



Field Safety Policy

Category: Health and Safety;

Jurisdiction: Vice President, Administration and Finance;

Approval Authority: Executive Team;

Established on: June 30, 2020;

Amendments: None.

1. Purpose

One of the fundamental objectives for Lakehead University is to be recognized as a comprehensive, research-intensive university, both nationally and internationally for excellence in teaching and learning. In working towards these research-oriented goals, conducting innovative Field Work Research will be required in some areas of study. While this work can offer an important opportunity to advance understanding and knowledge, Field Work Research presents a unique set of risks not present in traditional laboratory settings. The purpose of this document is to establish policy and resources to assist members of our University Community in recognizing, planning for and mitigating reasonably foreseeable risks without impeding innovative work and impacting the quality of data collection.

This policy respects four key principles:

- a) Maintaining healthy, safe, productive, stimulating and educational field experiences;
- b) Minimizing harm or loss to participants or the University;
- c) Meeting the University's obligations, both legal and moral, with respect to the health, safety and security of all members of the University community; and
- d) Ensuring that resources are available for participants to assist them in risk mitigation and planning activities.

Safety is an integral part of research planning. This policy recognizes that the level of pre-planning required will be correlated to the level of risk the Field Work Research entails.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all members of the University engaged in Field Work Research and is designed in conjunction with other applicable policies to assist in the prevention of work-related injuries and ensure that emergency plans are both coordinated and communicated.

Undergraduate field trips, field schools, and field laboratories are not covered by this policy. Organizers of such activities that are not covered by this policy should consult the Lakehead University Risk Management office for guidance on “Risk Management for Field Trips.”

3. Definitions

Accident: Incident that results in injury to a participant but is not life-threatening in nature.

Critical Incident: Any incident that directly threatens the life, safety or security of a participant.

Field Work Research: Practical work to gain experience and knowledge through firsthand observation conducted in a natural, non-urban environment, including exploration, observing, sampling, surveying and other related activities.

Hazard: A situation or circumstance that is potentially harmful or damaging to life, limb, property or the environment.

Near-miss: Incident that does not result in injury to the participant or damage to University property or the environment, but had the potential to.

Supervisor: Person who plans for, directs or allocates funding for completion of the Field Work Research.

4. Policy Guidelines

Guidelines or modified procedures particularly appropriate for specific activities undertaken by a Department/Unit or Researcher, but consistent with this policy may be developed and are strongly recommended.

- Prior to commencing Field Work Research, the Supervisor will conduct a documented risk assessment and draft written safety procedures including appropriate risk mitigation strategies. Supervisors are the ideal person to complete these assessments, as they are familiar with the conditions of the field, Hazards likely to be encountered and other risks related to collection of data and other inherent risks. Results of the risk assessment must be documented in the manner required by the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety in conjunction with the Office of Risk Management.
- The Supervisor will take all reasonable steps to mitigate Hazards identified by the risk assessment and will document these measures.
- Existing risk assessments and any written safety procedures must be reviewed in the following circumstances:
 - if the geographic area of Field Work Research, nature of the risks encountered, and/or the experience level of the participants change significantly from those documented.
 - following an Accident, Critical Incident or Near-miss.
- Field Work Research participants (including volunteers) must be familiar with the risks identified by the risk assessment and any written safety procedures, including without limitation to assist them in dealing with any Accident, Critical Incident, or injury. Acknowledgement of review of the risk assessment by Field Work Research participants (including volunteers) must be documented initially during the new personnel orientation process and shall be reviewed and signed prior to each field season. Review of risks and safety procedures in place to mitigate the risks are an integral part of field specific training.
- Field specific training shall include an overview of the nature of the Field Work Research, identified Hazards, the risks associated with the Hazards, and the proposed control measures as outlined in the written safety procedures including; the operation of any safety equipment to be used; the correct use of any personal protective equipment; first aid facilities; when-lost procedures; communications procedures; and emergency procedures.
- The use of volunteers is permitted with the clear and documented understanding by signing a University Waiver of Liability indicating that the University will not accept

responsibility for any claim arising from injury or death of voluntary workers. Queries and approvals concerning the University policy on volunteers should be directed to the Office of Risk Management.

- All Field Work Research must be conducted in such a way that potential risks are minimized.
- It is not advisable for any person to complete Field Work Research alone. Where it is appropriate for an individual to work alone, that individual must let someone know their location and expected time of return.
- Any participant conducting Field Work Research has the right to refuse work or particular work where they have reason to believe that performing the work is likely to endanger someone, including such participant.
- In remote Field Work Research locations, at least one participant must have up-to-date first aid training and must ensure there are sufficient first aid supplies. First aid kits are available from the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety.
- Participants shall observe the laws and customs of the country/region in which they are conducting research. Specifically, Researchers have a duty to become aware of and abide by the terms and guidelines of TCPS 2 (2018) – Chapter 9: Research Involving the First Nations, Inuit and Métis Peoples of Canada.
- Staff and students who participate in remote Field Work Research should ensure they have the fitness level required to do so. Nothing in this policy shall deprive Field Work Research participants from their rights to reasonable accommodations. Requests for accommodations can be made as per the University *Accommodation for Employees with Disabilities Policy and Procedure*.

In accordance with the Ontario Occupational Health and Safety Act and regulations, responsibilities for administering this policy are:

1) Responsibilities of Human Resources – Health and Safety and Office of Risk Management

- Ensure that this policy remains compliant with applicable laws and regulations, but does not increase unwarranted administrative requirements on Supervisors or participants.
- Ensure that resources and materials are available to Supervisors and participants to assist in planning, identification of foreseeable risks and documentation for due diligence purposes.

2) Responsibility of Supervisor

- Provide field specific training on safe work practices and recognition of Hazards.
- Ensure that participants are aware of the location of the nearest medical facilities.
- Ensure all participants have completed standard health and safety training with the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety.
- Plan (or assist in planning) the Field Work Research so that it can be conducted safely.
- Document training of participants.
- Document risk mitigation practices employed.
- Provide a full incident report for any Near-misses, Accidents or Critical Incidents to the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety as soon as it is possible.
- Endeavor to immediately notify the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety upon the occurrence of any Critical Incident. It is appropriate for this notification to occur immediately after the injured person is in the care of medical professionals and as communication facilities in the field allow.

3) Responsibilities of Participants

- Follow the instruction, guidance and training provided by the Supervisor.

- Complete standard health and safety training provided by the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety prior to starting Field Work Research.
- Conduct work in a safe manner.
- Review, understand, and adhere to all documented risk assessments and safety protocols.
- Report any Near-misses, Accidents, or Critical Incidents to the Office of Human Resources – Health and Safety and your Supervisor as soon as it is possible.
- Consult your Supervisor if/when unforeseen Hazards occur, proceed with Field Work Research only after steps have been taken to mitigate the Hazards.

Review Period: 5 years;

Date for Next Review: 2025-2026;

Related Policies and Procedures: None;

Policy Superseded by this Policy: None.

The University Secretariat manages the development of policies through an impartial, fair governance process, and in accordance with the Policy Governance Framework. Please contact the University Secretariat for additional information on University policies and procedures and/or if you require this information in another format.

Open: Monday through Friday from 8:30am to 4:30pm;

Location: University Centre, Thunder Bay Campus, Room UC2002;

Phone: 807-346-7929 or Email: univsec@lakeheadu.ca.