

FIELD RESEARCH SAFETY HAZARD GUIDELINE

Toxic and Poisonous Plants

Hazards	Potential Hazards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Poisonous and toxic plants such as poison ivy, poison oak and poison sumac can cause adverse reactions upon contact, ingestion, or inhalation. Some plants may cause skin irritation, rashes, or allergic reactions when touched. Ingesting certain plants can lead to nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, or more severe health effects.
	Personal Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When working in areas where poisonous plants may be present, wear appropriate long sleeve / long pant clothing, gloves, and closed-toe shoes to minimize skin contact. Consider using gardening or landscaping tools to handle plants instead of bare hands.
Hazard Controls	Preparation and Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Familiarize yourself with common poisonous and toxic plants in your region. Learn to identify them by their leaves, flowers, and overall appearance. Provide training to all researchers or outdoor educators who work in outdoor settings, on identifying and handling poisonous and toxic plants.
	General Work Practice Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid touching, consuming, or handling unknown plants, especially those with unfamiliar characteristics or strong odors. Use field guides or resources to identify plants and avoid getting too close to unidentified or suspicious vegetation. Stay informed about the known distribution of poisonous and toxic plants in the study area.
Other	Waste	Containerize, remove, and properly dispose all generated waste when you leave the area.
	Emergencies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If accidental exposure occurs, immediately rinse the affected area with water to remove any plant sap or toxins. In case of ingestion, contact a poison control center or seek immediate medical attention. Provide information on the plant ingested for accurate diagnosis. Familiarize yourself with the location and contact information of the nearest medical facilities to your research site.
	Reference and Additional Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NIOSH Fast Facts: Poisonous Plants American Hiking Society: Plant Safety New York DEC: Harmful Plants
	Questions	Contact Environmental Health and Radiation Safety (EHRS) at (215) 707-2520