



Fieldwork Safety Manual

A Guideline for Fieldwork Safety

2009

1.0 Introduction

The Fieldwork Safety Committee (FSC), appointed by the Executive Vice President and Provost and a sub-committee of the Senior Safety Oversight Committee, has prepared these guidelines to assist Texas A&M University faculty, staff and students in assessing and controlling risks associated with fieldwork. These guidelines should also assist colleges and departments in ensuring they have procedures in place for the Health and Safety of personnel involved in fieldwork.

Fieldwork is an important part of teaching and research at Texas A&M University. These guidelines are intended to help prepare for health and safety problems you might encounter when conducting fieldwork. Faculty, staff, and students should be properly trained, equipped, and prepared to assess and minimize risk and provide aid to themselves and their colleagues in case of an emergency.

These guidelines apply to all fieldwork activities and are a minimum a fieldwork activity should address.

2.0 Definitions

2.1 Fieldwork includes any work, study or research approved by Texas A&M University and conducted by faculty, staff or students at a site other than the Texas A&M University campus, Animal Science Teaching, Research, and Extension Center (ASTREC), Farm Services or the Riverside campus.

NOTE: Where work is being performed on a permanent basis at a remote location, this is taken to be their normal place of work and not fieldwork activities.

2.2 Remote fieldwork is defined both in terms of distance and inaccessibility and entails:

- Working more than three miles from a town, a house structure, or other facility with telephone or radio communication (even if personal communication equipment, e.g. cell phone, is carried);
- Working in areas where there is very little traffic, hills, mountains, dense timber or other topographic features would make it difficult to summon help, or if medical and other emergency support would be an hour or more away without a vehicle;
- Any work in rivers, on river banks, inland waterways, estuaries and ocean work sites.

2.3 Fieldwork leader is the person who has the authority to influence or direct the actions of students or employees involved in the activity.

2.4 Alternate fieldwork leader assists the fieldwork leader or acts as the fieldwork leader in their absence.

3.0 Fieldwork Approval

Fieldwork should have the prior approval of the Department Head.

The Fieldwork Safety Plan (Appendix 1) should be completed by the Fieldwork Leader or the Assistant Fieldwork Leader prior to any fieldwork. Department Heads should review and sign the fieldwork safety plan. A copy of the plan should be filed with the Department Head (or equivalent) and kept for one year after the end of the semester the fieldwork is completed.

Fieldwork that consists of multiple trips to the same location can be covered by a single Safety Plan. The Safety Plan should be revised when there is a change in the location or scope of the fieldwork or each semester.

4.0 Written Plan

Planning and preparation are the most important parts of your fieldwork trip. A written plan will assist both the fieldwork group and the responsible party within a department or college. A written plan should include the following:

4.1 Location and description of fieldwork – The specific location of where the fieldwork will take place along with the general nature of the activities involved in the fieldwork.

4.2 Emergency contacts – Local contacts are people at or near your fieldwork site who can reach you if necessary and who are familiar with your check-in and check-out arrangements. The local contact should also be informed of any medical conditions or allergies of the fieldworkers. It is recommended that fieldworkers also inform someone (i.e. police, sheriff, hotel employee, or local search and rescue personnel) about the daily fieldwork location and the approximate time of return and let that person know when they return each day. The local contact should be provided with contact information of who to contact if the fieldworkers do not return or report in within a predetermined length of time.

A home contact should be provided for each fieldworker to include the name and phone number of a family or friend in case the fieldworker is injured or becomes ill. Fieldworkers should check in regularly and should advise any changes in schedules or contact information.

4.3 Emergency procedures are plans written in advance with reference to emergency and evacuation information for the fieldwork location. The Fieldwork Leader is responsible for organizing emergency procedures and ensuring all members of the group are aware of the arrangements. Fieldwork will often take place in remote areas where contacting emergency personnel and evacuation in case of an emergency may be difficult. The most important part of an emergency plan is to have well defined communication links. Lines of communication must be established prior to fieldwork to ensure that communication within the group, to the University, and to local emergency services is maintained at all times. Good communication allows fieldworkers to be forewarned of dangers as well as calling for help in an emergency. Communication arrangements can include:

- Verify that your communication device (i.e. cell phone, radio, etc) functions at the site of work
- Frequency of contact
- Roll call of participants within the group
- Always carry a photo identification in case of an accident or injury

4.4 The fieldwork leader or someone within the fieldwork group is encouraged to have up to date training in First Aid and Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR).

4.5 A Risk Assessment should be performed to identify risks associated with fieldwork activities and the environment surrounding the fieldwork activities. It is important to be familiar with the surroundings such as potentially hazardous plants, animals, terrain, and weather conditions. Appendix 2 shows an example of a risk assessment.

NOTE: If you are traveling outside the country, you must contact the University's International Programs Office for specifics about international travel.

5.0 It is important that each fieldwork member is briefed about safety and that training has been provided where necessary prior to any fieldwork activity. Any trainings and the acknowledgement by the fieldwork member should be documented.

APPENDIX A
Fieldwork Safety Plan Document



Texas A&M University
Fieldwork Safety Plan

Acknowledgement of Fieldwork Members:			
I acknowledge that I have reviewed Texas A&M University's Fieldwork Safety Guidelines and: <i>(Include a separate sheet if necessary).</i>			
a) I have been fully informed of the risks of the fieldwork and I accept them;			
b) I have reviewed and will comply with the established emergency procedures;			
c) I have received all the prescribed immunizations; and			
d) I am in a satisfactory health to participate in the fieldwork.			
Name	UIN	Signature	Date
Signature of Fieldwork Leader (PI)			
I acknowledge that this Fieldwork Safety Plan was prepared keeping with the minimum requirements of the Texas A&M University Fieldwork Safety Guidelines:			
Name (print)		Signature	Date
Name (print)		Signature	Date
Signature of Department Head			
Name (print)		Signature	Date



Texas A&M University
Fieldwork Safety Plan

This form should be used by the Fieldwork Leader (e.g. PI) to assist with the development of a Fieldwork Safety Plan. This completed Safety Plan, or one of equal content, shall be filed with the Department Head (or equivalent) prior to any fieldwork travel. Multiple trips to the same location can be covered by a single Safety Plan. The safety Plan should be revised when there is a change in the location or scope of the fieldwork or each semester.

Department:	Fieldwork Leader (e.g. PI)
Phone Number:	E-mail Address
Date of Departure:	Date of Return:
Location of Fieldwork	
Country: _____	
Geographical Site: _____	
Nearest Community: _____ (Name, Distance from Geographical Site)	
Nearest Emergency Services: _____ (Location, Distance from Geographical Site)	
Description of Fieldwork:	
Emergency Contacts:	
Fieldwork Leader:	University Contact:
Name _____ Phone _____	Name _____ Phone _____
Alternate Fieldwork Leader:	University Contact:
Name _____ Phone _____	Name _____ Phone _____

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Texas A&M University
Fieldwork Safety Plan

Emergency Procedures: Emergency procedures are plans written in advance with reference to emergency and evacuation information for the fieldwork location. Communication is vital in an emergency situation and an essential component of an emergency and evacuation plan. *Include a separate sheet if necessary.*

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First Aid / CPR Training: (List all individuals who are trained in First Aid and CPR including the type of training and expiration of training.)

Name	Type of Training	Expiration

Physical Demands:

<input type="checkbox"/> Diving	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme Heat	<input type="checkbox"/> Walking for long periods
<input type="checkbox"/> Climbing	<input type="checkbox"/> Extreme Cold	<input type="checkbox"/> Work at night
<input type="checkbox"/> High Altitude	<input type="checkbox"/> Manual Lifting	<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify)



Texas A&M University
Fieldwork Safety Plan

Risk Assessment: Identify risks associated with fieldwork activities or the environment surrounding fieldwork activities (e.g. violence, water, extreme heat or cold, wild animals, endemic disease, firearms, explosives, high altitudes, climbing, etc). Also list appropriate measures to be taken to reduce the risks.	
Risk	Preventative Measure
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	
6	
7	
8	
9	
10	
Travel Immunizations: (Please list required immunizations / prophylaxis according to physician recommendations).	

Appendix B
Example Risk Assessment

Texas A&M University
Fieldwork Safety Plan

Risk Assessment:

Identify risks associated with fieldwork activities or the environment surrounding fieldwork activities (e.g. violence, water, extreme heat or cold, wild animals, endemic disease, firearms, explosives, high altitudes, climbing, etc). Also list appropriate measures to be taken to reduce the risks.

Risk	Preventative Measure
1 Environmental conditions	Wear appropriate clothing for activities/weather. Wear appropriate footwear.
2 Getting hit by a vehicle on the side of a road	All fieldwork memebers shall wear reflective vest. Work as far away from the road as possible. Park vehicle well off the side of the road.
3 Snakes	Wear snake guards to protect against snake bites.
4 Car accident	Only workers with a valid drivers license shall be able to drive. Obey all traffic lawas. Do not drive if over tired.
5 Domestic animals	Ask permission to enter a landowners property.
6 Falling rocks	Minimize work spent at the base of a rock cliff, especiall in rainy conditions. All team members must wear hard hats near rocky areas.
7 Theft	Keep wallet in front pocket. Do not carry expensive belongings with you. Cary shoulder bags diagonally across body.
8 International Disease	Consult with a physician prior to trip. Obtain a vaccine if available.
9	
10	

Travel Immunizations: (Please list required immunizations / prophylaxis according to physician recommendations).