Planning Field Research Activities

Nadir Erbilgin
Department of Renewable Resources
Director, Field Research Office
Role of Field Research Office (FRO)

- Advocate for field researchers to University administration
- Provide information on how to be compliant with the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*
- Facilitate training
- Provide safety and communication equipment at low-cost

Contact Us:
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Dr. Nadir Erbilgin, Field Research Director

Message from newly appointed director, Dr. Nadir Erbilgin
I am a professor at the University of Alberta within the Faculty of ALES. As the new Director of Field Research Office, I am looking forward to engaging the diverse community of field researchers at the University of Alberta. Our mission is to serve the community and facilitate all off-campus research activities. Our office provide solutions to issues that are important for the community.

Field Research Office (FRO)
The FRO aims to facilitate off campus research activities, including all types of field, archival, library or other research, as well as field trips and field schools, carried out nationally or internationally. We provide advice and offer
Historical perspective

2004: Alberta Government makes changes to *Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Act*

2008: *Field Research Activities Committee (FRAC)* formed

2008: *Field Research Office (FRO)* opened

2010: UofA *Off-campus & Travel (OCAT)* policy.
    - Recognizes academic freedom of researchers.
    - Balances this with legal responsibilities – especially when students are being taken in the field.
    - Tools to determine risk level.

2018: Major changes to Occupational Health & Safety Act in Alberta
TEN easy pre-planning steps for Field Research

- Read the applicable UofA Off-Campus Activity and Travel Policy.
- Determine your risk level from Appendix B of the Travel Policy (all medium, high and extreme level work MUST complete a Field Activities Plan (FAP). Go to Insurance & Risk Assessment's Off-Campus Activity & Travel page and use the Travel Planning Tool (right-hand side under resources).
- Complete the E-Learning Module on How to Create a Field Activities Plan
- ID hazards, consider the people, activities and location of your field project. You can access the EHS Control Library to find field-type hazards.
- Fill out the Field Activities Plan template for your project.
- Implement controls (Elimination, Engineering, Administrative) - look to EHS Hazard and Web Assessment App for help!
- Submit the FAP for approval by the PI if medium and high risk level. Contact the Office of Insurance and Risk Assessment to get their help to mitigate risks if extreme risk level. Send a copy to your department and keep a copy in the field.
- Request a Daily Field Safety Log Book from FRO.
- Write detailed records of weather conditions, road conditions, persons' behaviors, equipment issues, new hazards that would deviate from the FAP in the Daily Field Safety Log Book.
- Remember to fill out the Emergency Information Form for each participant to take with you in the field.

https://www.ualberta.ca/environment-health-safety/field-research-office/fieldresearchpreplanning
You will satisfy the legal obligations if you …

- Develop a working **Field Activities Plan (FAP)**
- Hold daily meetings and keep a record in a **log book**
- Have two way **communication device** (preferably voice)
Communication

• Need to have an "effective communication system"
• Need to set up a daily (ideally) check-in
  o The check-in delegate should be available
  o Cell phone, a satellite phone, a two-way GPS satellite based messaging device (inReach), or a SPOT (only in connection with the Provincial Radio Control Centre (PRCC) as they are not two-way).
  o PRCC
    ▪ Hazardous situation monitoring with safety timer
    ▪ Regular check-ins
    ▪ Emergency Response
    ▪ Weather warnings, AMBER Alerts etc… to field staff who have devices
Field Research Training

• Supervisors must ensure that participants are trained and competent to use equipment and perform their work safely.

• Module 6 of the Supervisory EHS Professional Development eLearning course covers training and competency of workers.

• Training needs for your team members should be identified during the completion of your Hazard Assessment & Evaluation.

• If you are working with a research station or institution or with a particular partner, be aware that they may have their own training requirements that you will have to comply with.
Travel Tips: Travelling out of country for field research?

• Read the U of A's Off-Campus Activities and Travel Policy - any off-campus activity is considered "field research"

• Visit the Travel Resources listed to the right for travel recommendations, advisories and immunization information

• Be aware of the visa requirements if field researchers are planning to "work" abroad

• Travelling Abroad with field equipment or shipping it to destination ahead of time?

• Cannabis Legalization - The effect on UofA travelers
Permissions

• The field researcher has to deal with various permissions (ethical, scientific, land access and regulatory).

• Permission to accessing crown land, or private land
  
  - You must comply with any conditions for entering on to the property.
STEP 1: Determine the risk level
(a) Where are you going?

- Review travel advisory of destination
- Decide what procedures you must follow and the approvals you may need in advance of your trip
- Be aware of your insurance coverage
- Use the Government of Canada’s Country Travel Advice Y Advisories web page: travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories

Exercise normal security precautions  \[\text{LOW}\]
Exercise high degree of caution  \[\text{MEDIUM}\]
Avoid non-essential travel  \[\text{HIGH}\]
Avoid all travel  \[\text{EXTREME}\]
China

Last updated: February 6, 2020 16:30 ET

Still valid: February 7, 2020 16:06 ET

Latest updates: Safety and security - Controls on individuals' movements related to a novel coronavirus

Risk level(s)

⚠️ China - AVOID NON-ESSENTIAL TRAVEL

Avoid non-essential travel to China due to an outbreak of a novel coronavirus.

Novel Coronavirus in China – Public Health Agency of Canada

Safety and security situation

⚠️ Hubei Province - Avoid all travel

Avoid all travel to the province of Hubei, including the cities of Wuhan, Huanggang and Ezhou, due to the imposition of heavy travel restrictions in order to limit the spread of a novel coronavirus.

The Government of Canada has chartered a flight from Wuhan to Canada for Canadian citizens looking to return to Canada. Find out more about Consular services and assistance for Canadians in China.

Safety and security situation
Safety and security

⚠️ Novel coronavirus in China

There is an outbreak of a novel coronavirus in China.
It may be increasingly difficult to travel within the country or in and out of it. If your presence in China isn’t essential, you should consider leaving by commercial means.

Most airlines have suspended or reduced flights to and from the country. A number of countries are denying entry to foreigners who have been in China up to 14 days before their planned arrival.

In parts of China, local authorities have imposed controls on individuals’ movements, including lockdowns of cities or neighbourhoods. Some air, rail and highway links have been suspended or reduced. Further restrictions may be imposed on short notice.

You may be quarantined based on your health condition, previous location or contact with others. Temperature checks are performed in parts of the country.

The New Year or Spring Festival holidays have been extended to February 9 or later. Some government offices, banks, shops, restaurants, schools, and cultural and entertainment sites may be closed.

- Read the Public Health Agency of Canada’s latest update on the 2019 novel coronavirus in China.
- Follow the instructions of local authorities.
- Monitor the news for the latest developments on the evolving situation.
- Expect increased health measures throughout the country, including at points of entry and transportation hubs.
- Contact your accommodations and transportation providers or tour operator to determine if the situation will disrupt your travel plans.
- If you’re leaving China, check your destination’s entry and exit requirements and restrictions specific to the current situation with the nearest foreign diplomatic mission or consulate.

2019 novel coronavirus: Outbreak update – Public Health Agency of Canada
Consular services and assistance for Canadians in China
Risk level(s)
STEP 1: Determine the risk level

(b) Who is going?

- Undergraduate students (MEDIUM)
- Graduate students (LOW)
- Volunteers (ask RISK MANAGEMENT)

- These participants require certain planning steps to be taken, and affect level of risk
STEP 1: Determine the risk level

(c) What activities will take place?

LOW: Activity with same risk as everyday activity

MEDIUM: Activity with higher risks than those encountered in everyday activity, but can be easily mitigated. e.g. most field research, off road travel
STEP 1: Determine the risk level

(c) What activities will take place?

**HIGH:** Activities that have the potential to expose participants to risks that are significantly higher than those encountered in daily activity. Risks can be mitigated with planning, training and standard operating procedures. *e.g.* dangerous wildlife, remote locations

**EXTREME:** Activity with substantial risk to participants, which cannot be reduced with strategic planning.
STEP 1: Determine the Risk level

- Combine the three factors (a)-(c)
- Overall risk level is the highest of (a), (b) and (c)

Review relevant UofA Off-Campus Activity & Travel Policy

If in doubt, let them out — children have the right to play
**DEFINITIONS**

Any definitions listed in the following table apply to this document only with no implied or intended institution-wide use.  

| **Off-Campus Activities and Travel** | Activities and travel undertaken by a member of the university community that takes place away from university owned, leased or rented property for reasons related to the mandate of the University. This includes, but is not limited to teaching programs, field schools, practicum placements, research and graduate studies, faculty or student exchanges, conferences and seminars, extra-curricular activities that involve the formal representation of the University by student ambassadors such as varsity athletics and discipline-based competitions, and trips organized by registered Student Groups.  
This does not include activities within the same municipality as the campus (eg: meetings, conferences and other activities such as student group movie night within Edmonton or Camrose). |
| **Emergency Health Coverage** | Coverage for emergency health expenses while travelling such as hospital and physician services, prescription drugs, dental care; health related emergency transportation and evacuation; and trip interruption due to a medical emergency. |
| **Personal Travel Insurance** | Insurance not related to health or medical emergencies that covers aspects such as trip cancellation and trip interruption due to circumstances beyond your control (eg: the death of a family member, weather conditions, mechanical failure or act of terrorism) and loss or damage to luggage and personal effects. |

https://www.ualberta.ca/search-beta/index.html#q=Off-Campus%20Activity%20and%20Travel%20Policy&t=Main&sort=relevancy
## Off-Campus Activity and Travel Policy

**Appendix B: Risk Assessment Matrix for Off-Campus Travel Involving Students**

**Instructions:**
- Review column 1 and determine the appropriate risk level based on the category of student traveling.
- Review column 2 and determine the appropriate risk level based on the kind of activity being performed.
- Review column 3 and determine the appropriate risk level based on where the travelers are going.
- Assign a final risk level. This will be the highest risk level identified in any of the three columns.

### Chart 1: Risk Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>1) Who is traveling?</th>
<th>2) What kind of activity are they doing?</th>
<th>3) Where are they going?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Graduate students engaged in research.</td>
<td>An activity that entails hazards or risk no greater than those encountered by participants in their everyday lives (e.g. meetings, conferences).</td>
<td>A location where Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Travel Reports indicate “exercise normal security precautions”. Typically travel within Canada is low risk. However, possible risks such as natural disasters and public health issues should be taken into consideration in determining whether the risk level should increase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Undergraduate students. Graduate students not engaged in research.</td>
<td>Activities that entail a higher level of risk than individuals would encounter in their daily lives, but those risks are easily mitigated (e.g. most field research activities, off-road vehicle use, sharps use)</td>
<td>A location where Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Travel, local country jurisdictional sources or specialized travel advisory services in combination or as a single source may indicate “exercise high degree of caution”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td></td>
<td>Activities that have the potential to expose participants to hazards that are significantly greater than those likely to be encountered in their everyday lives but which can be minimized through planning, training, standard operating procedures, etc. (e.g. direct work with dangerous wildlife, travel or work in extremely isolated locations)</td>
<td>A location where Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Travel reports, local country jurisdictional sources or specialized travel advisory services in combination or as a single source may indicate “avoid non-essential travel”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extreme</td>
<td></td>
<td>An activity for which there is substantial risk to participants, which strategic planning cannot effectively minimize with any reasonable probability (e.g. activities that result in a high probability of an incident that could result in serious injury or death)</td>
<td>A location where Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada Travel reports, local country jurisdictional sources or specialized travel advisory services in combination or as a single source may indicate “avoid all travel”.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Related Links:**
- [Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade Travel Reports and Warnings](https://www.international.gc.ca/tc-eng.php)
- [Public Safety Canada](https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/)
- [Alberta Emergency Management Agency Emergency Alerts](https://www.ema.alberta.ca/)
Off-Campus Activity and Travel Policy
 Appendix B: Risk Assessment Matrix for Off-Campus Travel Involving Students

Instructions:
- Review the row associated with the final risk level assigned from chart 1.
- Obtain approval if required as indicated in the “approval” column. You may use existing approval mechanisms within your Faculty/Department/Unit, or you may choose to use the sample Approval of Risk Assessment for Off-Campus Travel Involving Students form.
- Perform the actions listed in the “actions” column.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>None required.</td>
<td>• Should advise a supervisor or the Department/Unit as appropriate of the travel plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Should provide emergency contact information for all travelers to a supervisor or the Department/Unit as appropriate. If your program does not already have a mechanism for this you may choose to use the sample Emergency Contact Form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>If traveling outside Canada:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Faculties are encouraged to advise University of Alberta International of any programs they have that involve student travel outside Canada.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All travelers must have appropriate emergency health coverage and should consider purchasing personal travel insurance coverage*.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Travelers are encouraged to visit the DFAIT website for a variety of information including country profiles, Consular Services, general hints and tips and a variety of other information.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Please note: there may be special considerations to take into account for international students who are traveling (eg: insurance eligibility, country responsible for emergency evacuation). University of Alberta International can provide information and advice regarding this.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Off-Campus Activity and Travel Policy

## Appendix B: Risk Assessment Matrix for Off-Campus Travel Involving Students

### Chart 2: Approval and Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk Level</th>
<th>Approval</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Extreme    | For registered student groups: Student Group Services in consultation with Insurance & Risk Assessment.  
For all other student travel: the appropriate Faculty Dean in consultation with Insurance & Risk Assessment.  
Final authority lies with the Provost. (only approved in exceptional circumstances) |  
- Must advise the Department/Unit or Student Group Services as appropriate of the travel plans. *(University of Alberta International is also examining options for an electronic registration system)*  
- Must provide emergency contact information for all travelers to the Department/Unit or Student Group Services. If your program does not already have a mechanism for this you may choose to use the sample [Emergency Contact Form](#).  
- All travelers must complete the appropriate waiver form if required as outlined in the [Waiver and Release of Liability and Informed Consent Procedure](#).  
- For field research & field courses a [Field Activities Plan](#) must be prepared.  
- For student group activities a "Student Group Activity Plan" must be prepared *(to be developed)*  
- The group leader must work with the Office of Insurance & Risk Assessment and/or University of Alberta International to identify risks and develop appropriate risk management strategies.  

**If traveling outside Canada:**  
- Faculties are encouraged to advise University of Alberta International of their programs that involve student travel outside Canada.  
- There may be exclusions or limitations to emergency health coverage* due to a Travel Warning for the location or the nature of the activities being performed. Travelers must review their coverage to determine if there are any applicable exclusions or limitations. If exclusions or limitations exist consult Insurance & Risk Assessment to determine appropriate risk management strategies.  
- All travelers should consider purchasing personal travel insurance coverage*.  
- The group leader must consult with University of Alberta International and all travelers must complete any pre-departure orientation as advised.  
- Travelers are encouraged to visit the DFAIT website for a variety of information including country profiles, Consular Services, general hints and tips and a variety of other information.  
- Please note: there may be special considerations to take into account for international students who are traveling (e.g. insurance eligibility, country responsible for emergency evacuation). University of Alberta International can provide information and advice regarding this. |

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* Emergency health coverage refers to coverage for emergency health expenses while travelling such as hospital and physician services, prescription drugs, dental care; health related emergency transportation and evacuation; and trip interruption due to a medical emergency.  
Personal travel insurance refers to insurance that covers aspects of travel not related to health or medical emergencies such as trip cancellation, trip interruption, theft and lost luggage.
STEP 2: Complete Field Activity Plan (FAP)

Best Practice:
• You should always complete a Field Activities Plan (FAP)
• FAB will assist you to comply with Occupational Health & Safety laws

You MUST complete a FAP if:
• Your activities are deemed high or extreme risk and you are taking students.

FAP Template available from FRO website
• Your FAP should be reviewed/updated each year
• Please use latest version of template
https://www.ualberta.ca/environment-health-safety/training/field-activities-plan
STEP 2: Complete Field Activity Plan (FAP)

• FRO can assist with completing the FAP
• FRO does NOT approve the FAP
• Sample FAPs available on the FRO website
• eLearning modules available to help you develop FAP

Approvals based on risk level
• Low (none)
• Medium (Supervisor/Chair)
• High (Supervisor/Dean)
• Extreme (Dean/Provost)
STEP 2: Complete Field Activities Plan

Completing a FAP involves:

- **Identifying** specific research location and team
- Determining team’s **qualifications**
- Determining **safety & communication equipment** needed
- **Lodging** needs
- Conduct hazard assessment, identify mitigation controls, use [EHS Hazard Assessment Web Application](https://example.com) and [EHS Control Library](https://example.com)
Step 3: Training and equipment

- Training should be arranged and taken ASAP
- Check FRO website for the training we arrange
- Call FRO if you do not see what you need
- Defensive Driving now online
  - Contact Fleet Safety Officer- Kenji Kinoshita (cell# 780.405.5201) for driver evaluations and to arrange ATV training – also see https://www.ualberta.ca/vice-president-facilities-operations/service-catalogue/transportation-and-parking/drivers-training/drivers-training-courses
Step 3: Training and equipment

FRO organizes courses, provides info on others:

- First aid, chainsaw, snowmobile, boat handling
- Takes requests for needed courses
- Some offered by the UofA
Step 3: Training and equipment

- Satellite phones: $30/week, plus call cost
- inReach communicators: $20/week
- AEDs (automated defibrillator): free
- First Aid Kits: $5/week – all replaced with new kits
- no restocking fee!
- RESERVE EARLY, DEMAND IS HIGH

Note: bear spray no longer available. Researchers need to provide
Step 4: Daily Field Safety Log Book

- Obtain from FRO prior to fieldwork
- Log your daily safety meetings
- Record changing daily hazards
Step 5: While in the field

- Know your responsibilities
- See UAlberta EHS “Appendix B” Environmental Health and Safety Responsibilities (most recent approval May 28, 2014)
- Complete regular check-ins
- Fill in Daily Safety Log Books: Have all participate in safety discussions
- Report incidents (see EHS presentation later this afternoon)
- Record unanticipated hazards so that next years FAP can be improved
Step 5: While in the field

• Please remember safety comes first!

• The UofA (Chief Environment, Health & Safety Officer) has the ability to stop work where there is an immediate and significant health and safety risk.

• See Appendix A of the EHS Policy
Step 6: When you get home

- Debrief team about successes and problems of field practices
- Return equipment
- Properly repair and store equipment
- Store Daily Field Safety Log Book
  - 10 years after fieldwork
Working with other programs

• Some researchers do field research with other organizations

• If they have established safety procedures then simply refer to these in your FAP

• In other countries, need to follow legal requirements. Use judgement if safety standards are lower.
Security issues overseas

- Local partners are very important
- Minimize number of foreigners
- Dual citizens should be especially careful
- Planning trip before main fieldwork begins
- Supervisors need to be involved in the field
- Flexibility
- Be prepared to quit if the situation changes
Join our email distribution list to receive notices of training scheduled, new equipment to borrow, change to policies, etc.

If you checked it off when you signed in for the session, you will be automatically added to the list.

If not, email: fieldoff@ualberta.ca
Questions?

Please contact the Field Research Office at (780) 492-8981

fieldoff@ualberta.ca

www.uab.ca/fro