



The Rural Clinical School of Western Australia

STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE (SOP) FOR COUNTRY DRIVING IN CARNARVON, THE GASCOYNE REGION and THE CORAL COAST REGION

Welcome to **Carnarvon**,

One of the great opportunities we have when we live in the Gascoyne Region 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**
- **Completed vehicle checklist to be handed Administrator prior to leaving – see attached**

A safe vehicle:

RCSWA cars and 4WD:

In Carnarvon, there is one RCSWA 4WD vehicle (Toyota Land cruiser Prado Reg # 1DSH680) .The RCSWA is responsible for ensuring the vehicle is road-worthy, and appropriately fitted out. The driver is responsible for checking tyres, oil, water and noting any change in condition that may indicate a problem. If you note any concerns relating to the safety of an RCS vehicle please contact your local administrative person as soon as possible. All RCSWA vehicles are covered by a roadside assist programme (RAC).

Additional equipment is required and in Carnarvon consists of:

Two spare tyres

Two black of bags of tool kits

One First Aid Kit Box

Motor Vehicle Log Book

Car User Manual

One Satellite Phone (Mobile No: 0147 148 001)



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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 mechanical condition and must have:

- Good tyres
- A roadworthy spare tyre (2 if going long distances on unsealed roads)
- 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 or Satellite)
- A toolkit for the car, including a working jack
- Small first aid kit
- A blanket

Pre-travel vehicle check:

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

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.

Obey all road signs! In particular temporary signs such as 'road closed' or signs related to dangers ahead.

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 address concerns.
- Each site holds a discussion about driving risks and safety tips specific to the region in orientation week.

No RCSWA staff or student is permitted to drive if:

- Tired
- Under the influence of alcohol or other drugs

A safe journey plan:

Staff and students need to be aware of the conditions they are heading into, aware of the risks they may face in their year in the Gascoyne and to take appropriate steps to minimise these risks.

This includes excursions, field trips (for example car travel Carnarvon – Gnaraloo; Carnarvon- Shark Bay) and other journeys which may be part of the Carnarvon experience or related to RCSWA requirements (eg Carnarvon – Burringurrah; Carnarvon – Coral Bay; Carnarvon - Geraldton).



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Some general points when travelling remotely:

- Carry maps at all times, essential recovery gear and supplies at all times
- Find out about culturally sensitive locations before you go. Obey signs when you get there and check with locals to make sure you do the right thing.
- Leave gates as you find them – if closed then close them behind you, if left open then leave open.
- Don't stay around bores/gates/windmills/tanks or cattle yards without landholders permission.

See attached documents for risks that may be faced, regular driving plans and personalised driving plans for other long journeys.

A Safe Journey Plan:

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



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Risk	Relevant Measures taken
Particular risks in our region include: Gravel roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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, it 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. • <u>Read Car manual for further information.</u>
Poor roads	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Washed out due to heavy rains. • Heavy use of local vehicles on unsealed roads (deep tyre tracks and ruts). • Sand tracks unsealed and not well maintained. • Do not attempt to drive on salt lakes, loose sand, wet ground (e.g. beach, swamps). Your car will become impossibly bogged.



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Road trains	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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 minimize 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 great stopping/breaking distance.• 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.
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 when you get to destination)• Carry appropriate recovery gear, essential resources e.g. water, torch, food, etc.• 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.
Extremes of weather	<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 them from the Bureau of Meteorological site www.bom.gov.au• Check local facebook websites – whatson in Carnarvon and contact local shire offices for up to date weather information



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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 doesn'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 nuts of flat wheel before jacking 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 50 km.• Refer to car manual for further details
Lost signal on Mobile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Think about mobile phone cover in your area and whether another device is required (e.g. sat phone, UHF radio, GPS tracking device)• In the Gascoyne/Coral Coast and North West Central region 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.• Avoid driving in bush fire at all times.



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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 depth indicators 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.
Injury / illness on the road	<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.• 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.• Carry first aid box in the car at all times



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<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 you 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 are prevalent. • Take a torch and spare batteries. • Make sure you take insect repellent.
<p>Night driving</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Night driving is not allowed on RCSWA required journeys.
<p>Long trips</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't drive more than 8 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's work. • Plan to have a good night's sleep before you go
<p>Driving into the sun</p>	<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.

Emergency contact numbers	Police/Fire/Emergency 000
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Office Administrator	Alex Harper Maslen 0402 855 358
Medical Coordinator	An Ramon 0474 221 299
Road Side Assistance	RAC Tel: 1300 558 456
Insurance Claims	UWA Risk Management Tel:+61 8 6488 7202 or email insurance@uwa.edu.au