

University of  
Lethbridge



# SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR FIELD ACTIVITIES



## I. Preface

The University of Lethbridge Safety Guidelines for Field Activities is to be a resource for information, guidelines, policies, and procedures that will enable and encourage those working in the field to work safely and eliminate, or reduce, the potential for exposure to hazardous materials or conditions in the field. This guidance is useful for field activities that are performed within local, regional, or foreign geographical areas. It is intended that the Principal Investigator (PI) and supervisory personnel will supplement this information with instruction and guidance regarding specific practices and procedures unique to the work being done in the field.

This guideline will be reviewed and revised as necessary every three years.

## II. General Field Safety Guidelines

Field activities are an important part of teaching and research at the U of L. Since field activities take staff and students off campus, whether locally, regionally, or internationally, this booklet is intended to help plan and prepare for health and safety issues which might be encountered in the field. For more specific information on fieldwork hazards and precautions contact Campus Safety <https://www.uleth.ca/campus-safety>.

### Before Activities begin

One of the most important phases of the field activities is planning and preparation before the work commences. Here are some suggestions for a safe trip:

- Prepare a [Field Activity Safety Plan Checklist](#), and leave it with a responsible contact on campus. The plan should include:
  - An itinerary: All locations, arrival and departure dates, names, addresses and phone numbers of all fieldwork participants.
  - Contact person: Name and phone number of a person to contact in case of emergency a spouse, parent or friend, as well as a campus contact.
  - Activities: General nature of activities being conducted.
  - Local contacts: Names of people at or near fieldwork site who can reach workers if necessary, as well as check-in/check-out arrangements.Fieldworkers should check in with their group office regularly, and should advise the group office of any changes in schedule or points of contact. If possible, fieldworkers should also inform someone in their work locale (for example, local search and rescue personnel, police, sheriff, or motel employee) each day about the daily fieldwork location and the approximate time of return. After each day's work, the fieldworkers should notify the contact when they return. The local contact should be provided with the telephone numbers of people to call (group office, University contact, etc.) if the workers do not return or report in within a predetermined interval of the scheduled return time.

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- Identify potentially hazardous plants, animals, terrain, and weather conditions in the areas where you plan to work. Complete a [hazard assessment](#) identifying hazards and detail the controls that will be in place to minimize the risk of any potential hazards. (Reference: [Field Activity Hazard Assessment Guide](#))
  - Local residents and authorities such as provincial and federal park service personnel, may be a good source of information for completing Field Research Safety Plan.
  - Research involving animals (including wild animals), requires approval from the Institutional Animal Welfare Committee. Research involving microorganisms requires registration and approval from the Institutional Biosafety Committee. Please see the resources section for more information.
  - Contact Campus Safety, Risk and Insurance to obtain information about travel insurance and waivers.
  - Ask your Alberta health Services and additional insurance providers about coverage of medical treatment outside the province should that become necessary.
  - If the field activities involves travelling outside of the country, contact [Alberta Health Service](#) and [Public Health Agency of Canada](#) to learn about the required and recommended vaccinations for your location. Some countries require proof of vaccinations prior to entry. A travel appointment should be scheduled as far in advance as possible since some vaccines are given as a series over a six-month period.
  - U of L Students scheduling to travel outside of Canada must be familiar with the [Student Safety Abroad Policy](#), register with the [student registry](#) and attend an [International Travel Risk Management Orientation](#) where they will receive travel and safety information. (Campus Safety, Insurance and Risk for more information)
  - The registry and travel seminar are not required for Faculty travel but recommended.
  - To arrange first aid training contact the [Campus Safety](#).
  - Assemble safety provisions and check everything before you leave. Safety provisions may include:
    - First aid kit and first aid manual. These should be taken on any trip.
    - Medications you regularly take
    - Allergy treatments (if you have allergies)
    - Sunscreen and hat
    - Water purification tablets or filter devices
    - Vehicle emergency kit

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- Flashlight
  - Flares
  - Two-way radio (if you will be working alone in an isolated or dangerous area)
  - Personal protective equipment for field activities (safety glasses/goggles, gloves, hard hat, sturdy work boots, etc.). Safety Services can recommend protective equipment depending on your activities.
  - Any regulated or hazardous materials going to the field (domestic or international), may have specific transport requirements. Please ensure all provincial and federal transportation requirements are met. (i.e., Transportation of Dangerous Goods (TDG)).
  - [Transportation of Dangerous Goods \(TDG\)- Overview](#)
  - Remember shipping hazardous material to worksite or back to the U of L items may require additional time to reach their destination.
  - Whenever possible, field activities should be done in teams of at least two people. The “buddy” system is the safest way to work. Always make sure your supervisor knows where you will be and when you will return.

### III. Emergency /Medical Plan

#### A. Emergency Response Plan

- An emergency response plan (ERP) is a written document required by Alberta OHS Code 2009 Part 7.
- ERP must be established for responding to an emergency that may require rescue or evacuation.
- The purpose of an ERP is to facilitate and organize employer and employee actions during workplace emergencies.
- In field research situations this plan is extremely important due to the fact that workers may be in remote or isolated areas.
- ERP should address emergency responses in an event of an injury, exposure, accident or other emergency situations.
- ERP should include:
  - i. Identification of potential emergencies.
  - ii. Procedures for dealing with potential emergencies.
  - iii. Identification, location of and operational procedures for emergency equipment.
  - iv. Emergency response training.
  - v. Location and use of emergency facilities.
  - vi. Fire protection requirements.
  - vii. Emergency communication requirements.

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- viii. First aid services required.
  - ix. Procedures for rescue and evacuation.
  - x. Designated rescue and evacuation workers.

## B. Medical/First Aid

- There is a requirement under the Alberta Occupational Health and Safety Code for trained first aiders.
- Dependant on the level of hazard associated with the work the Code outlines the minimum number trained workers and the type of first aid kits. The appropriate number and size of first aid kit should be maintained at all times during the operation or exercise.
- The requirement for trained first aiders and first aid kits apply to all off-campus operations including field stations, academic field trips, field research, excursions, etc. that involve employees and students:
- Departments must purchase and maintain first aid kits including any special equipment or medication that is needed.
- Consult the OHS Code Schedule 2 for the minimum required first aid trained workers at a field site. Contact Safety Services for assistance.
- At permanent University field stations, written arrangements should be made in advance with local facilities for emergency medical treatment. If you are working from a field station you should find out what the arrangements are for emergency care.

## C. Reporting Injuries

- If a University employee suffers a job-related injury or illness, he/she must notify his/her supervisor within 24 hours or as soon as possible. All staff and students must complete U of L [Campus Accident/Incident Report \(CAIR\)](#).
- The CAIR may be completed by a supervisor if staff and students do not have access to the online form. The supervisor will be required to complete an [Incident Investigation Report](#) of any incident including new misses. If the injury is “serious” (amputation, permanent disfigurement, overnight hospital stay, fatality) notify your supervisor immediately. The supervisor must immediately call Wellness who will report the serious injury to the Alberta Workplace Compensation Board (WCB).



#### IV. Required Documents

1. Completed Field Research Safety Plan.
2. Completed Field Hazard Assessment.
3. Documentation of required training of all workers.

#### V. Resources

1. [Safety Services webpage](#)
2. [Alberta OHS Act, Regulation and Code](#)
3. Transportation of [Dangerous Goods \(TDG\) Act](#) and [Regulations](#)
4. [International Air Transport Association \(IATA\)](#)
5. [\*Bear Awareness: A Program Development Guide\*](#)