



The Rural Clinical School  
of Western Australia

## ALBANY STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR COUNTRY DRIVING IN GREAT SOUTHERN

Current as at 24<sup>th</sup> January 2018

### *Background*

Welcome to Albany.

One of the great opportunities we have when we live in Albany is access to the bush, and the sense of freedom and adventure that comes with that. We get to know, and feel a growing connection, to place. Driving is an integral part of being able to access this opportunity and is a valued activity in the RCSWA.

However, country driving also is one of the riskiest things we undertake, and we need to recognise this aspect as well. Although many of us feel “bullet proof”, students and staff have already been involved in serious accidents, and we have lost friends and colleagues to crashes or tragedies in remote locations.

This SOP must be adhered to for all trips while in the RCSWA, and read in conjunction with the RCSWA driving policy and 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 completed Vehicle Checklist to be handed in to the site administrator prior to leaving**

---

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

### *A safe vehicle:*

#### *RCSWA car*

The RCSWA is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is roadworthy, and appropriately fitted out. Additional equipment may be required in some sites (e.g. bull bar, tow bar, additional spare tyres, extra fuel capacity, cargo barriers, additional battery, upgraded tyre specifications, cruise control, additional communication equipment, survival kit, recovery equipment, extensive first aid kit, fire extinguisher). All RCSWA vehicles are covered by a roadside assist programme (RAC).

#### *Private vehicles:*

The owner is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is road-worthy, and appropriately fitted out.

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

- Good – excellent tyres
- Spare tyre
- 5L water / person / day, including some in a container that can be carried with you if you need to leave the vehicle
- Maps / navigation aid
- Communication device (e.g. mobile phone and charger)
- A toolkit for the car, including a working jack
- Small first aid kit
- A blanket
- A roadside assist programme (e.g. RAC = ~ \$113 per year per car).

#### *Pre-travel vehicle check:*

Before every trip, ensure the vehicle is fit for the journey (by visual inspection and checking gauges).

### *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.

---

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

- 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 address concerns.
- Albany will have a discussion about driving risks and safety tips specific to the region during orientation week.

No RCSWA staff or student can drive if:

- Tired
- Under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

### *A safe journey plan:*

**A Driving Plan must be completed for all journeys (private travel and RCSWA travel) not listed below:**

- **Albany/Perth via Albany Highway**
- **Albany/Mount Barker via Albany Highway**
- **Albany/Denmark via South Coast Highway**

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

- **Be visible** – always drive with your headlights on outside the town boundary
- **Stop and look** at rail crossings without lights. A loaded train travelling at 50km needs up to 1.6km to stop
- **Check** oil, water, windscreen washer reservoir and wiper blades before departure
- **Take a break** every couple of hours. Get out of the car and walk around for ten minutes.

Particular risks in our region include:

<b>Risk</b>	<b>Relevant information / measures</b>
<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>• Engage 4WD when driving on gravel roads (high range). This provides you with even traction and more control.</li><li>• If traffic signs warn of a gravel road ahead, slow down while you are still on the bitumen.</li></ul>

---

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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>Poorly maintained roads</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Roads in the Great Southern often have deep water on them especially in winter. Drive defensively in these adverse conditions.</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></ul>
<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</li></ul>

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

	<p>road is narrow. This will minimize flying debris from the many wheels of the larger vehicle and reduce dust.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><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 &amp; 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 &amp; wish to overtake. The driver will tell you / or indicate when it is safe to do so.</li><li>• Do not drive too closely behind road trains- they are unpredictable and can sometimes flick up small stones from the side of the road which could cause breakage to your windscreen.</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 &amp; you can't predict which way the animal will go. Slow down as much as possible &amp; stop, if necessary, until the road is clear. If you cannot avoid a large animal try to collide with them on the side fenders rather than head on.</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 the 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 landmark to find you as it's bigger than you are if a search is needed.</li></ul>
<b>Extremes of weather (e.g. heat, rain, cold)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Get up-to-date information about road and weather conditions. Intermittently UWA will send out email warnings and these must be followed.</li><li>• Road reports are available from local council websites and police stations.</li></ul>

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Weather Reports are available from the Bureau of Meteorology site <a href="http://www.bom.gov.au">www.bom.gov.au</a></li></ul>
<b>Breaking down</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Let someone responsible (your site administrator) 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 as it is your shelter and easy for searchers to see.</li><li>• Do not attempt to open the 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; Engine must be turned off; Passengers out of the vehicle; Hand brake on and gear lever engaged. Put a block/rock behind and in front of the wheels that are not on flat ground.</li><li>• Loosen the nuts of the wheel before jacking up.</li><li>• Have the spare wheel ready for putting on before jacking up the 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 after about 50km.</li></ul>
<b>Lost signal on mobile</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Think about mobile phone cover in your area and whether another device is required (e.g. sat phone, UHF radio, GPS tracking device)</li><li>• In the Great Southern area Telstra provide the best coverage.</li></ul>
<b>Bushfire</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Be particularly careful entering smoke across the road. Put on your lights, keep to the left, and drive very slowly. Anticipate that there may be fire-fighting appliances across the road or in the road.</li><li>• ABC radio broadcast state-wide bush fire alerts at quarter to and quarter past the hour.</li><li>• Headlights on low beam.</li><li>• Wind up windows, the recycle option for air conditioning</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><li>• Do not stop to help injured animals- can become a traffic hazard or result in injury to yourself.</li></ul>

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

<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>
<b>Injury / illness on the road</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are involved in an accident, or stop to help at an accident be sure to avoid further accidents by sending some one back to caution approaching drivers. Put on your hazard warning lights.</li><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 are a risk from laying on hot ground or road surface.</li><li>• Use satellite phone if you have one.</li><li>• If there is no satellite or mobile coverage and there is more than one vehicle travelling send someone to nearest farm/settlement with information of distance, location (nearest cross road or landmark), number of injured and type of assistance required.</li></ul>
<b>Journeys outside this SOP, e.g. Esperance, going bush</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you are undertaking a journey that is not specified in this SOP you must have a driving plan which you discuss with a coordinator. This is obligatory.</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. <b>Always engage handbrake</b> before moving in front of the vehicle</li><li>• Don't interfere with bores/gates/windmills/tanks or stock yards.</li><li>• Carry plenty of water.</li><li>• Make sure you wear a hat. Slip slop slap.</li></ul>

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA



## The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><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 and sunscreen.</li></ul>
<b>Night driving</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• All night driving is <b>not permitted</b>. Driving outside of SOP a Driving Plan must be submitted &amp; signed off prior to your journey to Dr Brian Cunningham.</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 two hours for 10 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>• If you have had a late night or have been involved in surgery or obstetrics late at night do not drive until you are fully refreshed. If you feel remotely sleepy stop off the road and have a nap. It is on balance safer to do this than carry on driving.</li></ul>
<b>Sun/Glare/Fog Insects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If you cannot see you cannot drive. It may require you to stop driving and stay off the road until conditions improve.</li><li>• If you must drive into the sun wear adequate sun glasses</li><li>• Keep your speed down as visibility can be impaired</li><li>• Put your lights on to low beam</li><li>• Plan to take breaks to alleviate fatigue.</li><li>• Make sure your windscreen is clean and washer reservoir is full. Bug Off and newspaper/cloth are handy</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Be alert to wildlife as animals may be hard to see due to sun glare. If visibility is poor due to fog, rising or setting sun, stop the vehicle safely <b>off</b> the road and wait till visibility improves</li></ul>
<b>Loose objects</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loose objects, bottles etc represent a significant hazard in vehicles during an accident. Carry your junk in the boot.</li></ul>

The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M701, PO Box 5771, ALBANY WA 6332  
Street Address: UWA Science Building, 31 Stirling Terrace, Albany.  
Phone: +61 8 9842 0822 Fax: +61 8 9842 0879 Email: [Albany@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:Albany@rcswa.edu.au)

Head Office: The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia, M709, PO Box 1654, Kalgoorlie, WA 6433  
Phone: +61 8 9022 5666 Fax: +61 8 9021 4366 Email: [admin@rcswa.edu.au](mailto:admin@rcswa.edu.au) Web: [www.rcs.uwa.edu.au](http://www.rcs.uwa.edu.au)



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WESTERN AUSTRALIA



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
NOTRE DAME  
AUSTRALIA