

Discipline of Archaeology

School of Geography, Archaeology & Irish Studies
University of Galway



Archaeological Fieldwork and Health & Safety

In preparation of field research

- **Consult with the Principal Investigator (PI) or your supervisor about your proposed independent field research programme and its Health & Safety implications.**
- In consultation with the PI or your supervisor, complete a '**Fieldwork Risk Assessment**' for the proposed field research programme.
 - ask permission to enter lands from landowners.
 - study maps and visit study area to identify hazards.
 - identify best routes and crossing points.
 - consider tetanus inoculation. etc.
 - (Note: a generic/sample 'Fieldwork Risk Assessment' is available on the 'Health & Safety' page of the Archaeology website, which can be used at a template to formulate your own Fieldwork Risk Assessment).
- **Complete and return a '*Student/Participant Health & Safety Statement*' form.**
 - (Note: this form is also available on the 'Health & Safety' page of the Archaeology website).

In advance of field research

- You are advised not to work alone in isolated rural areas and to arrange to bring an assistant if you are planning to do so.
- Inform a responsible person(s) of your whereabouts while engaged in fieldwork and provide this person with a contact mobile phone number, a location map and an expected time of return (report back to this person on safe return).
- You are requested to act responsibly, prioritising Health & Safety concerns at all times, and act in accordance with Health & Safety information detailed on the University, School and Archaeology websites.
- It will be necessary to acquire all the appropriate Health & Safety items appropriate to your fieldwork programme before venturing into the field (e.g. first aid kit, safety gloves, vis-vest, hard hat, goggles, etc.), most of which can be borrowed with prior notice from Archaeology.

General Rules for Fieldwork

- Advise PI/Supervisor/field-class coordinator of any physical disability or medical condition that could compromise H&S during fieldwork.
- Act in accordance with current NHS/Government, NUI Galway H&S Office, and Discipline of Archaeology information and advice regarding Health & Safety and Covid-19.
- Never work alone in isolated rural areas.
- Obtain permissions to enter lands.
- Advise a responsible person of your whereabouts and return time – exchange mobile phone numbers etc.
- Show respect for residents, landowners, their property and the local environment.
- Be well prepared for fieldwork and changeable weather conditions and always put personal safety above all else.
- Do not enter or work on dangerous sites or in dangerous buildings.
- Do not attempt to cross dangerous terrain – rivers, marshland, etc.
- Be vigilant of potential dangers at all times
 - farm animals
 - dogs
 - vehicles and farm machinery
 - hazardous vermin, insects and vegetation
- Make yourself seen – wear high visibility clothing

Be Prepared for all eventualities

- Be sure to bring:



- First Aid kit
- Hand sanitiser & face mask
- Suitable clothing (boots, waterproofs, etc.)
- Fully charged mobile phone and contact numbers
- Adequate food and water
- Money
- Student identification card
- Sun-screen, midge repellent, etc.
- Maps, notebook, ranging rod, camera, etc.



Dangerous Sites

- Students/Participants are advised to avoid all sites that may pose a physical danger. For example:
 - Caves or Mine workings
 - Exposed coastal areas, Cliff-top sites
 - Rivers, Bogs and Lakes
 - Quarries and Construction Works
 - Unsound or Derelict Structures and Buildings



Beware of the bull!

- And the...
- cow and calf
- dog
- ram
- goat
- wild animals
 - deer
 - badger



Vermin, insects, vegetation and disease!

- Rats & vermin
 - Weil's disease
 - gloves
 - hand disinfectant
 - antiseptic hand-wipes
- Ticks
 - Lyme disease
- Wasps, hornets, bees
- Hazardous plants
 - Giant hogweed
 - Nettles, thistles, brambles, etc.
 - Wear appropriate clothing and gloves
 - and other safety items (if required)



Pitfalls, Fences and Walls

- Use crossing points, gates and stiles
- Never rely on wire fences to hold your weight
- Beware of unstable dry-stone walls
- Avoid crossing electric and barbed-wire fences
- Beware of slurry pits and farm buildings
- Leave things as you find them
 - leave an open gate open or closed gate closed
 - do not walk through crops or damage boundaries
 - dispose of litter responsibly

Pitfalls, Fences and Walls



- Avoid climbing fences and walls
- Use recognised access routes and crossing points – stiles and gates
- If gates have to be climbed, climb over at the hinge end

Mental Health and Wellbeing

If you have any questions, queries or concerns relating to any aspect of Health & Safety you are always welcome speak with any member of the Archaeology staff in strictest confidence.

In crisis of emergency, please contact any of the following supports:

- Your own GP
- University Hospital Galway Emergency Dept: 091-544544
- Student Health Unit, NUI Galway: 091-492604
- The Samaritans: 116123
- Pitta House: 1800-247247
- Text NUIG to 50505 to access 24/7 crisis text support
 - More information at <https://text50808.ie>

In the event of a Minor Accident

- Assess the situation/check for hazards
- Make sure that the area is safe
- Inform group leader/staff member/First Aider
- First Aider to attend to casualty (PPE in First Aid bag)
- Ensure the group remains together and under supervision
- If additional medical attention is required accompany the injured person to doctor/hospital
- Cancel field excursion if necessary
- In an emergency telephone **112** and await instruction
- Care for and monitor vital signs of the casualty

In the event of an Emergency

- Assess the situation / check for hazards
- Make sure that the area is safe
- Inform group leader/staff member / First Aider
- First Aider to attend to casualty
- Avoid moving the patient if spinal injury is suspected
- Dial 112 for emergency services
- Remain with injured party at all times, keeping them warm, comfortable and reassured
- If someone is required to go for help (make phone call) ask them to return to report on the situation

On calling the Emergency Service (112)

- You will be asked 'what service do you require?'
 - Ambulance, Fire Brigade, Police, Mountain or Cave Rescue, Marine Rescue
 - specify cardiac ambulance if required
- State your telephone number first in case you are cut off
- Address and location of where help is needed
 - consult map, notable landmarks
- Nature of incident
 - number of people involved, any persons trapped, known hazards
- Don't hang up until you are told to do so
- Inform the emergency services if they are no longer required
- Send someone to meet and guide the ambulance

Bring any Health & Safety concerns that you might have a member of staff/lecturer.

- It is important that students/participants on medication or knowingly suffering from any physical disability, injury or medical condition that could compromise their health & safety, or that of others, during field activities must bring it to the attention of the lecturer/field-class co-ordinator promptly. Information of a personal or medical nature will, of course, be kept in strictest confidence.
 - (bring your medicines etc. on fieldwork if necessary)
- Ask any member of the staff if you have any questions regarding Health & Safety or if you have concerns relating to disability, medical health, personal wellbeing or the physical or mental wellbeing of other members of your class. We are here to help!