

# Field Safety Guide



## Environmental Health & Safety

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<http://www.usf.edu/ehs/>

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Before YGn

*The University Laboratory and Field Safety Committee coordinates and monitors laboratory and field safety functions and guidelines associated with research and teaching laboratories. In fulfilling these responsibilities the Committee developed the Field Safety Guide. This guide provides safety guidelines for all individuals participating in field activities including but not limited to area managers, instructors, teaching assistants, course coordinators, staff, volunteers, and students.*

## **Introduction**

Field work is defined as research and educational activities taking place outside of the traditional classroom or lab setting. Conducting field work is an exciting and important component of USF's teaching and research programs, but precautions must be taken to ensure a safe and productive experience. Special risks related to travel, being outside, and interactions with strangers are inherent to field work. This manual provides useful information regarding health and safety issues that may arise in the field and how they should be dealt with while physically away from the USF campus support system.

Planning for work in the field should include local emergency contact information, appropriate communication equipment (radio, cell, or satellite phone), personal protective equipment, first aid supplies, and boat/vehicle emergency kits. Appropriate training, standard operating procedures, insurance, permitting, and vaccinations should be obtained. A Field Research Plan containing the names and emergency contact information of all participants must be supplied to a per6 ( Ert)-2.9 (ic)-1.9en6.6 (n)20.0(t)JJ2fp ( e)7.9 (m)4..391 0 Td[ Td(,)T2 ( o)-60 Tw 4.4.3 (

## Before You Go

- Prepare USF Field Research Plan

The USF Field Research Plan

(Appendix A) summarizes important information about the field work.

This includes team leader

designation, itinerary, emergency,

and local contact information, a

check-in schedule, and a description

of the field work and anticipated hazards associated with it. This form must be completed and supplied

to all team members and the Principal Investigator. In addition the plan must be submitted to the

Department Chair or their designee. Someone outside the field team should be selected to be

responsible for monitoring the check-ins and responding appropriately should communications fail.

Scientific Divers should file a float plan with the Scientific Diving Office. Boaters should also file a Float

Plan with the responsible departmental party. (Appendix B)

required training (<http://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/environmental-health-safety/training/index.aspx>).

- Obtain or write standard operating procedures for specific field activities

These protocols describe the work being done, the equipment needed, and safety precautions.

- Verify insurance coverage is adequate

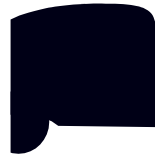
The State of Florida provides basic insurance coverage for University-owned buildings and building contents for specific causes of loss, as well as liability coverage for USF faculty, staff, and official volunteers for their actions within the course and scope of their jobs. However, the University does not automatically extend coverage for scientific equipment, electronics, or other property brought into the field, including vehicles. Therefore, equipment that is damaged in the course of field work will likely not be covered by insurance. For more information regarding insurance coverage options for scientific or other equipment, or for other questions regarding insurance or liability, please contact the USF Division of Environmental Health and Safety at 813-974-4036.

Please note that students are not covered by USF general or automobile liability insurance. Students

must make their own arrangements for equipment coverage. For more information, contact the USF Division of Environmental Health and Safety at 813-974-4036.

- The Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission requires permits to do research involving wildlife.
- Department of Transportation (DOT)
  - The transportation of hazardous materials by road in the United States is regulated under this federal agency. DOT regulations do not apply to transportation of hazardous materials in personal vehicles, but this practice is not recommended. Insurance companies may not cover claims involving the transportation of hazardous materials.
- Obtain or verify vaccinations as required
 

Tetanus immunizations should be current. The USF Student Health Services offers travel counseling. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website provides detailed information regarding travel vaccinations and County Health Departments have Immunization Clinics.



#### Vehicle and Boat

- Inspection
- Operation
- Safety Gear

## Hazard Information

### 1. *Vehicle and Boat Safety*

Inspect vehicle to see if it is in safe operating condition and pack appropriate emergency supplies (Appendix C). Become familiar with the vehicle/vessel's operation

and local laws. Be alert to hazards such as fatigue, animals, logs, rocks, and barbed wire. Do not drive a vehicle into water of unknown depth. Anyone operating a boat under the auspices of USF is required to complete a Boating Safety Course. Contact Research Integrity and Compliance/Boating Safety for more information.

### 2. *Biological Hazards*

Common biological hazards include insects, snakes, bears, alligators, poison ivy, oak, or sumac, red tide, jellies, and sharks. Become familiar with the types of wildlife that may be encountered and learn how to avoid attacks and treat stings and bites. Wear protective clothing. Shake clothing and bedding before

use and don't set up near nests or burrows. Wildlife may transmit diseases like rabies, Lyme disease, tetanus, West Nile virus, and St. Louis encephalitis. Microorganisms in water cause giardiasis and other ailments. Carry drinking water, use purification tablets, or bring water to a rolling boil for at least one minute before consuming.

### 3. *Physical Hazards*

Check the weather forecast. Be mindful of the danger of sun exposure by using sunscreen and protective clothing and working in the morning and evening. Excessive heat can bring about heat exhaustion and heat stroke. Drink plenty of cool liquids and avoid strenuous activity during hot weather. Take shelter inside a building or vehicle during a thunderstorm. If caught away from shelter, get away from tall objects and crouch on the ground to make yourself as small as possible. Lightning may start wildfires. Find out if the field work area is prone to flooding. It is not safe to be on the water in a thunderstorm. Return to shore if possible. If not, shelter in the cabin or keep low in an open boat.

### 4. *Personal Safety*

Research can place workers in vulnerable situations. They may face the risk of violence from strangers or psychological stress from the working environment. Complete a risk assessment identifying risks associated with travel, location, and study subjects, and consider controls, such as training and emergency communication, for each risk. Work with a partner, do not give out personal information, and consider scheduling interviews in a neutral location. When travelling abroad, dress and act in alignment with

## Resources

Name	Telephone Number	Web Site
Bureau of Consular Affairs (for international travelers)	Emergency: Within U.S. 888-407-4747 Outside U.S. 202-501-4444	<a href="http://studentsabroad.state.gov/">http://studentsabroad.state.gov/</a> <a href="http://www.travel.state.gov">http://www.travel.state.gov</a>
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)	<a href="http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm">http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/destinations/list.htm</a>
Environmental Health and Safety (EH&S) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fire Safety</li> <li>• Hazardous Waste</li> <li>• Lab and Chemical Safety</li> <li>• Risk Management</li> </ul>	813-974-4036	<a href="http://www.usf.edu/eh&amp;s">http://www.usf.edu/eh&amp;s</a>
Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission	850-488-4676	<a href="http://www.myfwc.com">http://www.myfwc.com</a>
Hillsborough County Health Department	813-307-8077	<a href="http://www.hillscountyhealth.org/new_website/travel.htm">http://www.hillscountyhealth.org/new_website/travel.htm</a>



## References

Field Work Safety Reminders July 2012

<http://ib.berkeley.edu/courses/bio1b/field/pdf/FieldWorkSafetyReminders.pdf>

Report of the Workshop to Promote Safety in Field Sciences

<https://zenodo.org/record/5604956#.YZgStE7MKUI>

United States Coast Guard Boater's Guide to the Federal Requirements for Recreational Boats and Safety Tips

<https://www.uscgboating.org/images/420.PDF>

University of South Florida Chemical Hygiene Plan

<http://www.usf.edu/administrative-services/environmental-health-safety/documents/chemical-hygiene-plan.pdf>

Williams Terry, Dunlap Eloise, Johnson Bruce D, Hamid Ansley. Personal safety in dangerous places. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*. 1992;21(3):343–374.

<http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2757080/>





### Appendix C: Vehicle Checklist

**VISIBILITY**

- Lights (headlights, tail lights, brake lights, turn signal lights, hazard lights)
- Windshield (Cracks, wipers)
- Mirrors (Side and rearview)
- Window defroster
- Horn

**MECHANICAL**

- Fluid levels (brake, steering, oil, water, windshield)
- Fuel
- Brakes (also parking brake)
- Seatbelts

## Appendix D: Boat Checklist

All boat operators must complete a USF Boating Safety Course (813-974-5638). **ITEMS IN BOLD ARE REQUIRED BY THE USCG.** The United States Coast Guard website lists size-specific required safety equipment for recreational vessels up to 65 ft. (<http://forms.cgaux.org/archive/a7012.pdf>)

### COMMUNICATION

- Vessel lighting (in limited visibility or between sunset and sunrise)**
- Trailer lights
- VHF marine radio (batteries) and cell phone
- Float plan filed
- Marine forecast checked

### MECHANICAL

- Battery
- Fuel
- Fluid levels
- Water, bilge pumps
- Power trim
- Trailer tire pressure
- Anchor, line, and rigging
- Review maintenance record

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Laboratory Safety Training

Hazardous Waste Refresher

Biomedical Waste Refresher

Hazardous Communication

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