

Geological Society of New Zealand field trip safety guidelines

No activity, and certainly no field activity, is without risk. Risk management is about maintaining the essential part of an activity while avoiding unacceptable accidents.

These guidelines are intended to make leaders **and** participants aware of their respective responsibilities during fieldtrips.

Fieldtrip leaders are responsible for ensuring that appropriate safety precautions are exercised during the course of any fieldtrip.

- they must attempt to identify any potential hazards prior to the fieldtrip, to communicate their existence to participants, and to mitigate their impact where possible.
- must advise participants of the fieldtrip difficulty, duration and the level of “fitness” required when the trip is advertised. Participants encouraged to contact the leader if unsure.
- on accepting participants with any handicaps or limitations the fieldtrip plan must take these into account.
- the terrain, changing weather conditions and the abilities of all participants are to be taken into account throughout the duration of the fieldtrip.
- postponement, curtailment or cancellation of a trip is the best course in severe weather conditions.
- must carry a first aid kit at all times and a cellphone is advised.
- must warn of potential rock fall hazards and minimise time spent in such areas. Active quarries will require hardhats and for prolonged stops under any “steeper than the angle of repose” or cliff outcrops hardhats are required.

Roadside and rail track outcrops:

Is the stop justified – i.e. are there other safer alternatives? Factors to be considered are traffic density, visibility, road width, anticipated traffic speed, and the “value” of the exposure to be viewed.

- Outcrops on railway lines should not be attempted.
- Outcrops on busy state highways should be avoided especially by large parties. If necessary limit the number at the outcrop at any given time.
- Outcrops adjacent to narrow roadside verges should be avoided.
- Before leaving safe parking to approach the outcrop remind all of potential hazards and the need for constant vigilance.
- At roadside outcrops positioning of vehicles with hazard lights on 100m away in both directions is advised.
- Warning cones, signage and fluro-jackets are also advisable.

River crossings should be avoided where the current is strong and the water is more than calf deep.

On bush tracks or in poor visibility leader to appoint “tail-end Charlie” for the group to ensure it stays close together. Stop and regroup at track junctions or poor sections of tracks where the way forward is unclear and account for all participants.

On long road trips driver fatigue should be closely monitored with regular rest stops and driver changes.

Fieldtrip participants have responsibilities too.

These include:

- following the leader's instructions and directions.
- advising the leader of any medical or physical problems prior to the start of a trip (e.g. vertigo, agrophobia, lithophobia, malleophobia etc).
- carrying any personal medicines they may require (anti-histamines, anti-inflammatories, asthma medication, pain-killers etc). A personal first aid kit is a good idea.
- knowing their limitations and fitness before undertaking any fieldtrip.
- advising the leader if they want to stop. Leader can then make arrangements to assist them safely back to the starting point, arrange a companion to stay with them or arrange to meet them on the return.
- staying with the group at all times. Short cuts can be dangerous.
- being responsible for taking plenty of fluids, food (including extra energy sources).
- having enough comfortable clothing adequate for any weather changes, suitable footwear and a good raincoat.
- taking care in the field such as when hammering rocks, using chisels. Wearing eye protection is recommended.