

# Geography School of Geography and Archaeology

Geography Fieldwork ;  
Health and Safety Guidelines



NUI Galway  
OÉ Gaillimh

Name of Speaker

# To prepare for fieldwork

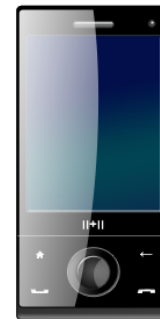
- Consult with your supervisor about your proposed field research programme and its Health & Safety implications
- In agreement with your supervisor, undertake a risk assessment of your study area
  - study maps and visit study area
  - identify potential hazards
  - identify best routes and crossing points. etc.
- Acquire permission from landowners to enter lands
- Ask about potential hazards
- Complete 'Student Health & Safety Statement' and 'Geography Fieldwork Risk Assessment (Student)' forms available on the Geography website:  
(<http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography>)

## Before you leave NUIG to undertake fieldwork:

- 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 (remembering to report back to this person on safe return)
- You are advised never to work alone in isolated rural areas and to arrange to bring an assistant if you are planning to do so.
- You are requested to act responsibly, prioritise Health & Safety concerns at all times, and act in accordance with Health and Safety information detailed on the University, School and Geography website
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/administration\\_services/healthsaf/?menu=3](http://www.nuigalway.ie/administration_services/healthsaf/?menu=3)
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography\\_archaeology/safety.html](http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography_archaeology/safety.html)
- <http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/>
- It will be necessary to consider acquiring the appropriate 'health and safety' items appropriate to your fieldwork programme before venturing into the field (e.g. first aid kit, safety gloves, life jacket, waterproofs, high vis-vest, hard hat, goggles, etc.), some of which may be made available/borrowed with prior notice from Geography

# Be Prepared for all eventualities

- Be sure to bring:
- Personal First Aid kit
- 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



# General Rules for Fieldwork

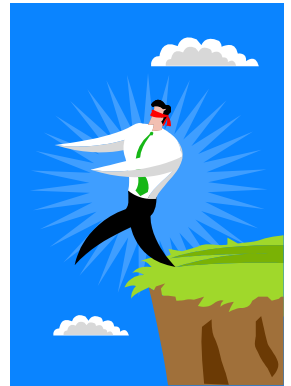
- Never work alone in isolated rural areas
- Show respect for residents, landowners, their property and the local environment
- Be well prepared for your fieldwork and always put personal safety above all else
- Do not enter or work on dangerous sites
- Do not attempt to cross dangerous terrain
- Be 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

# Dangerous Sites

- Students are advised not to inspect any site which may place them in physical danger.

Avoid...

- Caves or Mine workings
- Coastal areas, lakes, cliff-top sites
- Rivers, bogs and streams
- Quarries and construction works
- Unsafe and derelict structures and buildings



# Vermin, insects, vegetation and disease!

## — Rats & vermin

- Diseases
- gloves
- hand disinfectant
- antiseptic hand- wipes

## — Ticks

Lyme disease

## — Wasps, hornets and bees

## — Lyme disease

## — **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 loose dry-stone walls
- Avoid crossing electric and barbed-wire fences
- Beware of slurry pits
- 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



# Walls, Gates and Fences

- 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



# In the event of a Minor Accident

- Assess the situation / check for hazards
- Make the area safe
- Inform group leader/staff member / first aider
- First Aider to attend to casualty
- 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 the event of an Emergency

- Assess the situation / check for hazards
- Make the area 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 if it is safe to do so.

# On calling Emergency Services 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



# Safety Statements and Risk Assessments

- All students/participants attending Geography field-classes, field-schools, or engaged in Geography fieldwork etc. are required to complete and sign a 'Student/Participant Health & Safety Statement' form and return it to the Safety Officer before commencing fieldwork or attending any field-classes or field-schools etc.
- All students engaged in independent geography field research as part of their studies are also required to complete and sign a 'Geography Fieldwork Risk Assessment (Student)' form and return it to the Safety Officer before engaging in any fieldwork
- These forms are available on the Geography website
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/documents/form\\_geography\\_health\\_and\\_safety\\_statement\\_studentform.pdf](http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/documents/form_geography_health_and_safety_statement_studentform.pdf)
- [http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/documents/form\\_geography\\_fieldwork\\_risk\\_assessment\\_staff\\_2014.pdf](http://www.nuigalway.ie/geography/documents/form_geography_fieldwork_risk_assessment_staff_2014.pdf)

# Talk to the Course Supervisor

- 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 during field activities (or the health & safety of others) bring it to the attention of the course supervisor/project leader promptly. Information of a personal or medical nature will, of course, be kept in 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 or personal wellbeing or the physical or mental wellbeing of other members of your class.
- We are here to help

