



FIELD ACTIVITY POLICY

OVERVIEW

The University of Tasmania is committed to continuously improving the management and standards of Occupational Health and Safety. This extends to minimising the risks associated with field activities. This Policy outlines information for employees involved in field activities as well as providing a checklist which identifies hazards that need to be considered prior to undertaking an off-campus activity.

DEFINITIONS

Accountable Person:

An individual, who assumes responsibility for the health and welfare of any other person in a workplace by providing instruction, direction, assistance, advice or service, is deemed an Accountable Person in accordance with the *Workplace Health & Safety Regulations 1998*. All management and supervisory staff (which includes those with responsibility for students) are therefore considered "Accountable Persons".

Employee:

For the purposes of this Policy, employee means any staff member, and any student or visitor undertaking field activities.

Field Activities:

Field activities and field work are defined as any work/research/study/activity approved by a School/Section's Responsible Officer and undertaken by employees, at an off campus, urban, rural, freshwater or marine location. A field activity does not include inter-campus travel, meetings off-site or attendance at conferences.

Responsible Officer:

Deans, Heads of Division, Heads of School and Administrative Sections have been designated as Responsible Officers under the *Workplace Health & Safety Act 1995*.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Accountable Persons:

Ensure that employees are able to undertake field activities safely by implementing this policy. Where an employee is required to supervise field work, the Accountable Person is responsible for ensuring that delegated safety responsibilities are fulfilled and that appropriate supervision is provided. Accountable persons must also ensure that appropriate records relating to field activities are kept.

Employees:

Ensure that prior to undertaking a field activity, full disclosure is made on the Medical Disclosure and Authorisation Form (Appendix 1). Whilst undertaking any field activity, employees are required to do so in a manner which does not adversely affect their own health and safety, or that of others, by following this Policy. They must immediately report to the Accountable Person any matter which may affect their own or others' health and safety.

Responsible Officers:

Ensure that where field trips are undertaken that this policy is implemented within their area of responsibility. Ensure that School/Section specific guidelines are developed where necessary, and that they are consistent with the information contained in this document.

BACKGROUND

The *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* requires that the University ensure as far as is reasonably practicable, that all persons while at work are safe from injury and risks to health, by providing them with a safe working environment and safe systems of work.

As employees are often required to undertake activities “in the field”, involving themselves in research, teaching or instruction at locations off campus, the University recognises that “at work” must also extend to sites of University organised field activities.

This policy does not apply to student work experience or clinical placements. Organisers of these programs should ensure prior to placement that the host facility has appropriate mechanisms for managing health and safety.

PROCEDURE

With regard to all field activities, no matter how routine or complex, each Accountable Person is required to plan for, (which includes carrying out a risk assessment), and have the field activity authorised by their Responsible Officer.

Risk assessment is a structured process designed to assist in the identification, analysis and control of foreseeable risks. The University’s Project/Task Risk Assessment and Control Procedure can be utilised for developing School/Section specific risk assessments.

As field activities are performed off campus, part of the risk assessment needs to include consideration of how services which are normally available, can be provided. This may include first aid, security, communications, assistance or advice. It is also necessary to determine whether any person undertaking the field activity has a medical condition or requires medication and whether or not this trip poses any additional risks for them or others involved. A sample Medical Disclosure and Authorisation Form is attached as Appendix 1. It is by no means exhaustive and may well require additional information to be included which relates to the specific circumstances associated with a particular field activity. The University is committed to anti-discrimination practices and will provide reasonable accommodation to allow individuals to participate in field activities where it does not compromise safety requirements.

Accountable persons may elect to request that employees complete this form on commencement of employment/study providing it is updated annually, or alternatively they may elect to ask that this form be completed prior to each field activity. If the form is completed annually, employees must be advised that they are responsible for alerting the Accountable Person to any changes in their medical/other conditions throughout the year. Accountable persons are responsible for ensuring that the information contained in the Medical Disclosure and Authorisation Form is readily available to emergency medical personnel whilst field activities are undertaken. Where an employee discloses details of medication or a physical condition and the Accountable Person is unclear as to whether reasonable accommodation can or should be made, this should be referred to the OH&S Unit.

The risk assessment should also determine what permits/licenses, if any, are required for the field activity or any equipment to be used. It should also consider whether or not there is any potential for environmental damage resultant of the activities performed as part of the field activity. An example of a Field Trip Hazard Identification Checklist is contained in Appendix 2. This may need to be developed further to cater for the specific requirements of each proposed field activity.

The risk assessment must identify the minimum, and in some instances, maximum numbers required to undertake the field activity safely. If a person is permitted to work alone, it must outline what special conditions, if any, need apply.

A generic risk assessment of what becomes a routine field activity carried out frequently, may be appropriate provided that each time such a field activity is planned, a record is kept stating that the existing process applies and that there are no foreseeable changes to the previous assessment. If changes are identified, a new or modified assessment will need to be undertaken.

All field activities must be authorised by the Responsible Officer.

REFERENCES

The following legislative provisions have guided the development of this Policy:

- *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995*
- *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998*

Approved by OH&S Committee : 21st September, 1999

Disclaimer

This Policy was designed for use within the University of Tasmania. The University makes no guarantee and assumes no responsibility as to the absolute correctness for all circumstances or for the adaptation outside the University of Tasmania environment

APPENDIX 1 MEDICAL DISCLOSURE AND AUTHORISATION FORM

The University is committed to continuously improving the management and standards of occupational health and safety and in so doing we strive to protect the health and safety of our employees, students, contractors and visitors.

In order to meet our duty of care obligations all employees, students, contractors and visitors who intend to undertake field activities must complete the following information.

The University is committed to anti-discrimination practices and will provide reasonable accommodation to allow individuals to participate in field activities where it does not compromise safety requirements.

TO BE COMPLETED BY PARTICIPANT - PLEASE PRINT IN BLOCK LETTERS

School/Section		
Participant	Surname	Given Names / Preferred Name
Proposed Field Activity		
Residential Address		
Personal Details	Date of Birth:	Medicare Number:
Emergency Contact Details	Contact Person Name: Relationship to Contact: Phone: Work: Home: Mobile:	Alternative Contact Name: Relationship to Contact: Phone: Work: Home: Mobile:
Known allergies		
Known Medical, Physical conditions		
Dietary or religious requirements		
Current Medication and dosage		
Medical Practitioner	Name of Doctor:	Phone No:

Declaration

I (full name) _____ declare that I have read this Form and that I have completed it to the best of my knowledge and ability, disclosing all relevant facts as they are known to me. I also undertake to advise my Field Activity Supervisor/Course Coordinator should my circumstances change during my employment/study/contract that would change the answers provided above.

I authorise the Supervisor in charge of the field activity to consent to my receiving medical or surgical treatment as may be deemed necessary in the event that I am unable to communicate.

Signature

Name in Print

Date

APPENDIX 2 FIELD TRIP HAZARD IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

The following checklist of hazards and other items should be considered when planning field work.

<p>Fieldwork party</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • size <input type="checkbox"/> • composition <input type="checkbox"/> • novice / experienced <input type="checkbox"/> • fitness <input type="checkbox"/> • medical conditions <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Clothing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sun hat <input type="checkbox"/> • winter clothing (all year) <input type="checkbox"/> • trousers/overalls <input type="checkbox"/> • appropriate footwear <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fieldwork activities at site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban survey <input type="checkbox"/> • bushwalking traverse on foot <input type="checkbox"/> • abseiling <input type="checkbox"/> • rock / tree climbing <input type="checkbox"/> • working at height <input type="checkbox"/> • sample collecting <input type="checkbox"/> • underground work / caving <input type="checkbox"/> • diving <input type="checkbox"/> (refer UTAS Diving Operations Manual) • boating <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Personal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sunburn <input type="checkbox"/> • heat stress <input type="checkbox"/> • cold stress <input type="checkbox"/> • manual handling, lifting <input type="checkbox"/> • striking and grasping <input type="checkbox"/> • slips and trips <input type="checkbox"/> • mental stress <input type="checkbox"/> • personal security and safety <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Etiquette requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bush etiquette <input type="checkbox"/> • collecting permits <input type="checkbox"/> • permission to enter private land <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>First aid requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • first aider in the group <input type="checkbox"/> • first aid kit in transport <input type="checkbox"/> • portable first aid kit <input type="checkbox"/> (for walking trips away from base) • additional items required <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fauna & Flora</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • stinging animals (terrestrial and marine) <input type="checkbox"/> • dangerous marine animals <input type="checkbox"/> • stock (cattle etc) <input type="checkbox"/> • snakes <input type="checkbox"/> • bats (vaccinations) <input type="checkbox"/> • spiders, ticks, leeches etc <input type="checkbox"/> • allergens <input type="checkbox"/> • handling of small animals <input type="checkbox"/> • handling of large animals <input type="checkbox"/> • harmful plant contacts (sap, stinging hairs etc) <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Camp requirements</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • potable water and food <input type="checkbox"/> • cooking facilities <input type="checkbox"/> • LP gas arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> • electrical power failures <input type="checkbox"/> • lighting <input type="checkbox"/> • noise <input type="checkbox"/> • privacy <input type="checkbox"/> • accommodation facilities <input type="checkbox"/> • hygiene/ablution arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> • smoking/alcohol consumption <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Camp site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • terrain <input type="checkbox"/> • falling tree branches <input type="checkbox"/> • flash flooding <input type="checkbox"/> • safe from wildlife/stock <input type="checkbox"/> • safe from vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> • secure from theft <input type="checkbox"/> • harassment, hostile persons <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Personal protection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gloves <input type="checkbox"/> • goggles <input type="checkbox"/> • face masks <input type="checkbox"/> • respirator <input type="checkbox"/> • harness <input type="checkbox"/> • hard hat <input type="checkbox"/>

APPENDIX 2
FIELD TRIP HAZARD IDENTIFICATION CHECKLIST

(continued)

The following checklist of hazards and other items should be considered when planning field work.

<p>Transport</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> • boats <input type="checkbox"/> • aircraft <input type="checkbox"/> • driver licensing <input type="checkbox"/> • driver training <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Navigation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • route selection <input type="checkbox"/> • location determination <input type="checkbox"/> • direction determination <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • between participants <input type="checkbox"/> • with locals <input type="checkbox"/> • with authorised officer <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Tides and Weather</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tide data <input type="checkbox"/> • Met. bureau forecasts <input type="checkbox"/> • radio broadcasts <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fire risks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • extinguisher <input type="checkbox"/> • campfires <input type="checkbox"/> • combustibles <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Chemicals/Hazardous Substances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • carcinogens, genotoxins (mutagens, teratogens) <input type="checkbox"/> • sensitising agents <input type="checkbox"/> • corrosive agents <input type="checkbox"/> • irritants <input type="checkbox"/> • toxic harmful substances (poisons) <input type="checkbox"/> • solvents <input type="checkbox"/> • MSDS available <input type="checkbox"/> • dangerous goods transport <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Urban</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • urban dogs <input type="checkbox"/> • hostile or violent persons <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Overseas fieldwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disease <input type="checkbox"/> • vaccinations <input type="checkbox"/> • political climate <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Mechanical hazards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • vehicles <input type="checkbox"/> • machinery/moving equipment <input type="checkbox"/> • vibration <input type="checkbox"/> • pressure equipment <input type="checkbox"/> • generation of dust <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Radiation hazards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ionising - sealed / unsealed sources <input type="checkbox"/> • laser <input type="checkbox"/> • radiofrequency <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Fire and Explosion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • flammable substances <input type="checkbox"/> • explosives <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Thermal hazards</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cryogenic fluids <input type="checkbox"/> • hypothermia <input type="checkbox"/> • heatstroke <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Electrical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • high voltage equipment e. g electrofisher <input type="checkbox"/> • 240v electrical equipment <input type="checkbox"/> 	<p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • specify