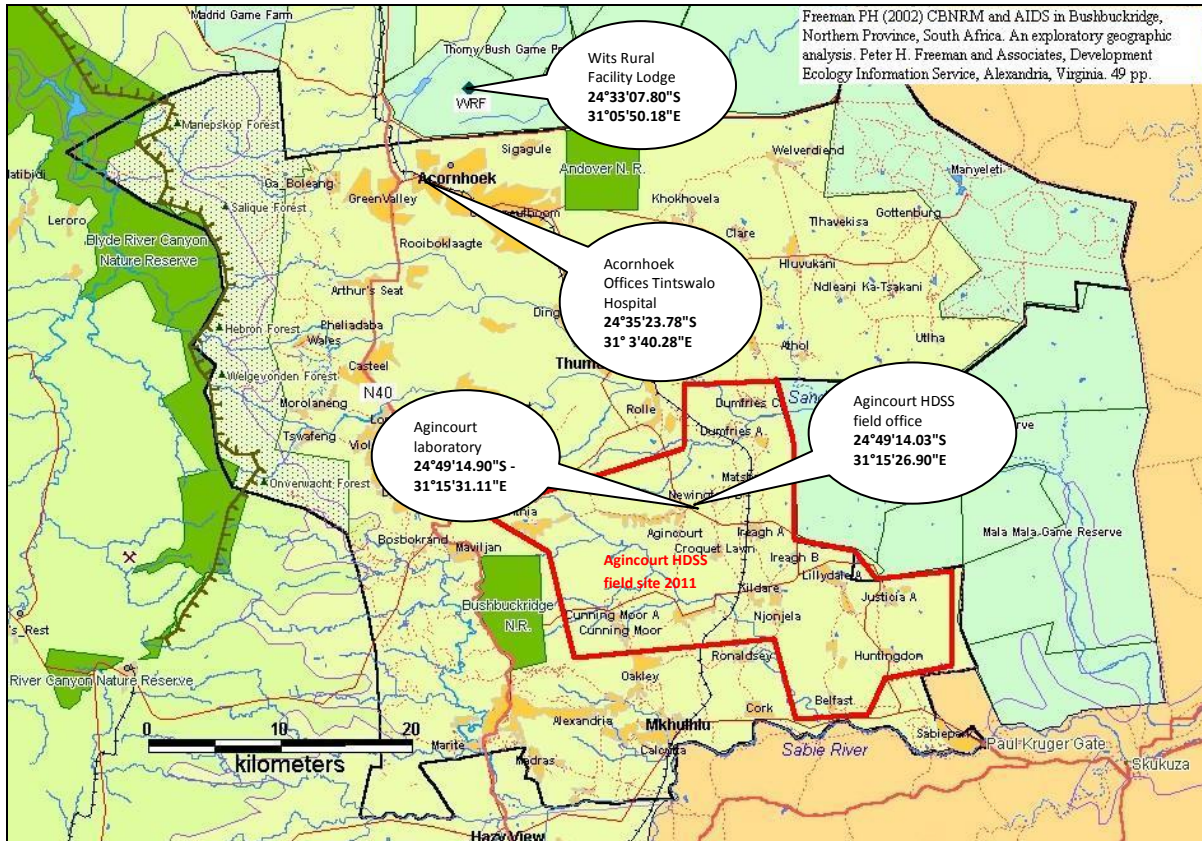


About the MRC/Wits Agincourt Unit

The MRC/Wits Agincourt Unit is a research unit of the University of the Witwatersrand and the South African Medical Research Unit under the School of Public Health, University of the Witwatersrand. Established in 1992, it lies in the rural sub district of Bushbuckridge in the Mpumalanga Province of South Africa. The unit has three main offices. The Johannesburg office is situated in the Wits School of Public Health. The main research office is based in Tintswalo Hospital in the small town of Acornhoek 500km from Johannesburg. The field site office and research laboratory are situated in the small village of Agincourt 45km from Acornhoek.

The Agincourt HDSS study area in the Bushbuckridge District Municipality, Ehlanzeni Municipality, Mpumalanga Province, South Africa



Visa Entry Requirements

Requirements for entry into South Africa differ from country to country, and are subject to change. Always make enquiries before travelling to South Africa. A yellow fever vaccination certificate is required from travelers coming from a country in which a risk of yellow fever transmission is present (Africa, Latin America etc.).

Transport arrangements

OR Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg is served by many international airlines. Upon arrival at OR Tambo International there are various options of getting to the rural Agincourt offices - through Hoedspruit's Eastgate, Nelspruit's Kruger Mpumalanga International (NOT Nelspruit airport...), Skukuza airport in the Kruger Park itself or Phalaborwa airports, or by car. Hoedspruit Eastgate Airport is the smallest but closest airport to WRF with two daily flights. Phalaborwa is about 1.5 hours drive from WRF. Nelspruit and Skukuza are the most convenient if you want to go straight to the Agincourt HDSS fieldsite. All airports have car hire company offices. To get to our Johannesburg offices, you can catch the Gautrain to Park Station and then the Parktown Gautrain bus which will drop you directly outside Wits Medical School. The Gautrain and the Gautrain bus run frequently and a Gautrain card can be bought at the airport.

For visitors who have requested airport transfers to our rural offices, we will arrange for an Agincourt unit vehicle and driver to meet you upon arrival at the Hoedspruit, Phalaborwa or Nelspruit airports. Note that the costs of transfers will

be charged to your project budget. **It is preferred that all visitors hire a vehicle as the unit does not have spare vehicles for visitors.** The unit can assist with hiring a vehicle with costs charged to your project. There is usually a daily shuttle from Tintswalo Hospital to the MRC/Wits-Agincourt Offices in Agincourt village leaving at 8.30am and leaving Agincourt village around 16.00pm. Note that there are no public transport options from any of the airports to Agincourt, Acornhoek or Wits Rural Facility. Timbavati Safari Lodge can arrange a transfer should you stay there.

Most vehicles are stick shift in South Africa. If you require an automatic car, allow extra ordering time as one will need to be ordered specially, and will also cost more than a stick shift. We drive on the left side of the road. International licenses are accepted for the duration of a tourist visa – if you are coming for more than 3 months, it is advisable to obtain an International Drivers License prior to your arrival in South Africa.

Here is a detailed map of Wits Rural Facility, the Agincourt HDSS site and Acornhoek <http://www.agincourt.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/map-hazy-agin-acorn-wrf-hoed.pdf>

A note regarding traffic police

Traffic police are common in South Africa. Unfortunately bribery is a problem and sometimes they target tourists. It is illegal to pay cash to any traffic official. If a traffic officer stops you and you have not committed a traffic offense (if you have, then you will need to pay the fine at a magistrates office or a police station and ask for a receipt at your own convenience i.e. you can ask for a ticket), make sure that you call the officer by his or her name and tell them that you are going to phone the corruption line 082 451 7044 or 013 755 1988.

Staying at Wits Rural Campus

Most of our visitors stay at Wits Rural Campus - website <http://www.wits.ac.za/placesofinterest/2939/wrf.html>, phone +27 15 793 7500 and email wrfreservations@radioactivewifi.co.za. Accommodation at WRF is comfortable, self catering and 15km from Acornhoek, on a beautiful former game farm. There are two accommodation sites – one at the WRF Lodge that is accessed over 3km of dirt road, and the other at Caravilla, which is close to the tar road but has fewer accommodation options. There is no public transport from Wits Rural Facility so please take this into account when planning your visit. There are no mosquito nets over the beds, but there are usually insect screens over the windows. The facility is regularly sprayed for mosquitoes but it is in a high malaria risk area. There is only aircon in some accommodation units. Bring a torch.

Staying at Timbavati Safari Lodge

It is possible to stay about 6km away from WRF at a lodge called Timbavati Safari Lodge timbavati@mweb.co.za or <http://www.timbavatisafarilodge.com/> or +27 15 793 0415. This is slightly more expensive and more isolated than WRF, but has catering. It also has a pool, restaurant and bar. There is also no public transport available although they can arrange airport transfers. There are mosquito nets over the beds, but no aircon. Bring a torch.

Travel insurance

Please ensure that you have the relevant travel insurance and that you provide someone in the unit with an emergency contact number. We very seldom have emergencies, but best to be prepared.

Currency and banking

Rands (ZAR) and cents. ***Please ensure that you bring some rands in cash when you visit the Unit*** as the nearest bureau de change is 35km away in the town of Hoedspruit. Most stores do accept major credit and debit cards, and you can draw cash from various ATMs in the town of Acornhoek. However, should you want to buy small items such as cold drinks or snacks especially in the Agincourt HDSS fieldsite, you will need cash in rands. The following banks are available in Acornhoek: ABSA, Nedbank, First National Bank, African Banking Corporation, Standard Bank, Post Office Bank.

Phone communication

The country dialling code is +27. The phone number of the main office in Acornhoek +27 13 795 5076 and the lines are manned from 08h00 – 16h30.

It is best to arrive at the unit with a cell phone that works in South Africa. The easiest place to obtain a cell phone and a SIM card that is registered in South Africa is at the airport since in order to register a SIM card you have to give proof of residence and the airport understands the requirements of visitors much better than cell phone dealers in Acornhoek do. Get the MTN or Vodacom network.

Internet

There is internet connectivity at our Acornhoek and Agincourt offices. You will need to arrange with our IT support for your laptop to be registered on the network - contact itayi.adam2@wits.ac.za. Let him know what project you are working with and who your contact person is at the unit. At Wits Rural Facility, **you will need to pay for a password and user name for the duration of your stay** - arrange directly with WRF on +27 15 793 7500 or wrfadmin@radioactivewifi.co.za or wrf@global.co.za. You can also arrange internet access at OR Tambo airport by purchasing a modem and airtime. It is easy to top-up airtime in Agincourt and Acornhoek, although there is nowhere to buy airtime at Wits Rural Facility. There is no internet at Timbavati Safari Lodge.

Electricity

The South African electricity system is 230V and 50Hz and the holes are three pin round. Our plugs look like the picture below – please bring appropriate adaptors. Staff do not have adaptors and they are hard to find in this rural area.



We sometimes have 'load shedding' in South Africa. These are rolling black outs that last about 2 hours each at various times of the course of the day. Sometimes they are daily, and sometimes we go weeks without such blackouts. They are scheduled, but sometimes the schedules are difficult to come by/not followed.

Language

The main language of communication in the unit is English, and the local language in the Agincourt HDSS is Shangaan, closely related to xiTsonga.

Weather conditions

The area normally receives about 860mm of summer rain per year. It is hot from September to April, and cool to cold from May to August.

Clothing

Bring one jersey and a raincoat or umbrella in summer. In winter temperatures can drop to about 6°C in the evenings. WRF has swimming pools at the lodge and at Caravilla, and Timbavati Safari Lodge also has a pool, so bring a swimming costume. Wear sensible shoes as the terrain is nearly all sandy with very little paving. Bring walking or running gear as WRF provides perfect opportunities for both activities. If you are going to meet community leaders, bring smarter clothes (for females a skirt/dress and a hat, for men a long sleeved jacket/jersey) - otherwise dress code is smart casual.

Before you travel to the MRC/Wits-Agincourt Unit

- Contact the Agincourt Unit Administration by contacting Doreen Nkuna on doreen.nkuna@wits.ac.za and ccing in the person with whom you are doing your research.
- Provide Doreen with your travel and visit itinerary.
- Find out from Administration any specific instructions and requirement instructions applicable for visitors.
- Make sure you pack all medication you may need, and just in case, please pack medicine for diarrhea and vomiting (not common as our water is potable – amongst the top 5% in the world, but sometimes people do get bugs)

Malaria

Prevention is extremely important

Although we are in a low risk malaria area, we do recommend that you take prophylaxis, but also that you talk to your own health care provider about malaria prophylaxis. Do bring long sleeves and trousers for the evening, and mosquito

repellant. WRF does not have mosquito nets over the beds, but if you bring your own the staff of WRF will assist you to hang it.

Early malaria diagnosis and treatment reduces disease severity and prevents deaths.

Before you leave your home town, find out where the nearest doctor is who knows how to, and has the treatment for malaria. The antimalarial drug, Coartem, remains highly effective in the treatment of uncomplicated malaria, provided there is early diagnosis and urgent commencement of treatment. If not treated within 24 hours, malaria can progress to severe illness and death. It is possible to buy very good rapid malaria tests in pharmacies in South Africa for R50-R60 and we recommend that you take one or two with you when you leave the area. If you suspect that you have malaria having visited, immediately consult your health care provider to be tested and treated. Malaria symptoms appear within 10-15 days after the infective mosquito bite. The symptoms include, fever, headache, chills and vomiting. Early malaria diagnosis and treatment reduces disease severity and prevents deaths.

For more recent information on the increased risk of malaria in the area during 2017, please read the advisory from the South African National Institute on Communicable Diseases <http://www.nicd.ac.za/index.php/update-malaria/>

If a visitor is ill

Our Unit staff is not trained physicians and cannot make decisions about medical care, nor should they be asked to conduct malaria tests as even though these are reliable, there might be complications such as medication hiding symptoms and expert medical training is required for any medical decision. There is an ambulance on call, but you will need to pay up front, via cash or EFT and claim from medical aid (see emergency contacts page at the end of this document).

For **serious illness** your Unit contact person, or someone visiting with you can needs to book an appointment with a general practitioner (GP) – making the choice by finding out which rooms have the first available appointment – and will either take you, or arrange for you to be taken to the GP. After hours this will be to a GP in Hoedspruit as they have after hour's arrangements and costs around R1000 cash. During working hours a visit to the GP costs around R300 and medicines need to be bought at a local pharmacy on script from the GP. You will need to pay the doctors/pharmacists and claim back from your travel insurance. Together, you and the GP will then make a decision re further health care.

For **minor ailments** your Unit contact person or someone visiting with you can either take you to the out patients department at Tintswalo Hospital which will mean a long wait to open a hospital card (around R20 to R120 dependent on income status) and then a long wait to see a doctor or nurse. Otherwise you can get the contact details of a GP in Acornhoek or Hoedspruit and make an appointment. An alternative is to go to Murotso clinic in the village across the road from Tintswalo where you will also wait in a queue and be seen by a nurse and given meds, all for free.

For **medical emergencies**, staff at Wits Rural Facility are trained in first aid, there is an emergency room at Tintswalo Hospital in Acornhoek and competent nurses at the Agincourt Health Centre for stabilization. An ambulance can be called on 10111, but this could take up to one hour to arrive. Your Unit contact person/admin can be called upon to arrange for emergency transfer to Tintswalo hospital. Once stabilized: the medical staff on duty will make decisions regarding further care.

After arrival

Enjoy your stay – South Africans are very hospitable and are interested in meeting visitors. In Acornhoek and Agincourt there is not much security risk, but as with any international travel, take adequate security precautions. Do not wear ostentatious jewelry, do not go into dark alleys, don't give lifts to strangers. **DO** go out for dinner, **do** see if you can add some time to your itinerary to visit the nearby Kruger National Park or go on a night drive in a private game reserve and do enjoy South African hospitality. Most people are happy if you take photos, but generally ask first if the photo is of an individual. It is fine to take photos at community events or other similar situations, except for funerals and weddings. Every Sunday there is traditional dance at a village in the area – find out from local people where this is. There is also usually soccer on Sunday afternoons that is quite a community event, and it is also interesting to attend a local church service on Sundays. Again, ask local people for information.

Tourist information

You can call Kruger National Park on +27 12 428 9111 or visit the internet site www.krugerpark.co.za. The best place to contact for night drives is 1 Africa Safaris in Hoedspruit +27 15 793 1110 or on their website www.1africasafaris.com.

Food/Shopping

We don't do filter coffee – bring a small press if you are a caffeine addict – but you can buy filter coffee in Acornhoek Pick and Pay (signs of a society in transition). Try rusks which are hard biscotti you dip in your coffee. Biltong is more delicious beef jerky. Try pap (grits) and various stews – chicken, beef – at roadside stalls in the villages. There are very good restaurants in the Hoedspruit area as it is a tourist haven. Sleepers in Hoedspruit does good breakfasts, Upper Deck and Wildebees Lapa in Kamperpus do more Afrikaans cuisine. There is an Ethiopian and a Pakistani restaurant in Acornhoek and try the various local restaurants that do the local pap and stew in Acornhoek and Agincourt.

BUSHBUCKRIDGE SHANGAAN

Greetings

1st person – Uvuxeni (*uhvooSHEHnee*) Good morning

2nd person – Ahe (*aaYEH*) Ahe

1st person – Mi njhani (meenJAHnee) How are you

2nd person – Hi pfukile, mi njhani nwina (*hip fourKEEleh, meen jaanee NWEENah*) I am fine and you

1st person – Hi pfukile (*hip fourKEEleh*) I am fine

When leaving

Person leaving – salani kahle (*salaanee KAshleh*) Stay well

Person staying – famba kahle (*faamba KAshleh*) Go well

Common sentences/words

Yes - eya (*ehya*)

No – ee (*eh eh*)

How much does this cost? I mali muni? (*ee MAAlee MOOnee*)

It is hot today. Ka hisa namuntla. (*kaah HEEsah naaMOOntlah*)

It is cold today. Ka titimela namuntla. (*kaah teeteeMEHlah naaMOOntlah*)

What is your name? Hi wena mani? (*hee wehnah MAAnee*)

How old are you? U na malembe mangani? (*oo naa mahlehmbah mahnGAHee*)

What is this called in Shangaan? Lexi xi vuriwa yini hi xichangana? (*Lehshe she vooreewah yeenee he sheshANGAanah*)

How do you say “.....” in Shangaan? Leswi u swi vula njhani “.....” hi Xichangana? (*Lehswee oo swee voolah NJAanee*) “.....” he sheshangaana

Eish – (*aysh*) – oh dear, I am with you in this, poor me

SOUTH AFRICAN ENGLISH

Now now – in a very short time

Just now – wait a bit

Plaster - bandaid

Nappie - diaper

Bakkie – pick up truck

Robot – traffic light

Rusk – a less sweet and bigger biscotti

Boot – trunk of the car

Jersey – sweater/jumper

Takkies – sneakers

Koki - marking pen

Cap – baseball hat

Blinds – shades

Gauze – window screen/window netting

Biltong – more delicious beef jerky

Baby grow – Onesy

Cot – crib

Dummy – pacifier

Rubber – eraser

Marmite – like Australian vegemite

Anchovy paste – delicious fish paste for your toast

Cold drink – pop/soda

Garage – filling station

Petrol –gas

Toyi toyi – protest march

Emergency numbers

Flody Wafawanaka 071 299 3250

Doreen Nkuna 073 206 3847



P O Box 1180

HOEDSPRUIT, 1380

Tel: 015 795 5970

Fax: 086 515 5512

Email: vsu@hoedspruit.co.za

Web: www.hoedspruit.co.za/safety_&_security.htm

EMERGENCY NUMBERS

General

Police	10111	Hoedspruit SAPS	015 799 4000
Station Commissioner	082 565 8253	Detective Commander	082 573 4773
Crimeline	32211	Childline	0800 055 555
Crime Stop	086 001 0111	Life Line	011 645 2000
			0861 322 322
Ambulance (Life Threatening Emergencies)		Fire Brigade	10177
	015 799 2065		015 799 2174/2
	015 799 2053		015 799 2350
	015 793 0999		
	015 793 1582		
Drakensig Hospital	015 799 2065		
	015 799 2053		
Hoedspruit Safety Action	076 924 3706	Kampersrus Safety Action	073 785 8884
	076 924 3802		073 794 5820
Safe-T Africa	086 125 8456		

To stop stolen cellphones (please note that you will require your 15 digit IFMI no)

082 & 072 & 076 numbers:

Contract Phones: 082 1082

Pay as you go phones: 082 114

083 numbers:

Contract phones from landline: 083 1808

From any other contract phones (free of charge): 808

Pay as you go from MTN: 173 (24 hrs)

From landline or other phone 083 17

084 numbers

From any phone: 084 140

From a Cell C Phone: 140