

Algoma University Animal Care Committee	
#AU 0011 Hiking Injury	
Issue date: June 2012	Last revised: May 2025

1) Purpose

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) describes acceptable procedures for preparing for hiking, as well as addressing injuries and what to do if an injury occurs.

2) Policy

CCAC guidelines and regulations

3) Responsibility

Principal investigator, their research staff, and their student investigators

4) Training Required

Administering First Aid

5) Materials Required

Hiking Boots

Hiking Poles

Weather Appropriate Clothing

Water and Snacks

GPS/Compass

Maps

Two-Way Radio/Cell Phone/Satellite phone or some mode of communication devices if going off the grid

Whistle

Flashlight

Battery Pack/Extra Batteries/Solar Charger

Bear Spray kits (if venturing into bear territory)

First Aid Kits

EpiPens in case of persons with allergies

Essential Gear & Equipment

1. Proper Footwear: Hiking boots with a good grip to prevent slips.
2. Clothing: Layered, weather-appropriate attire (avoid cotton in cold/wet conditions).
3. Navigation Tools: Maps, compass, or GPS (don't rely solely on phones).
4. Emergency Supplies: Whistle, flashlight, extra batteries, thermal blanket.
5. Food & Water: Sufficient high-energy snacks and at least 2 litres of water per person.

6) Procedures

Procedure: Prevention and Precaution

Always carry the required materials with you when hiking in the event you become lost (see SOP #AU0012) or injured. When hiking and working in the field you should always wear proper footwear that will provide support, keep you dry, and provide sufficient warmth for the season. Proper footwear will minimize the risk of injury. When hiking in the field, be aware of your surroundings and the ground on which you are walking. Avoid touching the flora and fauna if possible. If you are performing an activity that requires looking up, like following a bird (with or without binoculars) or observing the canopy, always move slowly when doing so and scan the ground frequently to avoid objects in the environment which may present a trip and fall risk.

Pre-Trip Planning & Risk Assessment

1. Route Planning: Choose a trail suitable for the group's fitness level and experience.
2. Weather Check: Monitor forecasts and prepare for sudden changes.
3. Risk Assessment: Identify hazards (e.g., steep terrain, wildlife, river crossings) and plan mitigations.
7. Emergency Plan: Define emergency contacts, evacuation routes, and nearest medical facilities.

Personal & Group Health Considerations

1. Medical Conditions: Ensure participants disclose allergies, asthma, or other health issues.
2. Fitness Levels: Assess if all members can handle the hike's physical demands.
3. Vaccinations & First Aid: Carry a well-stocked first aid kit and ensure necessary vaccinations (e.g., tetanus) are current.

OnTrip Safety Measures

1. Buddy System: Pair up to monitor each other.
2. Pace Management: Avoid overexertion; take regular breaks.
3. Hydration & Nutrition: Prevent dehydration and heatstroke.
4. Wildlife Awareness: Know how to react to encounters (e.g., snakes, bears).
5. Leave No Trace: Pack out all trash to protect the environment.

Emergency Preparedness

1. Communication Plan: Ensure that at least one phone has a signal or carry a satellite communicator.
2. First Aid Response: Assign a trained first aider in the group.
3. Hypothermia/Heatstroke Signs: Recognize and treat early symptoms.

Procedure: Accidental Injury Protocol

1. Should you trip or fall while working in the field, remain calm and do not get up quickly, if the injury is substantial this could only exacerbate the wound. Instead, remain on the ground for a moment and take a survey of the injuries sustained from the fall
2. If you are free of injury then feel free to get up and continue working in the field
3. If you have sustained a minor injury such as a scrape, bruise, or light strain, you should stop working and administer first aid if necessary and go home in order to prevent overexerting yourself and making the injury worse
4. For any injury, you should notify your buddy and you should both leave the field together

5. If the injury is serious and you cannot get up, call your buddy using whatever means available to you (e.g. whistle, radio, phone, even shouting if you must)
6. If you can get up with help, your buddy should assist you in walking to the vehicle and both of you will leave the field
7. If you are unable to move even with help or have a broken bone/seriously sprained a muscle then you should call an ambulance to get you out of the field and to a hospital
8. The Principal Investigator should be notified of all injuries that occur in the field, even minor ones
9. Critical injuries will necessitate the completion of the [Algoma University Accident/Injury Report](#) within 24 hours

REVISION HISTORY		
Revision #	Revision Date	Summary of Changes
1	November 2019	Modified
2	May 2024	Additional reviewing by Algoma H&S Office
3	May 2025	Reformatting
4	May 2025	Department of Life, Health & Safety and Security, reviewed and provided comments and additions to SOP. The name of SOP was changed to Hiking Safety