

FIELD WORK SAFETY INDUCTION MANUAL

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FIELD WORK SAFETY INDUCTION MANUAL

INSTRUCTIONS

Induction begins by viewing the Field work HSE Induction Film. At the end of the film you are directed to this manual, which you must read and then you should complete the attached questionnaire.

The HSE Coordinator is automatically notified when these steps are completed and then signs off on your induction on AIMSCAPE, the AIMS Intranet. As you are asked to complete more tasks at AIMS your supervisor may require you to complete other inductions and safety training. This is all part of the ongoing responsibility AIMS has to achieve a safe workplace.

INTRODUCTION

The sections are arranged so that they begin with a summary statement, which is then explained. For all enquiries regarding Field work you should contact your supervisor and /or Field Operations, ext. 4342. The induction has a goal of raising awareness of safety as an important part of your work at AIMS and we expect that you have this knowledge before you begin at any of our workplaces.

This Induction Manual will also be available on AIMSCAPE for your reference.

OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY LAW

You must obey safety law at sea, as on land

EMPLOYEES

Employees are often required to work in the field, involving them in research away from the Institute's fixed workplaces in Townsville, Perth and Darwin. However, the Institute's legal obligations "to protect the health and safety of employees", continues. Field work often involves volunteer workers and students working alongside staff working in the field. The Institute is bound by similar requirements to look after the health and safety of these workers as if they were Institute employees.

It is important to recognize that no staff members, visitors or students can absolve the Institute of its HSE responsibilities and carry the risks themselves. The Institute may not accept such an assumption of risk. The relationships between the employee, the nature of their work and the Institute can be readily demonstrated and it is this relationship and its legal obligations that AIMS must obey.

The Institute has a policy that all Visitors and Volunteers must be given a safety induction before proceeding on a field trip. As it is not always practical for these Inductions to be conducted prior to the commencement of a field trip, this manual has been developed to assist with field inductions for Visitors, Volunteers and Contractors.

CRUISE LEADERS

The Institute's field work procedures and LogReq system requires an AIMS employee to be nominated as the leader for each field trip. This person is known as the Cruise Leader (even if the fieldtrip does not involve working on an AIMS vessel). The Cruise Leader is responsible for how you work in the field. This leader may delegate responsibility for some decisions to other members of staff, for example issues of dive safety on a field trip may be delegated to the dive supervisor. The Cruise Leader also has responsibility for visitors safety whilst they are engaged in field operations.

EMPLOYEE/VISITOR RATIOS

In all AIMS field work activities, it is preferable if there are more AIMS employees than non-AIMS personnel. When the field trip involves diving activities it is a requirement that the number of AIMS divers in the water must not be exceeded by the number of visiting divers.

All persons working in the field are required to be in groups of not less than two (2) persons at all times.

The risk of being injured by wildlife and the danger of not being able to reach appropriate assistance is increased when personnel work alone. The Institute has therefore determined that no employees, visitors or volunteers are to work alone in the field under any circumstances.

AGE RESTRICTIONS

All persons involved in a field trip conducted by the Institute must be over 18 years of age.

SUPERVISION

"Small field work teams will mean that you will be supervised according to your level of training/ability"

Supervision is an important consideration when working in the field. The level of supervision provided should be appropriate to the knowledge and experience of employees and visitors involved in the field work. It is possible to identify different level of supervision when undertaking field activities.

General Supervision: this means that the cruise leader or supervisor is in the activity area overseeing the total activity. General supervision normally happens when there is a good mix of AIMS employees to

volunteers and students and that all persons have previous experience working in the field and in the particular environment.

Direct Supervision: this means that the cruise leader or supervisor is at the specific location of the activity, giving supervision and instruction to each person involved. Direct supervision should occur for all persons who have not previously worked in the field or who have limited experience in field work.

Indirect Supervision: this means that the cruise leader or supervisor does not join the specific activity. However, the supervisor still has full legal responsibility for the health and safety of all those involved in the activity. Indirect supervision should only occur when all persons on the field trip have extensive experience working in the field and in the particular environment.

FIELD SAFETY

“Field work may be conducted out at sea or on land or in another state/country. It is still considered as work and the area is considered to be a workplace and, as such, all OH&S rules must be observed”

As detailed in AIMS Field work Procedures, all field activities should be entered into the LogReq system so that all approvals can be processed prior to the field trip. The Field Operations Manager acts as the first point of contact for emergency contact numbers for any persons taking part in the field trip.

SPECIAL FIELD ACTIVITIES

Some field activities will require special precautions to ensure the health and safety of those involved. Such activities may include:

- boat handling;
- scuba diving;
- snorkelling; and
- working in mangroves.

You must ensure that you undertake the same precautions as you would at the Institute:

- do not work alone (particularly in a remote location or overseas);
- use appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g. sunglasses, long-sleeved top);
- stay in touch with your work group; and
- consider the safety of yourself and work colleagues.

On each field trip / cruise, you should follow the instructions of the field / cruise leader at all times.

DIVING PROCEDURES

The Diving Officer is responsible to approve diving and divers at AIMS.

A considerable amount of the field work undertaken by the Institute involves diving activities. To assist the Institute to meet its duty of care with regard to the health and safety of divers, AIMS has developed and implemented Safe Diving Procedures. All persons wishing to participate in diving activities with the Institute must obtain, read and understand all the requirements of these Safe Diving Procedures and must have undergone a dive induction.

AIMS employees, visitors, volunteers and students intending to dive must meet minimum requirements as listed in the Diving Procedures. These are:

- CMAS 2 Star (e.g. PADI Rescue Diver);
- dive medical to AS2299 (annually);
- diver rescue training (annually);
- Advanced CPR - Oxygen Therapy and AED (annually);
- Senior First Aid (current);
- 30 hours logged open water experience, including 10 hours at greater than 10 metres.

With the above qualifications you will be able to:

- act as dive buddy; and
- complete tasks as approved by the Diving Officer.

In addition to these requirements, all AIMS employees wishing to undertake diving activities must maintain their first aid and diver rescue qualifications. When all these requirements have been met, the AIMS Dive Officer will approve the person to dive at an AIMS workplace. No person is permitted to dive for the Institute unless the Dive Officer has approved them.

ELECTRICAL SAFETY

Only certified electricians may perform electrical work of permanently wired AC powered equipment.

Only persons authorised in writing, or a certificated electrician, may perform electrical work on portable AC powered equipment (e.g. changing fuses and bulbs).

All AC powered equipment/setups of experimental systems involving wet or potentially wet spaces must be checked and approved before operation.

Any electrical defects must be reported to an electrician and your supervisor immediately.

Why is it so important to work safely with or near electricity?

The electrical current at AIMS has enough power to cause death by electrocution. Even changing a light bulb without isolating the light socket can be hazardous; coming in contact with the "hot" or live part of the socket can cause serious injury or could even kill a person.

Electricity is an energy source that will take the path with least resistance to earth to complete its circuit.

The human body is a great conductor of electricity and if you are in contact with an energized wire or any energized electrical component, and also with any grounded (earthed) object, you will receive a shock!

Electric Shock disturbs the electrical heart rhythm, delayed cardiac arrest can happen sometime after the shock has occurred. All shocks, 'twinges', 'boots', 'static' etc... must be reported to your supervisor, no matter how minor.

Persons who have received an electrical shock will be transported to a medical facility for monitoring.

General Electrical Safety

Always be aware of your surroundings / underground electrical cables / overhead electrical cables.

Electricity and water does not mix.

Approval must be sought prior to performing any electrical work on portable AC powered electrical equipment, including the changing of light bulbs and fuses. This is to ensure that the individual has a safe work method and is competent to perform the work safely. An AIMS Electrical Work Exemption Form is available on the Electrical safety Page on AIMScope. For those seeking dispensation, the form must be completed with the inclusion a safe work method or risk assessment.

Similarly, approval must be sought when setting up or modifying experiment set-ups in high-risk work areas (e.g. wet, salty areas). Consideration must be given to the safe location of electrical equipment, test and tagging, equipment condition; the risk of electrical items falling into the water, cords plugs etc. An "Experimental Electrical Set Up Checklist" has been developed to assist users in setting up equipment prior to assessment. This form must be completed and signed off by an authorised person when an experiment begins or the set-up changes. The "Experimental Electrical Set Up Checklist" is located on AIMScope, Health & Safety tab / electrical safety page.

All electrical installations must be protected by an Electrical Safety Switch; portable electrical equipment must have a Residual Current Detector (RCD) in place.

Prevent overloading power outlets and power boards ensure power boards / cords are suitably rated for the current draw.

Do not tamper with the internal switches or terminals of electrical equipment.

Unplug / turn off all electrical equipment while

- Changing attachments
- Making adjustment
- Carrying out maintenance and servicing and
- When the equipment is not in use

All Electrical equipment must be inspected prior to use,

- ensure an in date "Test Tag" is attached to the equipment and or electrical lead.
- ensure the equipment is in good condition

Things to look for,

- cracked or split casings,
- frayed cords , exposed electrical components
- bent or missing plug pins
- cracks in the plug
- loose or missing casing screws
- splits or damage to the power cable insulation
- exposed wires
- loose connection between the power cable and the tool

If any of the above are found the equipment must not be used and an "Out Of Service "tag must be attached to the equipment.

Only conduct electrical work if you are qualified or authorised to do so

At AIMS Electrical work **does** include:

- connecting electricity supply wiring to electrical equipment or disconnecting electricity supply wiring from electrical equipment
- installing, removing, adding, testing, replacing, repairing, altering or maintaining electrical equipment or an electrical installation
- replacing electrical equipment or a component of electrical equipment (components that form part of a circuit)
- replacing light bulbs, fluoro tubes, fuses, etc

At AIMS Electrical work does **not** include:

- work that involves connecting electrical equipment to an electricity supply by means of a flexible cord plug and socket outlet (eg plugging a power drill into a power point)
- work on a non-electrical component of electrical equipment if the person carrying out the work is not exposed to an electrical risk e.g. filter replacement on water purifying units, changing photocopier toner cartridges.

If you believe that you have a valid reason why you may be exempt from the above defined electrical work and wish for an assessment of the task (including individual competence requirements), then please complete the AIMS Electrical Work Exemption Form

The AIMS Electrical Work Exemption form is available on AimScope under the HSE / Electrical Safety Tab

The form is also available from

Dominique Wiseman ext 4481
Paul O'Regan ext 4319
John Chappell ext 4211

Additionally, all electrical equipment, plant and electrical leads must be used in a safe manner so they do not impede or endanger the safety of workmates or yourself.

WILDLIFE SAFETY

When entering the natural habitat of predatory animals follow the instructions and advice of your Cruise Leader. Report any sightings immediately and clearly.

There are hazards where the Institute conducts its field work, such as sharks, crocodiles, box jellyfish, stingrays, cone shellfish, leopard fish, stonefish, stingrays, sea snakes and stinging coral or fire corals.

Injuries may result either from predatory attack, e.g. crocodiles, sharks and box-jellyfish, or from defensive attacks e.g., blue-ringed octopus, cone fish and other venomous fishes and sea snakes.

To safeguard against predatory attacks, all persons working in the field need to be aware of their environment and take precautions. These include:

- never work alone, especially in estuarine areas or areas where crocodiles or sharks have been recently sighted and ask local rangers for their advice;
- take particular notice of local signs warning of crocodile sightings;
- in estuarine areas stay well clear of the waters edge;
- always wear appropriate clothing including thick, hard soled footwear and stinger suits where appropriate;
- never place your hands in dark holes or crevices. To search these areas always use a stick;
- do not dangle arms or legs over the sides of the vessel or from rafts or barges;
- always be aware of your surroundings, be alert and watch where you are stepping, swimming or diving; and
- if you see a dangerous marine animal advise the cruise leader or person in charge of the field activity as soon as possible.

If you think that you have been stung, cut or bitten by a marine animal, advise the cruise leader immediately and they will ensure that appropriate first aid treatment is supplied.

Failure to remove pieces of coral, crown-of-thorn spines, etc. from abrasions in the skin can lead to severe bacterial infections, so always clean any cuts or abrasions thoroughly and advise the Cruise Leader about the incident as soon as you return to the vessel.

Persons with a history of severe allergic responses may react severely to stings or bites from marine animals. If you have previously reacted violently to a sting or bite then advise the Cruise Leader so that appropriate precautions may be taken.

ENVIRONMENT SAFETY

"Reduce your environmental footprint to a minimum"

All persons working in the field must consider the protection of the environment. Apart from wanting to safeguard the marine environment because we believe it to be to everyone's advantage, AIMS is required by legislation to protect the environment from any harm likely to arise from its research. To assist the Institute meet its obligations all staff, visitors, volunteers and students are asked to ensure that they comply with the following:

- do not treat the environment negligently;
- leave the flora and fauna alone as much as possible;
- replace natural items if they have been moved;
- carry out everything that you carried in including food packaging and keep all areas tidy;
- do not throw cigarette butts overboard; and
- do not collect any marine animals, including fish, unless they are needed for the research project and permits exist.

VESSEL SAFETY

"The Master is ultimately responsible for all their vessel"

The Master is responsible for the safety of all persons while they are onboard the vessels. The Master or first Mate will ensure that all passengers receive a briefing about what to do should an emergency arise onboard, including where passengers should muster. Orders given by the Master with regard to safety onboard the vessels must be complied with at all times.

VEHICLE SAFETY

“Only drive if you are properly licenced and approved to drive an AIMS vehicle”

If Institute vehicles are used in the field the cruise leader or driver must ensure that the person or persons operating the vehicle(s) is registered with the Vehicle Coordinator and has read and understood AIMS Transport Procedures. In addition, the Cruise Leader must ensure that vehicles are:

- driven by an appropriately licensed driver;
- suitable for the expected conditions e.g. 4-wheel drive, towing;
- equipped with a vehicle operating manual and tool kit; and
- equipped with a first aid kit.

Any accidents involving AIMS vehicles must be reported to the Transport Coordinator as soon as possible even if the accident appears minor and little or no damage seems to have occurred to the vehicle. If a vehicle has been involved in an accident in the field, the Cruise Leader must assess the vehicles safety and roadworthiness before allowing it to be driven.

LABORATORY SAFETY ONBOARD VESSELS

You must adapt good laboratory practices to a vessel that may pitch and roll according to sea conditions.

Field work may entail working with chemicals or radioisotopes onboard AIMS vessels. The Cruise Leader or supervisor should assess the competency of any students, volunteers or visitors to ensure that they know how to work safely and competently with chemicals before expecting them to work with chemicals onboard the vessels.

Most chemicals used in the field are required for preserving samples and use either ethanol/isopropanol solutions or formaldehyde solutions. Both ethanol and formaldehyde are considered hazardous substances and, as such, the Institute is required to comply with the Hazardous Substances regulations. These regulations require employees, visitors, volunteers or students working with these chemicals to:

- be appropriately supervised;
- know the identity of the hazardous substance;
- be aware of any risks or hazards;
- have access to the material safety data sheets;
- appropriately label each container to clearly identify the substance including information on individual ingredients where a preserving solution has been created or used; and
- detail the substance's risk and safety phrases.

DISPOSAL OF HAZARDOUS SUBSTANCES

Hazardous substances must not be disposed of down sinks on the vessel, overboard or anywhere else. Waste bottles are available in laboratories and these must be used to store hazardous waste material when rinsing/cleaning vials or bottles. Safe disposal procedures are obtainable from the relevant MSDS and must be strictly adhered to. All precautions should be undertaken to prevent the escape of any hazardous substance whilst they are being handled.

TRANSPORT

Strict regulations for the packing and handling of dangerous goods apply to air, road, rail and sea freight both within Australia and overseas. Many specimens collected in the field fall under these regulations if the specimens are preserved in alcohol or formaldehyde. Arrangements for transporting these specimens should be made with the Institute's Stores personnel prior to the field trip commencing.

RADIOACTIVE SUBSTANCES

The Radiation Safety Officer (RSO) must approve all research using radioisotopes in the field. Approval will not be granted unless the researcher has completed a Risk Assessment form. This form should detail the radioisotopes to be used, any waste to be generated and details of any persons working with radioisotopes.

Only persons who have undergone appropriate training are permitted to handle radioisotopes. If you are to be working with radioactive material it is essential that you are registered with the Radiation Safety Officer and are aware of and adhere to requirements of AIMS Radiation Safety procedures. If you have not been cleared by the RSO to work with radioactive substances, then it is an offence to handle them and significant penalties can apply to both the Institute and the unauthorised person.

MANUAL HANDLING

***“Keep weights to a minimum and use mechanical handling as much as possible while on field trips.*”**

Incorrect lifting of loads can cause damage to knees, elbows, shoulders, wrists and backs. The Manual Handling Regulations require a risk assessment of all dangerous operations to be conducted. Field work, particularly the loading and unloading of vessels is hazardous.

The risk of back injury increases significantly when individuals lift loads in excess of 20kg and as a precaution loads should be less than this weight. At the completion of a field trip it is easy for these weights to be exceeded, when clothing and equipment has become coated in sand and water-logged. No one should be expected to unload a vessel at the end of the field trip on their own. There should be at least two persons involved in unloading operations so that a team lift can be used on heavy items.

Even in a team lift situation, no persons should be required to lift, lower or carry loads greater than 45kg. In such cases mechanical equipment such as forklifts or palletjacks should be utilised.

PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE)

All participants on the field excursion are to wear appropriate protective clothing at all times when conducting field work. This clothing should include suitable wet-weather gear, a wide-brim hat, a long-sleeved shirt and suitably-strong and comfortable footwear.

In many outdoor activities, a most important aspect of safety is the appropriate choice and use of equipment. Equipment must be of approved quality and design (i.e. meet Australian Standards as a minimum). Considerable care must be given to inspecting and maintaining essential safety equipment before each use. The supervisor must ensure that participants are given appropriate information concerning any clothing and equipment necessary for health and safety, prior to commencement of the field activity.

A number of Personal Protective Equipment items are available at the Institute and you should consult with your supervisor regarding the appropriate clothing or equipment for your use. These items include:

- block-out cream;
- safety goggles;
- face masks;
- laboratory coats;
- rubber gloves; and
- ear protection.

These articles are provided to protect you - please make every effort to use them properly.

SMOKING AND ALCOHOL

“All enclosed areas are smoke-free”

“All AIMS vessels are alcohol-free”

It is the Institute's policy that all enclosed workplaces be free of environment tobacco smoke. In accordance with this policy, smoking is prohibited in all AIMS vehicles, vessels and any shared places during fieldwork activities (other than designated smoking areas). In all other circumstances smokers should consider the rights and comfort of non-smoking companions and seek their permission before lighting up. Smokers should ensure that they dispose of all cigarette butts in an environmentally responsible manner, which means that cigarette butts are not to be thrown overboard when smoking on the deck of vessels.

All persons involved in Institute field activities have a responsibility to ensure that they are not, through the consumption of alcohol or a drug, in such a state as to endanger their own safety or the safety of others. The use of illicit drugs is prohibited by law. The consumption of alcohol while onboard vessels is not permitted by AIMS during Institute field trips.

EMERGENCY PROCEDURES

“Advise staff of the Emergency Plan before the Trip”

When working on AIMS vessels, the Master of the vessel is responsible for coordinating any emergency procedures onboard. The Master or First Mate will ensure that all passengers are advised of what to do in an emergency onboard, including appropriate muster points.

When working in remote areas not involving the vessels, the Cruise Leader is responsible for control in any emergencies. The Cruise Leader should develop an appropriate emergency plan for all field work prior to the field trip commencing. This Plan should include details of local emergency support agencies, e.g. Police, Ambulance, Hospital, Park Ranger, CFS, Royal Flying Doctor Service, their location and contact telephone numbers or radio call signs. The details of this plan should be communicated to all persons involved in the field trip.

The use of suitable radios or mobile telephones is considered appropriate for all Institute field work. Where radios are used, the Cruise Leader should ensure that (s)he has the appropriate licenses or that a member of the field work group has the appropriate licenses.

FIRST AID

“At least one of the field work team must be trained in Senior First Aid. Plan the contents of the first aid kit to suit the field trip”

When working in remote areas all field work groups must include a team member with current Senior First Aid qualification. An appropriately stocked first aid kit must be carried on all field trips. Information on the contents of the first aid kit are available in AIMS Field Work procedures.

All AIMS employees authorised to dive with the Institute must have a current first aid certificate. When onboard the vessels, the Master and first Mate can also assist with first aid services in the case of illness or injury.

All persons who participate in field work should be reasonably fit, and should have no existing medical condition that could reasonably be expected to give rise to a life-threatening situation. Any person with a medical condition of any sort, that may in any way affect their performance while working in the field, should advise the cruise leader or project leader of this condition and any necessary medications as soon as possible, as this may affect their approval to be further involved in the field work. Persons participating in field work should carry adequate supplies of any personal medication at all times, and should ensure that the Cruise Leader or Master of the vessel knows the location of the medication and how it is to be administered.

VACCINATION

“Get medical advice regarding vaccinations/immunizations, especially if you are conducting field work outside Australia”

The Institute recommends that all persons likely to be involved in field activities involving mangrove and mud work have a current Tetanus vaccination. You should advise the Cruise Leader immediately if you have not had a tetanus shot in the last 10 years and are likely to be working with mud, as the bacteria causing Tetanus lives in soil.

CYCLONE PROCEDURES

“Cyclones can be extremely dangerous; follow the instructions of your cruise leader and keep in touch with the radio for updates”

The Institute conducts most of its field research in tropical regions. Cyclones can occur in these regions from November to April each year. High winds and rainfall usually build up to dangerous levels over a period of about 24 hours. All persons going into the field during this period need to be aware of the potential for, and hazards arising from cyclones. The Bureau of Meteorology use a Cyclone Watch/Warning System.

The **Cyclone Watch Message** is issued if a cyclone or potential cyclone exists and there are strong indications that winds above gale force will affect coastal or island communities within 24 to 48 hours of issue.

The **Cyclone warning** is issued as soon as gales or stronger winds are expected to affect coastal or island communities within 24 hours. It identifies the communities being threatened and contains the cyclone's name, its location, intensity (including maximum wind gusts and severity category) and its movement. Cyclone warnings are issued every three hours. When a cyclone is under radar surveillance close to the coast and poses a severe threat, hourly advices are issued. All messages are broadcast by the ABC or relevant commercial radio stations, and details are frequently given in the radio news bulletins.

If a cyclone watch or cyclone warning has been issued, the Cruise Leader or Master should assess the potential risks. If the cyclone is likely to present a hazard then the field trip should be curtailed and all members of the field party should proceed to a secure location.

INCIDENT REPORTING AND OH&S REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

“Report all Incidents to help prevent them occurring again”

Should you be involved in an Incident while working in the field, irrespective of whether or not it resulted in injury or illness, you must report it immediately to your cruise leader or supervisor who will then report it to the Field Operations Manager and the HSE Coordinator. Forms for the reporting of an injury, near injury or disease are available from the Cruise Leader.

An incident is an unplanned event that had the potential to cause damage to the health and safety of an individual, plant and equipment or the environment.

WORKPLACE INJURIES, WORKERS' COMPENSATION & PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE

“Everyone has Health and Safety responsibilities whilst at work”

AIMS has Workers Compensation and Public Liability Insurance cover to provide cover to employees and visitors who become ill or injured as a result of the work they are performing for the Institute.

For insurance purposes it is very important that all incidents and injuries are reported and recorded in full as soon as possible after the incident and where applicable a Comcare Workers' Compensation Form may be submitted

Upon liability being accepted by Comcare (our Workers Insurance provider), benefits may include up to 45 weeks on full pay during incapacity, payment of reasonable and necessary medical expenses and rehabilitation assistance.

Should you suffer an injury AIMS will want to contact you to arrange a Return-to-Work Program. The program will assist in rehabilitation by providing suitable duties in consultation with your medical provider. You should expect both your supervisor and the HSE Coordinator to contact you at home or at work to start you on a program with the aim of returning to pre-injury duties.

Contact: HSE Coordinator, ext. 4304.

PERMITS

“Strictly follow the conditions or permits”

Permits are required for a wide range of activities. Cruise Leaders and Project Leaders ensure that appropriate permits are obtained prior to any scheduled field activities, and that copies of the permits are available at all times.