordinator or Reception for assistance.

### **Registering Travel**

Registering proposed international travel is essential for the University to keep track of personnel around the world. When students register their travel plans they can opt to take up the University's free student travel insurance. This travel insurance is only relevant for people using air travel, either interstate and/or internationally. There is no need to register travel within Australia if you are only travelling by road and/or boat. The UoM Insurance Office has a suite of information regarding the [UoM travel insurance](#) procedures and policies.

Students on local excursions are automatically covered by insurance if the excursion is a study requirement.

Postgraduate students flying to interstate and international field sites need to register their intent to travel on the [Online Student Travel Registration](#). This travel request must be approved **before departure** to receive travel insurance.

Staff automatically receive travel insurance for authorized University business, regardless of whether they have logged their travel on the Travel Portal prior to departure.

### **Field Work Briefing**

The Field Work Risk Assessment and Field Work Plan are discussed during a Pre-departure Briefing (meeting). What to discuss in your pre-departure meeting is detailed in the [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#). If you are unable to get all participants together for a pre-departure meeting, send the documents out via email and highlight the most important points.

### **Useful links**

- [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#)
- [Field Work Risk Assessment](#)
- [Field Work Plan](#)
- [Example Field Work Risk Assessment – Bush Walking](#)
- [Medical Questionnaire for Off-campus Activities](#)
- [UoM Travel Insurance](#)
- Weather & rain radar - [Bureau of Meteorology](#)
- Current fires, fire ratings/restrictions, etc - [Country Fire Authority \(CFA\)](#)
- Current fires and other emergencies – [VicEmergency](#)
- [Mobile phone coverage - Telstra](#)

## Useful Phone Apps

- Current & predicted weather – eg '**WeatherZone**' (free)
- Rain radar – eg '**Oz Radar Lite**' app (free)
- Current fires & incidents - '**FireReady**' app (free)
- Emergency contact numbers & GPS of your exact location - **Emergency+** app (free)

## Other Resources

### Emergency Contact Telephone Numbers in Victoria

Obtain other emergency contact details/numbers if traveling outside of Victoria.

Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
Poisons Information	13 11 26
Police Search and Rescue Squad - Melbourne	9537 1006
- Outside Metropolitan area (Freecall)	1800 815 257
Water Police / Rescue Coordination Centre	9534 7361
Victorian State Emergency Services (SES)	13 25 00
VicRoads Traffic Hazards	13 11 70
Melbourne University Security	8344 6666