

# **GUIDELINES FOR FIELDWORK**

## **PURPOSE**

To provide guidelines for practical work for research or teaching, conducted outside of the classroom setting and at premises that are not under the University's control.

## **SCOPE**

Practical research or academic activities carried out under the authority of the University at locations off campus or outdoors.

## **GUIDELINES**

Department heads, supervisors, instructors, graduate assistants, and graduate and undergraduate students involved in independent study and research should be adequately *informed* of hazards known to be associated with field work, and should be adequately *prepared/trained* to minimize the risk from these hazards.

### **Conducting the Risk Assessment**

- Risk assessment occurs both at the *planning* stage of a project and, often repeatedly, during its *execution*.
- Some specific risks inherent in the *site of fieldwork* are listed in Attachment # 1
- Identify foreseeable *hazards*
- Assess the actual *risks* that these hazards present (see Form 1)
- Take appropriate *action* to reduce risks to acceptable levels.

### **Preparation for Safe Fieldwork**

- Many preparations are specific to conditions of the fieldwork site. Consult your supervisor and the reference list on attachment #2.
- The safety procedures selected must be based on the type of fieldwork and the working environment.
- Pay particular attention to the need to leave an itinerary with a responsible individual, especially if you are working alone. The Department of Environmental Health & Safety recommends use of the "buddy system".

***The responsibility for safety in fieldwork rests primarily upon the persons who directly supervise and carry out the activities on location. Such persons are expected to exercise good judgment at all times and must take all reasonable care to protect the personal health and safety of participants.***

**Useful References:**

***General books on fieldwork safety***

- Institute of Biology 1990 *Safety in biological fieldwork*.
- Committee of Heads of University Geoscience Departments 1995 *Safety in geoscience fieldwork*
- Natural Environmental Research Council 1993 *Guidance note on fieldwork*.
- Winsor, S. & William, N. (eds) (annual) *Expedition planners' handbook and directory*. Royal Geographical Society.
- Webb, M., Scott, R. & Beale, P. 1997 *First-aid manual*. Dorling Kindersley.
- Royal Life Saving Association 1989 *Saving life*