

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

Current as at the
31st August 2017

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.

On EVERY trip, the RCSWA requires:

- **A safe vehicle**
- **A safe driver**
- **A safe journey plan**
- **Completed vehicle checklist to be handed to reception prior to leaving – see attached**

A SAFE VEHICLE:

RCSWA car

There is no RCSWA car in Kalgoorlie.

There is now additional equipment for staff or students travelling to remote areas consisting of a **personal locator beacon (PLB) and a “SPOT” emergency GPS messenger** as well as a first aid kit, a 10 litre water container and a fire extinguisher.

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
- Five litres 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 roadside assistance programme (e.g RAC approx.. \$106.00 per year per car)

A SAFE DRIVER

As with all drivers, staff and students must have a valid WA 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 prior to 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 the local Orientation Week.

No RCSWA staff member or student can drive if:

- they feel tired
- they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs

A SAFE JOURNEY PLAN

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

A Driving Plan must be completed for all journeys (RCSWA related) with the exception of those listed below;

- Kalgoorlie – Esperance – Kalgoorlie via Norseman Highway
 - Perth – Kalgoorlie – Perth – via Great Eastern Highway
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Particular risks in our region include:

Risk	Relevant information / measures
Gravel roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you have a private 4WD - Engage 4WD when driving on gravel roads. This adds even traction and more control.• 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.• If traffic signs warn of a gravel road ahead, slow down while you are still on the bitumen.• Follow tyre tracks wherever possible - this will provide firmer ground. Keep away from the loose gravel on the edge of the road which could pull you off the road and may cause your vehicle to roll over.• 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.• 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.• 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.• 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.• Try to steer and brake as smoothly as possible - jerky or sudden braking or steering will increase the risk of your vehicle skidding.• 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.• 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.

Poor roads, eg Lake Ballard

- Dangerous **road conditions** may be the result of natural events, such as tropical rains and flooding, that make driving unsafe. Dangerous **conditions** can also arise from the **poor** physical **condition** of a **road** and its surroundings
- The condition of unsealed roads can change quickly, with the biggest contributing factors being rain, traffic type, traffic volume and traffic speed. Unlike sealed roads, permanent speed limit signs are not used on unsealed roads because the condition of the roads can not be assured and vehicles must always be driven to suit the conditions.
- **Drive to suit the conditions.**
 - Drivers are responsible for their own safety and that of other users of the road. If a road is known to be rough or slippery, drive at an appropriate speed.
- **Expect the unexpected.**
 - Never assume an unsealed road is going to be the same as it was the last time you drove on it, even if it is the same day.
- Do not attempt to drive on salt lakes, eg Lake Ballard. Your car will become impossibly bogged.

Road trains (up to 53m long)

- Ensure the road ahead is clear when overtaking.
- Overtake quickly; don't hesitate.
- Allow the road train plenty of room to brake and manoeuvre.
- Make allowances for the wind buffeting your car as you pass.
- Allow the road train to remain on the bitumen if the road is narrow. This will minimise flying debris from the many wheels of the larger vehicle and reduce dust.
- Be patient.
- Do not pull out onto a road when a road train is approaching.
- Road trains require a greater stopping/braking distance than smaller vehicles.
- Do not stop on narrow sections of road.
- Do not overtake near junctions - road trains may require two lanes in order to turn.
- 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.
- If you have a UHF radio in your car, let the driver of the road train know that you are behind and wish to overtake - normally channel 40.
- The driver will tell you / or indicate when it is safe to do so.

Animals on the road (stock and wildlife)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't drive at dawn / dusk. • Don't drive at night. • 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. • 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.
Travelling on remote roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Always let someone know where you are going and arrival time. (call or text immediately before you leave and when you get to your destination) • Carry appropriate recovery gear and water etc. • If you break down, STAY with your vehicle. It will be your shelter/security and a point to find you as a vehicle is bigger than you are if a search is needed.
Extremes of weather (e.g. heat, rain, cold)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get up-to-date information about road and weather conditions. Intermittently UWA will send out email warnings and these must be followed. • You can get updates from the Bureau of Meteorological site www.bom.gov.au
Breaking down	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letting someone responsible know where you are going and when you are expected back. • Stay with your vehicle don't leave it to walk for help it is your shelter and an easy thing to see. • 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. • Take care when changing flat tyres that your vehicle is on a stable base. • Engine must be turned off. • Passengers out of vehicle. • 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 wheel nuts before jacking the car up. • Have the spare wheel ready for putting on before jacking up car. • Make sure jack is in correct position so that it can't slip. • Make sure nuts are tight, stop and check them again at about 50km.

Lost signal on mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think about mobile phone coverage in your area and whether another device is required (eg satellite phone, UHF radio, GPS tracking device) • In the Goldfields the best coverage is Telstra.
Bushfire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headlights on low beam • Wind up windows, engage the recycle option for air • Follow advice of police or fire-fighters if available. • Remain away from the fire until safe to pass through. • Smoke can obscure oncoming vehicles so drive with care. • 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. • Do not stop to help injured animals – can become a traffic hazard or result in injury to yourself.
Floods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Check for depth of water indicators to show level. • Check for wash out areas. Walk the road if necessary but take care. • Be careful of floating logs and debris and the speed of the water flow. • If safe to cross engage low gear and drive in that gear (don't change while crossing water). • Once safely across touch the brake pedal a few times to dry out brakes.

<p>Injury/ illness on the road</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remote areas - do the best you can with the resources that you have around you. • Make sure person/persons are protected from elements, rig up shade or rain cover. • The ground can be hot so burns can be had from laying on hot ground or road surface. • Use satellite phone if there is coverage. PLB activation is extremely expensive and should only be used in a life threatening emergency or injury. • Activate "SPOT" this will send a message that help is needed. • 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. • If person / persons stable and you need coverage of satellite phone you can climb a hill. • If you are the patient, try to get protection from elements. • Make sure you have water available. • If there is no coverage and you have let someone know the time of your arrival then be prepared to wait.
<p>Journeys outside this SOP</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires a driving plan • Let a responsible person know where you are going and what time you expect to arrive. • Do not go onto land that is known to be sacred. Obey cultural sensitivity. • If you have to open a gate to go forward make sure you close it. • Don't interfere with bores, gates, windmills, tanks or stock yards • Before undertaking trekking or climbing hills make sure your level of fitness is adequate. • Carry plenty of water. • Make sure you wear a hat. Slip slop slap. • Wear boots or appropriate shoes, no sandals or thongs. • Have an appropriate first aid kit, as snakes maybe prevalent. • Take a torch and spare batteries. • Make sure you take insect repellent. Ross River virus occurs in the Goldfields.
<p>Night driving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night driving is not allowed on RCSWA required journeys.

Long trips	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Don't drive more than eight hours per day• Don't drive when you are tired• Share driving with others• Plan a stop at least every three hours for 20 minutes.• Don't plan to drive after a day or night's work.• Plan to have a good night's sleep before you go
Driving into the sun	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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.

SAFETY EQUIPMENT

PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACONS:

A PLB MUST ONLY BE USED FOR LIFE THREATENING EMERGENCY'S as this will activate emergency services to respond

- Accidental Activation

If your beacon has been activated accidentally then turn it off and phone **1800 641 792 [Aviation]** as quickly as possible to let the Rescue Co-ordination Centre know that it was a false activation. Police non-emergency communication centre number 131 444.

The PLB system is to be used as a last resort only. Your initial distress alert should still be made by telephone, radio or other direct communication if possible. Direct communication will result in a faster and more appropriate response as you will be able to explain the situation to the emergency services. A PLB should only be used if no method of direct communication is possible and urgent assistance is required.

There are some times when a PLB either will not work or you will have to wait a long time before rescue. They include:

- **Deep gorges** - A distress signal from a narrow gorge may not be detected. If it is detected it may be difficult for the rescue helicopter to track.
- **Night** - The satellites will pick up a PLB signal at night, but a rescue helicopter may choose not to fly immediately and wait until first light the next day.
- **Bad weather** - Lightning may make the signal difficult to get an accurate position and delay rescue. The rescue helicopter will not fly in weather risky for the aircraft, such as reduced visibility such as fog or in high winds. Either ground crews will be sent in or the helicopter will wait for the weather to improve. In any case you will have to wait a long time.

THE "SPOT" GPS MESSENGER

The SPOT GPS Messenger has been programmed to alert RCSWA staff of your location and assistance will be sent.
