It is not possible to fully prescribe every safety concern for every field project. The risks associated with each field project must be identified, communicated, and addressed in advance. It is the responsibility of every faculty member to establish protocols for safe field work by the students and staff who report to them. Training and preparation that may be needed for particular conditions include heat stress, cold-stress, animal awareness and avoidance, use of bear spray, zoonotic and vector-borne diseases. Training and preparation may also be needed for a wide range of specific activities, including electrofishing, operation of motorboats, swiftwater safety and rescue, aviation (including drones), firearms, wildlife netting, underwater diving, and power tools.

The most important component in safe field work is YOU. Everyone must take personal responsibility for being fully prepared and properly equipped. Your safety, and the safety of your group, depend on your knowledge and awareness, on being mindful of potential dangers, and on making smart decisions. Key elements of safe field work include (i) think in advance; identify possible risks and take steps to address them. (ii) stay cool and keep your priorities; an extra observation is not worth a life.

These are general guidelines. Specific, detailed protocols should be established by each research group.

**Driving**

In general, the most dangerous element of field work is getting to and from the field site. University Policy is explicit on two points: 1. All employees or volunteers who operate University automobiles, or their own automobiles on University business must complete an approved driving course every two years. 2. Every driver of an automobile for University related purposes must possess a valid and appropriate license to operate the type of automobile involved. Driver’s training can be accessed through [https://wwwou.usu.edu/riskmgt/vehicles/drivers-training](https://wwwou.usu.edu/riskmgt/vehicles/drivers-training). Beyond these University requirements, safe driving guidelines include: Wear seatbelts, always. No Alcohol. Do not drive when fatigued; pull over, rest, sleep. NO use of phones and other digital devices while driving. Ever. Lack of attention is how accidents usually happen.

**First Aid Training**

If working more than 15 minutes from an active roadway and more than one hour from definitive medical care, every field party should carry an appropriate first aid kit and at least two members of every field party should have active Wilderness First Aid certification (requires recertification every two years). Wilderness First Aid training is provided by USU Outdoor Programs. The cost of this training for WATS students will be fully covered by WATS, QCNR, and RGS.

**Communication**

If working in areas with cellular service, each individual should carry a fully charged cell phone. If working in areas without reliable cellular service and more than 15 minutes from an active roadway or other access, each field party should carry at least one InReach device. It is ABSOLUTELY essential that a specific protocol is established – and followed – for communications from remote field sites. InReach satellite communication devices may be borrowed from WATS. The loaners are intended for use by classes and by research projects (funded or unfunded) with occasional need. Research projects with large or frequent remote field campaigns should acquire their own communication devices.

**Working Alone**

Conducting field work alone is strongly discouraged. Solo work requires explicit approval of the supervising faculty member/PI and notification of the department head. A specific safety plan must be prepared in advance and must include specific contact procedures (including method and timing) and either a working cell phone (with service) or an InReach device.