

Best Practices

Lab & Field Work Safety

Interpreting services are on occasion required during lab and field work situations. Safety for everyone, including the interpreting team, is paramount. Familiarize yourself with the following SMU policies and best practices to ensure you are aware of your responsibilities regarding lab and field safety as it pertains to SMU Interpreting Services.

Safety Awareness at Saint Mary's University

Safety awareness is critical when working in a lab or the field due to the nature of the environment and with considerations for personal protection. SMU has policies in place to educate all SMU community members, which includes freelance (FL) interpreters. Please review these policies and forward any questions or concerns to the staff interpreter.

- [Faculty of Science Safety Resources](#)
- [SMU Safety Poster](#)

The SMU specific WHMIS online course must be completed by FL interpreters prior to working in the lab or the field. The staff interpreter will make arrangements and notify the FL interpreter on how to access this online training. Once completed forward a copy of your certificate to the staff interpreter for filing purposes.

Dr. Campbell or her chosen designate are responsible for the safety of everyone, including the interpreter(s), while in lab spaces or in the field. Follow their directions immediately for safety reasons; rest assured Dr. Campbell (or designate) have reasons for the request / command that may not be apparent right away. If you have questions about their directions please inquire to the purpose after the assignment is complete. If at any time you feel unsafe immediately inform Dr. Campbell (or designate).

Laboratory Spaces

Dr. Campbell is the Senior Research Fellow and lead of the Dynamic Environment & Ecosystem Health Research (DEEHR) laboratory located at SMU. For interpreters providing services within this or any laboratory spaces on campus a lab orientation must be completed beforehand. This orientation will take between 20-30 minutes and will be administered by Dr. Campbell or her designate (ex. Environmental Science Technician).

The staff interpreter will arrange a separate time for this orientation to take place before the assignment and will file the completed orientation form.

Considerations for when entering a laboratory space:

- No personal belongings can be brought into the lab. Leave coats, purses / bags, etc. in the staff interpreters' office or other secure location (ex. your vehicle, technician's office).
- No beverages (water, coffee, etc.) can be brought into the lab.
- The interpreter(s) will not be the first to enter, nor the last to leave a lab space. This is due to safety and liability reasons. Follow the directions of Dr. Campbell (or designate) immediately at all times.
- If you feel unsafe, advise Dr. Campbell (or designate) immediately. Likewise, Dr. Campbell (or designate) will make sure everyone, including the interpreter(s), are safe while in the lab space.

Attire is important while working within laboratory spaces. For safety reasons this attire guide must be adhered to:

Permitted	Not Permitted
Full length pants (to ankles)	Skirts, with or without tights
Full coverage shoe (closed toe, heel, top of foot)	Dresses, with or without tights
Lab coat and protective glasses (provided by SMU)	Loose or baggy clothing
*Breathable layered clothing (can be hot and stuffy under lab coat)	Open shoes, sandals

If you have any concerns regarding appropriate attire for lab spaces, please contact the staff interpreter in advance of assignment.

Field Work

The staff interpreter will contact you about the specifics for the area of field work. Some areas may be high in contaminants, be near / in water, have walking hazards, etc. If interpreting during field work, a Hazard & Risk Assessment Form must be completed. The staff interpreter will forward the form to the FL interpreter and will file the returned form.

While interpreting in the field it is important to be aware of your surroundings at all times and follow instructions of Dr. Campbell or designate as directed. For example: if interpreting from E-A while walking along a path keep looking forward and work to the side, or while working A-E walk alongside or briefly stop to interpret. Also be sure to interpret important auxiliary noise and conversations. For example: "the ice that we just walked on cracked slightly" or "I can hear a drone somewhere above".

It is also important to note and plan accordingly for the potential lack of on site or nearby facilities / bathrooms.

Although each field work situation is different these are some considerations for appropriate attire:

- Dress for the outdoors, suitable for the forecasted weather, in breathable materials, and for comfort. Long pants that cover ankles, and long sleeve shirt (or layers)
- Plan that there will be ticks present. Wear long pants and long sleeves. Light coloured clothing is best. Tuck your pants into your socks. ([Tick Safety Information](#))
- If there will be bugs present, consider wearing a bug net jacket or hat
- Good quality hiking shoes or rubber boots, depending on the terrain and nature of field work
- Brimmed hat
- Sunglasses
- Change of clothes

It is not advised to wear shorts, skirts, or short sleeve shirts.

Items that are useful to bring are:

- Sunscreen
- Bug spray
- Tick spray
- Water
- Snacks that can be eaten without needing to touch the food directly. For example bring snacks in Ziploc bags or pre-wrapped items such as granola and energy bars. It is not advised to bring food that requires utensils to eat.
- Cell phone fully charged

Important Note for FL Interpreters

It is the FL interpreter's responsibility to have a copy of all training records available on hand and ready to produce while working in labs or field. These include WHMIS, lab orientation, and field risk assessment forms. Please ensure you have your completed documents with you.

Staff Interpreter's Responsibilities

The staff interpreter will ensure all appropriate training and orientation is provided to the FL interpreter. As well, the staff interpreter will file copies of completed forms with Interpreting Services.

The staff interpreter will provide PPE for laboratory spaces as needed. For the field, they will bring a Field Safety Bag that contains a first aid kit, extra sunscreen, bug spray, and tick spray. Waders, if needed, will be provided by SMU.

Disclaimer for Use

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