



CCFMS Health and Safety Best Practices for Field Trips

Mines and other collecting sites can be hot and dry and may contain piles of loose waste rock, sharp objects, open holes, steep slopes, overhead hazards, harmful substances, and other hazardous conditions. The following best practices will reduce the chance of injury or illness caused by the most common risks and hazards associated with field trips to these sites. Field trip leaders and site owners may identify other risks and hazards and/or mitigative measures (such as Personal Protective Equipment PPE) on specific field trips. On all field trips, participants must follow direction provided by field trip leaders and site owners.

If you, or any minor children accompanying you, sustain any injuries or illnesses while on a field trip you must advise the field trip leader.

- 1) To reduce the risk of dehydration, sunburn, or heat exhaustion/heat stroke:
 - i) Wear appropriate clothing including hats or other head gear;
 - ii) Use sunscreen;
 - iii) Carry and drink sufficient water to remain hydrated;
 - iv) Pace yourself on a hot day, take frequent breaks; and
 - v) Monitor yourself and others for signs of heat exhaustion (e.g., excessive sweating, dizziness) – rehydrate and rest in a cool shady spot and advise the field trip leader if symptoms are detected.
- 2) To reduce the risk of trips and falls which may lead to cuts, bruises, sprains, broken bones, or more severe injuries:
 - i) Wear sturdy footwear with closed toes, good traction, and ankle support – such as hiking, work, or safety boots;
 - ii) Always watch where you step – test footing before stepping on objects that may move – be extra careful on wet slippery rocks;
 - iii) Avoid hazardous areas such as open or capped shafts, steep slopes, large loose rock piles, old headframes or buildings, or any other areas identified by the field trip leader – pay special attention to any warning signs or fencing; and
 - iv) Wear high visibility clothing so you can be located if you fall.
- 3) To reduce the risk of eye injuries from flying rock fragments, soil, dust, or other debris:
 - i) Wear safety glasses or goggles when using (or near someone using) hand or power tools to hammer, break, cut, drill, or blast rock; and
 - ii) Use only hand or power tools safe for rockhounding and approved for use by the field trip leader.
- 4) To reduce the risk of foot/ankle injuries sustained from falling or rolling rocks, stepping on sharp objects, or twisting ankles:
 - i) Wear sturdy footwear with closed toes, firm soles, and ankle support – footwear with crush-resistant toes and puncture-resistant soles (green patch) provides the greatest protection;
 - ii) Tread carefully – test footing before stepping on objects that may move; and
 - iii) Avoid stepping on old metal or old lumber or beams that may contain rusty nails or spikes.
- 5) To reduce the risk of hand/finger injuries resulting from handling sharp rocks, use of hand tools, or moving rocks:
 - i) Wear gloves;
 - ii) Be careful when using hand tools such as hammers and chisels; and
 - iii) Be careful not to crush hands/fingers when moving rocks.
- 6) To reduce the risk of head injuries caused by falling overhead hazards:
 - i) Wear a hard hat (make sure it has not expired) when there is a potential for overhead hazards;
 - ii) Work carefully around any sites that may have loose rocks or other material at or above head level (e.g., rock or cliff faces); and
 - iii) Never loosen (or throw) rocks that could fall on yourself or others.
- 7) To reduce the risk of back injuries from lifting, moving, or carrying heavy rocks:
 - i) Do not attempt to move or lift rocks beyond your limits;
 - ii) Use pry bars to roll rocks; and
 - iii) Use proper lifting techniques (e.g., lift with legs, not back).



- 8) To reduce the risk of cuts, scrapes, and bruises to face, arms, or legs from tree branches and other vegetation:
 - i) Wear appropriate clothing, especially long pants; and
 - ii) Avoid walking through dense vegetation, especially patches of thorny or prickly shrubs such as raspberries or blackberries.
- 9) To reduce the risk of illness from ingesting or handling harmful plants, fruit, fungi, rocks, minerals, soil, or dust, or drinking contaminated water:
 - i) Know and avoid touching poisonous plants such as poison ivy, giant hogweed, and poison sumac;
 - ii) Do not eat plants, fruit, or fungi growing at old mine sites;
 - iii) Wash hands thoroughly after handling potentially harmful rocks, minerals, soil, or dust (e.g., galena, arsenopyrites); and
 - iv) Never drink standing or flowing surface water.
- 10) To reduce the risk of injuries associated with interactions with dangerous animals such as bears or rattlesnakes, stinging or biting insects, or ticks:
 - i) Know how to react if you encounter a bear (see [Be Bear Wise and prevent bear encounters](#)) – always carry a safety whistle to alert others (provides a very loud sound that requires very little blowing effort);
 - ii) Don't reach where you can't see, especially in rattlesnake habitat;
 - iii) Be watchful for nests of stinging insects when moving rocks – always carry an EpiPen if you are allergic to stings;
 - iv) Wear long pants and use insect repellent to deter ticks. Carefully check for, and remove, ticks after a field trip; and
 - v) Be wildlife-aware during collecting and when driving – helpful links to look at are:
 - [Staying Safe Around Wildlife](#)
 - [Wildlife and Safety](#) and [Top tips to respect wildlife and stay safe](#) *english & French versions*
- 11) To reduce the risk of injuries sustained from collisions with vehicles or heavy equipment:
 - i) Watch for vehicles or heavy equipment when exiting a vehicle or walking along or crossing roads;
 - ii) Stay well clear of heavy equipment in operating mine sites; and
 - iii) Wear high visibility clothing so you can be seen.
- 12) To reduce the risk of damage to personal vehicles or injury to drivers or passengers when driving on roads that are narrow, rough, dusty (or muddy), loose-surfaced, soft-shouldered, or wash-boarded:
 - i) Drive slowly and carefully, watching for potholes, ruts, and protruding rocks – drive especially slowly on narrow shrub-lined roads to avoid scratches on vehicles;
 - ii) Drive with lights on and give the driver in front lots of room;
 - iii) Stay to the right when cresting rises with poor visibility;
 - iv) Don't stray too far to the right when shoulders are soft;
 - v) Use four-wheel drive on roads with loose surfaces or washboards;
 - vi) Test flooded parts of roads to verify water depth and ensure the road bed is firm; and
 - vii) Always watch for other vehicles, ATVs, and pedestrians.
- 13) To reduce the risk of becoming lost:
 - i) Always collect with a 'buddy' who knows where you are at all times;
 - ii) Ensure any minor children accompanying you are always within sight;
 - iii) Carry a safety whistle and compass (repeat 3 short blasts of the whistle if you become separated) – know which direction to walk to return to parked vehicles; and
 - iv) Wear high visibility clothing so you can be located more easily.

Please note, that when on CCFMS and CCFMS-affiliated club field trips, Field Trip leaders have overall responsibility and authority to refuse entry and/or ask participants to leave.