

**BROCK BASECAMP  
FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES  
BROCK UNIVERSITY**

**FIELD ACTIVITIES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

THE FIELD ACTIVITIES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES DOCUMENT IS COMPILED FROM:  
THE FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES - RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES  
AND PROCEDURES MANUAL FOR FIELD ACTIVITIES

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This Risk Management Policies and Procedures Guide to Field Activities represents the result of the research and ideas of many people within the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies (RECL), the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences (FAHS) and Brock University. The first edition of this document was completed in 2008 by the Chair of the RECL Risk Management Committee. This second edition has been revised with the input of the RECL Risk Management Committee (Mary Breunig (Chair), Garrett Hutson, Erin Sharpe, Mike Van Bussell, Ann Marie Guilmette, and Chris Pontoen), the FAHS Risk Management Sub-Committee of the Undergraduate Affairs Committee (Colleen Hood, Linda Ritchie, Kirsty Spence, Jamie Mandigo, and Mary Breunig). We would like to thank the faculty and staff of the FAHS for their feedback and support of this Guide. We would also like to thank Maureen Murphy, Valerie Wolfe, and Greg Finn for their input. We also thank Lakehead University (School of Outdoor Recreation, Parks, & Tourism), NOLS, Preston Cline, Wilderness Inquiry, Outward Bound Canada (OBC) (Michael Crowtz, the National Director of Safety and Training for OBC, in particular), Brian Lisson (Adventureworks) and the work of the Association for Experiential Education for their contributions.

## **PURPOSE OF BROCK BASECAMP**

Brock Basecamp is a distinctive summer experience for incoming students in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences and Brock University. While BBC trips take place in the outdoors, the primary goal is to welcome first-year students to Brock and to introduce them to life as a university student. The following goals serve as a guide for Brock Basecamp trips:

1. Provide incoming students with a fun way to meet new people, make friends and develop a sense of community.
2. Offer participants the chance to talk with current Brock students and ask questions about what being a first-year university student is all about.
3. Provide participants the opportunity to talk about student life issues such as drug and alcohol use, living away from home, diversity and positive interpersonal relationships.
4. Encourage participants to increase self-confidence and to take responsibility for their choices and themselves.
5. Support student retention and successful graduation from Brock.
6. Provide leadership experiences for current Brock students.
7. Promote an appreciation for the natural environment and foster an interest in outdoor recreation activities.

## **PURPOSE OF THE FACULTY OF APPLIED HEALTH SCIENCES**

The Faculty of Applied Health Sciences is a diverse and inclusive teaching and learning culture in which our undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff strive to excel in the pursuit of scholarly, creative and professional achievement. Our teaching and learning is based upon student-faculty interaction, experiential education and small-group learning that embraces local, national and international values and perspectives.

## **PURPOSE OF THE RISK MANAGEMENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES GUIDE**

The purpose of the Risk Management Policies and Procedures Guide to Field Activities is designed to be a systematic analysis of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences field activity operations. The plan is designed to provide safe and successful learning activities for students and to manage potential risk exposure. The policies outlined herein are intended to provide a framework of professional requirements and guidelines for faculty, staff, graduate students, and undergraduate students within the Brock BaseCamp Program in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University. This framework should be used in conjunction with staff experience and training, sound judgment, and group skills to provide a safe and successful experience for all students.

## **PHILOSOPHY OF RISK**

Brock BaseCamp and the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences seek to manage risk in its field activities in an attempt to enhance the safety of all participants. However, BaseCamp and the FAHS also acknowledge that it is neither possible nor desirable to eliminate all risk. Risk is an inherent element of many applied health sciences disciplines and is recognized by organizations such as Parks Canada, Outward Bound and the National Outdoor

Leadership School (NOLS), and as having personal and educational benefits. The goal in conducting field-based programs is not to eliminate or avoid all risk, but to prepare students through technical training and the development of judgment so that they may more effectively assess and manage risk in a variety of out-of-classroom settings and activities.

This Guide to risk management is an attempt to combine several, sometimes contrary, components of the Faculty's field-based activities, including:

- the need for safety;
- legal protection for the University, the School, and its instructors/staff; and
- the moral acceptability of risk in out-of-classroom activities.

Hence, while the policies and procedures outlined in this document are designed to create decision-making frameworks in order to improve the management of risk, we recognize that the complexity and variability of factors involved in the field can make decision-making a subjective process for instructors/staff. Therefore, reasoned judgment about a particular situation should never be supplanted by the framework merely for the sake of following procedure.

Having identified judgment as a significant factor in decision-making in the field, it is necessary to provide some context for understanding and exercising good judgment. Significantly, sound judgment does not exist in isolation. Assuming the position of making decisions through judgment is a serious responsibility and should be tempered by the educational objectives of the course and the program as well as by the intent of the risk management processes adopted by the FAHS. In other words, risk should not be pursued for its own sake, but should be managed and undertaken as consciously as is practical. Exposure to risks should be consistently questioned as to whether the foreseeable negative consequences of an action-or lack of action-might outweigh its benefits.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

Under certain circumstances and for specific program purposes, these policies and procedures may be modified at the discretion of the program coordinator or lead staff.

**Policies are hard and fast rules. Policies are listed in bold.** Deviations from policy are warranted when following the policy would clearly not be acting in the best interest of the students' or staff safety.

Procedures are recommendations on how to act.

## **A "LIVING" DOCUMENT**

The Brock BaseCamp Policies and Procedures Guide to Field Activities is a "living" document. The RECL Risk Management Committee and the Risk Management Sub-Committee of the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences recognizes that the fields of applied health sciences is growing and changing and that issues of risk management are progressing apace. For this reason, changes and additions to this document may be made as a result of an audit that reviews an individual event or a series or pattern of events, or as a response to a development in industry standards that merit a policy or procedural change. The RECL Risk Management Committee and the FAHS Risk Management Sub-Committee will review the Guide annually.

### **THIRD PARTY PROVIDER STATEMENT**

In most cases, third party recreation providers (activities that are not conducted “in house”) will use their own Local Operating Procedures (LOP's) and these would take priority over primary providers (Brock's) procedures as outlined below. Clients may request that a specific standard be adhered to (i.e., when a secondary school board takes students climbing the board requests that OPHIA risk mgt. guidelines be met).

Third party providers will enact their first response protocols in the event of an emergency. Once primary care has been initiated and the situation is stable they will transfer care back to the primary provider (Brock University). In the event that third party providers are being contracted to collaborate on curriculum and program delivery, then risk management procedures and protocols would be developed in partnership.

## **BROCK BASECAMP FIELD ACTIVITIES POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Brock BaseCamp**, a program offered through the **Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University** conducts field activities in two primary venues – frontcountry and backcountry.

A **frontcountry field activity** is generally defined as requiring 2 hours travel or less to advanced life support.

A **backcountry field activity** is generally defined as requiring 2 hours travel or more to advanced life support.

**RECL** refers to the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies.

**FAHS** refers to the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences.

These activities are enacted throughout the academic year and summer by various program staff.

### **ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**

This Risk Management Guide is designed to work in complement with the Brock University *Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures in Non-Academic Matters*

(<http://www.brocku.ca/webcal/undergrad/code.html>) document. Students and staff are directed to that document for more information.

#### **Waiver and Medical Questionnaire**

**Prior to participation on any Brock BaseCamp field activity students shall complete a waiver and medical questionnaire (field staff should also complete a medical questionnaire); original copies are to be kept on file in the Brock BaseCamp office.**

- Medical questionnaires should be reviewed by the coordinator to ensure that students and staff do not have any pre-existing conditions that would affect their participation.

### **OUTDOOR EDUCATION LAB AND FIELD SUPPORT SERVICE**

The primary purpose of the Outdoor Education Lab and support staff is to maintain a complete inventory of program equipment, ensuring that each student goes into the field well equipped. Equipment should be made readily available to both students and staff for any course requirement. Direct access to the Outdoor Education Lab shall be regulated under the direction of the Brock BaseCamp Coordinator or Lead Staff.

- All Brock BaseCamp staff should possess the necessary skills and knowledge to both advise students and assign them with the proper equipment for any given field activity.
- All equipment should be in good, working order.
- Equipment logs, recording usage and equipment condition, should be kept for climbing equipment.
- Regular equipment maintenance and repair should be conducted and recorded.
- Hazardous materials should be kept in the approved storage cabinet in the equipment room.

## **FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY PROCEDURES**

- Staff shall take appropriate measures to protect all students and themselves from harm.
- If an injury or near miss occurs, staff should refer to the Emergency Management Guidelines (on call guide), which outlines the necessary steps for care, evacuation, documentation and notification.
- University administrators shall take control of all external communications.
- Safety policies and evacuation procedures should be discussed with all staff and students at the beginning of the trip.
- Staff shall have access to a complete first aid kit with them at all times, which includes: list of first aid kit contents, a Wilderness Medical Associates field manual, and incident report forms. It is the lead staff responsibility to check the contents of the first aid kit prior to departure and to notify the coordinator if anything is missing or needs to be replaced both pre- and post- trip. It is the responsibility of the lead staff to restock first aid kits and the responsibility of the coordinator to perform a regular and thorough check of all first aid kit contents prior to the start of Brock BaseCamp programs and on a regular basis thereafter to ensure that all kits are complete.
- An incident report form shall be completed for all injuries and near misses and a copy of this form shall be submitted to the RECL Risk Management Committee chair.
- Any student on prescribed medication and on a backcountry trip should provide the lead staff with a second set of medication and instructions for its use (based on the number of days in the field), to be used as a back-up.

## **GENERAL SAFETY**

**All equipment is subject to the approval of the lead staff.**

### Footwear

Footwear that is appropriate for the activity and terrain will be worn at all times on trips to protect against foot injuries, except:

- while inside tents or sleeping bags
- when airing feet out in camp or in a boat
- while swimming at a publicly designated beach/swim area or swimming off a boat in open/deep water.

### Communication

Cellular or satellite telephones are not a substitute for skill and knowledge. The phone, however, is a communication tool that may be useful to carry on certain types of field activities. When a group is in a backcountry setting, it is recommended that a staff carry a cell or satellite phone and use it as she would any other “tool,” where access is available and under appropriate circumstances. Terrain and remoteness may prevent phone reception on many wilderness trips. It is recommended that cell phones be carried while driving to and from an activity site.

### Land Use

Staff should be familiar with local, provincial, and federal statutes regarding land use and shall abide by all regulations.

- All fire bans shall be observed.
- Groups shall not exceed the designated number for group size without permission.
- Permits or permission shall be obtained where required.

### Tobacco, Alcohol, and Drug Use

- No smoking is allowed in or near tents or near stoves or camp fuel.
- **The use or possession of alcohol or illegal drugs is strictly prohibited.**
- Only medications that have been prescribed by a doctor or can be obtained as over-the-counter medicine are permissible.

### Lightning

- Staff shall review safety procedures with students as soon as it is practical.
- Monitor approaching storms.
- When judgment dictates, staff should get the group to a safe location as soon as it is practical.
- Follow the lightning drill procedure as appropriate for conditions:
  - spread the group out
  - insulate people from the ground (with PFD, ensolite, or other non-conductive material)
  - avoid high and low spots and large bodies of water
  - assume the “lightning position.”

### Hazardous Materials Storage and Transportation

- All hazardous materials will be stored in the approved flammable storage cabinet in the Outdoor Education Lab.
- Bulk matches will be stored in the flammable storage cabinet in the Outdoor Education Lab.
- Vehicle fuel in containers will not be transported in vehicles. Instead, these fuel containers shall be transported in trailers or on roof racks.
- Whenever possible, white gas will not be transported in vehicles. It should instead be transported in trailers or on roof racks. If it must be transported inside a vehicle, it shall be securely contained.
- All hazardous materials should be handled appropriately.

## **TECHNICAL SKILLS**

### **WATER SAFETY**

#### Swimming

- **Cliff jumping will not be permitted on any Brock BaseCamp activities.**
- A qualified individual will supervise any swimming activity:
  - current and valid bronze cross life saving certification will be required
  - both staff and student swim supervisors shall have a valid copy of their certification on file at the Brock BaseCamp office and submit a copy to the coordinator.
- Student supervisors shall report to the lead staff prior to the supervision of each swimming activity.
- The swimming supervisor will have necessary rescue equipment on hand: a throw bag and flotation device (at minimum).

#### Flatwater Canoeing

- **Students shall wear PFDs at all times while in a boat.**



Personal flotation devices (PFDs) shall be approved by the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (or approved by the nationally recognized governing body of water safety within the country where a field course is being conducted).

- Students should be instructed on the proper use of equipment and briefed on relevant safety procedures as soon as it is practical.
- Staff should have access to a program first aid kit and rescue equipment.

## **LAND SAFETY**

### Backpacking

- Students should be instructed on the proper use of equipment and briefed on relevant safety procedures as soon as it is practical.
- Staff should have access to a program first aid kit.