

Communications

Communication between field workers and the University is essential for safety reasons. The following recommendations may be appropriate for University-sanctioned field excursions:

- The Faculty/Principal Investigator and the expedition leader and/or field safety officer must evaluate the training, preparedness and survival skills of the field party and must be aware of any unique medical condition of each field worker (e.g. allergic reaction to insect stings, ailments, medications, circumstances that might cause onset of symptoms etc.). There must be a currently certified, qualified first aid practitioner appropriate to the risks and availability of medical assistance. Faculty/Principal Investigators must certify the training and fitness of their field workers and should consult EH&S about obtaining specific training for particular hazards (confined space, respiratory protection, etc.).
- Leave an itinerary with the Business Office in the department and those in the research group who may be remaining on campus, preferably including phone numbers and times when people may exchange messages (if possible).
- In addition to the University, inform others locally (co-worker, friend, parent, police, hotel or youth hostel, park ranger, etc) of your daily travel plan, and leave them notes and maps. Detail your planned route and possible alternate routes and return time. Specify the expected time and date of arrival at a destination and your return to base camp.
- Inform the same person(s) when you return.

It is essential that the person(s) you have informed of your whereabouts and likely return time knows exactly what procedure to follow in the event your non-return.

- Don't go into a new area or region "cold". Talk to someone who has worked there before to obtain helpful information to adequately prepare for the field work.
- Work in pairs rather than alone when in dangerous or remote areas, or when one of the individuals is inexperienced.
- All personal injury incidents must be reported to the University at the earliest opportunity. Reporting procedures should be established and necessary forms acquired prior to embarking on extended and/or remote work.
- In remote areas, dependable radio or satellite communication and backup are essential. Establish contact with local expeditors, Police, forestry or other officials so that your timetable and whereabouts are known locally. A personal locator beacon and GPS device may be required.
- If a badly injured excursion member needs medical evacuation, know:
 - Who to telephone for a medical evacuation;

- ❑ Location of nearest medical facility to which evacuation would proceed;
 - ❑ Who to contact for medical advice and who to advise of your situation;
 - ❑ Location of the nearest available fixed-wing or helicopter aircraft, and how to contact the service in an emergency.
- Anticipate the effects that an injured member might have on the success of your excursion.
- A listing of emergency numbers for the nearest medical facility, Police, government officials, and air transportation should be carried by all members of the field party. Americans traveling abroad often assume they can a phone effortlessly to the U.S. If you bypass foreign operators and hotel telephone systems by using a calling card, you may avoid hassles and unexpected service charges.
- Use a mobile telephone when and where available, remembering to give mobile telephone number to enable return contact. Make sure mobile is switched on. In that there are likely to be many situations in which there will not be cell phone coverage, a satellite phone may be necessary or at least recommended.
- Small Boats Safety procedure specifies the carrying and use of communications equipment as a mandatory requirement.
- Contact should be made on a regular pre-arranged basis with either the department and/or a nominated communications base. The means of communication should be appropriate to the fieldwork environment and a back up system should be in place in case of technology failure.
- Establish communication and signaling protocols within the field work group for remote work. Example emergency signals are:
 - ❑ Six signals within one minute (whistle blast, torch flashes, shouts, waves of cloth)
 - ❑ One minute pause
 - ❑ Repeat six signals
 Reply is:
 - ❑ Three signals
 - ❑ One minute pause

Keep good documentation via a Log book or other means to assist those that may follow you into the specific area of your field work. Include local contacts, problems encountered, suggestions etc. for future trips. This may assist others in your research group who continue the work or even you on return trips. Note those things you “wish you would have known” before you arrived at the location.