



Fieldwork Health and Safety

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Introduction

This procedure outlines requirements and practices for the health and safety management of staff, students and volunteers who participate in University teaching and research field activities including travel to and from a destination off campus.

Field activities vary in their nature and duration and may include,

- excursion
- field trips
- day trips
- field camps
- placements
- practical work
- tours
- work experience.

The procedure does not apply to work experience programs carried out on facilities that are not owned or managed by the University. Organisers of such activities should ensure that the participating external organisation has appropriate mechanisms for managing health and safety.

Roles and Responsibilities

Line Managers are responsible for:

- ensuring a system is in place for assessment, approval and review of all field activities.
- approving (signing off) health and safety arrangements for field activities

Supervisors are responsible for:

- effectively managing field activities
- planning field activities and establishing procedures for supervision and control before the commencement of the field activity
- ensuring staff, students and volunteers are consulted in relation to the health and safety arrangements and procedures to be followed in relation to a particular field activity.

Staff, Students, Volunteers are responsible for:

- not placing themselves or others at risk of injury during a field activity
- reporting hazards associated with field activities and consulting with Line Managers and Supervisors in relation to appropriate risk control measures
- reporting every incident and injury irrespective of its seriousness to the relevant Line Manager or field activity Supervisor.

Procedure

Duty of Care

The OHS&W Act (1986) places an obligation on an employer to ensure the health and safety of third parties (students, visitors, volunteers etc). The OHSW legislation requires a systematic approach to planning and organising field activities and potential hazards associated with field activities.

Planning

All field activities shall be a formal planned process.

Staff, students and volunteers involved in field activities shall be consulted in relation to the activity and provided with information on particular hazardous work activities or conditions.



Planning shall be carried out with consideration for the foreseeable hazards involving participant exposure. Field activity planning shall be completed using OHSW Procedure – Hazard Management and appropriate controls developed to minimise risk to participants.

Consideration shall be given, for example, to:

- transport arrangements
- condition and maintenance of vehicles, trailers
- Legal requirements for vehicles & trailers, towbars
- written itineraries & maps
- briefing sessions in advance of the field trip
- Personal Protective Equipment
- catering arrangements
- relevant licenses and permits
- accommodation
- clothing relevant to conditions
- integrity of equipment
- consultation arrangements with the field party
- communication systems (may require satellite phone in remote areas)
- personal needs list
- relevant vaccinations
- fire fighting equipment
- motor vehicle spare parts
- relevant University OHSW Procedures
- student or volunteer responsibilities
- provision of first aid
- the hazards associated with the field activity
- dangerous substances, containers, storage and use (eg petrol, LP Gas)
- procedure on drugs and alcohol
- emergency procedures (eg medical, fire, evacuation)
- weather forecasts and conditions
- advising relevant authorities, local Police or the Park Ranger, Country Fire Service (CFS) Regional Officer, Department of Primary Industries and Resources or Department of Environment and Heritage of the dates for planned activities
- emergency response procedures
- special precautions to ensure the health and safety of those involved in activities that may include, boating, cliff walking, scuba diving, climbing, snorkelling, use of high voltage equipment, bush walking, tractor driving, explosives handling and geological and mining activities, or other activities considered may expose people to medium to high risk.

Fieldwork Health and Safety Checklist

The Field Health and safety Checklist [OHSW 73](#) is to be used to assist with planning and organising field activities.

The Field Health and Safety Checklist is to be used to assist with the identification of potential hazards and circumstances that may require further enquiry and analysis during the planning of field activities.

Information Notices

Information notices ([OHSW 71](#) and [OHSW 72](#)) are one of the most important mechanisms for ensuring all relevant health and safety information is passed on to participants.

They should:

- be developed for all types of field activity and not restricted to those involving undergraduate students.
- incorporate a form (see example form [OHSW 39](#)) that the student/volunteer signs and returns to acknowledge receipt of this information. The form could also be used as a consent form if students/volunteer are under 18 years of age and include information provided by the student on medical conditions, medication, or special dietary needs. A contact person in case of ill health or injury should also be obtained.

University By-law 7.1 allows for the removal of a student who is disrupting a class, and may be applied during any University field activity. Schools must make it clear to students that this option



is available to the field supervisor, particularly where there is a disruption which affects the health and safety of the student or others.

The University recognises that non-University staff are invited on, and participate in, field activities. The relevant Line Manager shall authorise this involvement, and the supervisor-in-charge must ensure that non-University staff are made aware of the hazards associated with the field activity and their responsibilities. The names of non-University staff involved in field activities must be included in documentation relating to the activity.

Accidents / Incidents

The University does not insure volunteers against accident or injury when participating in field activities. Volunteers must be made aware of this and informed of their duty of care obligations.

As a requirement of regulations under the OHS&W Act (1986) every accident, incident or injury to University staff, students, visitors, and voluntary helpers must be reported, irrespective of its seriousness, using online [OHSW Hazard or Incident Report](#).

Document/Forms

[OHSW 39 – Fieldwork Health and Safety Acknowledgment](#)
[OHSW 71 - Fieldwork Health and Safety Information](#)
[OHSW 72 - Fieldwork Health and Safety Information Notice](#)
[OHSW 73 – Fieldwork Health and Safety Checklist](#)

References

[University OHSW&IM Policy](#)
[University OHSW Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 158kb\)](#)
[University Injury Management Strategic Plan 2009 - 2011 \(PDF 85kb\)](#)
[OHSW & Injury Management System \(PDF 128kb\)](#)
[University OHSW Procedure – Working Alone](#)
[Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Act, 1986](#)
[Occupational Health, Safety & Welfare Regulations, 2010](#)
[OHSW Procedure Hazard Management](#)

Further Assistance

Line Management and staff may seek further advice regarding OHSW field activities from OHSW & IM Services 8302 1635.