

General safety regulations for fieldwork

The Department of Organism Biology (IOB) and Department of Evolution and Genetics (IEG)

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1. General guidelines

This document contains general regulations that apply to all fieldwork performed by personnel and students at the Department of Organism Biology (IOB) and Department of Evolution and Genetics (IEG) at Uppsala University. These regulations apply primarily to work performed in Sweden. In most cases, they will also apply to fieldwork performed abroad, in which case the laws and regulations in that country shall also be observed.

The primary purpose of these regulations is to prevent personal injury that could result from fieldwork.

Fieldwork includes excursions, courses, sample collecting and surveying of the terrain, alongside roads, at sea and from the air. Fieldworkers are all those that participate in such activities.

The supervisor (teacher, tutor or equivalent) has ultimate responsibility for fieldwork activities. Fieldworkers shall have an insurance policy that provides comprehensive cover. The supervisor shall ensure that everyone who takes part in the fieldwork has adequate insurance cover. The insurance should apply for all study trips and cover the whole period away from the home or place of work/study (see Insurance cover).

2. General rules

The planning and execution of fieldwork should take into account the nature of the work and the level of knowledge and experience of the participants. It should also be planned so that the work proceeds efficiently and that the participants are not exposed to an unnecessary risk of physical, mental or social harm.

Lone work should be avoided as far as possible, but in cases where it is unavoidable it is important that safety routines for lone work are followed (see below). See also AFS 1982:03 Ensamarbete (Lone Work), http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/AFS1982_03.pdf

Fieldwork should be planned in consultation with the participants involved.

The supervisor should go through all the safety aspects and safety regulations with the participants in detail, and cross-reference them with a work environment plan drawn up specifically for the project. A work environment plan does not need to be drawn up for fieldwork projects of a repetitive or similar nature unless the safety aspects have changed.

You should plan the fieldwork so that long shifts are avoided and that there are periods of rest between and during shifts.

When long stretches of walking are involved, you should remember to take something to eat and drink.

Every fieldworker should be equipped with a mobile phone which has been programmed with the telephone numbers of people that can be contacted in an emergency, e.g. the supervisor.

The mobile phone system's coverage in the work area should be taken into account. Fieldworking personnel are encouraged to programme their mobile phones with the ICE (short for "In Case of Emergency") + the telephone number of relatives. With this number, rescue personnel can quickly contact relatives in the event of a serious accident.

Preparedness and routines for first aid should be in place. See also AFS 1999:07 First Aid and Crisis Support, http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/AFS1999_07.pdf

Accidents and incidents should always be reported to the safety representative and supervisor, who will in turn report them to the head of department.

Routines for managing more serious accidents can be found in the document "Crisis Management Plan for Uppsala University" and appendices,

<http://regler.uu.se/Detaljsida/?contentId=14239&kategoriId=97>

3. Insurance cover

Information about insurance policies applicable to the different categories of existing personnel is provided below.

3.1 Employed personnel, doctoral students and undergraduates

Employed personnel, doctoral students and undergraduates are automatically insured for fieldwork and for transportation to and from the work area. For trips outside the EU, you need an insurance card from Kammarkollegiet (the Swedish Legal, Financial and Administrative Services Agency). Please contact the personnel administrator for more information.

3.3 Consultants, visiting researchers, visiting teachers and visiting students

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General insurance from Kammarkollegiet applies. Please contact the personnel administrator to register.

3.4 Non-employed personnel travelling on behalf of Uppsala University

Please contact the personnel administrator for more information.

4. Safety

4.1 Safety and protective equipment

Prescribed safety and protective equipment must be used on fieldwork trips. The equipment shall be provided by IOB and IEG and paid for by the department concerned. Personnel may, however, purchase necessary protective equipment for fieldwork that is performed on behalf of IOB and IEG, if the items and costs have been approved by the supervisor.

If you are taking medication or have a severe allergy problem, make sure that you bring extra medicine on the trip and inform someone close to you about your allergy.

4.2 Protective equipment that may be necessary

Protective equipment that may be necessary includes: hearing protection, protective goggles, protective shoes, protective gloves, helmet, protective clothes, life jacket, reflective clothing, first aid equipment, ice pick, rescue line, ice prods, whistle, distress rocket (signal flare), emergency transmitter and work clothes in conspicuous colours.

When working in a temporary laboratory set-up, remember to wear protective equipment.

When performing seasonal work, always use protective equipment that is appropriate for the climate (e.g. insulated protective shoes, heat and sun protection)

When fieldworking a long distance from your vehicle and where there is no clear-cut road back, use a map and compass and/or GPS. When using a GPS you should mark the vehicle/campsite/assembly point so that you can easily find your way back.

See also AFS 2001:03 Use of Personal Protective Equipment,

http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/AFS2001_03.pdf

5. Safety routines

5.1 Safety routines for lone fieldwork

There are a number of preventative steps that you can take to simplify assistance in the event of an accident, acute illness or other emergency situation while working alone. The step that you take should be appropriate to the nature of the work, where the work is being performed and the experience and competence of those involved. Some work tasks may not be performed by lone workers for safety reasons (see below).

Ensure that all the right safety equipment is in place, e.g. whistle, distress rockets (signal flare), emergency transmitter and work clothes in conspicuous colours.

In the event of an accident or similar situation, it is vital to have routines for quickly raising the alarm when the person in distress is incapable of doing so and for identifying the approximate location of the person in distress using a roadmap. See section, Safety routines for assisting fieldworkers in distress.

It is the supervisor's responsibility to inform everyone concerned about the appropriate routines. The lone worker is responsible for making the arrangements necessitated that these routines. It is every fieldworker's obligation to follow these routines.

From a safety and social perspective, fieldwork should be planned so that lone workers have a shared base/field office. This will enable lone workers to contact each other on a daily basis and act quickly if someone fails to turn up at the agreed time at the end of the working day.

Lone work performed by people who live alone should be avoided as far as possible. When it is unavoidable, everyone should be made aware of the psychological stress that this form of work can entail. Everyone concerned should contact each other regularly. Please note that this can, in certain circumstances, also include certain one-day arrangements.

See also AFS 1982:03 Lone Work http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/AFS1982_03.pdf

5.2 Fieldwork that should not be performed alone

Fieldwork that is assessed to be too risky or difficult should not be performed alone. This decision is to be made jointly by everyone concerned.

This category of fieldwork includes work along coastal cliffs, near landslides, by boat, on snow scooters and on ice, etc. Work inside facilities that contain hazardous substances or which have been closed down and therefore entail an extra level of risk may not be performed alone.

Work that includes collecting samples by boat should never be performed alone.

5.3 Work on/alongside roads

Vehicles that are used when working on or alongside roads, e.g. on excursions and similar, should be fitted with a flashing light and a sign that clearly shows the Uppsala University logo. It goes without saying that applicable traffic regulations must be followed.

Reconnaissance and survey work, etc. can be performed by car if the traffic situation permits it from a safety perspective. Extra caution should be used during such work. Drivers should not read maps or register observations until the car is at a standstill or is safely parked.

Reconnaissance and similar may not be performed by the driver on roads where there is a lot of traffic. In such cases, the work must be done by one of the passengers. The necessity of such an arrangement should be decided from case to case. As a general rule, lone work should not be performed by car on roads where the speed limit is more than 70 km/h, and, on other roads, where there is a lot of traffic or poor visibility. The risk of accidents can be minimised by scheduling the work at times when traffic is light. Approved reflective clothing (reflective vest) shall be worn by everyone concerned while working on the road surface, in ditches/intersections or in the immediate vicinity of the road. An LED flashlight should be used when necessary.

5.4 Driving routines

Transportation constitutes the greatest safety risk for fieldworkers. Avoid driving a bus/car in long shifts – it can cause tiredness and back pain. Stop at regular intervals or rotate driving duties if there are several of you in the vehicle. If you are driving in winter conditions it is important to remember that the road surface may be slippery. Drivers should avoid using mobile phones without a headset.

Vehicles that are used for fieldwork should have the Uppsala University logo.

5.5 Fieldwork with chemicals

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When working with chemical substances, follow the safety regulations for laboratory work (see safety regulations for work with hazardous chemicals).

Remember that certain substances are unsuitable for transportation by car, e.g. liquid nitrogen and corrosive, inflammable or toxic chemicals. If hazardous chemicals need to be transported, please contact the university's environmental chemistry specialist for advice.

Use adequate protective equipment when working with harmful substances/hazardous chemicals.

See also AFS 2011:19 Chemical Hazards in the Working Environment,

http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/afs2011_19.pdf

5.6 Fieldwork at sea or on frozen lakes

When field working in a boat, you should wear an approved life-jacket and the fieldworkers should know how to swim. When performing fieldwork on frozen lakes or at sea, at least two people shall take part, of which one should be accustomed to working in icy conditions. Ice prods, ice picks and rescue line should be in place.

6. Animal attacks

The greatest risk of an animal attack generally comes from dogs, insect bites (wasps/bees, ticks) and snake bites. Many people today also perceive bears as a threat, particularly in parts of the country where bear populations are well-established. When you are in the forest, you will probably never encounter bears, wolves or any other large mammals if you talk, sing or rattle your bucket as you walk. Particularly if you are walking downwind. If, against the odds, you encounter a bear or wolf, make your presence known and walk calmly away from the area.

<http://www.naturvardsverket.se/Documents/publikationer/620-8331-1.pdf>

The following general advice and guidelines apply:

Dogs

The Swedish Kennel Club has the following advice: If you encounter a dog running loose, try to remain passive: stand still, do not run, do not gesticulate, show no interest and do not make eye contact with the dog. Move slowly and calmly from the place when the dog has lost interest. If the owner shows up, ask him/her to call the dog and put it on a leash. If the dog attacks and bites

you, seek medical attention immediately and have your wounds attended to. The event should be reported to the police.

Insect bites

In Sweden, insect bites are mostly harmless except bites from ticks. A wasp or bee sting can, in some cases, cause an allergic reaction.

To prevent illness transmitted by ticks, all fieldworkers should be vaccinated against TBE.

Fieldworking personnel who suspect they have a borelia infection can turn to Länshälsan Uppsala AB for a free health check-up and treatment (if necessary).

Snakebites

If bitten by an adder, you should always seek medical attention. See also

<http://www.giftinformation.se>

7. Safety routines for assisting fieldworkers in distress

The purpose of including these routines in a work environment plan is to aid the assistance of any fieldworkers who have been in an accident or are ill while working in the terrain. These routines may vary according to factors such as staffing, nature of the work, and worksite's geographic location. In general terms these routines should include the following points:

1. The following information specified on a written communication and sketch map should be provided to the programme coordinator at IOB and IEG, and the base and/or field office:
 - all the participants' names and, if applicable, their mobile telephone numbers
 - all vehicle numbers, and the names and telephone numbers of any car rental firms, if applicable
 - names and telephone numbers of relatives (if applicable)
 - the name and location of the area where the daily work is being performed. The area should be specified in a map sheet list
 - expected time of return/latest possible time of return
 - when working alone: the telephone number of the police district inside the surveyed area
 - the time to raise the alarm.
2. When work alone there should be a designated person with whom you can keep in daily contact. This person shall have access to the above-mentioned details and, if required,

raise the alarm and provide the details necessary to aid the search process. The person could be a colleague or an adult family member. An emergency transmitter is an appropriate accessory.

3. It should also be possible to contact the emergency services if another person cannot be reached.
4. Work shifts should be planned to enable fieldworkers to notify the designated contact person if he/she is delayed, comfortably in advance of the agreed time.
5. If the fieldworker does not turn up or notify the contact person of his/her delay, the alarm shall be sounded and the supervisor or his/her replacement shall be informed.
6. The agreed times must be respected so that the alarm is not raised out of negligence. If the alarm is raised repeatedly out of negligence, the person's suitability as a fieldworking personnel should be called into question.

8. Particular risks

Special caution shall be used if there are signs of crop spraying, prevalence of hazardous substances, sub-standard construction work and similar, and on polluted land, e.g. old industrial land. Use protective gloves, breathing protection and take eyewash equipment on the trip.

When working in an area where hunting is in progress, the senior huntsman should be informed (does not apply to work alongside roads).

Marine or aerial survey, open water diving, climbing and operating vehicles such as snow scooter/off-road vehicles are examples of fieldwork that may require a permit.

When working in tropical areas, you should have protection against mosquitos (head net), vaccination, etc. See also AFS 1997:02 Work in tropical areas,

http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/AFS1997_02.pdf

In some instances, fieldwork may include tasks that constitute a particular risk for pregnant and breastfeeding employees. All project managers and affected workers should therefore know about

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the Provisions and general recommendations of the Swedish Work Environment Authority on pregnant and breastfeeding employees and general advice on the implementation of the regulations". The Authority's Regulation AFS 2007:5 on Pregnant and Breastfeeding Workers http://www.av.se/dokument/afs/afs2007_05.pdf