

Faversham Society Archaeological Research Group (FSARG)

Health and Safety Policy and Practice

2: Field Activities including Field Walking, Geophysical and Geographical Surveying and Metal Detecting

Area of responsibility

FSARG accepts responsibility for the health and safety (H&S) of volunteers only while they are engaged in the designated areas of research and under the supervision of a person (a supervisor) appointed by FSARG. All volunteers will be at least 16 years old except in specific circumstances approved by the FSARG committee.

When young people between 12 and 16 years of age are invited to take part in FSARG Field Activities it will be with parental/guardian written agreement. In addition, the designated FSARG member accompanying the young person/s will have the necessary clearance, e.g. a current DBS clearance, registered with the Faversham Society or alternatively a parent/guardian shall be present.

2 Who has responsibility for H&S?

It must be recognised by all involved in FSARG projects that in the first instance each individual has a common-sense responsibility for their own H&S.

The FSARG supervisory team is responsible for the day-to-day H&S of all volunteers while they are taking part in the designated FSARG projects. Overall responsibility lies with the Board of the Faversham Society under whose auspices FSARG operates. All project participants must be members of the Faversham Society. An H&S officer will be appointed. All participants will be required to attend a training session, which will cover H&S as well as archaeological issues.

Volunteers with specific H&S requirements, such as skin complaints, disabilities or prescribed drug requirements, must make these known to the FSARG Director and as appropriate to the FSARG H&S officer and relevant supervisor.

3 Reporting incidents

All incidents involving the H&S of volunteers (including supervisors) must be reported to the H&S officer immediately. All incidents must be entered in the accident book. This entry will be countersigned by the supervisor present witnessing the entry as a true record of the incident.

4 First aid kits

Each group of volunteers will have a basic first aid kit and first aid check-sheet with them in the site box.

5 Areas and activities of risk

5.1 Risks common to all Field Activities

5.1.1 Potential hazard to the general public resulting from FSARG activities in general

In general, the Field Activities are such that the danger to the public is remote and the common-sense precautions identified in the accompanying Risk Assessments give as low as reasonably possible and practical protection to all concerned. Where there is a high risk it will be necessary to delineate between FSARG activities and the general public. In such circumstances means such as lines of hazard tape will be erected, or laid out as appropriate, at least 2m from the hazard. Members of the public will not be allowed to cross these lines. FSARG volunteers will be warned during their induction about the potential dangers to the public and themselves.

5.1.2 Restricted hearing and distractions

Field Activities are by their nature activities where the participants are often distracted from their surroundings. This is a particular danger when the activity is on or adjacent to public roads, tracks and footpaths and where the activity itself restricts the participant's general awareness of dangers in their surroundings, such as when using metal detection headphones. FSARG volunteers will be made aware of the dangers during their induction. Where necessary the supervisor of the activity shall place a watch-person to accompany the participants. This watch-person shall have the single responsibility of watching for hazards and danger to FSARG volunteers and the general public resulting from the activities.

The watch-person shall STOP the activity as appropriate to prevent danger.

5.1.3 Equipment

In general, the equipment used in Field Activities present minimal danger to the operator/s and common sense and prior instruction are sufficient to prevent danger, e.g. tripping on ropes and cables, inserting probes, spades and marker poles in the ground. The accompanying Risk Assessment clarifies these areas.

For the general public however, some aspects of the activities can present hazards when performed in public access areas. These hazards are mostly associated with the potential tripping hazards of ropes, cables, marker poles and sticks, and the movement of survey poles, swinging of metal detectors etc. and each location will present its own variation. The supervisor shall ensure that such hazards are avoided by careful positioning of the equipment and operator/s and if necessary clear marking with yellow/black hazard tape, or even red/white danger tape, or by use of a watch-person as in 5.1.2 above.

5.1.4 Manual Handling

Volunteers will be given instruction in manual handling, lifting, carrying and lowering of heavy and difficult objects.

5.1.5 Sharp edged hazards such as metal finds, stones/flints, barbed wire and thorny vegetation

These are a constant potential hazard to all field activities. Gloves are provided for volunteers who wish to use them and/or when the supervisor advises for Health and Safety reasons.

Antiseptic washing facilities are available in case of cuts as are first aid materials. (See 3 and 4 above.)

5.1.6 Use of equipment and protective clothing

All volunteers, will be instructed during induction in the use of hand tools and the other basic equipment relevant to the specific Field Activity. They shall be required to wear robust footwear and appropriate clothing for the weather conditions and be responsible for their own sun-screen and drinking water. Any specialist equipment will be under the control of appropriately trained operator.

5.2 Risks common to Field Walking and Metal Detecting

5.2.1 Hazardous Substances

During field-walking and metal-detecting in particular it is possible that a hazardous substance, such as asbestos (white or blue), chemicals, munitions etc., may be exposed. In such circumstances work shall stop and the relevant supervisor shall identify the hazard and as appropriate notify the H&S officer. They shall seek knowledgeable advice as necessary. The supervisor, or H&S officer, shall then take whichever of the following is the most appropriate action, either:

- (a) Stop the activity, notify the appropriate authorities and the owner of the property, or
- (b) Remove and safely contain the substance and then arrange, with the property owner, its safe disposal using the appropriate protection throughout.

5.2 2 Finds handling

In general, all cleaning, dry brushing and sorting will take place at the base location (see associated FSARG document H&S Policy 1: Excavation and other site activities.) Finds handling on site shall be conducted in a manner to prevent damage to eyes and skin. Masks, eye protection and gloves will be available for those who foresee difficulties. See also 2 above.

5.3 General

5.3.1 Alcohol and drugs

No volunteer will be allowed to participate in a FSARG field activity under the influence of recreational drugs or excessive alcohol.

With prescribed drugs, their potential for causing a risk to the user or others, e.g. causing drowsiness, will be separately considered as detailed in 2 above.

5.3.2 Environment

The countryside code will be followed in all field situations especially where damage to trees or their roots is to be avoided. Clearing up and tidying tasks will be shared between all volunteers and is the responsibility of the relevant supervisor.

5.3.3 Security

Personal possessions remain the responsibility of the individual owner volunteer. FSARG cannot be responsible for loss or damage to personal possessions.

6 Review

The policy will be reviewed each and a copy of the H&S Policy and Risk Assessment signed and dated.

Nick Wilkinson
Mike Tillman

Updated: 21st May 2019
Next Review Date: 20th May 2020