

Safety Guideline



Fieldwork

Approval of Field Activities

The Head of Department is to approve the field activity and must ensure that adequate consideration is given to aspects of health and safety. The responsibility for safe conduct of the activity rests with the designated supervisor.

Supervisor

The supervisor is generally the academic staff member teaching the course but may be any person who has the authority to influence or direct the actions of students, employees or others involved in the activity. In general there should be a ratio of 1 supervisor/leader per 20 participants. The supervisor is responsible for ensuring the party is complete at the end of fieldwork.

Organisers Of Field Activities

Organisers must have strategies for dealing with emergencies. The following may act as a guide:

1. The supervisor should know the whereabouts of the local emergency and support agencies such as police, ambulance, Department of Conservation and Mountain Safety, their contact numbers and/or radio call-signs.
2. An emergency contact should be available at all times so immediate contact can be made in an emergency.
3. The names, and contact phone numbers of all group members should be known by the contact person along with full details of the location of the activity and methods of travel.
4. In remote areas, the itinerary and emergency contact person should be made known to the local police or DOC Ranger.
5. The use of portable radios or cellphones should be considered subject to the availability to recharge batteries. If such equipment is carried, then all members of the party must be trained in the proper use and routines.
6. Food and drink should be sufficient for the planned fieldwork, and an emergency supply (ie. chocolate, high energy bars, barley sugars) should also be included.
7. Fieldwork should be within the capability of the majority of the group, and should allow for the needs of individuals who may require extra assistance.
8. Escape plans should be formulated during the activity planning stage to allow withdrawal of the group or individuals in the event of injury, illness, forest fire or downturn in weather conditions.

Emergency Procedures

The supervisor of the field activity is to ensure that correct and immediate action can be taken in the event of injury or other unforeseen emergency. They must ensure the well-being of the rest of the group, obtain any necessary assistance and make contact with the relevant personal or aid authorities.

Equipment

Subject to the nature of the field activity, there may be a requirement for specific safety equipment such as life jackets, wet weather gear or similar. Such equipment must be of good quality (an approved design where applicable) and must be in good repair. Participants in the activity must be instructed in the use and care of any special equipment. Party members are to ensure that they have adequate clothing to meet any contingencies.

Medical

The supervisor is to be aware of any special medical conditions relating to party members, and any specific medications or treatments for those conditions. Allergies are to be especially noted.

First Aid

Organisers of field activities are to assess whether a fully qualified first aider is to be included in the party. When making this assessment the nature of the activity and proximity to outside assistance is to be considered. A suitably stocked first aid kit (University of Auckland First Response Kit) is to be carried, irrespective of the decision to include or not a qualified first aider. Arrangements for transportation to medical assistance should be made at the activity planning stage.

Permits

Permits may be required for some activities such as open fires in forest areas, or to gain access to restricted areas. Obtaining such permits is the responsibility of the field activity organiser. Contact should be made with manuwhenua, and areas of spiritual significance avoided.

Essential Information

The activity supervisor is to ensure that the appropriate information is available to all concerned parties. Included in this information notice are to be the following items:

1. Date, time and duration of the field activity
2. Transport arrangements
3. Medical and first aid requirements and procedures
4. Staff and student responsibilities and obligations
5. Essential safety and personal equipment
6. Vaccinations, passport information
7. Personal needs list (special clothing, medication, etc)
8. Catering details
9. Accommodation details
10. Smoking rules
11. Alcohol and drug rules
12. Procedures for dealing with sexual harassment
13. Procedures for dealing with and reporting on incidents and/or injuries.

Such information notices should incorporate a recognition form that members of the field party can formally acknowledge. This is also the form where individuals can enter essential personal details such as allergies, medication, phobias, contact numbers etc.

Remote Field Activity

1. "Remote" is a flexible concept. If emergency or medical support is more than one hour away on foot, then the location should be considered remote.
2. The itinerary, a location map and a list of party members should be left with a nominated contact person.
3. Fieldwork in isolated locations or potentially dangerous situations must not be conducted alone.
4. Individuals acting independently of the main group of participants must keep the supervisor advised of their movements and maintain regular communication.
5. Persons working in remote areas should establish a regular communication procedure with the nominated contact person. Where possible radio communication should be used, and all party members should be trained in the correct operating procedures. Organisers of the remote field activities should establish and note the location of any "dead spots" where radio transmission is not possible or intermittent.

Vehicles

Vehicles to be used on field activity are only to be driven by staff with the licence classification appropriate for the type of vehicle and number of passengers. No alcohol or drugs are to be consumed while the driver is in control of the vehicle.

Staff and Students

Staff and students are to take all reasonable care for their own health and safety and to comply with the supervisor's instructions regarding activities and the use of materials and equipment.

Non-University Staff

From time to time non-University persons may be invited to participate in field activities. Such participation may only occur after approval by the Head of Department organising the activity. Such participants are to be briefed on all requirements and treated as though they were students or staff of the University.

After Hours

Responsibility for the safety of students "after hours" can only be determined by assessing the circumstances in each situation. Supervisors are to be aware that there is a significantly greater responsibility in remote or isolated areas than when in a built up area. In some circumstances it may be advisable for students not to leave the campsite.