

Field safety at EMG

Rationale for this document: *As a student or an employee at EMG, the likelihood of you ending up doing some kind of fieldwork is high. Fieldwork in remote terrain not only increases the risk for more severe accidents, but also causes situations where you and your colleagues may feel vulnerable. Moreover, international studies indicate that as many as 22% of surveyed scientist reported harassment while in the field (Clancy et al. 2014). Remote location of fieldwork settings, blurry boundaries of social interactions, and the hierarchical nature of academic work can amplify the risk of harassment (sexual or otherwise), violation, or discrimination. We are fully aware of issues relating to field research stations reported by fellow researchers, and that especially female researchers/students have suffered from harassment during fieldwork.*

Fieldwork at EMG should be free from harassment or any discrimination relating to gender, transgender identity, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, and age. Therefore, we have written this document as a guidance for safe fieldwork at EMG.

We recommend that you share this information with those involved in fieldwork connected to research or education activities at EMG.

The document has two main units. The first chapter focuses on risk assessments and minimizing risk when it comes to physical injuries or illness during fieldwork. The second chapter of this document centers around EMG's code of conduct. The rationale for highlighting an appropriate behavior is to prevent of harassment/discrimination and to create fieldwork that is safe for everyone.

1. Safety measures relating to fieldwork

We recommend that you read the book about field safety written by the Swedish Polar Research secretariat that can be found here: [Field course handbook-2020 \(polar.se\)](https://polar.se/Field-course-handbook-2020). While this book is written for polar expeditions, it contains information relevant for fieldwork in other biomes (just ignore the recommendations that are specific to polar bears and research ships if you are active south of the polar areas).

Prior to fieldwork, you should conduct a risk assessment of your planned work in line with the framework outlined below that follows international standards. This risk assessment is based on a self-evaluated risk assessment involving an injury or illness in the field and the probability of that risk occurring, as recommended by international standards and the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat (Figure 1). Similar calculations can be made for the risk of damaging equipment and/or causing environmental harm, but EMG emphasize the importance of prioritizing risk involving human health.

Before you leave Umeå, plan your trip well in advance! Field work may require vaccinations or other risk-minimizing measures for certain diseases (malaria etc.) that needs booking appointments month before onset of the field work.

Assess mobile phone coverage in your study area. If the coverage is poor, you may need to borrow a satellite phone.

Study a map and talk to people with local knowledge. If your field work involves hiking in remote terrain, plan your route and the amount of time you can reasonably expect it to take, and – again – ask for advice.

Fieldwork alone off-road should be avoided and is never allowed when using a boat, working in water (e.g. wading), or working on ice. As a student, solo off-road fieldwork must be approved by

your supervisor and will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances. Safety is always improved when working in pairs.

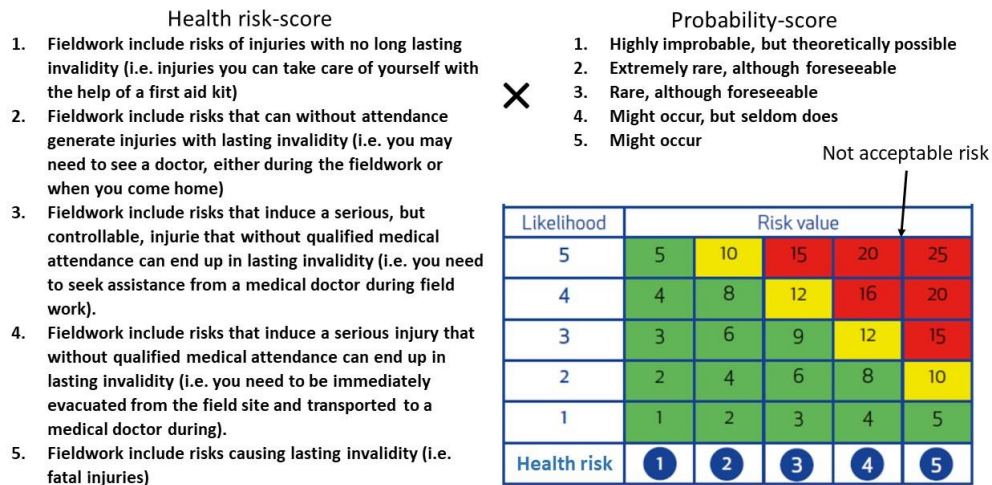


Figure 1. Scheme to calculate the risk-score of your health during fieldwork. Risk scores are generated by multiplying the health-risk score and the probability-score. EMG, in accordance with the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat (Augner 2020), does not recommend fieldwork that generates risk-scores above 14. For risk-scores ranging between 10 to 12, we emphasize the need of extra precautions, which may include involvements of specialist staff members or special training/methods.

Winter travel always requires careful planning to evaluate risks. Travel in avalanche-prone areas requires special skills and equipment. Check with your supervisor before conducting any winter travel to evaluate risks and needs.

Be responsible for yourself and your peers.

Inform others (colleague, peer, partners, etc.) about where you are going and when you are expected to be back. This routine should apply for multi-day backpacking trips as well as daily trips to your field site.

Always bring safety equipment, such as a compass/GPS, food, spare clothes, radio/phone, transponder, and extra batteries, etc.).

Wear a reflective safety vest when walking along a highway or busy roads.

Check the weather before you leave, including extended forecasts for multi-day trips at www.yr.no and www.smhi.se or another weather site.

When you return from the field, **make sure your contact person (colleague, peer, partner, etc.) knows you are back!**

If a colleague has not returned in time, **don't hesitate to act**. Suitable actions in such case include launching a search team of locals or contacting the police.

If you have to call for help, the **emergency number in Sweden is 112 or 0046-63 107 112 (via SMS)**. If you are working abroad, note the emergency number for the relevant country before you travel. Remember that mobile phone coverage might be limited and it may be necessary to bring a satellite phone. Calling from a satellite phone requires training, so practice and assure that everyone can call before you go out in the field. EMG has one satellite phone available for teaching and one for

research. However, note that satellite phones may require the purchase of a SIM card and this may take weeks to receive; hence, plan far ahead if you are planning to use satellite phones. Note that the Swedish Polar Research Secretariat may have emergency beacons and satellite phones that researchers may have access to if you do fieldwork in the Scandes. However, these need to be booked beforehand.

If you cannot reach 112 using your mobile phone, **try sending an SMS**. To get fast help, it is necessary to know your position. A GPS is good in this situation, but always also bring a map and compass. Create a waypoint on your GPS at the trailhead, where you parked or were dropped off.

2. Code of Conduct

Work at EMG should be free from discrimination and harassment. Here, everyone should have equal access to education and employment in the absence of, for example, sexual harassment and gender discrimination. Employees, students and associates are expected to conduct themselves in a manner that does not infringe upon the rights of others.

2.1. Felonies

You are expected to follow Swedish law and we remind you that felonies relating to inappropriate behavior can lead to dismissal from EMG for staff members and dismissals from courses held at the department. Felonies that will or may lead to dismissals includes:

Sexual Harassments. This behavior includes unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, and offensive comments related to gender, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical appearance, and body size.

Sexual Misconduct. Includes rape, sexual assault, inappropriate touching, sexual battery, sexual exploitation, coercion, and other forms of non-consensual sexual activity.

Stalking. EMG does not accept repeatedly following, harassing, threatening, or intimidating another person via telephone, e-mail, electronic communication, or social media.

2.2. Other unacceptable behaviors

Fieldwork may include situations that individuals may find especially vulnerable, including all daily routines that accompany camping and fieldwork where sharing shelters or housing is often common. Therefore, we recommend supervisors and course administrators to plan fieldwork accordingly and minimize the risk of uncomfortable situations. Have an open communication about peoples' comfort zones/boundaries and, if necessary, avoid housing situations (tents, cabins, hotel rooms) where hierarchical structures (i.e. supervisor-student or teacher-student) or gender identifications are mixed. Staff responsible for the booking should be able to motivate housing situations with mixed hierarchical/genders/status. Examples of such cases could, for instance, be scarcity of available housing or a research budget constrain.

EMGs list the following examples of unacceptable (inappropriate) behaviors.

Patterns of inappropriate social contact. Example of this behavior includes requesting/assuming inappropriate levels of intimacy with others.

Abuse in any form. Includes emotional and verbal abuse with or without the presence of physical abuse.

Deliberately mis-characterizing a person's gender/identity/religion/ethnicity/age. This includes harassment through the use of a name or pronoun that the person has rejected.

Unwarranted or off-topic sexual images or behavior in spaces where they are not appropriate.

Retaliation against anyone reporting a violation of this policy

2.3. If you are subjected to unacceptable behaviors

If you feel victimized during the field work, **abort the fieldwork**.

Talk to someone about the events that have occurred. This someone could be your supervisor, a colleague, or someone else that you trust that can support you.

If you are alone with the person that harassed you and cannot return back from your field site alone, **call the project leader or the head of the department** that will arrange for a safe evacuation.

Do not put off documenting the occurrence. **Write down what has happened**, and when, and make sure to save any potential evidence (text messages, on-site photos, etc.). This will simplify the investigation, but also help you remember details that will strengthen your description of the events.

If you are in the need of **professional support and counselling**, you can turn directly to the University's occupational health care services, Feelgood. You do not need prior approval from your manager or supervisor to book an appointment.

2.4 Reporting harassment or discriminations

If you have been subjected to a **criminal act**, you must always **call the Police**.

You should report if you are subjected to harassment or observe violations against EMG's Code of Conduct. **Contact your head of the department** and reveal what has happened as soon as possible. If the head of the department is the cause of the problem, contact Joanna Jonsson EMG's Human Resources (HR)-coordinator: phone +46 90 786 60 75, joanna.jonsson@umu.se.

Other ways to report, if the head of the department is the problem, is to the University directly through the registry, the work environment representative or union representative.

We also recommend that you act proactively. If you observe something that is not a clear violation of EMG's code of conduct, but still causes concern or discomfort, we suggest you contact Joanna Jonsson EMG, HR-coordinator. Through this channel, EMG can take suitable proactive measures.

Note that Umeå University has developed a homepage that contains general information about reporting harassment: <https://www.aurora.umu.se/en/service-and-support/if-something-happens/i-wish-to-report/psychological-harassment-sexual-harassment-or-bullying/>. While we cannot guarantee that this specific link is permanently active, you can search for more information on Aurora (the local intranet).

2.5 What happens after reporting?

If the head of the department is informed that a staff member feels subjected to harassment, violation, or discrimination, the **University is obliged to investigate** the circumstances. This investigation will involve the Vice-Chancellor and university lawyers.

The person who is singled out as potentially being guilty of violating EMG's code of conduct **must not be judged guilty until the university has conducted an investigation and made an impartial assessment**.



References

Clancy, K. B. H., Nelson, R. G., Rutherford, J. N. & Hinde, K. 2014: Survey of Academic Field Experiences (SAFE): Trainees Report Harassment and Assault. Plos One 9, e102172.

Magnus A. 2020. Field Course Handbook. Ed. Granberg M. Swedish Polar Research Secretariat. pp 1-331