

**Faculty of Science, University of New Brunswick**  
**Safety Policy for Academic and Research Field Work**  
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## **INTRODUCTION**

All faculty, students, and staff members participating in field work for teaching or research purposes must adhere to this policy. The term "field work" is to be interpreted broadly and will include, for example, work at field stations and aboard ships. It also includes components of student laboratories that take place outdoors and off-campus.

This policy does not attempt to cover every possible field situation. It is the responsibility of the person-in-charge to consider appropriate training, conduct and equipment, and some groups may wish to develop supplemental documents and/or policies for some activities.

## **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

Every field trip will be organized and supervised by a designated person-in-charge, and responsibility must be delegated if the person-in-charge is absent, even briefly. The person-in-charge will normally be a faculty member, postdoc, or full-time technician; if not, a member of one of those groups will co-sign the fieldwork planning record (see below)<sup>1</sup>.

It is the responsibility of the person-in-charge to take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- (1) an assessment of known and potential risks has been conducted;
- (2) each participant is informed of known risks and of physical requirements of the fieldwork;
- (3) the fieldwork is conducted safely, including availability of first aid kits, MSDS sheets, determination of appropriate safety equipment and clothing and instruction of participants in use and maintenance of these;
- (4) a fieldwork planning record is completed and left with the relevant department and check-in contact person before departure;
- (5) the field team carries contact information for the check-in contact and for relevant local authorities, and when possible, equipment to contact them (cell/satellite phone, etc.);
- (6) participants have provided emergency contact information and information about any relevant health issues (if not already on file with the department).

## **FIELDWORK PLANNING RECORD (FPR)**

The person-in-charge will complete a Fieldwork Planning Record ("FPR", appendix to this policy), and submit it to the Departmental Office before departure. A check-in contact not participating in the fieldwork will be designated for notification when fieldwork is completed, and will receive a copy of the FPR before departure.

When frequent, brief trips to a single site or small area are envisioned, an open-ended FPR may be left on file. In this case, the person-in-charge will notify (and receive acknowledgement from) the check-in contact before each trip.

This policy recognizes that researchers traveling for other reasons sometimes make unplanned stops at potential field sites for exploratory purposes. In such situations, researchers will take all reasonable safety precautions (for example, limiting solo travel far from the stopped vehicle, carrying first-aid materials and cell phone, etc.). Researchers will work to minimize the frequency and duration of such unplanned field activities.

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<sup>1</sup> In some circumstances it may be appropriate for a graduate student to be designated to sign FPRs without a cosignatory. The student's supervisor may recommend such designation for approval by the Director of Graduate Studies. The written recommendation should explain why designation is necessary and appropriate and stipulate any limitations (term, travel area, etc.). DOGS will communicate approval to student, supervisor, and Chair.

## **VEHICLES**

The person-in-charge will take reasonable steps to ensure that vehicles are appropriate for the conditions in which they are to be used, appropriately licensed, and in good working order. All drivers will operate vehicles safely. This policy applies regardless of whether vehicles are UNB-owned, rental, or personally owned.

## **BOATS/AIRCRAFT**

All use of watercraft and aircraft will conform with applicable regulations<sup>2</sup>. In particular, watercraft will be licensed and operators have Operator Cards or licenses as required. The person-in-charge will ensure that all safety precautions are taken and that boats or aircraft are in good repair and carry legally required safety equipment. It is expected that the master of a vessel or aircraft will inform all passengers and users of safe operating practices and what procedures to follow in the case of an accident.

## **WILDERNESS, REMOTE OR HAZARDOUS AREAS**

In the case of fieldwork in remote areas where there is limited access to medical support, at least one participant should be trained in first aid and CPR. The person-in-charge should also consider:

- (1) providing a communication link to a central station;
- (2) conducting area familiarization trips before work has started;
- (3) leaving details of travel plans with local authorities before leaving;
- (4) having a procedure for contacting local authorities to initiate a search for missing people.

## **FOREIGN TRAVEL**

For work undertaken outside Canada, the person-in-charge shall inform participants of the need to consult the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT) website<sup>3</sup> for Travel Reports and Warnings and other information and advisories on safety and security, local laws and customs, entry requirements, health conditions, immunization recommendations and other important travel issues.

## **OTHER SAFETY POLICIES**

In addition to this policy, UNB safety policies (e.g., diving and boating<sup>4</sup>, incident/accident reporting<sup>5</sup>) shall apply during fieldwork. Departments may also develop supplemental policies to cover unit-specific field issues. Fieldwork at field stations and other installations with their own safety policies should adhere to those policies in addition to this policy; where multiple policies conflict, the person-in-charge will exercise reasonable judgment.

Some fieldwork by UNB personnel may also be covered by other, similar field safety policies (for instance, work under direction of federal government employees). In such a case, the person-in-charge will make a reasonable judgment and follow the most appropriate of the alternative safety policies.

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<sup>2</sup>Watercraft: <http://www.tc.gc.ca/eng/marinesafety/debs-obs-menu-1362.htm>

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.voyage.gc.ca/index-eng.asp>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.unb.ca/safety/handbook/waterpolicy.html>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.unb.ca/safety/handbook/accident.html>