

Hamilton College Biology Department

Standard Operating Procedures for Field Work

Submitted by Ernest Williams to share with the Researchers at Undergraduate Institutions
Section of the Ecological Society of America

These procedures should be applied to the following four kinds of fieldwork that Hamilton College students might experience as part of Biology Department coursework or research.

1. One-day class trip
2. Overnight class trips
3. Supervised field work
4. Independent field work

One-day field trip

1. **Field trip policy statement:** All students must read and sign the *Biology Department Field Trip Policy Statement*. The faculty member leading the trip must collect the signed agreements before the trip, typically at the beginning of the field season or semester in a course that takes more than one trip. The field trip leaders will abide by and enforce the rules of the policy.
2. **Group size:** Whenever students work out of sight or hailing distance from the field trip leader, they should be in groups of at least three so that one can go for help while another stays if someone is injured.
3. **First aid kit:** A first aid kit must be taken on all field trips regardless of their duration. The field trip leader must know basic first aid skills and make all trip participants aware of the availability of the first aid kit.
4. **Report of accident, injury or illness:** In the event of accident, injury or illness during a field trip the field trip leader must fill out the *Biology Department Accident/Injury/Illness Form* and advise the student to follow up at the Hamilton College Health Center after the field trip. Completed forms should be kept in a file maintained by the Department's Administrative Assistant.
5. **Appropriate field attire and safety gear:** The field trip leader must ensure that students wear footwear and other attire appropriate for safely completing the field activities. The field trip leader will also make sure that appropriate safety gear is provided, i.e., flotation devices for aquatic work.
6. **Cell phone:** The field trip leader must carry a cell phone.
7. **Avoiding missing persons:** At each departure, the field trip leader should make a head count in each vehicle to make sure that all students are present. At the end of the trip, the leader should double-check to ensure that everyone has returned safely to campus.
8. **Vehicle use:** Personal vehicles may not be used for class field trips. Only College vehicles or vehicles rented on a College account may be used. Only drivers authorized by the College are permitted to drive on a field trip, and drivers must abide by all rules outlined in the College Vehicle Use Policy.

Overnight field trip

Policies 1 to 8 above apply to trips that include an overnight stay. In addition:

9. **Itinerary and emergency contact information:** Before the field trip departs, the field trip leader will forward a copy of the Department's *Field Trip Itinerary and Emergency Contact Information Form* to the Biology Department Chair, Director of Purchasing and Property Management, Campus Safety, and the Dean of Students.
10. **Student Health and Medical Information Form:** Before departing on a multiple day field trip, students will complete the *Hamilton College Student Health and Medical Information Form*. These forms contain information that is strictly confidential and will be used only in the case of an emergency, and they will be destroyed at the conclusion of the field trip.

Field work supervised by faculty

Policies 1 to 7, 9 and 10 above apply (as appropriate) to field research conducted by students under supervision of a faculty advisor.

Independent field work

Policies 1 to 7, 9 and 10 apply to field research conducted by students without direct supervision of their faculty advisor. Specific policies applying to these circumstances:

- a. Research teams. At a minimum, research teams will include two students. In unfamiliar or potentially high-risk situations there should be at least three team members.
- b. One student on the research team will assume the responsibilities of field trip leader and will be responsible for understanding and carrying out the Biology Department Fieldwork SOPs.

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Biology Department's Field Trip Policy

The Biology Department expects all field trip participants to conduct themselves with maturity and respect for others and the environment. They will behave in a manner that allows us to be welcome at field trip sites and accommodations in the future. In addition to this general expectation, the Biology Department has established specific policies:

1. Safety is paramount. A student who willfully endangers the safety and welfare of him/herself or another will be required to leave the field trip and return home at the student's own expense.
2. All field trips in the Biology Department are "dry" and drug-free. This means that students who go on field trips agree not to consume alcoholic beverages of any kind or to use illegal substances for the duration of the field trip, including the evenings. Rare exceptions to this rule may be made by the field trip leader in the matter of alcohol consumption at mealtime. At the discretion of the field trip leader, a student violating this rule may be required to leave the field trip and return home at the student's own expense.
3. Any student who operates a van for field trip activities must have been recognized as a qualified driver by the College. The field trip leader will use his/her discretion to decide which qualified students will drive the vans.
4. The field trip leader will hold all van keys during off hours.
5. Field trip participants will take part in field trip activities at all times or obtain explicit permission for exceptions.
6. Field trip leaders will make the final decision on whether any proposed activity is appropriate or not, and participants will abide by that decision.
7. At the end of the trip, all participants will be responsible for helping to clean equipment and return it to its proper storage location.

I have read the Biology Department's Field Trip Policy and agree to abide by the rules outlined therein.

Printed Name: _____ Class Year _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Overnight Field Trip Itinerary and Emergency Contact Information
Hamilton College Biology Department

Forward the following information to:

- Biology Department Chair
- Director of Purchasing and Property Management
- Campus Safety
- Dean of Students

Name and number of course:

Fieldtrip leader:

Dates of trip:

Fieldtrip itinerary:

Fieldtrip leader's cell phone #:

Other emergency contact information:

Overnight accommodations (including address and phone #):

List of participants, including TAs:

Report Form for Accident, Injury or Illness
Biology Department, Hamilton College, Clinton, NY 13323

Student's name _____ Date: _____

What happened? (including symptoms)

What treatments were given?

Taken to hospital/clinic? YES NO If YES, Where:

Relevant medical history, allergies and medications:

Biology Department policy is that all students who become ill or injured must see the nurse at the Hamilton College Health Center for follow-up evaluation and/or care:

I acknowledge that I have been advised to follow-up with the Health Center.

Student's signature _____

Person filling out report: _____