

# **Memorial University**

## **Department of Physics and Physical Oceanography**

### **Safety Policy for Academic and Research Field Work**

**14.January.2007**

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#### **SAFETY DURING ACADEMIC OR RESEARCH FIELD WORK**

##### **A. INTRODUCTION:**

Memorial University expects that all participants in University approved Academic or Research Field work will find the experience enjoyable, worthwhile and valuable.

These Field Trips can be for part of a day or extended over several weeks.

The term "field work" is to be interpreted broadly and will include, for example, work aboard ships, coastal field studies or work at marine field stations, e.g. the Bonne Bay Marine Station. A visit to a ship at the dock will not count as field work.

A Field Trip form should be completed, together with the usual Travel Request form, before undertaking a field trip.

##### **B. SAFETY POLICY:**

The University's Safety Policy shall apply during approved field work. During incidental periods of personal activities the university expects all participants to act prudently.

##### **C. PERSON-IN-CHARGE:**

Normally field work will be organized and supervised by a Faculty member.

For field work supervised by a person other than a faculty member, prior written approval for such designation must be obtained from the departmental Head.

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

- a. each participant be informed of the known risks, and physical requirements
- b. the academic portion of the work is conducted safely,
- c. it has been determined what safety equipment and clothing is appropriate,
- d. all university equipment taken on field work is thoroughly checked for safety by a qualified person, before removal from campus,
- e. each field trip participant is instructed in safety, the wearing of safety clothing, (e.g. hard hats, safety boots, goggles, etc.) and the safe use of the equipment. This is especially important when the person-in-charge cannot be present.
- f. For work on ships, each participant should be informed of procedures to be followed in the case of an emergency, such as a fire or collision. This would normally be done by the master of the vessel

It is permissible to delegate responsibility if the person-in-charge cannot be present.

#### **D. CHECKLIST:**

In a generic document such as this, it is impractical to anticipate all situations. Here is a checklist of some major items. Other items will be dictated by the knowledge or experience of the person-in-charge.

##### **i. EQUIPMENT:**

All equipment taken on a field trip must be checked by a qualified person before removal from the campus, to ensure that it is in good condition, complete, and safe.

If during field work, equipment fails, its use must be discontinued immediately. The failure must be reported to the person-in-charge immediately. This equipment must not be used until satisfactory repairs have been completed.

If it is necessary to rent equipment while off campus, all reasonable steps are to be taken to ensure that it is safe to use.

The responsibility for ensuring equipment is safe is vested in the person-in-charge.

**ii. BUSH, REMOTE OR HAZARDOUS AREAS:**

In the case of field work in remote areas where there is limited access to medical support, person-in-charge should consider:

1. having at least one participant trained in first aid
2. having at least one participant trained in CPR
3. providing a communication link to a central station
4. conducting area familiarization trips before work has started
5. having a procedure for contacting local police who will organize a search for missing people
6. obtaining from students, before leaving campus
  - i. MCP numbers or equivalent
  - ii. Contact information for next of kin
  - iii. details of special health considerations and special diets
7. for underwater research, evidence that diver(s) hold current and valid license
8. local expert advice

**E. FOREIGN TRAVEL:**

For work undertaken outside Canada, the participants should contact at the earliest possible opportunity after arrival, the local Canadian embassy, consulate, chargé d'affaires, local C.I.D.A. or C.U.S.O. officers, with details of travel and work plans.

**F. PERFORMANCE IMPAIRING SUBSTANCES:**

The use of substances that can impair performance or judgement and the consumption of alcohol during the working periods of field trips is not approved by the university, under any circumstances.

The availability and consumption of alcohol during personal activities is discouraged and is to be kept at a minimum level.

**G. VEHICLES:**

- . University owned - all university owned vehicles are insured against claims by third parties for injury or damage.

A Certificate of Automobile Liability Insurance (known as a "Pink Slip") is to be kept in the glove compartment.

- a. Rented vehicles - In Ontario, it is the legal obligation of the renting agency as vehicle owner (Avis, Budget, Discount, Hertz, Tilden, etc.) to purchase insurance against injury or damage claims from third parties.

It is the responsibility of the above agency to provide the "Pink Slip", - it is recommended that its presence in the vehicle be confirmed.

Other jurisdictions - third party insurance regulations must be complied with before a rental contract is signed.

- b. Who may drive? – Only qualified drivers working with the university may drive university vehicles. They must meet university requirements to be eligible to drive. Likewise, only those considered qualified by the rental company may drive rental vehicles.

Different rules may apply in other jurisdictions.

Under no circumstances shall a vehicle be driven by;

- i. an unlicensed person, or
- ii. a person with suspended license, or
- iii. a person under the influence of drugs or alcohol.

## **H. BOATS:**

It is the responsibility of the person-in-charge to ensure that all safety precautions are taken, operators are experienced, boats are in good repair and carry legally required safety equipment. It is expected that the master of the vessel will inform everyone of safe operating practices and what procedures to follow in the case of an accident.

University owned, rented or leased boats are NOT to be used for personal activities.

The person-in-charge is encouraged to review the Canadian Safe Boating Guide which is available at <http://www.tc.gc.ca/marinesafety/TP/TP511/menu.htm>.

## **I. PERSONAL ACTIVITIES:**

Field trip participants may undertake incidental personal activities. While not wishing to restrict the nature of those activities, the university expects them to be conducted safely, with common sense, and within the law. Neither the university nor the person-in-charge can accept any responsibility for or arising out of these activities.

In any event university owned or rented equipment (including vehicles) used in connection with a field trip is not to be used for or during personal activities.