

RULES FOR THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT DURING FIELD WORK (RAF)

GENERAL RULES FOR THE WORKING ENVIRONMENT DURING
FIELDWORK AT AALBORG UNIVERSITY



© Colourbox

Content

Introduction.....	1
Responsibilities and roles	1
Planning the field work.....	2
Working environment organization (AMO) for field work	3
Training, instruction and supervision	3
Welfare measures	4
References	5

Introduction

Aalborg University's research and study activities are to a certain extent carried out as field work.

Fieldwork is practical work which is characterized by taking place in locations or under conditions where the necessary facilities have not – or only to a limited extent – been established so that the research and study activities can be carried out as intended. As a consequence, those who carry out the activities typically have to bring the necessary equipment etc. for the purpose.

Fieldwork typically takes place at locations outside Aalborg University's premises, either in Denmark or abroad. However, fieldwork can also take place in an area that AAU has at its disposal.



Example of field work. Collection of aquatic organisms.

This document describes the overall principles that AAU's departments must apply to minimize any safety risks or hazardous exposures and strains related to field work.

The document has the status of rules that apply to all departments that carry out field work. The departments themselves are expected to draw up and maintain local rules that implement and supplement the rules in this document.

The abbreviation, RAF, refers to the Danish title of the document: Regler for arbejdsmiljø ved feltarbejde.

Responsibilities and roles

Aalborg University's Working Environment Policy states that the Rector has overall responsibility for the working environment at AAU, but that managers at all levels are responsible for the working environment within their own area of responsibility.

The responsibility for the working environment and safety during field work thus rests with the Head of Department. The Head of Department can appoint a person responsible for each fieldwork. This person must, in collaboration with the local working environment organization (AMO), take care of the specific tasks of ensuring a safe working environment at the field work.

Planning the field work

The Head of Department or the person responsible for the field work must ensure that for **each field work** an assessment is made as to whether the field work or parts of the field work may pose a risk to safety or health and ensure that these risks are countered effectively. This applies regardless of whether the fieldwork is carried out by AAU employees or by non-AAU employees, e.g. students.

If necessary, an actual **risk assessment** of relevant elements of the fieldwork or of the fieldwork as a whole must be carried out. In this connection, pay attention to whether the nature of the fieldwork dictates that it cannot be carried out as solo work.

All participants must be made aware of which **special work clothes** and which **personal protective equipment** they are expected to bring with them when working in the field. The department must provide special work clothes and personal protective equipment for AAU employees who participate in the field work but is as a general rule not obliged to do so in relation to participating non-AAU employees.

In addition, depending on the nature and location of the fieldwork, a decision must be made on the following:

- **Insurance for the participants**
Clarify the participants' needs for travel insurance as well as their personal insurances with regard to liability and accidents. Clarification is particularly important for participating non-AAU employees, e.g. visiting researchers and students, as AAU employees are **normally** covered by the university's statutory workers' compensation insurance.
In addition, investigate whether participating students will be covered by the university's collective accident insurance for students in laboratories, see also **References**.
- **Vaccination of the participants**
Clarify the participants' individual needs for vaccination. This may be relevant when the field work involves exposure to infectious biological agents, e.g. from contaminated wastewater.
Also pay attention to vaccination requirements or recommendations when traveling abroad.
- **Transport of dangerous goods**
Clarify the need for the transport of dangerous goods to and from the location where the field work takes place. Dangerous goods can e.g. be dangerous substances and materials or pressurized equipment. The requirements for the transport depend on the form of transport (air, sea or road transport, respectively). The Working Environment Section can provide a contact to the safety adviser currently employed by the university.

- **Emergency preparedness and emergency communication**

Clarify the need for emergency measures in connection with the field work, e.g. via the aforementioned risk assessment. This can e.g. be fire-extinguishing equipment, first-aid equipment and wound dressings.

Also clarify the participants' ability to call for help in emergency situations. In this connection, check whether there is mobile phone coverage where the fieldwork takes place. In areas without mobile coverage, it may be necessary to establish another communication option, e.g. a radio connection.

Working environment organization (AMO) for field work

For field work in which at least 5 employees of the department participate over a period of 14 days or more, the work with safety and health must be organized. This implies,

- **either** that a working environment group is established for the field work in accordance with the rules in the document **Working environment organization at AAU**.
- **or** that an existing occupational health and safety group in the unit covers the field work while this is in progress. This can, for example, be a group which already covers a workshop area in the department.

The latter option presupposes that the existing working environment group can inspect the fieldwork to the extent necessary and otherwise be contactable during the fieldwork. It is important here that the working environment group knows the terms for this, including the transport options.

When the field work takes place on the premises of another company or in collaboration with other companies, including other educational institutions, an agreement can be entered on cooperation on the working environment work during the field work according to the provisions of Executive Order on Cooperation on Safety and Health regarding organizational and company agreements.

The Working Environment Section must be involved when concluding such agreements.

Training, instruction and supervision

The Head of Department must ensure that all participants in the fieldwork are sufficiently trained and instructed prior to the initiation of any activity in the fieldwork that may involve a risk to safety or health. This applies regardless of whether the activity is carried out by AAU employees or by non-AAU employees, e.g. visiting researchers or students.

Training and instruction must include all relevant working environment aspects of the activity in question, including:



- safe operation of machines and equipment
- safe use of hazardous substances and materials
- proper lifting and carrying of heavy items
- safe work with high voltage/high current
- safe work at height
- safe work when exposed to hazardous weather or special climatic conditions
- use of personal protective equipment.



Use of fall protection equipment requires training and instruction.

The list is not exhaustive.

The Head of Department must also ensure that participants in fieldwork are themselves able to take appropriate safety measures as the fieldwork progresses. If necessary, the participants in the fieldwork must be trained and instructed in carrying out **risk assessments**.

Alternatively, the Head of Department must ensure that necessary risk assessments are carried out on behalf of the participants by the designated person responsible for the fieldwork or other qualified staff, e.g. teachers and student supervisors. As a starting point, this will require that teachers and supervisors themselves participate in the fieldwork or are regularly present at the fieldwork while it is in progress. This point must be particularly observed when the field work is carried out by students on their own.

When the field work is carried out in places or under circumstances where local rules apply, including field work on another company's territory, field work abroad, at sea or by air, the Head of Department must ensure that the participants are familiar with and comply with these rules. It can, for example, be done through collaboration with persons or agencies with local knowledge.

The Head of Department must also ensure that the fieldwork is **supervised**. The purpose of the supervision must be to check, on the one hand, that the participants carry out the activities in a safe manner, and on the other hand, that training and instruction have been sufficient. The supervisor and the local occupational health and safety group can arrange for the work to cease during the field work, if applicable legal or local regulations are not complied with and there is otherwise an imminent, significant danger to safety or health.

The Head of Department, in collaboration with the occupational health and safety organization, can assign one or more employees the right to train, instruct and supervise the participants in the field work. The Head of Department must describe the powers of the persons concerned in writing and make the participants in the fieldwork familiar with the delegation.

Welfare measures

The Head of Department or the person responsible for the fieldwork must ensure that everyone who participates in the fieldwork (including non-AAU employees) has access to

- **toilet**, within approx. 10 minutes transport time,
- **suitable dining area** if there are meal breaks during the fieldwork,
- **hand washing**, as far as possible provided with running water. If it is necessary for health reasons to be able to clean oneself in hot water and soap, there must be access to this as well.
- **proper storage** of clothing and personal belongings.



35-liter water can with tap. In some cases, this will meet the need for access to running water.

There must also be access for AAU employees to

- **change of clothes**, if, as a result of the nature of the work, a change of clothes is necessary,
- **drying the work clothes** if the work causes the work clothes to get wet,
- **shower** and **changing room** with separate storage of private clothes and work clothes, if the work e.g. is very dirty.

The department sets the rules for students' and other non-AAU employees' access to the mentioned changing, bathing and drying facilities. However, non-AAU employees must be offered access to the mentioned facilities if the field work is highly soiling or involves contact with substances and materials hazardous to health, e.g. contaminated soils, contaminated waste water, uncured epoxy, etc.

The welfare measures can be established either at the place where the fieldwork takes place, e.g. in a construction site trailer, or found at an AAU location or other location nearby.

References

The references below are relevant to this document. They can all be found by searching the titles.

WEA guidelines

- **WEA guidelines on vaccination of persons working with sewage sludge and waste water**
The guide provides rules for vaccinating people against hepatitis, tetanus and polio.
- **WEA guideline on work-related infection risks with hepatitis, meningitis, polio, tetanus og Tickborne Encephalitis (TBE)**
The guideline describes work-related infection risks with the mentioned diseases when people are exposed to certain biological agents.

AAU-documents

- **Aalborg University's Working Environment Policy**
The university's work environment policy is the overall governing document for all work environment work at AAU. The policy can be found in the AAU handbook.

- **Working environment organization at AAU**
This procedural document under the working environment policy describes the principles for establishing a working environment organization in AAU's departments.
- **Accident insurance for students in laboratories**
The description of this insurance scheme can be found in the AAU handbook.
- **Insurance at Aalborg University**
This overview of the insurance conditions for employees, students, etc. can be found in the AAU handbook.
- **Do what I say!**
Good advice on take care of the instructional obligation at Aalborg University.

Inquiries about this document can be directed to the Working Environment Section:
arbejdsmiljoesektion@adm.aau.dk.

AAU - Arbejdsmiljøsektionen, marts 2023