Fieldwork Safety

Toolbox Talks are intended to facilitate health and safety discussions. Find more Toolbox Talks on the Occupational Safety web page.

General Information
Fieldwork may consist of off-campus research or teaching activities. Fieldwork may occur in remote locations, and can expose fieldwork crew members to extreme weather, hazardous terrain, or other adverse conditions.

Preventive Measures
- Ensure proper training has been completed.
- Ensure a risk assessment has been performed to identify potential hazards.
- Ensure there is a communications plan (i.e., cell phones have coverage and/or two-way radio available).
- Ensure you inform your co-worker or supervisor where you will be working and when you intend to return.
- Have information for emergency contacts (local police, fire, and medical) for the area you will be working.
- Know what to do in the event of an emergency.
- Know the weather forecast for your area.
- Be aware of poisonous wildlife, insects, and plants in the area.
- Be aware of the terrain; uneven ground, holes, mud, and wet grass can contribute to a hazardous work site.

Actions
- Pre-plan fieldwork activities.
- Wear footwear appropriate for the task.
- Always carry a first aid kit, communication device, and water.
- Protect yourself from the sun and heat (e.g., sunscreen, clothing, limit exposure, hydrate) or plan work in the morning or evening.
- Protect against insects and ticks (clothing, insect repellents).
- Whenever possible, fieldwork activities should be performed in teams of at least two people.
- Identify adjacent activities that may impact your location.
- Watch for rapid changes in weather, the worksite or your surroundings.
- Ensure permission has been granted before entering private property.