

SAFETY POLICY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL FIELD STUDIES

Addendum to Laboratory Safety Practices and Policies

Department of Biological Sciences and Department of Chemistry, Mathematics, and Physics

Regarding: The performance of field studies and/or research by students participating in biological courses, independent research, or capstone projects.

Purpose: Field based studies are necessary for collecting data outside of the traditional laboratory setting. However, they present unique risks that are not typically encountered in the laboratory such as remote locations far from immediate medical care, potential exposures to zoonotic or infectious agents, and being exposed to adverse physical conditions. Knowledge of the surroundings and potential risks helps to protect faculty and students conducting field work from possible injury or illness. The purpose of this document is to promote the safety of the faculty and students working in the field.

Policies:

1. While in the field, individuals must wear appropriate foot attire. At a minimum, appropriate foot attire includes a rubber sole, lace-up shoe. A sturdy walking shoe is recommended. Flip flops and sandals are not appropriate field attire and are not permitted. Boots are available and will be provided by the instructor upon request.
2. While in the field, individuals must wear appropriate field attire. Appropriate field attire includes long sleeve shirts, long pants, and a wide brim hat. The appropriate field attire will help protect faculty and students from the inherent hazard of cuts, abrasions, insect bites, and sunburn.
3. Individuals are required to apply sunscreen as needed while in the field.
4. Insects represent a significant source of disease transmission, and precautions to minimize contact are necessary. The use of insect repellent is required in the field to protect against injuries and infections that may result from bites, stings or exposure to insects such as ticks, mosquitoes, flies, and others that are part of the environment.
5. Individuals must wear eye protection and gloves anytime chemical test kits are used in the field.
6. Individuals should use caution when in the field because of the presence of wildlife. Dangers associated with wildlife include, but are not limited to, stings and bites from insects, poisonous snakes, rabid small mammals, spiders, chiggers, and ticks. Individuals should thoroughly inspect their bodies for ticks, bites and rashes when returning from field work.

7. Individuals who have allergies to poisonous plants, insect bites or stings, or any other allergens encountered outdoors must inform their instructor. If necessary, an Epi-pen should be taken into the field for emergency response.
8. When possible, faculty and students should work in groups of three. In the event of an accident one person would assist the injured while another goes for help. Cell phones should be carried while in the field for emergencies, but recognize that cellular service may not always be available.
9. Individuals should watch their step at all times. Steep terrain and slippery or unstable rocks are slip and fall hazards and are the most common dangers in the field.
10. Individuals should use caution when entering the water. Submerged objects are capable of causing cuts and abrasions. Tetanus is a concern for puncture wounds. Individuals should also be aware of deep water or currents that could knock off one's balance.
11. Inclement weather is a common hazard in the field. Individuals should wear or carry appropriate clothing for rain or cold weather, including layered clothing and a waterproof jacket. In the event of thunder or lightning, individuals conducting studies in lakes or streams should exit the water immediately. In all cases, seek safety in a sturdy building or vehicle.
12. Individuals working in the woods are required to wear high visibility orange vests. These vests will be provided by your instructor.
13. Individuals performing field work in or in close proximity to water are not permitted to work alone. If on the water, personal flotation devices must be made available and worn by faculty and students. Students who are not strong swimmers, or may have other concerns, must notify the instructor or appropriate administrator prior to beginning work in the field.
14. The instructor or a designated student must carry a first aid kit at all times while in the field.
15. Whenever possible, University-provided transportation should be used to travel to off-campus field sites. In situations in which University-provided transportation is not available, faculty and student vehicles may be used. If students travel in a faculty member's personal vehicle, they must sign the "Off-Campus Travel Waiver and Assumption of Risk Form." It is recommended, when possible, faculty and students travel in groups of three.

Stevenson University cannot predict every hazard that may confront students working in the field, and as a result students must at all times use good common sense, be observant of environmental conditions, and exercise prudent judgment regarding their safety and the safety of others. Students failing to adhere to these policies may be prohibited from completing their field work, which may result in removal from the field work program with appropriate academic consequences.

I understand that Stevenson University is not responsible for illness or injuries that are the result of field work, and/ or because of a student's failure to comply with the School of the Sciences policies regarding the conduct of field work. I have read and understood all of the foregoing safety precautions. I understand that there are risks to myself and others. Therefore, I agree to abide by the above rules and I will behave in a responsible manner.

Student's Name (please print)

Student's Signature

Date