

Standard Operating Procedures

#AU 0012 Getting Lost

Materials:

Compass or GPS

Maps

Whistle

Two-way radio

Cell Phone

Prevention/Precaution:

Before travelling to any field sites for the day, the Principal Investigator/Team Leader must be notified that you will spend the day in the field and which sites you plan to visit. You must also notify the Principal Investigator/Team Leader that you have returned from the field. When working in the field, always use the buddy system. Work with at least one other individual and remain in close contact. You need not work side-by-side but keep track of each other's whereabouts and maintain contact using your two-way radios or cellphones. Be sure to arrange a meeting place and time in case you lose cell/radio contact. Always make sure that you leave the field site at the same time and confirm that you are finished for the day. When working in the field, always carry a compass or GPS, whistle, and maps of the site. Use these when travelling to keep track of your location to avoid getting lost.

Procedure:

If you should happen to get lost, the best course of action is to remain where you are. Contact your buddy via cell-phone or radio and describe the last place you know was familiar so you can locate your buddy. When your buddy has moved to the last familiar place, blow your whistle or make loud 'WOOT' calls and have your buddy do the same. Walk slowly toward your buddy and his/her whistle/call. Alternately, use your map and compass/GPS to travel in the direction that should take you to the nearest road/waterway and follow it to return to the meeting place. If all methods fail, continue to remain where you are and wait for help to come. If you have not notified the PI/Team leader of your return from the field and/or have failed to meet your buddy at the agreed upon time, attempts will be made to contact you. If these attempts fail, a search will be initiated in the field area to locate you and bring you back safely. By remaining where you are, the search team will find you more easily. Blow your whistle at regular intervals so that searchers can locate you.

Created June 2012

Modified November 2019

AUACC