



## DEPARTMENT OF BIOLOGY

### BIOLOGY FIELD SAFETY RULES AND PROCEDURES

Office of Public Safety: 678-466-4050 or 770-960-5151

Prepared by: Laboratory Safety Committee

1. **KNOW WHAT TO DO IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY.** Learn the locations and operation of emergency equipment. This includes the first aid kit. Notify the instructor and field site manager (if applicable) immediately in case of a FIRE or PERSONAL INJURY. Report all accidents, injuries, and close calls to the instructor immediately. If the instructor is not available at the time of the emergency, call Public Safety if on campus, the ranger or 911 if off campus immediately.
2. **CARRY A CELL PHONE WITH YOU AT ALL TIMES.** Have your instructor's phone number, public safety, and the ranger station/field manager's phone numbers programmed into your phone.
3. **USE THE BUDDY SYSTEM.** Someone should know your whereabouts at all times.
4. **WHEN DRIVING, FOLLOW ALL TRAFFIC LAWS.**
5. **PERFORM ALL FIELD WORK AS DIRECTED.** Do not do anything which is not part of an approved experimental procedure. Follow all instructions given by your laboratory/research instructor.
6. **BE PROPERLY PREPARED TO DO THE FIELD WORK.** Read all written procedures in advance and understand what you are going to do. Know the hazards before you do the experiments.
7. **WHEN INSTRUCTED WEAR THE APPROPRIATE PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT.** This includes appropriate foot wear and snake guards if needed.
8. **BE ALERT FOR ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS.**
  - *Stings from venomous insects* (bees, wasps, hornets, yellow jackets). If you have an allergy to insect venom, carry the appropriate medication.
  - *Bites from venomous snakes.* Be familiar with venomous snakes that might be present at your field site and use the appropriate precautions. If bitten return to vehicle and seek medical attention immediately.
  - *Poisonous plants* (poison ivy, poison oak, poison sumac). Avoid poisonous plants in the field. Do not eat any plants or fruits in the field. Wash clothing after field work to remove any oils that may be on your clothing.
    - Use a preventative lotion before field work.
    - Use a poison ivy skin wash such as tecnu after exposure.
  - *Ectoparasites* (ticks, mosquitoes, and chiggers). Use insect repellent containing at least 40% DEET, tuck pants in boots, and keep hair up in a hat to avoid being bitten. *Inspect your body for ticks after field work.* Remove the entire body of the tick, being careful not to leave behind the

head. Note bite location and **consult a physician should any suspicious symptoms appear** (swelling, red circle, fever, joint aches).

- *Ticks*: If you are going to spend a considerable amount of time in the field, use a permethrin containing clothing treatment to help repel ticks (*do not use on skin!*).
  - Shower after fieldwork to remove insect repellants.
  - If you are conducting field work abroad and experience suspicious symptoms, seek medical attention from a *travel doctor*. Most general practitioners are not familiar with insect born illnesses and diseases that are common overseas but uncommon in North America.
  - *Endoparasites* (*Giardia*, tapeworms, etc.). Do not drink untreated water. Wash hands before eating.
  - *Lightening*. Do not conduct field work during storms. If you are already in the field and a storm threatens, leave the area and seek shelter in a building or vehicle. If this is not possible avoid: open areas, hilltops, water, isolated tall objects (trees, towers), and rock overhangs.
  - *Steep topography*. Wear appropriate footwear if hiking in steep terrain.
  - *Aquatic field work*. Avoid bodies of water if you cannot swim. If you are boating, follow all boating laws and safety protocol.
  - *Cold weather trips*. Wear the appropriate clothing to avoid exposure.
  - *Hot weather trips*. Wear the appropriate clothing to avoid exposure (wear a hat, bring more water than you think you need).
  - *Sun exposure*. Wear the appropriate clothing (hat) and sunglasses to avoid exposure. Also wear sunscreen with UVA/UVB protection. Apply sunscreen before you apply insect repellent. Bring several liters of water with you in the field.
9. **ACT IN A RESPONSIBLE MANNER AT ALL TIMES.** No horseplay or fooling should occur in the field.
  10. **ALWAYS WEAR APPROPRIATE CLOTHING IN THE FIELD.** No sandals, shorts, and limit jewelry. Wear the appropriate foot wear (hiking boots, muck boots, waders, etc.) and clothing (long sleeves, long pants, hat). Tie back long hair to keep it away from chemicals and from obstructing your view.
  11. **SMOKING IS PROHIBITED IN THE FIELD.**
  12. **NOTIFY THE INSTRUCTOR OF ANY ALLERGIES.**
  13. **WASH YOUR HANDS AND SHOWER AT THE COMPLETION OF FIELDWORK.**
  14. **REPORT ANY POTENTIAL PROBLEMS OR CONCERNS TO YOUR INSTRUCTOR IMMEDIATELY. THIS INCLUDES HAZARDOUS SITUATIONS, ACCIDENTS, etc.**