Sampling design and preparation

Version: February 2018

Record keeping, including taking field photographs and videos

1 Purpose and scope

This document is a guide to ensure accurate record keeping in the field. Accurate and complete record keeping of site and sampling information is vital for completing field surveys and investigations. Information collected in the field, including notes, voice recordings, photographs and videos, may later be used as evidence in a court. They also support and corroborate the witness's observations and actions on the day.

2 Associated documents

Sampling design and preparation: Operating a basic handheld Global Positioning System unit for an investigation or compliance inspection

3 Health and safety

Before following the methods contained in this document, a detailed risk management process (identification, assessment, control and review of the hazards and risks) must be undertaken. All work carried out must comply with the Queensland Work Health and Safety legislative obligations.

4 Permits and approvals

Permits and approvals may be required to conduct activities involving animals, plants and/or in protected areas (for example National Park/Regional Park, State Forest or State Marine Park). See *Permits and approvals* document for more information on requirements.

5 Skills, training and experience

No skills, training or experience is required to conduct the procedure within this section.

6 Equipment

Equipment specific to this method includes:

- camera
- video recorder/Go Pro or body cam
- GPS
- voice recorder
- official notebook, field sheets or other method of recording
- a ruler
- pens, markers, pencils etc.

7 Procedure

7.1 Prior to undertaking fieldwork

1. Ensure the digital equipment (e.g. camera, video recorder, voice recorder, GPS) are fully charged and spare batteries are packed.
2. Check the date and time on the digital equipment against your computer prior to undertaking the field survey. If incorrect, follow the equipment manual to update the date and time on your digital equipment.
3. It is recommended that the numbering of the images on the camera/video recorder is reset to zero.
4. Ensure there is an accurate method for record keeping (i.e. field sheets, notebook) suitable for the investigation. If the results are likely to be used in court, the information should be written into an official notebook (i.e. bound spine with consecutively numbered pages to show no pages have been removed) or an electronic log alternative. A digital voice recorder can be used to assist in record keeping, however details of on-time and off-time still need to be recorded elsewhere.
5. Make a record of the digital equipment to be used during the field work (e.g. model, make and year of manufacture).
6. Calibrate the GPS unit (see document *Operating a basic handheld Global Positioning System unit for an investigation or compliance inspection*).

Note: It can be useful to pre-fill some standard information such as date, investigation name, and other site details if known.

7.2 Undertaking fieldwork

1. Upon arrival at the site, record the time in notebook or field sheet.
2. Record the full names, position and roles of persons present.
3. Ensure that you have a plan with respect to the roles and duties of each person in the field team. For example, Person 1 is the overall controller of the site, Person 2 is designated the role of filming/recorder, Person 3 is collecting samples etc. Where practical, identify a property officer whose primary responsibility is the recording, collection and continuity of all seized samples.
4. Record general site information relevant to the investigation such as weather conditions, vegetation disturbance, rubbish, scums etc.
5. Record the GPS location using the method described in document *Operating a basic handheld Global Positioning System unit for an investigation or compliance inspection*. If storing positions as waypoints, note the waypoint number in notebook/on field sheets while in the field.
6. Nominate one person to take photographs of the site.
7. Whilst still standing where the GPS point was taken, take initial photographs of the site:
    - For terrestrial environments, take eight photographs in eight directions (N, NE, E, SE, S, SW, W, NW) so that photographs all have side-lap and can be joined in a panorama of the site. Include a hat/person/bag in the first photo (north) and always rotate in a clockwise direction looking down at your point.
    - For aquatic environments, take four photographs in four directions (downstream, right shore, upstream, left shore), rotating in a clockwise direction.

    These photographs are taken as a backup to the GPS point in case of GPS error.
8. Record each photo number and time taken in the notebook/field sheets, making additional notes of what the images depict.
9. Take any additional photographs/videos relevant to the investigation, recording the time, location, photo number and a description. It is essential to clearly identify when and where each shot is taken. If possible, include an identifying feature in the photograph (e.g. site label) to assist when examining photographs at a later date. The use of a scale (i.e. ruler, pen) is useful for close-up shots.
10. Photograph all samples as they are collected and make a record of the samples as they are collected.
11. Where practical a video (Go Pro or body cam) / camera should be used for the identification and recording of samples being collected notwithstanding the notes taken at the time.
12. Record any measurements taken at the site (if relevant).
13. Record any relevant conversations with landowners, general public, or company representatives.

Note: if using a voice recorder, advise the people involved prior to recording that the conversation is being recorded. It is an offence under the *Invasion of Privacy Act 1971* to use a voice recorder to record private conversations where the person recording the conversation is not a party to the conversation.

14. Complete a site sketch, providing an overview of the site area (with indication of direction – North), location of initial photographs and GPS location, location of sample collection point/s and any other information relevant to the investigation.
15. Prior to leaving the site, review notes to ensure all relevant information has been recorded and fill in any gaps that may be present.
16. Repeat steps for each new site.

Note:

- If taking close up photographs, it is advisable to use a ruler as a scale for the photograph.
- If undertaking an investigation, consider the use of plastic alpha-numeric evidence stands, markers or flags to identify the exact location of sampling points in a terrestrial environment, or where evidence is found at a site. Establishing a reference point with a marker, recording GPS co-ordinates at each marker and generating unique identifier for each sample provides for accurate recording of exactly where samples were taken enables easy cross referencing onto a map. The area should be photographed *in situ* from all angles prior to sampling and again photographed/digitally recorded as markers are placed at the various sampling points.
- It is important when taking photographs to accurately determine the location of each photograph. This may be by using a camera with an inbuilt GPS, including a permanent land mark in the photograph or by marking a tree with a permanent mark (e.g. spray paint) if appropriate.
- Ensure note taking is neat, precise and contains only the facts (who, what, when, where, why, how).
- A clear record should be made of all photographs, videos, measurements and samples, including time, location and descriptions.
- If using a voice recorder, record the start and finish time in the notebook/field sheets. When the voice recorder is turned on, state the date, time, location and persons present.

7.3 Upon return to the office

1. Check and record the accuracy of the date and time on the digital equipment against your computer upon return from the field survey.
2. Download all photographs, videos, voice recordings and GPS co-ordinates (see document *Operating a basic handheld Global Positioning System unit for an investigation or compliance inspection*). If the purpose of the field work was for an investigation or there is a possibility of it going to court, an original set of this data must be downloaded onto a CD/DVD, or similar non-rewritable device. No deleting, renaming or editing the files in any way can occur prior to doing this.
3. Scan the original notebook or field sheets.
4. Store downloaded information in an appropriate location. For investigations or legal cases, this information must be stored in a secure, locked location.
5. Store and maintain digital equipment in accordance with manufacturer's instructions.