



**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING OPTIONS TASMANIA
FIELD ACTIVITY SAFETY POLICY**

Version 25 July 2008

Preamble

This document presents the Field Safety Policy (the “Policy”) of Environmental Consulting Options Tasmania (hereafter “ECOtas” or the “Employer”) in relation to any work away from the office situation, including driving and field work.

ECOtas is firmly committed to a Policy enabling all work activities to be carried out practically, efficiently and safely, and with all possible measures taken to remove (or at least minimise) risks to the health, safety and welfare of Employees, contractors, authorised visitors, and anyone else who may be affected by our field work activities.

Implementation

All Employees will be provided with a copy of this Policy during negotiation of their contract with ECOtas (or if already employed, as soon as practical after the time of this Policy becoming available), and acknowledge their acceptance of the Policy by signing of the contract (or variation to the contract), which refers to the existence of the Policy. The Policy will be explained in a face-to-face Employee/Employer meeting. Employees will be made aware of alterations to the Policy in writing and requested to acknowledge an understanding of the changes.

Legal requirements

The Tasmanian *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* and the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998* provide the legal and policy framework for employers and employees in relation to workplace health and safety matters.

Some relevant clauses are copied below.

2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK AND GENERAL DUTIES

2.1 DUTIES OF EMPLOYERS

All employers and employees must comply with the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* and the *Workplace Health and Safety Regulations 1998*.

An employer must, so far as is reasonably practicable, provide and maintain:

- a. a safe work environment;
- b. safe systems of work; and
- c. plant and substances in a safe condition.

An employer must also provide, so far as is reasonably practicable, such information, instruction, training and supervision to employees as are necessary to enable the employees to perform their work in a manner that is safe from injury and risk.

2.3 DUTIES OF EMPLOYEES

While at work, an employee must:

- a. take all reasonable care for the employee's own health and safety, and that of other persons at the workplace; and
- b. comply with directions given by the employer, supervisor or person in charge.

Scope of policy

ECOtas undertakes a range of field-based assessments. This Policy is intended to address safety aspects of field work related to:

- undertaking ecological assessments of different vegetation types (and associated values and management issues) in different parts of the State on a range of tenures;
- undertaking assessments in different circumstances created by different seasonal and daily weather conditions, timing of surveys (e.g. daytime versus nocturnal) and site conditions (e.g. terrain and topography);
- accessing field sites via vehicle and/or foot;
- other aspects of field activities not covered by the above.

Throughout this Policy, examples are provided. These are usually intended as examples of a particular situation being described and will be preceded by terms such as “including”, which

can usually be read to mean “including, but not necessarily restricted to” to indicate that other examples may apply to the situation being described.

Responsibilities

The Employer will provide and maintain as far as possible:

- a safe working environment
- safe systems of work
- plant and substances in safe condition
- facilities for the welfare of employees
- information, instruction, training and supervision that is reasonably necessary to ensure that each employee is safe from injury and risks to health
- a commitment to consult and co-operate with employees in all matters relating to health and safety in the workplace
- a commitment to continually improve performance through effective safety management.
- Each Employee has an obligation to:
 - comply with safe work practices, with the intent of avoiding injury to themselves and others and damage to equipment
 - take reasonable care of their own health and safety and the health and safety of others
 - wear personal protective equipment and clothing where necessary
 - comply with any direction given by management in relation to health and safety
 - not misuse or interfere with anything provided in the interest of health and safety
 - report all accidents and incidents on the job immediately, no matter how trivial
 - report all known or observed hazards to the Employer.

Duty of care

The following section is taken from the Tasmanian Workplace Standards Authority's web site.

A duty of care is a legal responsibility. The general duty of care provisions in the *Workplace Health and Safety Act 1995* are limited by 'reasonable practicability'. Practicable means it must be possible or capable of being done safely. To carry out a duty as far as is reasonably practicable means the degree of risk in a particular activity or environment can be balanced against measures taken to control it.

The 'reasonable practicability' test must take into account:

The nature of the employment or, as the case may be, the particular aspect of the employment concerned; and

(a) the severity of any potential injury or harm to health or safety that may be involved, and the degree of risk that exists in relation to such potential injury or harm; and

(b) the state of knowledge about the injury or harm to health or safety that may be involved; the risk of the occurrence of that injury or harm to health or safety; and any methods of preventing, removing or mitigating that injury, harm or risk; and

(c) the availability and suitability of ways to prevent, remove or mitigate that injury or harm to health or safety or risk; and

(d) whether the cost of preventing, removing or mitigating that injury or harm to health or safety or that risk is prohibitive in the circumstances.

As the risk increases, it is reasonable to increase substantially the time, effort and cost needed to reduce or eliminate that risk.

General duties of care are central to the legislation, requiring all workplace participants to take practicable steps to ensure health and safety measures are met. Each person under a duty must satisfy it, even if other persons also have a similar duty.

An Employee of ECOtas should not undertake field work in a situation that they consider to be a danger to their own, another member of the field party's or a third party's safety, health and well being.

Commonsense decisions will need to be made in some situations that are site-specific. For example, unexpected weather conditions (e.g. sudden lightning storms, intense heat, flash floods, wild winds, etc.) may require changed field work plans to ensure safety is maintained. Unexpected illness or injury may also require plans to change. Less obvious examples may include discontinuing field work due to tiredness (see also section on driving).

It is impractical for this Policy to consider every potentially dangerous situation that may arise because some potentially risky situations occur infrequently (e.g. encountering booby-trapped illicit drug plots, wanting to sample an aquatic plant in unexpectedly deep water, etc.). Employees must exercise due caution at all times and be responsive to changing safety conditions.

Standard field work procedures

The following set of procedures must be followed prior to any field work. More detail on some aspects of the procedures is provided later in the Policy and in separate forms.

- Review this Policy, especially the Risk Assessment section and determine its applicability to your situation.
- Complete an ECOtas Field Activity Safety Assessment Form (Form S-1) prior to undertaking field work (but see also section on Risk Assessment).
- Complete an ECOtas Field Activity Notification Form (Form S-3) prior to undertaking field work. This form includes the notification procedures for call-in and call-out for each field trip.
- Notify your nominated contact person of your intended field trip and provide them with a completed copy of Form S-3 (or at least an equivalent summary of the information on the form in a different format such as email with attached map).
- Ensure all essential field equipment is carried and that all equipment is in good condition (e.g. fresh and spare batteries).
- Undertake field work, complying with any specific work site requirements.
- Complete field work and notify your nominated contact person that you have safely exited the field site.

Risk assessment

This Policy contains a summary of the identified risks in field work undertaken by ECOtas in most situations. Risks not identified in this Policy can be identified at the time of completing a risk assessment form.

It is not necessary to complete a new risk assessment for frequently undertaken tasks (e.g. routine surveys) but it is vital that the potential risks are considered prior to undertaking any field task. A new form should be completed (or equivalent notes made in a diary or field note book) if new risks are identified prior to or during a field task. For example, if a routine ecological assessment is planned but preliminary investigations identify the potential for a threatened aquatic plant to be present and aerial imagery identifies potential sites that may require sampling, a new form should be completed identifying the risks associated with sampling an aquatic environment (or at least the risks discussed and documented with the Employer prior to undertaking the field work). If a new risk is identified during the course of field work, the situation should be carefully considered and an on-site decision made as to whether to progress with further assessment. For example, if a routine ecological assessment was anticipated (e.g. topography map shows generally open forest on gentle terrain) but an unexpected site is identified requiring sampling (e.g. a rocky cliff potentially suitable for a threatened plant), the situation should be assessed and field work in the new environment should only continue if deemed safe to do so. In this situation, field documentation such as a field notebook entry and digital image would suffice as a risk assessment.

Driving

Routine ecological assessments will require driving in a variety of situations, including:

- driving to and from the field site on public roads (sealed and unsealed);
- accessing the field site using private roads and tracks (or various conditions);
- accessing and exploring a field site without using roads and tracks (e.g. driving across paddocks, “bush-bashing”, dune and beach driving, creek and river crossing, etc.).

This Policy does not provide advice on driving on public roads per se, except to reiterate that the relevant State road and vehicle laws must be strictly adhered to.

Risks from driving activities are numerous and include:

- lack of adequate training and education for the type of vehicle or road conditions;
- lack of securing objects in the vehicle leading to increased risk of injury during an accident;
- inappropriate or inadequate load distribution and security leading to accident or injury;
- poor assessment of surface and site conditions leading to personal injury, third party injury or vehicle damage (which may in turn result in increased personal risk due to exposure, etc.);
- local conditions with inherent risks of vehicle or personal injury (e.g. steep rocky tracks, soft sand, boggy ground, unstable ground, etc.);
- collision with objects, other road users and animals, due to poor driving ability, other road user behaviour, unexpected road conditions, sudden animal movements or fatigue (or other health conditions).

The following general advice is provided to minimise the risk of personal or third party injury, and damage to vehicles:

- do not drive a vehicle if feeling unwell to do so (exercise common sense) or if fatigued – as a general rule it is suggested that driving sessions not exceed 2 hours duration (less if road conditions are intense such as in poor weather), that breaks of 5-10 minutes occur every 2 hours, and that extended driving sessions do not occur if excessively long field days have been experienced (sharing driving may alleviate these conditions);
- ensure the vehicle being used is well maintained in a condition suitable for the intended use;
- use a 4WD vehicle if the conditions dictate that such a vehicle is required;
- only use a 4WD vehicle if appropriate training has been undertaken;
- secure all objects inside a vehicle such that in the event of sudden stopping that loose objects do not fly through the vehicle and cause injury (during the course of routine field work it is easy for numerous objects to be strewn about a vehicle so assess this regularly and keep the vehicle tidy);
- drive to the conditions (e.g. slow down at night, in fog or heavy rain; watch for strong buffeting side winds; watch for fallen objects);
- only proceed in off-road situations if the route has been carefully assessed and deemed to be safe to proceed – this applies particularly to situations such as creek crossings, boggy and soft ground, steep rocky areas, etc.;
- ensure the vehicle is equipped with appropriate spare items such that if events like punctures, bogging or getting stuck on protruding rocks/logs occur, equipment is available to return the situation to normal and proceed safely on the journey (this includes a tool kit, jack, shovel, bush saw, etc.);
- ideally travel with two or more people in off-road situations to provide additional risk assessment expertise and person-power in situations such as being bogged;
- ensure that sufficient fuel is carried for the journey and return journey, and in the event of needing to use additional fuel (e.g. unexpected fuel-consuming intensive 4WDing due to unexpected road conditions).

In addition to the above, it is recommended that a spare set of vehicle keys is either carried by another member of the party or left hidden (except to the members of the field party) near the vehicle. This is to minimise the risk of a party becoming stranded in a remote situation due to lost keys or a lost party member and becoming exposed to additional risks (e.g. exposure).

It is also suggested that unattended vehicles be securely locked to not only minimise the risk of theft (or theft of items) but to minimise the risk of vehicle tampering by third parties leading to unsafe driving conditions.

ECOtas is prepared to provide employees with formal training by accredited training agencies in defensive driving techniques and off-road vehicle use – this can be arranged on an as-needs basis by mutual convenience. In addition, ECOtas will contribute on an as-needs basis or through negotiated contract conditions to the maintenance of an employee's vehicle in a safe working condition.

Emergency situations

There are numerous potential emergency situations that may arise during the course of field work, the degree of safety risk applicable to each varying according to the event and the preparation of the victim.

Emergency situations may include:

- vehicle accident (of varying levels of damage to person, vehicle or third party);
- other vehicle incident such as getting bogged or stuck in some other way (e.g. several punctured tyres, ruptured fuel tank, etc.);
- personal injury such as snake-bite, other animal bite/sting, broken bones, sprained/twisted joints, punctured skin, etc.;
- personal illness such as fatigue, heat exhaustion, hypothermia, headache, allergic reaction, etc.;
- getting lost.

The response to an emergency situation will depend on the incident. In most cases, being well prepared with appropriate field equipment and field notification procedures is the most appropriate response. Situations requiring first aid will rely on the skills of individuals and their level of training and expertise. ECOtas is prepared to provide employees with formal training by accredited training agencies in first aid techniques – this can be arranged on an as-needs basis by mutual convenience.

Working at night – nocturnal assessments

ECOtas occasionally requires employees to work at night. This may include driving to and from a field site (see section on Driving) and nocturnal fauna surveys (this section).

Nocturnal surveys for species such as nocturnal mammals and birds of prey (e.g. owls) may include activities such as:

- spotlighting from a stationary vehicle;
- spotlighting from a moving vehicle;
- driving from one field site to another on various condition roads/tracks;
- walking from one field site to another in various conditions (with or without tracks);
- undertaking surveys such as “hooting” for owls, checking of traps, spotlighting, etc.

Activities at night have additional safety risks associated with them, primarily related to the reduced light conditions making the movement over rough terrain more treacherous, the risk of becoming disoriented or lost greater, and the risk of equipment failure (or injury due to equipment use) greater.

The following additional precautions are recommended (some or all may be appropriate).

- Ensure that you do not work alone. Special approval from the Employer must be provided for any solitary nocturnal work.
- Familiarise yourself (and other members of the party) with the site during daylight hours.

- Mark key features with night-detectable markers (e.g. mark the intended route, in both directions, with reflective flagging tape, possibly annotated to indicate where you are along the route).
- Carry additional field equipment including, as a minimum, one head torch with fresh batteries (and spare batteries to ensure at least 8 hours of use of at least one torch per party) per person, and at least one hand-held torch with fresh batteries (and spare batteries to allow at least discontinuous use during the night to supplement head torches) per party.
- Ensure field navigation equipment is appropriate for the conditions e.g. globe power not too weak and item sturdily designed to ensure risk of damage is minimal.
- Ensure strict notification procedures are followed. Additional call-in and call-out may be warranted advising a third party of your entry to a site and your successful exit from the site and resumption of more routine activities (e.g. advise someone you are out of the bush, driving home, back at the motel or camped).
- In some circumstances, staying on site for the entire night (or series of nights) may be required and in such situations, usual notification procedures may not be applicable. In such cases, the field party must ensure that they have carefully considered the safety risks of the activity and implemented a revised notification protocol satisfactory to the Employer (and possibly third parties such as a land manager or land owner).

Working alone

Working alone is inherently riskier than working with a partner or in a larger party. However, it will often be more practical (and more cost effective) to work alone. This is acceptable provided that the risks of the activity have been assessed and appropriate precautions taken.

Some situations in which solitary work should be avoided include:

- nocturnal surveys (see separate section);
- remote area surveys (see separate section);
- inherently riskier situations such as on active forest operations or mine sites (usually these situations are under the control of another agent such as a “bush boss” or “site supervisor” and their instructions must be followed);
- inherently riskier situations such as underground (e.g. cave), terrestrial (e.g. cliff-climbing) or arboreal (e.g. tree-climbing) surveys (such situations will need to be assessed on a case-by-case basis and decisions made on appropriate training requirements between the Employee and the Employer).

Remote area field work

Remote area field work is considered to apply to the following type of situations (note that other situations may fall within the scope of remote area field work – when in doubt, discuss the situation with the Employer):

- field assessments greater than 1-2 hours walking distance from the point of departure, based on a field waking pace of c. 15 minutes per kilometre (what constitutes a long walking distance will vary depending on the individual’s level of fitness and the field situation – this is a guideline only);
- field assessment likely to exceed 10 continuous hours in the field requiring additional meal breaks (e.g. breakfast and/or dinner) to be taken in the field (except where such work is based on a safe field site such as a car or building base);
- field assessment requiring overnight stays by camping (backpacking) with each subsequent night on the outward journey being further from the point of departure (this means that camping at a fixed point such as a field site for several night’s nocturnal survey close to a car does not necessarily constitute remote area field work).

Prior to undertaking any remote area field work, the Employer and Employee must discuss the proposed assessment protocols in person and develop and agree to a work plan. Additional reporting requirements may be deemed necessary. Additional field equipment (e.g. extra clothing, sustenance and items such as an EPIRB) may also be necessary.

Essential field equipment

The following equipment/items must be carried for all field work, irrespective of the predicted duration of the work or how far the work may take place from a car or other access point.

- **Appropriate field clothing including Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**
Field work in rough situations will usually require the Employee to wear appropriate field clothing including sturdy long pants and shirts (to protect against animal bites and stings, stick injuries, grazes from slips and falls and ultraviolet light exposure), sturdy work boots (the type will vary according to the type of work and terrain e.g. steel-toe boots on work sites such as active mines and forestry operations, standard walking boots for most routine surveys in light to medium vegetation but perhaps sturdier boots with ankle protection on steep rocky slopes, gum boots or waders for aquatic surveys, etc.) and often additional PPE (including a safety vest, which is often a good idea for visual reasons in any situation, and hard hat).
- **Appropriate cold weather clothing, including wet weather gear**
Employees will have different concepts of what constitutes “appropriate” but as a minimum the amount of clothing carried should be sufficient to prevent conditions such as hypothermia, should an employee be required to spend an unintended night in the bush or the weather closes in for a lengthy period. This includes items such as rain jackets and/or polar fleece clothing. Checking the weather prior to departure is essential. The Tasmanian Weather Bureau can be contacted (62 21 2000) for detailed predictions of weather for sites not normally reported on their web page or on news bulletins.
- **Ultraviolet light protection**
Employees must protect their skin and eyes from damage from ultraviolet light so must carry sunglasses (for driving as a minimum but also suitable for field work in many situations) and sunscreen (for field work in all non-winter months). The Workplace Standards Authority Safety Bulletin 34 Skin Cancer and Outdoor Work provides guidelines that should be adhered to. It will often be impractical to avoid working in the full sun during the recognised high UV danger hours so appropriate protective action must be taken. As a minimum this includes sunscreen (UV-A and UV-B rated) applied as per directions on all exposed skin, use of long clothing, wearing of hats (ideally wide-brimmed or legionnaire style to protect neck, face and ears) and sunglasses (as field work allows).
- **First aid kit**
A field aid kit suitable for use in the field should be carried at all times by at least one member of a field party. As a guideline, there should be sufficient first aid kits in any party to allow parties to be divided and still have a kit for each party. Larger field parties must not be divided during the course of field work if this results in one or more of the smaller parties no longer having a field first aid kit.
- **Personal medicinal supplies**
If you need to take medicine (either on a prescription or in case of emergencies such as an allergic reaction), make sure that you have packed the medicine. Also, inform (where relevant) other members of the party of any particular medicinal needs.
- **GPS unit and spare batteries**
GPS units are a device for assisting with survey requirements (e.g. marking sites) but are also a useful safety device if used practically. GPS units need not necessarily be carried by all members of a party.
- **Flagging tape and permanent marking pens**
Flagging tape can be used to indicate a route taken and can be annotated to further assist in providing an idea of where you have been (or intend to go).
- **Maps of the area**
All members of the party should be informed of the intended routes, and site conditions prior to departure. Not every member of the party needs to carry a map but spare copies are a good idea so all members can follow the route in the event that the leader becomes disoriented (or injured and can no longer lead the party). Larger field parties must not be divided during the course of field work if this results in one or more of the smaller parties no longer having a suitable map for navigation.

- Water
A minimum of 1 litre per 3 hours per person is recommended but this may vary depending on the anticipated activity levels or weather conditions (e.g. known high temperature conditions). Spare water should be carried in the event of an emergency (e.g. getting lost overnight, getting closed in by bad weather).
- Food
Sufficient food for the anticipated time in the field should be carried. Emergency rations may be warranted in some situations (e.g. carry a spare chocolate bar or bag of nuts for more remote or longer duration field work where there is a greater risk of an incident occurring).
- Mobile phone
While a mobile phone can have limited coverage, carrying one does provide an additional possible “safety net” in an emergency situation. It is also useful for call-in/call-out procedures in remote locations.

In some circumstances, additional personal protective equipment may also be mandatory. When working in an area covered by other field safety procedures (e.g. on a forest operation controlled by a “bush boss”), you must comply with the local requirements.

On a forest operation site (and many other work sites controlled by strict OH&S policies), additional personal protective equipment is likely to include the following:

- Hard hat
- Safety vest
- Steel-toe boots
- Long pants and shirts.

On a mine or mill site, personal protective equipment may include:

- Hearing protection
- Eyesight protection.

ECOtas will supply a hard hat and safety vest as part of standard field equipment. The Employee should notify the Employer when the equipment requires replacement (either because of a due date or it has become damaged or worn such that it no longer provides protection). ECOtas will contribute to the supply and maintenance of field clothing that forms a recognised part of a safe field kit (as itemised in the contract of employment). Other personal protective equipment will be supplied as needed. ECOtas will also supply (as needed) items such as sunscreen and first aid kits (or replacement items for existing kits).

Geographic embarrassment

Getting lost is a risk associated with field work in almost any situation, if proper precautions are not taken. With proper planning, the risk of getting lost is significantly reduced. The consequences of getting lost such that a search and rescue operation needs to be mounted are costly, both in terms of risk to the person lost and the people undertaking the search and rescue (and in financial terms).

The following planning guidelines will reduce the risk of becoming lost:

- Always familiarise yourself with the area being assessed. This may include examining maps or discussing the lay of the land with someone more familiar with the area than yourself (e.g. a land owner). Do not rely on old maps or difficult to read maps. If the maps supplied for a particular job are inadequate, the Employee is authorised to obtain more recent and better quality maps (e.g. hard copy 1: 25000 TASMAs).
- Larger field parties may want to nominate a leader who can control the primary field map and equipment and suggest appropriate routes.
- Make sure all members of the party are familiar with the intended route and lay of the land. Spare maps for other members of the party are a sensible idea. All members of the party should stay familiar with the route being taken in the event that the leader becomes disoriented or injured and can no longer advise the party of its location.

- Checking aerial photographs (where available) can also be useful. If an Employee considers that the job will be more efficiently and more safely undertaken in the company of an aerial photograph, they are authorised to obtain digital imagery from Service Tasmania or another source (keeping in mind that hard copy prints are much cheaper than orthorectified digital files, and that TheList or GoogleEarth are free and usually adequate for survey purposes).
- Pre-prepare field maps prior to undertaking field work. This may include adding annotations such as noting particular features of interest, adding gridlines to allow easy comparison to GPS readings, etc.
- Carry a GPS unit and spare batteries for the unit. Always check that the unit is operating properly before setting out, don't wait to turn the unit on at the first point of interest.
- Collect a waypoint of the point of departure (e.g. where you parked the car) and for other significant points (e.g. where you decided to take the left hand fork of a track rather than the right).
- Annotate the map or take field notes during the assessment to remind yourself of the route taken. In some cases, flagging tape might be useful to indicate when you made a route choice or to tell someone where you took off from (but remember the bush is full of flagging tape so annotate yours or use a colour specific to your party).

If you do get lost...

- Don't panic!
- Take a break. Relax. Have a sip of water, eat a piece of chocolate!
- Have a look at the map, the GPS and landmarks – 9 times out of 10 you will no longer be lost!
- If still lost, have a better look at the maps you are carrying and look over your field notes. Take some time to recall your route but don't try to re-trace your route – if you are really lost, you may end up even further off track or become tired.
- Still lost? Get out the GPS and recall the departure point waypoint. Establish a good satellite reading and work out where you might be on the map or how far from the car. If this check tells you where you are and its safe to return to your departure point (or continue on your intended route), proceed.
- Still lost? Stay where you are and wait to be rescued. Don't panic! If you have followed the field safety protocols, someone knows where you are (within a reasonable area) and knows when to call the authorities. You should also have enough clothing to stay warm and enough food and water so you won't starve. Relax! Try using your communications equipment but don't get further lost trying to get a good mobile signal. If you are working in a remote area, you should also be carrying an EPIRB that you might now want to activate.

Use of chainsaw

ECOtas recognises that at times the use of a chainsaw for cross-cutting trees that may be blocking a road or track may be necessary. Only Employees with a certificate to use a chainsaw should use one for work-related activities. Every effort should be made to avoid the need for using a chainsaw (e.g. by seeking an alternative route, or using alternative equipment such as a bushsaw) but if necessary, every care should be taken in its use in accordance with the training that has been provided.

Chainsaws and fuel/oil should be carried safely in the vehicle in an outside compartment and in no circumstances should be carried in the internal cabin (except for security storage). Chainsaws and related equipment are not supplied by ECOtas and the storage and maintenance of such equipment in accordance with recognised safety procedures is the sole responsibility of the Employee.

Chemicals

ECOtas does not routinely require the use of chemicals, other than fuels and oils used for vehicles and chainsaws (see separate section). Should any aspect of field work require the use of potentially hazardous chemicals, a case-by-case policy will need to be addressed by ECOtas

and the Employee should not undertake any potentially risky work until such a policy is in place.

Noise, dust and contaminated air

Employees should not routinely be subjected to site conditions requiring hearing, respiratory or eyesight protection. If such a situation does arise, the Employee should exercise due caution and only proceed on to a noisy or dusty work site wearing appropriate protection. In most circumstances (e.g. noisy mill or mine site), such equipment will be supplied by the site manager. Should any aspect of field work require the use of hearing, respiratory or eyesight protection, a case-by-case policy will need to be addressed by ECOtas and the Employee should not undertake any potentially risky work until such a policy is in place.

Farm related hazards

ECOtas regularly conducts field assessments on sites managed for primary production. These sites can have hazards not usually encountered in forest-based work such as dangerous stock (e.g. bulls), electric fences and farm equipment. This Policy does not attempt to identify individual dangers on such sites but the Employee is reminded to exercise due caution. In most circumstances, discussion with the land owner or manager will identify specific threats (and how to manage them) prior to entering the site. Should the Employee be presented with a situation where they deem the on-site safety measures to be inadequate, they should not proceed until the risk has been addressed.

Incident reporting

For the purpose of this Policy, an "incident" is defined as an event that is noteworthy because it is "out of the ordinary" compared to the usual activities undertaken as part of routine duties. If there is any confusion as to whether an event constitutes an "incident", the Employee should note the event (e.g. in a diary or field notebook) for clarification with the Employer or other party.

Incidents include, but are not necessarily restricted to, the following types of events:

- **Vehicle accident**
This includes events whether a personal or third party injury, or equipment damage, occurred or not. For example, "near misses" are considered to be an incident.
- **Personal accident**
This includes events whether a detectable injury occurred or not. For example, a broken leg should obviously be reported. A hard fall from a log where no obvious injury occurred should also be noted in case later bruising leads to more serious injury. Another example might be a bee or ant sting where no obvious injury occurs but later swelling from an allergic reaction occurs. Employees need to exercise some commonsense in relation to this incident type. For example, if an employee knows that they are not allergic to mosquitos they need not report mosquito bites every time they occur but if they experience an unusual adverse reaction to such a bite, a report should be made.
- **Geographic embarrassment**
An Employee who suffers geographic embarrassment while in the field but manages to find their way again should report the incident to ensure that a review of field safety procedures for the incident and more generally can be made to minimise the risk of a repeat occurrence.
- **Offensive or abusive behaviour**
If an Employee is subject to offensive or abusive behaviour, this should be reported. Every Employee will have different "boundaries" as to what they may find offensive so some commonsense needs to be exercised. Some incidents might include abusive language directed at an Employee from an irate land owner, "road rage" and other events such as vandalism or graffiti.
- **Incidents can be reported in several ways but all formal incident reporting must be accompanied by a completed ECOtas Incident Reporting Form (Form S-2). As a minimum, Employees should make a note of the incident in some permanent form (e.g. a diary entry or field notebook) recording the date and time of the incident, the location of the incident**

and what occurred (including if the incident has already been reported or otherwise dealt with). An incident report can be made via email, phone or letter to the Employer.