



WHSMS Handbook, Chapter 3.12 Off Campus, Fieldwork and High-Risk Travel Safety Management

Purpose

(ISO 45001: 4.3, 5.2, 8.1)

To set the minimum WHS requirements for planning, approving, conducting, monitoring and reviewing work undertaken away from campus, including fieldwork, remote or isolated work, and high-risk travel, to ensure risks to health and safety are identified, assessed, controlled and remain effective.

Scope

(ISO 45001: 4.3)

This chapter applies to all workers, students and other authorised persons undertaking University activities away from campus, including:

- off-campus (domestic or overseas) conducted at another organisation's site, in public spaces, or at locations not owned/managed by the University
- fieldwork (teaching or research activities undertaken away from normal University support networks, including terrestrial and aquatic field activities)
- remote or isolated work (where assistance is not readily available due to location, time or nature of the work)
- overseas work and travel for University business, including locations with elevated security or health risks
- high-risk travel (as defined below)

Exclusions: this chapter does not cover Boating and Diving Safety Management (Chapter 3.21) or Drone Safety Management (Chapter 3.22), where separate requirements apply.

Definitions

(ISO 45001: 3)

Off campus work: Authorised work undertaken away from a person's normal on-campus workplace.

Fieldwork: Teaching or research activities undertaken away from normal University support networks, often in outdoor, urban, rural or remote environments.

Remote or isolated work: Work isolated from assistance or other people because of location, time or nature of work (WHS Regulations – remote or isolated work provisions).

High-risk travel: University travel or travel-associated work where the risk profile is elevated, including: (a) remote/isolated fieldwork; (b) overseas travel where authoritative advisories indicated higher risk; or (c) activities involving high-risk hazards (Appendix A).

Travel/Fieldwork plan: A documented plan that describes the work, locations, people, controls, communication and emergency arrangements.

Roles and responsibilities

(ISO 45001: 5.3, 5.4)

Responsibilities apply in addition to those in Chapter 2 (Governance and accountabilities) and Chapter 3.1 (Hazard management).

Role	Key WHS responsibilities for off-campus/fieldwork/travel	Typical records/evidence
Officer/Senior Leader	Ensure due diligence for off-campus and high-risk travel risks by verifying resourcing, processes, and oversight are in place; ensure consultation occurs where required; review WHS performance and incidents arising from off-campus activities.	WHS reports/dashboards; audit actions; approvals where delegated.
Local area Director/Head of School/Manager	Ensure proposed work is planned, risk assessed and controlled before approval; confirm competence, supervision and emergency arrangements; ensure communication and escalation arrangements; ensure incident reporting and notifiable incident processes are understood.	Approved travel/fieldwork plan; risk assessment; training evidence; communication plan.
Supervisor/Fieldwork Leader/Course Coordinator	Plan the activity; complete and review risk assessments with participants; ensure controls are implemented; brief participants; maintain communication schedule; stop work if conditions become unsafe; coordinate emergency response and reporting.	Brief records; check-in logs; equipment checklists; incident reports

Role	Key WHS responsibilities for off-campus/fieldwork/travel	Typical records/evidence
Traveller/Participant (worker/student)	Follow the approved plan, controls and instructions; participate in consultation and briefings; use PPE and equipment correctly; report hazards/incidents promptly and within 48 hours; comply with communication and check-in requirements; cease work and seek help if unsafe.	Acknowledgement/induction; check-ins; hazard/incident reports.
Safety & Wellbeing/WHS Advisors	Provide advice on risk management, controls and incident response; support training and guidance material; review high-risk proposals where required; support assurance activities	Advice emails; review notes; assurance/audit outcomes.

Planning and approval requirements

(ISO 45001: 6.1, 8.1)

Off-campus work and travel must not commence until WHS planning is complete and documented, and the relevant delegate has approved the activity.

Minimum requirements:

- Define the purpose, scope, locations, duration, participants and supervision arrangements.
- Identify hazards, assess risks and select controls using the hierarchy of controls (Chapter 3.1).
- Confirm competence and training requirements (see below)
- Confirm communication and check-in arrangements (see below)
- Confirm health considerations (e.g. fitness for work, vaccinations/medical advice where relevant) (see below)
- Confirm equipment, PPE, permits and approvals required for the work.
- Document the above in a travel/fieldwork plan and attach relevant assessments and checklists.

High-risk travel requires additional scrutiny and may require review by Safety & Wellbeing (or other subject matter experts) before delegate approval, depending on local requirements and risk rating.

Risk management for off-campus and fieldwork

(ISO 45001: 6.1.2, 8.1.2)

Risk assessments must be specific to the activity and location and must cover reasonably foreseeable physical and psychosocial hazards.

The risk assessment and controls must consider, where relevant:

- hazardous substances, biological materials, radiation sources/equipment and other regulated hazards
- plant, equipment and electrical items used in the field
- terrain, weather, seasonality, and environmental conditions (including aquatic hazards where relevant)
- manual handling and ergonomics
- fatigue and journey management (including driving)
- security threats, violence and aggression risks
- remote/isolation factors and time-to-help considerations
- participant characteristics (experience level, medical considerations disclosed, special needs) while respecting privacy
- contractor/host site hazards and local rules (including inductions and permits)

Controls must be implemented and verified before departure and during the activity. If conditions change, the plan and controls must be reviewed and updated, and work paused or stopped where required.

Competence, training and supervision

(ISO 45001: 7.2, 7.3, 8.1)

Participants must be competent for the tasks and environment, and must receive task- and site-specific briefings before commencing off-campus work.

- Mandatory training: any University-mandated WHS/fieldwork training applicable to the role or activity must be current.
- Supervisors/fieldwork leaders must be competent to lead the activity and manage emergency response.
- Specialised training must be completed where required (e.g., 4WD/ATV operation, remote communications equipment, hazardous substance handling, water safety).
- Students and inexperienced participants must have appropriate supervision ratios and escalation pathways.

Communication, monitoring and check-in

(ISO 45001: 8.1, 9.1)

A reliable method and frequency of communication must be established, commensurate with the risk profile and remoteness.

The travel/fieldwork plan must include:

- a nominated base contact (home base) with authority to escalate
- communication methods (e.g., mobile, satellite phone, radio, distress beacon) and backups
- a check-in schedule and trigger actions for missed check-ins
- contact details for participants, supervisors, local emergency services and University escalation points

Communication equipment must be tested before departure and maintained during the activity.

Emergency preparedness and response

(ISO 45001: 8.2)

Emergency arrangements must be planned and documented before off-campus work begins.

As a minimum, the travel/fieldwork plan must address:

- credible emergency scenarios (injury/illness, severe weather, vehicle breakdown, security incident, lost person, etc.)
- evacuation routes and medical access (including time-to-help assumptions)
- first aid requirements and provisions (Section 11)
- roles and decision-making during an emergency (including stop-work authority)
- procedures for missed check-ins and escalation

Remote or isolated work controls

(ISO 45001: 6.1.2, 8.1)

Remote or isolated work requires controls that ensure timely assistance in an emergency and manage associated psychosocial risks.

- avoid lone work where reasonably practicable for higher-risk tasks/locations
- ensure suitable vehicles, equipment and communications for terrain and conditions
- ensure fitness for work, including fatigue management and heat/cold stress precautions
- implement scheduled check-ins with defined escalation actions
- ensure access to information, instruction, supervision and support while remote

Health considerations, medical advice and vaccinations

(ISO 45001: 7.2, 7.3, 8.1)

Health risks must be considered during planning. Where relevant, participants should seek appropriate medical advice prior to travel/fieldwork (e.g., for remote travel, known medical conditions, destination-specific health risks).

Vaccinations and prophylaxis:

- Participants must comply with any University immunisation requirements applicable to the activity or occupational exposure.
- Destination- or task-specific vaccinations/prophylaxis should be assessed using a risk-based approach.
- Medical information must be handled confidentially and only shared on a need-to-know basis for safety.

First aid

(ISO 45001: 8.2)

First aid requirements must be determined by the risk assessment and reflected in the plan.

- Ensure appropriate first aid kits are available, accessible and suitable for the hazards.
- Ensure an adequate number of trained first aiders are included, commensurate with participant numbers, remoteness and hazards.
- For remote work, consider remote area first aid capability and extended care needs.

Personal medications required for a participant's condition remain the responsibility of the individual, but planning must consider access, legality (where travelling) and contingencies.

Vehicles, driving and fatigue

(ISO 45001: 8.1.2)

Journey management must be included where vehicle travel is required.

- Drivers must hold the appropriate licence and be authorised for the vehicle type.
- Vehicle selection must be fit for purpose (terrain, load, passenger numbers) and maintained/roadworthy.
- Fatigue controls must be implemented (e.g., rest breaks, driver rotation, limits on driving duration, stop if drowsy).
- Where specialised vehicles or conditions apply (e.g., 4WD, unsealed roads), required training and competence must be verified.

Hazard, incident and notifiable incident reporting

(ISO 45001: 10.2)

Hazards and incidents arising during off-campus work must be reported and investigated in accordance with Chapter 3.16 (Incident and hazard reporting).

- Take immediate action to make the situation safe where possible and within competence.
- Seek first aid/medical treatment as required.
- Notify the supervisor/fieldwork leader as soon as practicable.
- Record hazards/incidents/near misses in the University reporting system as soon as practicable (or as soon as access allows).

Notifiable incidents must be escalated immediately to enable regulatory notification in accordance with WHS Act requirements and University procedures.

Monitoring, review and accountability

(ISO 45001: 5.3, 9.1, 9.3, 10.3)

Monitoring and review of performance against this chapter is undertaken to verify that hazards associated with off-campus, fieldwork and high-risk travel activities are identified, risks are controlled, and controls remain effective.

- **Officers** will exercise due diligence by reviewing aggregated performance information, trends, incidents and corrective actions to verify that appropriate resources, processes and oversight are in place to manage risks associated with off-campus and high-risk travel activities.
- **Local Area Directors, Heads of Schools and Managers** are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of this chapter are implemented in areas under their control and that identified hazards and risks are managed in accordance with the hierarchy of controls. Where monitoring, review, audits or incidents identify non-conformances or control weaknesses, they must ensure corrective actions are implemented.
- **Supervisors, Fieldwork Leaders and Course Coordinators** are responsible for implementing planning, risk controls and monitoring arrangements for activities under their supervision, for responding to changing conditions, and for escalating and ceasing work where controls are not effective or risks cannot be adequately managed.
- **Safety & Wellbeing / WHS** will support monitoring and review through advice, assurance activities, reporting, internal audits and analysis of trends, and will escalate systemic or significant risk issues where required.

The outcomes of monitoring and review will inform corrective actions, management review and continual improvement of the WHSMS.

Performance Measures

(ISO 45001: 9.1, 9.3, 10.2)

The University will use the following performance measures to evaluate the effectiveness and implementation of this chapter.

ISO 45001 Clause	Performance Measure	Evidence	Frequency	Effective When
6.1, 8.1	% of activities with an approved travel/fieldwork plan prior to commencement.	Approved plans	Quarterly	100%
6.1.2	% of activities with task- and location-specific risk assessments	Risk assessments	Quarterly	100%

ISO 45001 Clause	Performance Measure	Evidence	Frequency	Effective When
6.1.2	% of assessments applying hierarchy of controls	Risk assessments	Quarterly sample	≥95%
7.2, 8.1	% of supervisors with verified competence	Training records	Quarterly	100%
8.1	% of higher-risk activities with communication and check-in arrangements	Plans	Quarterly	100%
8.2	% of plans with documented emergency arrangements	Plans	Quarterly	100%
9.1, 10.2	% of hazards/incidents reported in accordance with Chapter 3.16	Reporting system (i.e. Figtree)	Quarterly	≥95%
9.2	Completion of planned audits/assurance activities	Audit reports	As scheduled	100%
10.2	% of corrective actions closed within timeframe	Action registers	Quarterly	≥95%

Records and document control

(ISO 45001: 7.5)

Records must be retained in accordance with the WHSMS document and records control requirements.

- approved travel/fieldwork plan
- risk assessment(s) and control verification checklists
- training/competency evidence
- communication and check-in records (where used)
- incident and investigation records
- permits/authorisations required for the activity

Related documents and references

- WHSMS Handbook Chapter 3.1 – Hazard management
- WHSMS Handbook Chapter 3.16 – Incident and hazard reporting
- University procedure: Working safely away from campus (as applicable)
- University travel approval requirements and systems (administrative requirements may apply in addition to this WHS chapter)

- Managing the Work Environment and Facilities Code of Practice (Safe Work Australia)

Appendix A – Examples of high-risk hazards (non-exhaustive)

Where any of the below hazards are reasonably foreseeable, ensure controls are identified and implemented, and obtain any required permits/approvals and specialist advice.

- operation of high-risk machinery or equipment capable of serious injury (e.g., chainsaws, lathes, power saws)
- handling venomous wildlife or high-risk fauna
- work with large animals (beyond low-risk observation/feeding)
- work with toxic/corrosive substances or nanomaterials with significant exposure potential
- use of apparatus with explosion/implosion or high-energy fragment risk (e.g., pressure vessels)
- work at heights (towers, ladders) where fall risk exists
- work on energised electrical/electronic systems above extra-low voltage thresholds (extra-low voltage is voltage which **does not** exceed 50 volts alternating current [50 V AC] or 120 volts ripple-free direct current [120 V ripple free DC]. Note, work on energised equipment or systems with an energy source above extra-low voltage (>50V AC or >120V DC) **must comply** with Division 4 of the [Work Health and Safety Regulations 2011](#) (Cth).
- work with higher-risk biological agents or high containment requirements
- use of higher-class lasers
- work in non-atmospheric pressure environments
- fieldwork in areas prone to significant natural hazards (seismic, volcanic, severe storms)