



The Rural Clinical School  
of Western Australia

## STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR COUNTRY DRIVING IN KALGOORLIE AND THE EASTERN GOLDFIELDS

Current as at the 11<sup>th</sup> January 2013

### Background

Welcome to Kalgoorlie.

One of the great opportunities we have when we live in the Eastern Goldfields is access to the bush, unsealed roads, magnificent scenery and a sense of freedom and adventure that comes with that.

We get to know, and feel a growing connection, to place.

Driving around the region is an integral part of being able to access this opportunity and is a valued activity in the RCSWA.

However, country driving is a risky undertaking and we need to recognise and respect this. Although many of us feel “bullet proof”, students and staff have already been involved in serious accidents, and we have lost friends and colleagues in tragedies in remote locations.

This SOP must be adhered to for ALL trips while in the RCSWA, and read in conjunction with RCSWA driving policy and with the two relevant UWA policies:

<http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/topics/off-campus/driving>

and

<http://www.safety.uwa.edu.au/topics/off-campus/field-work-remote>

**On EVERY trip, the RCSWA requires:**

- A safe vehicle
- A safe driver
- A safe journey plan

#### *A safe vehicle:*

##### *RCSWA cars*

In Kalgoorlie there are two RCSWA vehicles, neither of these cars are 4WD. The RCSWA is responsible for ensuring that these vehicles are roadworthy and appropriately fitted out.

Additional equipment is required and in Kalgoorlie consists of:

A PLB (personal locator beacon) for each of the two RCSWA cars as well as a first aid kit, a 10 L water container and a fire extinguisher.





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## *Private vehicles:*

The owner is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy, and appropriately fitted out.

All vehicles leaving the town boundary must be in good-excellent mechanical condition and must have:

- Good-excellent tyres
- A spare tyre
- A jack and toolkit for the car
- 5 litre of water per person per day, including some in a container that can be carried with you if you need to leave the vehicle
- Maps/ navigation aid
- Small first aid kit
- A road side assist programme (e.g RAC approx. \$113 per year per car)

## **A safe driver**

As with all drivers, staff and students must have a valid driver's licence and adhere to all traffic regulations. Always wear a seat belt.

## *Preparing for travel on country and remote roads:*

- All students must pass the pre-RCSWA driving course
- All students and staff must complete an "assessment of country driving experience form when commencing with the RCSWA. This form will be reviewed and signed off by the lead MC/administrator in each site.
- If areas of concern are noted, these will be discussed and an individual plan created to assess concerns.
- Our site in Kalgoorlie will have a discussion about driving risks and safety tips for the region during orientation week.

No RCSWA staff or student can drive if:

- Tired
- Under the influence of alcohol or drugs

## **A safe journey plan**

The journey plan form needs to be completed and handed to your lead MC/administrator and signed off prior to commencing your journey.

Particular risks in our region include:





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## *A safe journey plan:*

Engage 4 wheel drive when driving on gravel roads. Adds even traction and more control.

Particular risks in our region include:

Risk	Relevant information / measures
<b>Gravel roads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Slow down and reduce your speed to suit the conditions -there is less traction on gravel roads and it is easier to lose control, compared to driving on a bitumen surface.</li><li>• If traffic signs warn of a gravel road ahead, slow down while you are still on the bitumen.</li><li>• Follow tyre tracks wherever possible - this will provide firmer ground. Keep away from the loose gravel on the edge of the road, it could pull you off the road and may cause your vehicle to roll over.</li><li>• Slow down for corrugations - the old adage about speeding up to travel over the top may appear to work for small corrugations, but you could lose traction. When corrugations get severe you may lose control of the vehicle.</li><li>• Watch out for the slope or camber of the road on corners - it could be sloping in the wrong direction and cause you to skid off the road if you are travelling too fast.</li><li>• ABS will work differently on gravel and may increase your braking distance. If you have to brake heavily be aware of the difference in the braking sensation of ABS.</li><li>• Consider using a lower gear when driving. It will give you better control and enable you to use the engine as a brake rather than relying on the brakes.</li><li>• Try to steer and brake as smoothly as possible - jerky or sudden braking or steering will increase the risk of your vehicle skidding.</li><li>• Watch out for dust ahead. It could be a sign of an oncoming vehicle, or it could signify that you are coming up behind a vehicle - switch your headlights to low beam when driving in dust.</li><li>• Slow down and keep left on the approach to blind corners and crests - if you meet an oncoming vehicle it may be difficult to avoid a collision</li></ul>
<b>Poor roads, eg Lake Ballard</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Washed out due to heavy rains.</li><li>• Heavy use of local vehicles on unsealed roads (deep tyre tracks and ruts).</li><li>• Sand tracks unsealed and not well maintained.</li><li>• Do not attempt to drive on salt lakes, eg Lake Ballard. Your car will become impossibly bogged.</li></ul>





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<b>Road trains (up to 53m long)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ensure the road ahead is clear when overtaking.</li><li>• Overtake quickly; don't hesitate.</li><li>• Allow the road train plenty of room to brake and manoeuvre.</li><li>• Make allowances for the wind buffeting your car as you pass.</li><li>• Allow the road train to remain on the bitumen, if the road is narrow. This will minimize flying debris from the many wheels of the larger vehicle and reduce dust.</li><li>• Be patient.</li><li>• Do not pull out onto a road when a road train is approaching.</li><li>• Road trains require a great stopping/breaking distance.</li><li>• Do not stop on narrow sections of road.</li><li>• Do not overtake near junctions - road trains may require two lanes in order to turn.</li><li>• If a road train is approaching from the opposite direction and the road is narrow, pull over off the bitumen if necessary and allow as much room as possible.</li><li>• If you have a CB radio in your car, let the driver of the road train know that you are behind and wish to overtake.</li><li>• The driver will tell you / or indicate when it is safe to do so.</li></ul>
<b>Animals on the road (stock and wildlife)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't drive at dawn / dusk.</li><li>• Don't drive at night.</li><li>• Don't swerve to miss an animal - you may lose control of the vehicle and you can't predict which way the animal will go. Slow down as much as possible and stop, if necessary, until the road is clear.</li><li>• On local open roads kangaroos, emus, sheep and goats can appear from nowhere, NEVER swerve to miss, as this can cause accidents, slow down if you can to avoid impact.</li></ul>
<b>Travelling on remote roads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Always let someone know where you are going and arrival time. (call or text immediately when you get to destination)</li><li>• Carry appropriate recovery gear and water etc.</li><li>• If you break down, STAY with your vehicle. It will be your shelter/security and a point to find you as its bigger than you are if a search is needed.</li></ul>
<b>Extremes of weather (e.g. heat, rain, cold)</b>	<p>Get up-to-date information about road and weather conditions. Intermittently UWA will send out email warnings and these must be followed.</p> <p>You can get them from the Bureau of Meteorological site <a href="http://www.bom.gov.au">www.bom.gov.au</a></p>





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<b>Breaking down</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letting someone responsible know where you are going and when you are expected back</li><li>• Stay with your vehicle don't leave it to walk for help it is your shelter and an easy thing to see.</li><li>• Do not attempt to open a radiator of a vehicle to check for water if the engine is hot. Leave for several hours to cool as it will be scalding hot.</li><li>• Take care when changing flat tyres that your vehicle is on a stable base.</li><li>• Engine must be turned off.</li><li>• Passengers out of vehicle.</li><li>• That the hand brake is on and gear lever engaged. Put a block/rock behind and in front of wheels that are not flat. Loosen the nuts of flat wheel before jacking up.</li><li>• Have the spare wheel ready for putting on before jacking up car.</li><li>• Make sure jack is in correct position so that it can't slip.</li><li>• Make sure nuts are tight, stop and check them again at about 50 km.</li></ul>
<b>Lost signal on mobile</b>	<p>Think about mobile phone cover in your area and whether another device is required (e.g. sat phone, UHF radio, GPS tracking device)</p> <p>In the Goldfields the best coverage is Telstra.</p>
<b>Bushfire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headlights on low beam</li><li>• Wind up windows, engage the recycle option for air</li><li>• Follow advice of police or fire-fighters if available.</li><li>• Remain away from the fire until safe to pass through.</li><li>• Smoke can obscure oncoming vehicles so drive with care.</li><li>• Fires move fast and are unpredictable so don't be a hero, there are hot embers, wind and animals, that can be a danger to you.</li></ul>
<b>Floods</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Never drive into flood waters or creeks without first ascertaining that it is safe to do so. If not sure don't attempt to cross. Either go back to where you have come from or sit and wait, until the waters go down.</li><li>• Check for depth of water depth indicators show level.</li><li>• Check for wash out areas. Walk the road if necessary but take care.</li><li>• Be careful of floating logs and debris and the speed of the water flow.</li><li>• If safe to cross engage low gear and drive in that gear (don't change while crossing water).</li><li>• Once safely across touch the brake pedal a few times to dry out brakes.</li></ul>





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<b>Injury / illness on the road</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Remote areas - do the best you can with the resources that you have around you.</li><li>• Make sure person/persons are protected from elements, rig up shade or rain cover.</li><li>• The ground can be hot so burns can be had from laying on hot ground or road surface.</li><li>• Use satellite phone if there is coverage. Activate EPIRB if one available.</li><li>• If there is no satellite or mobile coverage and there is more than one vehicle travelling send someone to nearest station/settlement with information of distance,(location) number of injured or people involved</li><li>• If person/persons stable and you need coverage of satellite phone you can climb a hill.</li><li>• If you are the patient, try to get protection from elements.</li><li>• Make sure you have water available.</li><li>• Get mobile/satellite phone or PLB and activate.</li><li>• If there is not coverage and you have let someone know the time of your arrival then be prepared to wait.</li></ul>
<b>Journeys outside this SOP</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires a driving plan</li><li>• Let a responsible person know where you are going and what time you expect to arrive.</li><li>• Do not go onto land that is known to be sacred/obey cultural sensitivity.</li><li>• If you have to open a gate to go forward make sure you close it.</li><li>• Don't interfere with bores/gates/windmills/tanks or stock yards</li><li>• Before undertaking trekking or climbing hills make sure you level of fitness is adequate.</li><li>• Carry plenty of water.</li><li>• Make sure you wear a hat. Slip slop slap.</li><li>• Wear boots or appropriate shoes, no sandals or thongs.</li><li>• Have an appropriate first aid kit, as snakes are prevalent.</li><li>• Take a torch and spare batteries.</li><li>• Make sure you take insect repellent. Ross River virus occurs in the Goldfields.</li></ul>
<b>Night driving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Night driving is not allowed on RCSWA required journeys.</li></ul>
<b>Long trips</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Don't drive more than 10 hours per day</li><li>• Don't drive when you are tired</li><li>• Share driving with others</li><li>• Plan a stop at least every three hours for 20 minutes.</li><li>• Don't plan to drive after a day's work.</li><li>• Plan to have a good night's sleep before you go</li><li>•</li></ul>





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## Driving into the sun

- Try to plan your trip so this is a non-happening event.
- If you must drive into the sun wear adequate sun glasses
- Keep your speed down as visibility can be impaired
- Put your lights on to low beam
- Plan to take breaks to alleviate fatigue.
- Make sure your windscreen is clean.
- Take extreme care if you have to overtake, there may be a vehicle coming toward you that you cannot see due to sun in your eyes.
- Take extreme care of animals crossing the road as you may not see them due to sun glare.
- If necessary stop until the sun has gone down sufficiently so that it's safe to resume driving.

