

**Memorial University**  
**Department of Ocean Sciences**  
**Safety Procedures for Academic and Research Field Work**

**Updated February, 2025**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The Department of Ocean Sciences Field Safety Policy applies to all faculty, staff and students who are involved in off-campus field activities related to research or teaching at Memorial. The aim of the policy is to make field work safe and the experience enjoyable, worthwhile and valuable.

The terms “field activity” or "field work" is to be interpreted broadly and will include, for example, work aboard ships, coastal field studies, land-based field studies or work at field stations, e.g. the Bonne Bay Marine Station. A visit to a ship at the dock, for example, will not count as field work. Field Trips can be for part of a day or extended over several weeks.

**\*\*\* A Job Hazard Analysis form (required by MUNL Environmental Health & Safety) should be completed before undertaking a field trip/work (refer to attached form and guidelines at the end of this document). It is also advisable to use the “Work Alone” feature of the MUN Safe App when undertaking field work. When working alone, it is required that someone be informed of where you are working, when you expect to return and that they be contacted once you have returned (checking in).**

## **SAFETY POLICY**

The Memorial University Safety Policies (e.g., diving, boating, incident/accident reporting, driving) and the Field Safety Policy of the department shall apply during approved field work.

## **PERSON-IN-CHARGE**

All participants are collectively responsible for ensuring field work is conducted safely under the leadership of the person-in-charge (e.g., faculty member or designate) who should take all reasonable steps to ensure that:

- a. An assessment of known and potential risk has been conducted to the extent that is appropriate for your circumstances. The safety documents contain a fairly comprehensive check-list of potential hazards/risks to serve as a guide.
- b. Each participant be informed of the known risks, and physical requirements.
- c. The field work is conducted safely.
- d. It has been determined what safety equipment and clothing is appropriate.
- e. All University equipment taken on field work is thoroughly checked for safety by a qualified person ahead of time.

- f. Each field trip participant is instructed in safety, the wearing of safety clothing, (e.g., hard hats, safety boots, goggles, personal floatation devices) and the safe use of the equipment. This is especially important when the person-in-charge cannot be present.
- g. A first-aid kit accompanies all activities.

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

## **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 beforehand, 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, but participants are expected to ensure they are properly trained, remain vigilant and immediately report any issue/concern.

### **II. BUSH, REMOTE OR HAZARDOUS AREAS**

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

- a. Having at least one participant trained in first aid and CPR.
- b. Providing a communication link to a central station (via cell phone or in remote locations, some form of satellite communication).
- c. Conducting area familiarization trips, where appropriate, before work has started.
- d. Having an emergency plan (e.g. information on communication, first aid and evacuation plans) and a procedure for contacting local authorities or police who will organize a search for missing people.
- e. Obtaining from participants before leaving campus
  - i. MCP numbers or equivalent
  - ii. contact information for next of kin
  - iii. details of special health considerations and special diets.

- f. Having all field work conducted in work groups of two or more persons (i.e. working alone in remote areas is highly discouraged). If working alone, ensure that someone is aware of where you are working and that at the end of the day, you make contact with them to check in.
- g. For underwater research, refer to Memorial Scientific Diving requirements. [https://www.mun.ca/health\\_safety/health-and-safety-management-system/scientific-diving/](https://www.mun.ca/health_safety/health-and-safety-management-system/scientific-diving/)

## **FOREIGN TRAVEL**

For work undertaken in non-western countries, the participants should consider contacting 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.

## **VEHICLES**

University owned and rental vehicles must be acquired and operated in accordance with Memorial University Policy and Procedures (<https://www.mun.ca/risk/driving/>).

Only qualified drivers who meet the Memorial University requirements may drive University vehicles. Likewise, only those considered qualified by the rental company may drive rental vehicles.

## **ATVs, SIDE-BY-SIDES (UTVs) and SNOWMOBILES**

Training is required for the use of such off-road vehicles, and can involve in-house or external training (e.g., [https://safetynl.ca/course\\_category/off-road-vehicle-safety-training/](https://safetynl.ca/course_category/off-road-vehicle-safety-training/)). Operators are expected to follow provincial regulations and those that apply in the jurisdiction where they plan to use of such vehicles.

## **BOATS**

All operators of boats with motors have a license to operate - this is required by the University and the Province. All operators of boats without motors must be certified by the University. Courses in operating both types of craft are offered by the University. It is the responsibility of the person-in-charge to ensure that all safety precautions are taken, operators are certified or licensed, that boats are in good repair and carry legally required safety equipment. For more information, please see the [Boating Safety](#).

## **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. It is recommended, however, that participants

inform the person-in-charge if they will be departing from the field site and where they will be heading, particularly when working in remote/hazardous locations.

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.

### **CODE OF CONDUCT (to be conveyed to all participants)**

All participants in field work should expect an inclusive experience, free from harassment and discrimination and as such, comply with the following code of conduct:

- Be benevolent to oneself and respecting of your own limits.
- Be kind or benevolent to others. Do not insult or denigrate others.
- Act professionally. Any remarks or behaviours that lead to exclusion or devaluing of others are not appropriate.
- Make an effort to make the environment inclusive, allowing the opportunity for everyone to express themselves and the opportunity to contribute.
- All communications - online and in person - must be appropriate for a professional audience. Sexual or discriminatory language and images are not acceptable.
- Be attentive to micro-aggressions, where the actions taken by one person may be hurtful to others and may contribute to a negative environment, even when they are not done with the intention of hurting.
- Listen, offer sincere apologies, and commit to learning and research at hand.

Specifically, unacceptable behaviours include verbal comments related to gender, sexual orientation, disability, physical appearance, body size, cultural community and religion, posting of sexual images in public spaces, deliberate intimidation, stalking, harassing photography or recording, inappropriate physical contact and unwanted sexual attention. Any form of harassment or discrimination should be reported and will be held in confidence in the first instance. It is recognized, however, that reporting such behaviour can be difficult, particularly for members of under-represented groups or individuals in a vulnerable situation, and that in some situations direct dialogue is impossible. It is therefore encouraged each participant remain vigilant and intervene with benevolence in such situations.



# Job Hazard Analysis

Supervisor: \_\_\_\_\_

| Activity:         |  |       | Location:                |                               |   | Date:          |                     |
|-------------------|--|-------|--------------------------|-------------------------------|---|----------------|---------------------|
| Tasks in Activity | Associated Hazards   | Risks | Proposed Hazard Controls | Residual Risk (with Controls) |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          | P                             | S | Risking Rating | Control Implemented |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
| Date              | Name (Print and Signatures of team members who have participated and/or reviewed this JHA) |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |
|                   |  |       |                          |                               |   |                |                     |

## Job Hazard Analysis

|                                  |   | Risk Assessment Scoring Matrix   |  |  |  |  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|--|
|                                  |   | Severity   |  |  |  |  |
|                                  |   | Very Low   | Low  | Moderate   | High   | Very High  |
| <b>Safety</b>                    |   | •No Injury   | •First Aid / Medical Aid   | •Lost Time Injury (LTI)  | •Permanent Disability  | • Fatality   |
| <b>Health</b>                    |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reversible health effects (e.g. dizzy, headache, minor irritations, etc.)</li> <li>•Comparable to report only</li> <li>•Below detectable limits</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reversible health effects (e.g. skin, eye, mucous membrane, sun burn etc.)</li> <li>•Comparable to first aid or medical-aid</li> <li>•Below action limits</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Serious reversible health effects (e.g. MSD, heat exhaustion, vibration effects, etc.)</li> <li>•Comparable to LTI</li> <li>•Between action limits and OELs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Irreversible health effects and illness (e.g. hearing or respiratory impairment, etc.)</li> <li>•Above OELs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•IDLH - Immediately Dangerous to Life &amp; Health (e.g. asphyxiation, poisoning, etc.)</li> <li>• Severe life shortening illness (e.g. carcinogens, mutagens, etc.)</li> </ul> |
| <b>Probability of Occurrence</b> | <b>Almost Certain</b><br>Expected to occur most times                               | <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>High</b>  | <b>Very High</b>   | <b>Very High</b>   |
|                                  | <b>Likely</b><br>Probably occur most times (1 in 10)                                | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>High</b>  | <b>High</b>  | <b>Very High</b>   |
|                                  | <b>Possible</b><br>Should occur sometimes (1 in 100)                                | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>High</b>  | <b>High</b>  |
|                                  | <b>Unlikely</b><br>Could occur at some times (1 - 1000)                             | <b>Very Low</b>  | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Moderate</b>  | <b>Moderate</b>  |
|                                  | <b>Almost Impossible</b><br>May only occur at exceptional times (facility lifetime) | <b>Very Low</b>  | <b>Very Low</b>  | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Low</b>   | <b>Moderate</b>  |

### Time Frame

### Risk Appetite - Action Required

|           |  |
|-----------|--|
| Immediate | Very High: Immediately dangerous: stop the process and implement controls  |
| Immediate | High risk: investigate the process and implement controls immediately  |
| 1 months  | Moderate risk: keep the process going; however, a control plan must be developed and should be implemented as soon as possible |
| 3 months  | Low risk: keep the process going, but monitor regularly. A control plan should also be investigated                            |
| 6 months  | Very low risk: keep monitoring the process   |
|           |  |