



Health, Safety and Wellbeing - Field Activity Planning Guidance

General Planning guidance for all users

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Introduction

Field activity is a distinctive characteristic of university life and an essential part of teaching and research, enhancing the academic development of staff and students. The University of Auckland conducts multiple activities across its many faculties and service divisions, which involve work, study or research outside the controlled environment of University facilities. The University therefore has a responsibility to ensure that health and safety is a key consideration in the planning and operation of field activities, and that such activities are carried out in an environmentally responsible manner.

Some field activities are inherently high risk due to the work environment or the nature of the work undertaken. The University takes a risk-based approach to the management of such activities, expecting that planning is thorough and robust, appropriate procedures and equipment are used, and participants are fully briefed and/or trained in advance.

This guidance has been developed to help staff and students meet the University Field Activity Health, Safety and Wellbeing Standard, which is intended to ensure that:

- Comprehensive and robust preparation and planning is carried out
- Thorough risk assessments are conducted
- Good practice procedures, controls and risk reduction strategies are used
- Staff or contractors undertaking fieldwork leadership, approvals and supervision are trained, competent and have appropriate knowledge
- Participants are supervised, capable and fit
- Emergency plans are prepared and are operational
- Appropriate information from any incident is captured

2 BUILDING AWARENESS

2.1 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY “FIELD ACTIVITY”?

Field activity is any work carried out by staff or students for the purposes of teaching, research or representing the University off campus (where health and safety of participants is not managed by other host institutions).

Examples of field activity include:

- Groups of staff, students and contractors who travel off campus as part of a University course of study (undergraduate or postgraduate)
- Groups of staff, students and contractors who travel off campus as part of a University research project, and are intending to visit or work at locations that are not governed by University of Auckland health and safety policies and controls
- Staff and students engaged in research off campus

Field activity does not include:

- Approved travel to conferences (with University travel insurance coverage) where participants can be expected to be responsible for their own wellbeing
- Activities based at established University facilities, which are covered by the University Health and Safety Policy
- Study that is part of a University of Auckland Study Abroad programme or elective courses taken at other institutions
- Local and international off-campus placements of students and staff
- Placements and work experience

3 PEOPLE

3.1 ROLES AND ACTIONS – WHO DOES WHAT?

3.1.1 Heads of School/Department/Directors of Service:

- Identify appropriate members of your staff who are qualified for field activity roles such as field activity leader, expert reviewer(s), University contact etc.
- Implement a system to identify which staff and students will participate in field activities, and when and where they will take place.
- Check that health monitoring is carried out where required by the field activity plan.
- Check that records are kept for the relevant length of time.
- Approve all field activity plans before the field activity begins.

3.1.2 Field activity leader:

This is an academic leader of teaching and research, professional staff manager or contractor who has the authority and responsibility to make decisions on all aspects of the field activity, which may be a taught course, research project or collaborative expedition. This person has the capability, qualifications and experience to be responsible for the planning and operation of the field activity, as designated by the dean of faculty or head of school/department.

- If the field activity requires overseas travel, find out whether the location is identified by the New Zealand government as “high risk” (www.safetravel.govt.nz) and if so, contact the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager for advice.
- Complete a field activity plan.
- Determine an appropriate staff/student ratio when planning a field activity for undergraduate students. As a guide, a ratio of one staff member to ten inexperienced students carrying out low risk activities in a rural area would be adequate. A ratio of less than 1:20 is not recommended.
- Ensure that the field activity plan is approved and the control measures are in place before the field activity begins.
- Refer any requirement for health monitoring during the field activity to the appropriate medical adviser.
- If the field activity is overseas, provide insurance/health and safety documentation in line with the host country's requirements.
- Brief all participants before the trip.
- Make sure all participants understand their own roles and those of their team members.
- Organise any training identified as necessary by the field activity plan.
- Check that the University contact has all the relevant information, including changes of plan or notification of emergencies during field activity.
- If a third party is involved (catering, transport etc.), make an assessment of the organisation's health and safety suitability in conjunction with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.
- If you have undertaken the planning but are not able to supervise the operation of the activity, appoint another qualified person to be the field activity leader.
- Ensure that agreed emergency processes can be put into action immediately if an emergency arises.
- Report any accidents/incidents that occur during field activity, by phone or other communications device in the first instance, or use the University's online Accident/incident reporting system.
- Review the process after the field activity to support continuous improvement.

3.1.3 Deputy Field Activity Leader

Where the field activity group comprises more than ten participants, or the group will be split up at the site, one or more deputy field activity leaders must be in attendance. This person is an academic leader of teaching and research, professional staff manager or contractor who has the capability, qualifications and experience to be responsible for the planning and operation of the field activity, as designated by the dean or head of school/department. Where possible, leaders should include male and female representatives for mixed gender groups.

- Support the field activity leader to carry out all their duties, as described above.
- Provide “checks and balances” from a health and safety perspective.

3.1.4 University Contact

This is a University staff member with knowledge of the field activity who can be contacted for support and in case of emergency.

- Familiarise yourself with the field activity plan and associated documentation.
- If the activity is in a remote area, provide your contact details to the local police and/or DOC ranger.
- If the activity is considered high risk, use a scheduled check-in process.
- Be contactable at all times in case of an emergency.
- Know how to contact the field activity leader at all times.
- Be able to locate contact details for all participants and their next of kin, as well as medical questionnaires, emergency processes, itineraries and control measures.
- Implement agreed/approved emergency plans if required.

3.1.5 Field Activity Participants

This refers to staff, students and contractors taking part in field activities, as well as volunteers (defined as “pre-recognised” people willing to participate in field activities, who are offering their time and services for no remuneration). A participant may work independently, without direct supervision (as an activity leader) or under direct supervision by the field activity leader.

- Familiarise yourself with the field activity plan and follow any control measures that are indicated.
- Familiarise yourself with emergency processes and follow them if an emergency arises.
- Supply any information relevant to your health and safety to the field activity leader.
- Get medical advice or assessment where required by your line manager, lecturer or tutor.
- Complete consent forms.
- Follow all instructions as requested by the field activity leader.
- Report any hazards associated with the field activity to the field activity leader.

3.1.6 Health, Safety and Wellbeing Manager

- Support staff in meeting the University Field Activity Health and Safety Standard.
- Advise staff on how to write field activity plans.
- Assist in monitoring MFAT advice when field activity is scheduled in countries identified as “high risk”.

The health and safety responsibilities of staff, students and visiting personnel are fully detailed in the University of Auckland Health and Safety Policy, available on the University of Auckland website.

4 PLANNING

4.1 RECONNAISSANCE

Thorough pre-planning could make the difference between success and failure (or worse) on a field trip. Wherever it is reasonably practicable, pre-trip reconnaissance should be carried out by the field activity leader or authorised delegate, in order to gather information about the location and its suitability for the proposed field activity. Factors to scope include:

- Transport
- Nature of the site
- Potential hazards
- Environmental conditions
- Access and permissions
- Accommodation
- Proximity to food and medical supplies
- Cultural considerations
- Local knowledge and where to get it

4.2 FIELD ACTIVITY PLAN

A field activity plan is a mandatory requirement for any field activities undertaken by University staff, students, contractors and volunteers. The plan needs to include a risk assessment and an emergency response plan. Factors to take into account when writing the plan include:

- The purpose of the field activity: specifics of the teaching or research project or expedition
- The location of the field activity: local, overseas, urban, rural, remote, coastal, marine
- Age, gender, experience and any disabilities/medical conditions of participants
- Access/permissions: DOC, local iwi, local authorities
- Government advice about travel to countries considered “high risk”
- Travel and transport to location: flights, boat trips, public transport, driving University or private vehicles
- Transport on site: 4WD vehicles, all-terrain vehicles, forklifts, tractors and other specialist vehicles, e.g. aircraft, marine vessels
- Environmental conditions: climate, weather contingencies, terrain, access, tides, sea conditions, river flow, pollutants
- Actions required during the field activity, e.g. heavy lifting, driving off road, working with animals
- Hazardous substances being handled or sampled, e.g. taking chemicals onto site, sampling microbiological specimens
- Equipment required: electrical equipment, machinery, specialist equipment such as climbing gear, personal protective equipment (PPE)
- Communications devices: mobile phones, two-way radio, satellite phones, personal locator beacons, tracking devices
- Food, water and hygiene: adequate supplies of food, potable drinking water, toiletries, sanitation/cleaning gear, cooking and refrigeration facilities, nearest source of additional supplies, transportation of supplies to the site
- Health and medical considerations: vaccinations, medications, first aid, location of nearest medical facility
- Physical fitness and capability of participants
- Personal safety and security: possibility of violence, theft, political unrest

- Local emergency response units (local Coastguard, Mountain Safety etc.)

For more detail on the risk profile of specific field activities and applicable control measures, please refer to the relevant guidance document.

4.3 IDENTIFYING HAZARDS

All aspects of the field activity should be taken into account, including travelling to and from the field and after hours activities.

4.3.1 Environmental conditions

Assess hazards associated with the locality and climate:

- Sunburn
- Heat stroke
- Dehydration
- Hypothermia
- Altitude sickness
- Frostbite
- Sudden changes in weather and temperatures
- Fire
- Flooding
- Forestry
- Wild animals and insects
- Exposure to disease
- Water purity
- Potential to be stuck in snow, sand or mud
- Potential to be stranded by bad weather
- Lack of local infrastructure
- Lack of rescue services
- Political instability
- Threats to personal security

4.3.2 Site-specific conditions

- Working alongside railways and major roads can be dangerous, and requires permission from the local authorities.
- Urban and suburban field activity hazards include traffic, physical violence or abuse, theft, and dog attacks.
- Hazards in commercial and industrial sites include traffic, machinery, chemical, biological and radiological hazards, collapsing structures and falling objects, and noise.
- Hazards on a farm include aggression from domestic animals, mechanical hazards, pesticides, crop sprays, and noise.
- Marine field activity, including coastal and shoreline work, will often require specialist equipment and/or working with a third party organisation. Hazards to consider include:
 - Drowning
 - Pollution
 - Infection from polluted waters
 - Falling rocks and landslips in coastal areas
 - Becoming trapped by flooding or tide surges
 - Potentially dangerous wildlife, e.g. stinging jellyfish
 - Hypothermia

There are strict health and safety rules governing the use of boats and other marine craft in New Zealand. Please refer to Maritime New Zealand's website for a full list of protocols: [Maritime New Zealand](#)

4.3.3 Health and fitness of participants

An essential part of the planning process is taking into account the age, experience, gender, fitness and ability of participants, and any medical conditions/disabilities they have that may pose a potential risk in the field.

Participants are to complete a Declaration and Consent Form that is submitted in confidence to the appropriate University authority. In some cases, a doctor's certificate may be required as proof of fitness to participate.

4.3.3.1 Overseas travel

If you are travelling to a country where participants may be exposed to infectious diseases such as malaria, tuberculosis and hepatitis B, vaccinations or prophylactic medications will be required, beginning weeks or even months in advance of travel. Participants should check with their doctors or consult www.safetravel.govt.nz

Note: The faculty or service division will cover the cost of immunisations to **staff members** who are undertaking an authorised field activity on behalf of the University.

Participants should ensure that routine immunisations are up-to-date (such as tetanus, measles and polio). It is also important to have a dental check-up prior to going overseas for fieldwork activities in remote areas, or where health and dental care is limited in the country of origin.

4.3.3.2 Occupational health

If the field activity could expose participants to hazardous substances, it is imperative that such hazards are identified and that appropriate control measures are applied. There are many biological and chemical hazardous materials, dust, fumes and vapours that could result in acute or long-term infection, illness or disease.

Occupational health and safety standards in a foreign country may be less stringent or even non-existent, which increases the risk of exposure to contaminants and hazards. Participants may need to acquire personal protective equipment and monitoring equipment in New Zealand and take this equipment with them when operating in another country. Additional supplies should be taken to cover the duration of the trip or task and to cover for any lost or damaged equipment.

Note that pre-existing medical conditions may make an individual more vulnerable to the adverse effects of some substances and pathogens.

Substances to be aware of include:

- Specified biological agents (human or transmissible animal pathogens or "zoonoses")
- Carcinogens
- Toxic chemicals (with both short term acute and long term chronic effects)
- Allergenic substances (some wood dusts, paint vapours, lubricants and animal fur)
- Venomous stings or bites
- Radioactive chemicals

Disease	Hazardous substance
Hepatitis A	Raw sewage / faecal matter
Hepatitis B	Blood/body fluids/taking blood samples Non-human primates. Macaque monkeys /marmosets
Tetanus	Tetanus bacteria that enter the body through wounds such as cuts, grazes and puncture wounds.
Leptospirosis	An infectious disease transmitted from animals to humans (a zoonosis) and from animal to animal by infected urine. Infection can occur through breaks in the skin or through the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose or mouth.
Legionellosis	Legionella can be found in any type of water system, and in soil. The bacteria are prevalent in warm stagnant water such as is found in plumbing systems, hot water tanks, water in cooling towers, evaporative condensers of large air conditioning systems and spa pools.
Rabies	Not found in New Zealand, but can be found in some other countries: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wild animals (foxes, skunks, bats, and raccoons) • Livestock (mostly cattle but occasionally horses, sheep, goats, and pigs) • Pets (mostly cats and dogs, and occasionally ferrets)

4.3.3.3 **Participants with existing medical conditions**

Anyone with a medical condition that may affect his or her performance on a field trip should discuss the matter in confidence with their field activity leader.

If the medical condition could escalate into a life threatening event, it is important to decide whether the field activity is suitable for that person. If in doubt, consult with the person's medical practitioner, with the consent of the participant. If the decision is that this person is going to participate, include specific procedures in your emergency response plan. A confidential Declaration and Consent form must be completed by all participants.

Some environments, physical tasks or allergies may aggravate certain medical conditions and require specific planning to reduce this risk.

Staff and students with particular medical conditions (such as severe allergies that may result in anaphylactic shock) should wear "medical alert" bracelets or pendants. For information on the use of Epipens, see Field Activity Guidance - Operation, Appendix 1: *First aid medication and equipment*.

4.3.3.4 **Medications**

Each participant is responsible for carrying adequate supplies of any prescribed medication(s) required for the duration of the field activity. In remote areas, and where it is possible delays could result in spending more time in the field, participants should pack 1.5–2 times their normal medication supplies. A spare set of medication should be stored in a separate secure pack in case the primary supply is damaged or lost.

Some medications have adverse side effects that could impact on the individual's safety and performance on the field trip, such as drowsiness, fatigue and loss of concentration. Discuss these possibilities with the field activity leader. If in doubt about particular side effects, consult a medical practitioner.

If you need to take medications on an overseas trip, check the regulations that apply to medications in the country you are travelling to; contact the Embassy or High Commission of that country.

If large quantities of medication must be taken while travelling overseas, participants should carry a letter from their doctor, dentist or pharmacist explaining why such amounts and types of medications are required.

4.3.3.5 Participants with visual or hearing impairment or disability

When participants are undertaking a field activity as part of their course requirement, reasonable accommodation must be made to ensure that participants who have a disability can participate. Adjustments to the working environment and arrangements for students and staff with disabilities may include:

- Alternative forms of transport or frequent, scheduled breaks for participants with disabilities
- Accessible facilities and accommodation during the field activity
- Appropriate communications devices (e.g. SMS-enabled phones for people with hearing impairment)
- Alternative documentation formats, e.g. Braille or audio for participants with vision impairment

Some participants may not, however, be able to undertake some activities. Alternative arrangements must be made to ensure that these students can meet the inherent requirements of the course. Seek advice from the Disability Service Office.

4.3.3.6 Student support worker participation

Some students may require a student support worker to accompany them on the field activity to assist as an interpreter or note taker, or to ensure that they are guided safely onsite. These people are to be treated as participants in terms of health and safety provision.

4.3.3.7 Personal protective clothing and equipment

Participants may need to wear personal protective clothing and equipment for their safety and wellbeing. It is important that such clothing and equipment is suitable and fits the person well, to provide the required level of protection.

4.3.3.8 Participant fitness

When planning a fieldwork activity, consider what level of physical fitness is required to participate without undue stress, discomfort or fatigue.

Consult maps, trip guides, local host or specialist agencies to determine fitness requirements. This will help you to calculate:

- Suitable times to cover certain distances
- Appropriate rest breaks
- Appropriate movement of groups
- Adequate supply of energy food and drinks
- Whether any pre-trip physical training is required

More information is available on the DOC and Mountain Safety websites.

4.4 RISK ASSESSMENT

A risk assessment is the process of evaluating the risk(s) arising from the hazard(s) associated with the activity, taking into account the adequacy of existing control measures, deciding whether or not the risk is acceptable and taking further action as required.

This process is carried out by the field activity leader, with input from the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service, and trained and experienced participants, as appropriate.

The basic requirement is to document all the hazards that could compromise health and safety in your field activity plan. If possible, organise a pre-field activity site visit to assess the hazards; or work with a contact person who knows the location. Then, consider how you are going to **eliminate, isolate or minimise** each hazard. (See the University's field activity management plan template for a list of risk control measures for hazards commonly associated with field activities.)

As required by the Standard: all risk control measures must be carried out and recorded; and all health and safety training needs identified in the plan must be carried out and recorded.

4.4.1 What do we mean by “high risk”?

Some field activities are inherently high risk due to the nature of the activity, the remoteness of the location, or the harshness and volatility of the environment. These conditions can potentially cause serious injury, ill-health or life-threatening situations.

Such conditions do not always prevent the field activity taking place, but they signal that thorough preparation, comprehensive risk assessments and robust emergency planning must be carried out beforehand. Staff and participants must be trained, and demonstrate competency with operational procedures and fitness for the work they will undertake.

High risk field activities can only be approved if all control measures have been applied.

Field activities that are defined as inherently “high risk” include:

- Handling of dangerous or venomous animals
- Interacting with people who have extreme behavioural issues
- Marine activities such as boating, kayaking, snorkelling, scuba diving
- Off-road driving
- Operating heavy machinery
- Working alone in rural or remote areas
- Working in alpine, volcanic, geothermal, underground, rough terrain, dense bush and forestry environments
- Working in areas with a high crime/violence rate
- Working in or around coastal, sea shore, estuary, beach, mudflat, lake, river and storm water environments
- Working on industrial sites i.e. mines, quarries
- Working with hazardous chemicals or live electricity

4.4.2 What do we mean by “remote areas”?

Remote area field activity is work that is carried out in locations where it is difficult to summon help and/or where emergency assistance is expected to be more than one hour away. Examples include:

- Marine work carried out in open water
- Working in off-road in areas where there is very little traffic or where hills, dense timber or other topographic features would make it difficult to summon help

- Working more than 5km from a town, farmhouse or other facility with fixed telephone or radio communications (even if personal communications equipment, e.g. mobile phone, is carried)

4.4.3 What happens if plans change during the field activity?

Recognising that conditions can change rapidly in the field, the University acknowledges that it is sometimes necessary to deviate from the approved plan. The planning and preparation process should anticipate potential changes e.g. weather, environment conditions, political unrest, and should state proposed alternatives to routes, schedules and alternative communications links.

Where a plan requires onsite changes due to changes in conditions the field activity leader can make the necessary changes, documenting them in the field wherever possible and updating the base camp or administrative unit.

If these changes are significant, the field activity leader must notify the University contact, who will escalate to the head of school/department if necessary.

As required by the Standard: risk control measures must be reviewed and improved following any incident/accident that happens during field activity.

4.4.4 Emergency response plan

As required by the Standard: "All field activity plans must include a comprehensive emergency plan" in case of injury, severe weather, earthquake, avalanche or any event that could result in serious harm or a life-threatening situation to participants.

Core emergency planning should include:

- Emergency protocols for personnel in the field, at the base camp and in the academic/administrative unit
- Emergency procedures for participants who have disabilities, medical conditions or impairments
- Contact details of local emergency response units (including Coastguard, Mountain Safety, doctor, hospital, police, etc.)
- Communication strategy and equipment
- Missing persons procedure
- Emergency and survival equipment
- Medical emergencies and repatriation plan
- Plan for civil unrest and natural disasters
- Available support
- Methods for contacting next of kin
- Financial plan for emergencies
- Media management plan where applicable

All field activity leaders, participants, contractors and third parties need to know what to do in the event of an accident or incident. Ensure you are equipped with communication devices suitable for the environment and participants are trained to use them (See 3.4.4.3 *Communications*).

The field activity leader should document the location, opening hours and after-hours support of the nearest medical facilities. Where large groups of 25 or more are involved in an activity, this medical centre should be informed in advance of the trip.

You should also ask the NZ Police, Department of Conservation, applicable foreign government agency or similar services to review your emergency plan, evacuation or exit strategy and the location of the nearest shelter and support in remote areas.

Specialist training will be required to enable people with particular health needs or disabilities to participate. For example, if a participant is known to be vulnerable to anaphylactic shock, first aiders will need to know how to administer suitable treatment.

The emergency plan should be in place before the activity begins but may be altered in response to unforeseen local conditions, e.g. severe weather warnings, road blocks etc.

Where external stakeholders (such as partner institutions or third party providers) have roles or responsibilities in the emergency plan, it is vital that they are fully briefed.

Having to deal with a medical emergency is a possibility that should be considered for all offsite field activities, whether supervised or independent. Considerations include the duration of the work, remoteness of the location, fitness of participants, access to hospital facilities and standards of health care available in the country.

The field activity leader and participants need to be proficient in responding to emergency events and applicable survival techniques. Seek professional training for all high risk activities.

Field activity base and/or University personnel must be available to monitor, alert and action emergency responses should the field party require assistance.

Emergency response plans will vary depending on the location or the nature of the activity. See the relevant guidance document for procedures to be followed in specific circumstances.

Use the forms and checklists in the field activity plan template to help you prepare your emergency response plan.

4.4.4.1 *Emergency response procedures in New Zealand*

Emergency contacts

- Call 111 for Emergency Services – Police, Ambulance, Fire.
- State nature of emergency.
- Provide location, road junctions, tracks, landmarks.
- State numbers of people involved.
- Give mobile phone/s contacts.

Missing persons procedure

Before you phone the police, first determine if the person is really lost/missing; maybe they have just changed their plans.

- Call 111 and ask for the police.
- Give the person's name.
- Describe the person (age, particulars of appearance).
- Describe any vehicles, clothing or equipment the person may be using/wearing.
- Give their destination and estimated time of return.
- Give the entry routes and finishing points.
- Explain what you have done to locate them.

Emergencies in remote locations

- **STOP:** Take a breath, sit down and remain calm.
- **THINK:** Look around you, listen, brainstorm ideas.
- **ASSESS:** Evaluate the options and their potential consequences.
- **RESPOND:** Take the best alternative.
- **REMEMBER:** Water, shelter, warmth and the will to live are the essential elements for your survival.
- **IF IN DOUBT:** Stay put. Your emergency response plan is in place, and will be activated if you are overdue.

4.4.4.2 *National and international emergency alerts and warnings*

Emergency alerts and warnings provide immediate notification of natural disasters, severe weather or civil unrest that will or could be life-threatening. The purpose is to help people to take appropriate action and/or get to a safe place to improve their chances of safety and survival.

Field activity leaders and deputies, and personnel at bases and administrative units must subscribe to available and applicable alert and warning services. You can subscribe via email, mobile phone text, VHF radio channel or public radio alerts.

Useful emergency alerts and warnings services are:

- [MetService weather warnings](#) – the New Zealand Weather Service issues a range of warnings on weather conditions that are regularly updated.
- [Tsunami Warning Centre](#) – a worldwide tsunami monitoring service that notifies recipients of earthquakes around the world and the risk to exposed coastlines in exposed countries.

- [Civil Defence and Emergency Management, Auckland Region](#) – a regional alert and warning notification system for potential or actual significant emergency events e.g. severe weather, infrastructure / utility failure and natural disaster.
- [Safe Travel](#) – the NZ government's travel advisory subscription service that identifies events that pose a potential or actual threat to travellers e.g. disease outbreak, civil unrest, natural disaster.
- [Allianz Global Assistance](#) – the University of Auckland partners with Allianz Global Assistance, the leading international travel emergency support service.

4.4.4.3 Communications

Reliable means of communication are essential for all field activities, so that if something goes wrong, you can alert Emergency Services and get help. It is also important that participants can report their progress and status to their base camp or field activity leader. In some environments, tracking devices can be used to check on expedition progress and routes taken from the base camp or administrative control unit. If the field activity group loses contact, their last known position will help emergency responders narrow down search areas.

Provide a means of communication between:

- Groups/vehicles in the field and the main base camp
- The main base camp and the University contact or a nominated communications base
- The main base camp and Emergency Services

4.4.4.3.1 Scheduled check-ins

A scheduled check-in procedure should be established with a nominated emergency contact. The recommended schedule "check ins" are as follows:

- Arrive onsite or reach destination.
- Start the activity.
- Complete the activity.
- Return to base camp or administrative unit.

4.4.4.3.2 Communication equipment familiarity and back up

- More than one person in each group should be trained in the use of the communications equipment carried with the group.
- Ensure that familiarity training is carried out before the field activity begins, and all equipment is in good working order.
- Provide back-up equipment such as a spare radio, mobile phone, and additional battery packs, EPIRB or flares in case equipment damage or failure occurs in remote or high risk field activities.
- Ensure that communication devices are placed in a waterproof bag or container and are carried on the person, to prevent loss or separation.

4.4.4.3.3 Types of communication devices

Mobile phones are very convenient but are not always suitable as the only means of communication. Radio, satellite phones, GPS tracking, duress devices, personal locator beacons (e.g. EPIRB or PLBs) are also required in some circumstances. All of these have advantages and limitations and it is important to understand which ones (or combinations) will be most suitable for the activity and the environment.

Communication device	Suitability	Limitation(s)
EPIRB (emergency position-indicating radio beacon)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For use on boats and ships and kayaks Waterproof and designed to float in water Have additional safety devices, such as strobe lights GPS equipped will pinpoint the specific position of the person / beacon Battery life is twice as long as PLBs 	Do not provide a verbal means of contact
PLB (personal locator beacon) – for use in remote locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For people working in remote areas of NZ where there is no cell phone or VHF radio coverage, take a 406MHz PLB (personal locator beacon) GPS equipment will pinpoint the specific position of the person / beacon 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not float May not be fully waterproof Aerials are often not designed for use in the water Have a shorter battery life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is important to understand the differences between an EPIRB and a PLB, which are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> EPIRB standards require all EPIRBs to float the right way up when in the water and to have an operating battery life of at least 48 hours. PLB standards <i>have no requirement</i> to float the right way up when in the water and only require an operating battery life of at least 24 hours. 		
ELT (emergency locator transmitter)	For use in aircraft of a certain commercial category and automatically activate should the aircraft crash.	PLB or EPIRB can be carried if operating with smaller aircraft but require manual activation by the survivor in the event of an incident.
GPS tracking, acknowledgment and help device e.g. SPOT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ideal communication device to indicate participant status, needs, progress and route taking Suitable for operations with vehicles, hiking, and operating in remote areas around the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Requires unobstructed signal clearance e.g. no tree canopy, car roofs Must be supplemented with a PLB 406 for high risk activities

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location can be picked up by any other authorised person via Google maps • Alert messages can be sent to nominated persons' emails and mobile phones • Will work if placed on dashboard of vehicle, boat or aircraft 	
Mountain radio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-way communication • Obtain updated weather forecasts • Works almost anywhere in the backcountry, fairly reliable service • Relatively inexpensive to hire • Available from multiple locations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relatively heavy and bulky when compared with other communication devices • Setup time required • Large operating area required (for aerial setup) • Difficult to set up if injured and solo • Call quality can be affected by atmospheric static (storms)
Avalanche transceiver	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transceivers: An essential for anyone entering the backcountry in an alpine environment • If you are buried in an avalanche and are wearing a transceiver you have a significantly higher chance of being found quickly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to ensure batteries are fully charged • Potential interference from other communication devices
Mobile phone tracking app	Ideal for urban environments or low risk level activities e.g. street or home surveys, local parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A secondary device if operating around water environments • May not be fully waterproof • Do not float
Personal assist tracking device	Ideal for person operating in urban environments in NZ where there is need for tracking or alerting others in the event of an emergency	
Marine radio	VHF Radio	

	Channel 16: Multiple parties and Coast Guard monitoring	
Man down alert devices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ideal for person operating alone who has become incapacitated • Sends an automatic alert to nominated persons and high pitch siren • Used in industrial environments 	
Satellite phone	Ideal for maintaining direct verbal communication when operating in remote areas of the world.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Require operators to verify GPS location if seeking help • Difficulties obtaining satellite connection • Requires back up battery and or charging devices
Two-way radios VHF	Ideal for several groups operating in close proximity and line of sight	Limited signal and communication if operating in rough undulating terrain
Mobile phones	Ideal for most local urban fieldwork activities and low risk activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not waterproof • Limitations in coverage

Personal locator beacons, mountain radios and satellite phones can be hired for small daily fees. This would be a sensible precaution where technology requires recharging, updating or replacement.

Beacon Hire Outlets

<http://beacons.org.nz/>

Mountain Radio Service

A volunteer group that provides a backcountry communications service with scheduled calls for backcountry users.

www.mountainradio.co.nz - Canterbury Mountain Radio Service

www.wmrs.org.nz - Wellington Mountain Radio Service

www.cnimrs.org.nz - Central North Island Mountain Radio Service

4.4.4.4 First aid

When planning the field activity, undertake a first aid assessment to determine:

- The number of first aiders required
- Whether standard or advanced first aiders are required

- The number and location of first aid kits and any other specialised equipment required

The first aid assessment must be completed by a trained first aider and/ or field activity leader. This can also be done in consultation with the local health and safety co-ordinator, the health and safety representative, and participants. The Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service can assist with first aid assessments, if required. First aid assessments need to be reviewed whenever:

- The number of participants changes significantly
- The hazards and risks change significantly
- Or at least, every three years

4.4.4.4.1 Numbers of first aiders for field activities in low risk urban environments

The following table is intended as a guide for planners. The provision is based on the levels of risk and reasonable practicality. Heads of School/ Department and Directors of Service Division have the discretion to approve a lower ratio of first aiders, if they are satisfied that first aid assistance is readily available. Note that in the case of very low risk activities (e.g. walking trips to visit people and/or places in and around the Auckland CBD and immediate environs), the requirement for first aiders and first aid kits may even be waived if it is reasonable to do so.

Groups up to 15 people	One person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher
Groups of 16 to 30 people	Two people trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher
Groups of over 30 people	2 people trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher, plus an additional person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher for every additional 20 people or part thereof

4.4.4.4.2 Numbers of first aiders for field activities in rural areas

Field activities in rural areas should include as many first aiders as practicable and they should be trained to at least Level 2 Outdoor First Aid Unit standard 424, with additional modules as determined by the first aid assessment. Whenever practical, first aiders should not travel in the same vehicle.

Groups up to 15 people	One or two people trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher
Groups of 16 to 30 people	Two people trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher
Groups of over 30 people	Two people trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher, plus an additional person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher for every additional 10 people or part thereof

4.4.4.4.3 Numbers of first aiders for field activities in remote areas

Field activities in rural areas should include as many first aiders as practicable and they should be trained to at least Level 2 Outdoor First Aid Unit standard 424, with additional modules as determined by the first aid assessment. Additional specialist first aid training may be needed for individuals operating in extremely remote areas. Whenever practical, first aiders should not travel in the same vehicle.

Groups of up to 15 people	Two people trained in remote area first aid.
Groups of 16-30 people	Two people trained in remote area first aid plus an additional person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher
Groups of over 30 people	Two people trained in remote area first aid, plus one person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher, plus an additional person trained in Level 2 First Aid or higher for every additional 10 people or part thereof

For full details on first aid equipment and medications, please refer to Field Activity Guidance - Operation/*Appendix 1*. First aid standards and procedures are available on the University website: [First Aid Standards and Procedures](#)

4.4.5 Security and threat analysis

A fundamental part of the initial risk assessment for any fieldwork activity, either in New Zealand or overseas, is consideration of security and political threat levels. This should include both the field site/destination and transport to, from and around the destination. In order to assess these threats the field activity leader(s) and participants must have access to comprehensive up-to-date information.

Travel to a high/extreme risk country requires sign-off from a dean (for faculty staff) or the Registrar (for other staff). Note that travel to “extreme risk” destinations is not covered under the University Insurance Policy. The University Risk Office should be consulted for guidance.

Allianz Global Assistance: Before travelling overseas, field activity leaders and participants should create an account in order to receive daily bulletins with up-to-date information on events in their destination country.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT): Before travelling overseas, check the [Safe Travel website](#). Travel to areas where MFAT advises against all or all but essential travel will require additional consent from the head of department and you will need to check with the Risk Manager that the University travel insurance remains valid for these destinations.

The University will not support student travel to a country or region with a government travel advisory set at “high risk” or “extreme risk” unless under exceptional circumstances. In this case, individual students should seek consideration by the Vice Chancellor. More information is on the Staff Intranet: [Student travel overseas](#).

The likelihood of incurring harm will depend on the location and nature of the field activity. Your threat analysis should be used to inform the risk assessment and influence the planning and authorisation process. Detailed control measures must ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, reduction of the threats identified.

Examples of potential security hazards are listed in Field Activity Guidance – Operation /*Field activity security controls*.

4.4.6 Travel insurance

The University provides overseas travel insurance at no cost to the individual in the following circumstances:

- Staff, students and consultants/contractors travelling overseas on University business and returning to New Zealand (provided travel is funded by the University, a research grant or by a third party such as another university, research entity or conference organiser).
- Associated private travel (e.g. visiting relatives, holiday, etc.). Staff will be covered for up to 31 days of associated private travel per business/field trip. Students and consultants/contractors will be covered for up to 14 days of associated private travel per business/field trip.
- Accompanying and immediate family of staff (i.e. spouse/partner and/or children) travelling in the above circumstances. In order to qualify for University travel insurance, family members must accompany staff for at least 5 days of business travel. They will also be covered for up to 31 days as per above. No cover is provided for family members of students, consultants or contractors.

More information is on the University website: [Travel Insurance Guidelines](#)

4.5 TRAINING

The field activity leader will have or will acquire the knowledge, experience and skills to lead and participate in field activities, and is responsible for organising participant training well in advance of the departure date. Specific training requirements will depend on the nature of the field activity. Training may include:

- Cultural awareness
- Emergency response
- Field activity training
- First aid and preventive medical treatment
- Fitness training
- Food handling and hygiene
- Leadership
- Languages
- Specific equipment training
- Swimming lessons
- Vehicle safety

For more information on training requirements, see the relevant specific risk assessment guidance: Water and Marine Environments, Alpine Safety, etc.

4.6 ACCESS/AUTHORISATION/PERMITS

Field activity leaders should seek approval and confirm authorisation to access property, land, parks, places of work, residences etc., from the land/property owner, local IWI or indigenous people, local authorities and government agencies.

Specific permits and licences may be required for field activities involving the collection of samples, interacting with wildlife or operating specific types of equipment. Some agencies will require a specific health and safety plan to be provided.

This keeps all parties informed and ensures that:

- Any hazards are identified
- The proposed field activity does not conflict with any other operations
- Sensitive or sacred sites are not disturbed or damaged
- Other agencies and groups are informed and can assist with permission to operate in a specific area

To obtain approvals in time for the activity it is essential that contact is made with the approving body several weeks before the planned activity takes place.

Note: There is no need to duplicate this work if this task has already been completed as part of the 'ethics' approval process and / or research planning application.

4.6.1 Specific authorisations and permits

Department of Conservation: You need to have permission from DOC to collect samples (plants, soils, rocks, invertebrates, freshwater fish species, historic materials); catch, hold, release or kill most wildlife species and marine life; and operate unmanned aerial vehicles. A pre-application meeting with DOC may be required; contact your local DOC office.

Auckland Council regional parks: You need to have permission from Auckland Council and/or the local ranger if you want to carry out any of the activities described above.

Auckland Transport: If you are planning to carry out any work or activity that affects the normal operation of a road, footpath or berm, you will need to submit a Corridor Access Request. Contact Auckland Transport for advice.

Harbour master and port authority: If you are planning to carry out any work or activity in or around certain areas of harbours, lakes or ports, consult the local harbour master and/or port authority about the nature of the activity and any restrictions.

New Zealand Defence Force: If you are planning to carry out any work or activity in or around areas controlled and operated by the NZDF, seek permission from the Base Commander.

Forest permits: Commercial forests are multi-hazard working sites. Anyone wanting to access forest estates will need to contact the site owner and obtain a permit.

Airports and aerodromes: If you are planning to carry out any work or activity in or around an airport or aerodrome, seek permission from the airport/aerodrome owner. Depending on the nature of activity, you will also need to seek approval from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Railways: The land surrounding railway tracks is called the rail corridor. You need a valid permit to work on a rail corridor. Contact Kiwi Rail and obtain a permit before beginning any activity.

This is not an exhaustive list and other authorities and agencies may require to be contacted.

4.7 BRIEFING PARTICIPANTS

The pre-departure briefing should include:

- Full details about the logistics of the trip, including location(s), site, itinerary, travel and transport, accommodation, first aid and catering
- Practical requirements for the activity, e.g. personal protective equipment, sunglasses, sunscreen, insect repellent, footwear, weatherproof coat, water bottle
- A copy of the approved emergency response plan

- Guidelines on health and safety measures relevant to the activity e.g. use of equipment or vehicles, communication protocols
- Rules relating to alcohol, drugs and tobacco
- Dress code, if applicable
- A written statement about the consequences if students do not comply with safety instructions or display disruptive behaviour on the field trip
- Accident compensation insurance and travel insurance cover
- A reminder that all participants must complete and sign a declaration and consent form

4.8 THIRD PARTY CREDENTIALS/COLLABORATION WITH OTHER AGENCIES

If you intend to involve any third party organisations/contractors in the field activity, first check their suitability with the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service. They may want to see the organisation's health and safety documentation and insurance before approving your plan.

Where the University of Auckland staff are collaborating with another agency and that agency is the lead, University of Auckland staff shall adopt the health and safety procedures and training requirements of that agency.

Where the health and safety procedures of that lead agency are less than or contradict University requirements, then parties will discuss and consider the issues raised, based on a risk assessment.

4.9 SUPERVISION OF STUDENT GROUPS

The field activity leader should determine an appropriate staff/student ratio when planning a field activity.

To ensure appropriate levels of supervision, planning should take into account:

- The experience, qualifications and skills of staff (including volunteers, instructors, etc.)
- The age, maturity, physical characteristics and gender of students
- The ability and experience of the students
- The size of the group
- The nature and location of the activity
- The activities to be undertaken
- Requirements outlined in Part Two of this guidance or by regulatory or good practice requirements for specific activities
- Any other relevant factors

For remote and high risk activities, a ratio of 1:8 is suitable for most situations. A ratio of more than 1:20 is not recommended in any situation.

The nature of some activities may require additional supervisors per student numbers and some supervisors may require specific skill sets and competency to ensure the safety of a group undertaking certain types of activities or operating in certain types of environments. Refer to the relevant risk assessment guidance for specific recommendations.

Some students will have the knowledge, experience, training and qualifications to undertake supervisory roles for some activities and group work. Where deemed appropriate and with the students' agreement they may supervise participants and support the field activity leader and other staff.

Where possible, there should be male and female supervisors for field activities involving male and female students.

4.10 APPROVAL

All field activity plans must be submitted at least ten working days in advance, allowing sufficient time for assessment and approval (unless **exceptional circumstances** apply).

The completed field activity plan needs to be approved by the head of school, head of department or an individual nominated by the Dean, responsible for the area of field activity. Field activity plans for postgraduate students conducting research off campus should be submitted by the student's main supervisor. Seek expert review, if you have not done so already.

Send copies of the approved plan and associated documentation to the University contact in the school/department, make them available to participants during the field activity, and file for future reference when the field activity is over.

A field activity plan template can be used for repeated field activities that occur at the same location. However, you will need to undertake a risk assessment each time to ensure there are no changes to the existing field activity plan. Such field activity plans also need to be reviewed every three years or at any time where an incident has taken place.

4.11 PRE-DEPARTURE ASSESSMENT

As required by the Field Activity Health and Safety Standard: "A pre-departure assessment must be conducted prior to undertaking any field activity. This will include, but not be limited to, current conditions (including weather, environmental, cultural or political outlook) and capability of all participants (medical conditions, level of fitness, required training completed)". This should be sent to the head of school, head of department or an individual nominated by the Dean, and the administrative unit for final approval and reference.

Definitions

The following definitions apply to this document:

Accident refers to an incident which has given rise to injury, ill-health or fatality.

Expert review is an appointed individual or group with the qualifications and experience to provide advice and support for the planning and assessment of field activity for the University.

Field activity is any work carried out by staff, students and contractors for the purposes of teaching, research or representing the University off-site (where health and safety is not managed by other host institutions). This may be a taught course, research project or collaborative expedition. See Appendix 2 for a list of specific field activities undertaken by the University.

Field activity leader is an academic leader of teaching and research, professional staff manager or contractor who has the authority and responsibility to make decisions on all aspects of the field activity. This person has the capability, qualifications and experience to be responsible for the planning and operation of the field activity, as designated by the dean or head of school/department. If a participant is working alone in the field, then they are the activity leader.

Field activity participant is anyone taking part in field activities, including volunteers (defined as “pre-recognised” people willing to participate in the fieldwork activities, who are offering their time and services for no remuneration). A participant may work independently, without direct supervision (as an activity leader) or under direct supervision by the Field activity leader.

Field activity plan answers the why, what, where, who, and how of the activities to be undertaken, with consideration of the risks and plans for minimisation of those risks at a management level.

Incident refers to any unplanned event resulting in, or having a potential for injury, ill health, damage or other loss. (An incident may also be termed a “near-miss”, “close call” or “dangerous occurrence”.)

Near miss is an incident that could have resulted in injury or illness.

Notifiable event is an event in the workplace that WorkSafe must be notified about. This includes the death of a person, a notifiable injury or illness (requiring immediate treatment or hospitalisation) and a notifiable incident (exposing people to a serious risk to their health and safety). This function is undertaken by the Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service.

Remote area field activity is work that is carried out in locations where it is difficult to summon help and/or where emergency assistance is expected to be more than one hour away.

Risk assessment is the process of evaluating the risk(s) arising from the hazard(s), taking into account the adequacy of any existing control measures, deciding whether or not the risk(s) is acceptable, and taking further action as required.

Risk control hierarchy, in order of the most preferred to least preferred method of control, is as follows:

1. **Elimination** - remove the exposure of the participant to the hazard. This is the most preferred of all the controls and should be used wherever possible.
2. **Elimination** through substitution - replace a high risk task or item of equipment with a safer equivalent.
3. **Isolation** through engineering - minimise the risk of harm by isolating a participant from a hazard.
4. **Minimisation** through administrative controls.
5. **Minimisation** through personal protective equipment (PPE)

Shall, are/is to and must are used in health, safety and wellbeing guidance in places where there is a legal requirement to achieve the desired result.

Should is used in health, safety and wellbeing guidance as a way of indicating a preference. It does not indicate a mandatory requirement as other alternatives may achieve an equivalent result.

Staff member refers to any individual employed on a full or part time basis by the University.

University means the University of Auckland and includes all subsidiaries.

University vehicle(s) include cars (primarily people-carrying, including saloons, station wagons, hatchbacks, estate vehicles), vans (primarily not people-carrying, including single and double cab), utilities, trucks, trailers, boat trailers, motorcycles, motor scooters, quad bikes, motorised boats, forklifts, mini vans, and grounds maintenance equipment (including ride on mowers, tractors, flat deck mowers, for example) that are owned or leased by the University.

Volunteer is a person authorised to participate in the operation of part or all of a planned field activity, who is offering their time and services for no remuneration.

Key relevant documents

- University of Auckland Health and Safety Policy
- Field activity plan (RAMS form)
- Field activity FAQs
- Motor Vehicles Accidents and Insurance policy
- Motor Vehicles Administration Policy
- Motor Vehicles Driver Policy
- Travel Policy
- Travel Insurance Guidelines
- 24557 Demonstrate knowledge of the safe operation of an All-Terrain Vehicle
- 24554 Ride an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) on flat terrain
- 24559 Ride an All-Terrain Vehicle (ATV) on undulating terrain

APPENDIX 1: FIELD ACTIVITY OVERVIEW

When	What	Who
Before	Field activity plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hazard identification (P/3.3) • Risk assessment (P/3.4) • Control measures (P/3.3, 3.4) • Expert review • Participant declaration and consent forms • Access/permissions (P/3.7) • Travel and transport (O/1, Appendix 2) • Insurance • Accommodation • Weather contingencies • Equipment (P/3.3.3.7) • Catering and hygiene (O/6) • First aid and other medical supplies (P/3.4.4.4, O/ Appendix 1) • Communications devices (P/3.4.4.3) • Emergency response plan (P/3.4.4.1) • Cultural considerations 	Field activity leader, deputy field activity leader, with input from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health, Safety and Wellbeing Service • Trained and experienced participants
	Approval (P/3.11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Line manager • Head of School/Department/Director of Service • Dean of faculty (if the activity is assessed as high risk)
	Training (P/3.6)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevant participants (as identified by the field activity plan)
	Briefing participants (P/3.8)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field activity leader • Deputy field activity leader
During	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site instruction • Emergency response plan (P/3.4.4) • Communications (P/3.4.4.3) • Accident/incident reporting (O/8) • Approval for personal/downtime activities (O/7) • Waste disposal (O/9) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field activity leader • Deputy field activity leader • Trained and experienced participants
After	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equipment repaired or replaced and returned • Incident follow-up • Review /evaluation (O/10) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Field activity leader • Deputy field activity leader

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