FIELD SAFETY GUIDELINES

Welcome to SEAS! You will have the opportunity as a student in this program to experience the many field-based learning approaches of SEAS. Either in a course or research project you will likely work outdoors, in a field setting, in private, public, and UM-owned forests, wetlands, and fields in the Ann Arbor area, to other sites in Michigan, to field sites throughout the U.S., and many international locations.

While each field situation will have specific instructions to follow, we expect you to be familiar with these general guidelines for a safe and productive field-based learning and research experience.

1. **Use the buddy system:** Always go out into the field with at least one other person. This ensures that someone knows where you are and can help you as needed.

2. **Prepare for the weather and the season:** If you are working in cold temperatures you will need to wear a warm hat, gloves, coat, and long underwear, to decrease the chance of discomfort, frostbite, or hypothermia. Warmer and/or sunny conditions require a sun hat, sunglasses, light-weight long-sleeves and pants, and an adequate water supply to stay hydrated. Extreme weather (hail storm, tornado, high winds, etc.) can occur throughout the year, so know the closest locations to your field site where you can take cover if needed. Working in the field during hunting season you must wear a bright orange hat and/or vest to make your location obvious to hunters. If you have any allergies, including bee allergies, always carry your own medications and/or epi-pen to be prepared for exposure to seasonal or other allergens.

3. **Wear proper footwear:** Flip flops, high heels, loose-fitting exposed shoes, or bare feet are unacceptable for field work. Make sure you have sturdy, comfortable shoes for walking on uneven terrain.

4. **Know the proper use of equipment:** You will be guided in the use of various equipment, some of which requires specific instructions for safety, including the use of motor vehicles (vans, tractors, ATVs, etc.), boats, power tools, waders, tree corers, electroshocking equipment, chemicals for analysis, etc.

5. **Be aware of potential plant and animal hazards:** Be aware of plants and animals in your area that can be dangerous or noxious to you and ask your instructors for specific guidance. In Michigan this could include poisonous berries and mushrooms, plants that can cause skin irritation if touched with your skin, clothing, or equipment, including poison ivy and poison sumac; *E.coli* bacteria or other contaminants in water that you should avoid ingesting; deer ticks which can carry Lyme’s disease; massasauga rattlesnakes, Michigan’s only venomous snake that can be present in wetlands; and black bears which can occur in certain northern Michigan forests.

6. **Know your navigation and roadways:** Make sure you have good maps and/or a guide to your field locations, a back-up in case of lack of cell phone coverage, a clear sense of gas station locations, and an awareness of road traffic so that you do not walk or bike in dangerous traffic situations.

7. **Know your local culture and laws:** Wherever you work in the field may have different customs and policies. Be aware of required licenses and/or permits or the need for permission to access areas for the field work you are doing. To avoid misunderstandings, familiarize yourself with local languages and major cultural customs including traditional events, acceptable clothing and personal space, and perspectives regarding environmental values and knowledge, as well as gender, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation, and disabilities.

8. **Communicate early and often with your instructors and advisors:** Make sure you always know how to contact your instructors and/or advisor and talk to them right away if you have any injuries or concerns about safety that occur while doing field work, about how to respond to situations in the field, or if at any point you have *any* questions or concerns about field safety protocols or about the physical conditions or requirements of field work. We are here to support your field-based learning experience!