

Travel and Field Safety: Risk Assessment and Planning

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My Field Experience

(first field season in 1976)

- ☐ Hazards encountered
 - Extreme cold, extreme heat, blizzards, thunderstorms, black flies, mosquitoes and ticks, grizzly and black bears, logging roads, 15-20' seas, whitewater rapids, forest fires, volcanic eruptions, blasting, diamond drilling, shot at
- ☐ Modes of transportation employed
 - Feet, trucks, canoe, snowshoes, zodiac, snow mobile, helicopter, fixed wing aircraft, long liner, coastal boat
- ☐ Where
 - Local, provincial, national, international



Where Geology has taken me





Running ERSC 3P99
Field Camp in Sudbury -
Espanola – Elliot lake
area since 1987

Why a Travel and Field Safety Policy?

- ☐ Current Policy on Safety and Liability in Field Research applies to **field based research** activities
- ☐ Field research defined as:
 - "Work and academic activities conducted primarily for the purpose of scholarly research and creativity, undertaken by faculty members, students, associated research personnel and staff of the University beyond the geographical boundaries of the University property." (FHB III 24.2)

Internships, practicum, field placements in current courses 2008-2009

Summary by Faculty

Faculty	Internship	Practicum	Field Work/ Experience/ Trip	Field Work- Extended	Co-op	TOTALS
Applied Health Sciences	6	11	23	9	0	49
Business			1		2	3
Education	2	15	7	1	0	25
Humanities	2	1	14	5	4	26
Math and Science	1		20	4	13	38
Social Sciences	2	4	13	8	5	32
TOTALS	13	31	78	27	24	173

Proposed Policy on Travel and Field Safety: Risk Assessment and Planning

- ☐ Addresses health and safety responsibilities for faculty, staff and students engaged in local travel, and field research/academic activities beyond the geographical boundaries of the University
- ☐ Key elements include:
 - risk identification and assessment;
 - elimination or mitigation during planning and implementation;
 - approval and post-trip review.



Proposed Policy on Travel and Field Safety: Risk Assessment and Planning

Status? Draft

- ☐ Draft policy been in development for under a year
- ☐ Has been reviewed by and received input from:
 - Council of Academic Administrators
 - BUFA
 - OEHS
 - A range of individuals across campus
- ☐ Will be presented to Senate for approval, following reviews by:
 - Research and Scholarship
 - Graduate Studies
 - Undergraduate Student Affairs



T&FS Policy - Purpose

To achieve the goals of:

- ☐ organizing and delivering healthy, safe, productive, stimulating and educational field experiences;
- ☐ minimizing harm or loss to participants, planners or the University;
- ☐ meeting the University's obligations (legal and moral) with respect to the health, safety and security of all members of its community, plus protection of the environment, when participating in University-sanctioned activities where any travel is required;
- ☐ increasing the level of awareness and respect for safety issues and the preparedness of individuals who are participating in travel related activities; and;
- ☐ exercising consistent and reasonable due diligence in identifying and managing the risks inherent in travel related activities.



T&FS Policy - Scope

T&FS Policy expressly covers off-campus activities that are organized or sanctioned (the commitment of resources) by the University, such as:

- ☐ field research conducted by faculty, PDFs, graduate and undergraduate students, staff and authorized volunteers
- ☐ all off-campus activities that are part of academic courses and programs
- ☐ non-credit program components; eg. IELP, course practica, concerts, art gallery or museum visits



T&FS Policy – Scope (continued)

- ☐ travel by faculty, staff, PDFs, graduate and undergraduate students to attend conferences and other academic meetings;
- ☐ travel by faculty and staff on Brock University business;
- ☐ road trips by Brock's Varsity athletic teams and University-supported athletic clubs, and all off-campus athletic activities involving such groups, and
- ☐ other extra-curricular off-campus activities that are organized, sanctioned or funded in whole or in part by the University (including, for example, Orientation Week or Community Connections) and activities that, while organized by students in residence, are expressly approved by the University.



T&FS Policy - Who/what is exempt

- ☐ External activities (including consulting) undertaken by faculty, staff or students that are not part of the individual's employment responsibilities or academic program at Brock;
- ☐ Activities organized exclusively by students or student groups (including but not limited to the BUSU, GSA, and student clubs) without expressed approval, sanction or funding from the University. Such activities would be subject to the Student Event Risk Management Policy; or
- ☐ Travel or activities of any person who is not a member of the University community as defined below
 - ☐ e.g., a person accompanying a member of the University community traveling to attend a conference would not be considered an authorized volunteer because the accompanying individual is not traveling for the purpose of participating in the off-campus activity – the conference.



T&FS Policy - When does it kick in?

- ☐ For trips or activities that involve:
 - Students or inexperienced participants
 - Any international travel
 - Travel to areas where there is an elevated risk of environmental or activity based hazard that may impact on the participants or the success of the trip
 - Travel > 250 km (one-way) from Campus



Risk Assessment

- ☐ Off-campus activities can pose varying levels of risk to the participants:
 - **Manageable**
 - ☐ Low-risk
 - ☐ Higher-risk
 - **Unmanageable**



Risk Assessment

Risk assessment requires the exercise of good judgment, based on expertise and experience, and, where necessary, consultation with suitably qualified individuals. Risk assessment is a process that involves:

- identifying hazards associated with the activity;
- analyzing the risk related to the probability, severity and ability to manage each of the hazards; and
- determining how to prevent or mitigate the risks effectively.



Risk Assessment

□ Low Risk

- Entails hazards no greater than those encountered by the participants in their everyday lives.
- Planning and preparation required for such activities involve 5 areas:
 1. Security
 2. Transportation
 3. Accommodation
 4. Food
 5. Communication/Emergency Response

(recorded on the Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (TREMP))



Risk Assessment

□ Higher Risk

- An activity has the potential to expose participants to hazards that are significantly greater than those likely to be encountered in their everyday lives.
- Planning, preparation, documentation and approvals are required in advance of such activities (TREMP). Approval may be contingent on additional planning and/or training.
- NOTE: In light of review of the TREMP, it may transpire that an activity is deemed to entail risks that are unmanageable.



Risk Assessment

□ Unmanageable Risk

- Following review of the TREMP and taking into account the category of the participants, the circumstances and the resources available, an activity may ultimately be deemed to entail unmanageable risk and will not be approved by the TFSRC.
- Activities that might involve unmanageable risk include, for example, travel to war zones, travel to areas with high medical risks, and activities in areas with high risk of natural disasters such as avalanches. Travel and health advisories posted by external agencies such as DFAIT and Health Canada should be considered very carefully when assessing whether an activity falls in the higher-risk or unmanageable-risk category.



Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (TREM)

- ☐ Nine items
 - Activity Leader(s)/Team
 - Trip Location
 - Description of Trip
 - Transportation
 - Communication Plan
 - Other Trip Logistics
 - Hazard Control and Emergency Planning
 - Emergency Contact Procedures
 - Signatures



Roles and Responsibilities

- ☐ Travel and Field Safety Review Committee (TFSRC)
- ☐ OEHS
- ☐ Principal Investigator/Responsible Authority
- ☐ Dean/ Chair/Director
- ☐ Activity Leader
- ☐ Activity Participant



Travel and Field Safety Review Committee - Responsibilities

- ☐ Ensuring that the Travel and Field Safety Policy is in place and disseminated widely;
- ☐ Establishing procedures to:
 - ☐ review the assessment of the risk associated with the nature of the travel and field work proposed, in accordance with the guidelines provided.
 - ☐ establish the level of risk, upon the advice and guidance of the Environment, Health and Safety where appropriate;
 - ☐ approve and sign the TREMP
 - ☐ file a copy of the TREMP with the Environment, Health and Safety Office, as appropriate; and
 - ☐ monitor compliance with this policy across the University.
- ☐ Reviewing/approving/recommending changes or modifications to the Policy, Risk Assessment Tools, Education & Training or Evaluation mechanisms.



Travel and Field Safety Review Committee - Terms of Reference

- ☐ Independent body that oversees the Travel and Field Safety Policy, similar in function and autonomy to REB
- ☐ Mandate to receive, review, recommend modifications, approve, the Trip Risk and Emergency Management Plan (TREM) submitted for any proposed or ongoing travel or field activity for research and academic purposes.



Travel and Field Safety Review Committee - Composition

- ☐ A minimum of 8 members:
 - Chair, selected in consultation with VPA and VPR
 - Vice-Chair, to be selected in consultation with the current Chair, the VPA and VPR
 - 3 faculty reps with a range of expertise in Travel and Field Safety (undergraduate field travel, international travel and field research)
 - Individual with expertise in risk management
 - Two representatives from Student Services
 - HR/EHS – institutional resource



Training/Support

- ☐ FA/CPR
 - Monthly or bimonthly
- ☐ Science Safety Seminars
 - Each term
- ☐ Field Safety
 - Each term
- ☐ WAFA/WFER
 - Annually
- ☐ Matching funds for specialized training
- ☐ Trip planning advice and support



Questions

Draft policy is posted on the EHS website

Comments can be directed to me at:
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