

School of BioSciences

Field Work Safety Requirements

It is often fun and interesting to get out into the field, but 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 Health & Safety: [Travel and Off-Campus Work](#) website provides much of the information you will need regarding fieldwork. The UoM [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#) is a detailed booklet covering issues you should consider.

Basic Field Work Rules:

- **Do not go on field work alone!**
- **NO field work on CODE RED fire danger days.**
- **Your supervisor needs to know where you are at all times.**
- **In case of an emergency, you need to be able to raise the alarm at all times
-> Uni emergency contact person.**

Procedure

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

- [Roles & Responsibilities 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) /[UniTravel](#) (staff)
- Field Work Equipment/Actions 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 (hard copy)
 2. Supervisor (may prefer an electronic copy)
- and/or**
3. UoM Communications Contact (see below; this may be 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.

Roles & Responsibilities online training

Roles & Responsibilities online training now includes Risk Management which is compulsory for anyone working in a laboratory or undertaking fieldwork. The training accreditation lasts 3 years.

Roles & Responsibilities Access:

Staff - [TrainMe](#).

Students - [UoM Health & Safety: Training](#).

Always keep a paper or electronic 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 a [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 should have access to the Field Work Risk Assessment and 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 when you send them an electronic copy of the form.

Merely getting to and from sites can itself pose dangers, especially if you are driving on unfamiliar roads, you are new to driving on the left-hand side of the road or you are an **inexperienced driver**. **Be sure to include “Vehicle breakdown” and “Vehicle accident” in your Field Work Risk Assessment** and consider accidents with wildlife on the roads. See Safety Alert: Be mindful of wildlife while driving.

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

If your field work raw risk score is medium or higher, you will also need to complete a Field Work Plan.

Low Risk Field Work

If the Field Work Risk Assessment deems the field work to be of low risk (raw risk), a Field Work Plan is not required. This situation would generally only include short or day trips to metropolitan or urban parks and gardens to observe, record or collect non-hazardous samples. In such circumstances the field site must have mobile phone coverage and a mobile phone must be taken, plus at least one participant must have first aid training. In lieu of a FW Plan, the field trip leader must inform their supervisor of the participants, contact details, itinerary and communication arrangements prior to undertaking the fieldwork and report-in upon return.

Field Work Plan

The [Field Work Plan](#) includes a participant list with contact details, an itinerary and a communication plan.

UoM Communications Contact

Prior to departing you should enlist a UoM employee to be your Communications Contact. This is the person you report in to at regular intervals to confirm that all is ok. Your UoM

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Communications Contact should be given copies of your Field Work Risk Assessment and Plan so that they know when and how 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.

Communication Devices

Before venturing off campus 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 mobile reception or breaks in reception, you will need to take an alternative communication device/s (eg mobile phone with Telstra coverage, satellite phone, inReach satellite communicator). These can be booked and borrowed from the School via Outlook online bookings. Speak to your local EHS Coordinator or Reception for assistance.

Emergency Plan

Person mobile number should be noted in the participants section of the Plan but include contact numbers of other communication devices you have with you such as the satellite phone number in the Emergency Plan section.

Under local emergency services include contact numbers for locals who would easily be able to check on you if communication is lost eg Ranger, accommodation manger, collaborative researchers, etc.

Medical Fitness

Staff and students must be 'reasonably fit' and declare any pre-existing medical conditions that may effect participation in the field prior to going into 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 Excursion form (undergraduate student on excursions only), or Volunteer Registration form (volunteers only).

See the section 4.10.1 Medical Preparedness page 22 in the [Field Work 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 Smart Fleet Vehicle 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).**

If you have an accident or breakdown in a University vehicle whilst on a work trip, SmartFleet will provide roadside assistance. Call 1300 555 6656.

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

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.

Off Road Driving

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 drip. See your local EHS Coordinator to organize this.

BioSciences has numerous pieces of off road equipment available for use eg hand puller, high lift jack, recovery kit, winch. You will be taught how and when to use this equipment in the 4WD course. These can be booked and borrowed from the School via Outlook online bookings. Speak to your local EHS Coordinator or Reception for assistance.

First Aid

At least one person on each excursion/field trip should have first aid training. The first aider requirements increase with increase in number of participants. Refer to the [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#) p 24-25 for recommendations.

There are small Hikers First Aid Kits, large First Aid Kits, snake bite first aid kits and a portable defibrillator 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 travelling by road. 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 and Honours 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, Field Work Plan and any other relevant safety matters are discussed during a Pre-departure Briefing (meeting). What to discuss in your pre-departure meeting is detailed in the [Field Work OHS Guidelines](#) page 6. 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 within the text of the email.

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](#)

Useful Phone Apps

- Current & predicted weather – eg **'BOM'** (free)



- Rain radar – eg ‘**Oz Radar Lite**’ app (free)
- Current fires & incidents - ‘VicEmergency’ app (free)
- Emergency contact numbers & GPS of your exact location - Emergency+ app (free)

Other Resources

Contact Telephone Numbers and Websites in Victoria

Police, Fire, Ambulance	000
SmartFleet Roadside assistance	1300 555 665
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
Parks Victoria	13 19 63 www.parkweb.vic.gov.au
Weather & rain radar (Bureau of Meteorology)	http://www.bom.gov.au
Current fires, fire ratings/restrictions (Country Fire Authority (CFA))	http://www.cfa.vic.gov.au
Current fires and other emergencies (VicEmergency)	http://emergency.vic.gov.au/respond
Mobile phone coverage (Telstra)	https://www.telstra.com.au/coverage-networks/our-coverage
Snow Safe	http://www.snowsafesafe.org.au/
Bushwalking Victoria information	http://www.bushwalkingvictoria.org.au
Four Wheel Drive Victoria	www.4wdvictoria.org.au
Trip Intentions	www.tripintentions.org

Safety Alert: Be mindful of wildlife while driving 23/2/2017

This week an international student hit a kangaroo while on a fieldtrip. Luckily the student is ok, but the car was a write off and the roo was unfortunately killed.

RACV received over 5300 animal collision claims in 2016, 82% of which involved kangaroos. Below is a list of tips to help you avoid hitting wildlife while driving:

- **Avoid driving at dusk, dawn and night if you can** (approx. 6pm – 6am) as native animals are more active at these times.
- **Be alert** and avoid driver fatigue – concentrate on the road ahead as well as the sides; look for animal eye-shine in your headlights; take breaks; swap drivers; reduce fieldtrip activities to 8hrs per day, including driving.
- **Drive slowly** (eg 80km/h in a 100km/h zone), especially if you are driving through bush, over hills or around bends, as these restrict distance and side views.
- Use high beam lights if you have to drive at night.
- If you have cruise control use it and keep your foot near the break.
- Be mindful of road signs warning of animals on roads.
- Take note of dead wildlife along roadsides as this indicates animals move through the area.
- Predict animal behaviour to prevent accidents:
 - kangaroos move around in groups, if you see one cross the road ahead, there are likely to be more;
 - kangaroos and wallabies often jump sideways, not just straight ahead and they might

move along the road for a long distance;

- herbivores eat green grass along roadsides esp. in summer/autumn;
- animals can be stunned by vehicle lights and may stop in the middle of the road.
- If you need to break suddenly, stop in a straight line, even if this means hitting an animal.
- Report injured native wildlife by phoning Wildlife Victoria 1300 094 535.

Consider the points above when planning your itinerary and completing your Fieldwork Risk Assessment and Fieldwork Plan.

Version tracking

Date	Version Number	Author	Changes made
7 Dec 2017	1.1	N.Middleton	Remove personal locator beacon Add Snake bite kit info Add include sat phone number in Emergency Plan Add local contacts in Emergency Plan Check hyperlinks