COVID-19 QUARANTINE AND TESTING RISK FRAMEWORK
FOR FIELD WORK

BACKGROUND
This guidance is intended to assist University research and field personnel to determine COVID-19 quarantine and testing protocols for field research or assignments determined by their units as critical. The testing and quarantine requirements are one component of the Fieldwork Health and Safety Plan. University researchers and field personnel who are seeking to return to field work during the COVID-19 pandemic are required complete the following steps per the Office of Research:

1. Determine if their field work is allowable under the current phase; see the Returning to In-Person Research Involving Fieldwork: Decision Tree
2. Develop and implement a specific Project Health and Safety Plan for fieldwork that meets the University's safety standards. See the template UW Fieldwork Health and Safety Plan. Plans must include provisions for responding to any sick individuals, including access to emergency medical care and providing isolation and/or evacuation.
3. Have their Fieldwork Health and Safety plan approved by their unit’s COVID-19 Site Supervisor, and designate a Field Team Leader responsible for carrying out the plan's activities while in the field.

Some field research may require specific quarantine and testing procedures before or after deployment in order to prevent research staff becoming sick while in a remote location. The table below details when these measures may be necessary.

QUARANTINE AND TESTING RISK LEVEL FRAMEWORK
During quarantine, an individual does not leave their place of stay/residence, maintains at least a 6 foot physical distance from household members unless quarantining together, and adheres to hygiene and cleaning practices required for COVID-19 prevention. While receiving a COVID-19 vaccine when eligible is highly encouraged, at present vaccination status does not allow for a change in quarantine and testing protocols.

Quarantine Protocols:

- **Pre-Departure Quarantine**: The standard quarantine protocol for essential fieldwork travel is pre-departure RT-PCR test, then 14 days of quarantine, and a second RT-PCR test within 1-3 days before departure. Continue quarantine until departure. For those who cannot quarantine for 14 days, a 10-day quarantine may
be considered with analogous testing points (initial RT-PCR test, followed by 10 days of quarantine, and a second RT-PCR test within 1 to 3 days of departure, continuing to quarantine until departure.

- **Post-Departure Quarantine**: Quarantine protocols are dictated by the location being returned from. International trips are governed by CDC requirements. For domestic trips, both the CDC and the Washington State Department of Health recommend a combination of quarantine and testing. A 14-day quarantine upon return is still recommended as the safest option, with an RT-PCR test 3-5 days after return. For those who cannot quarantine for 14 days due to hardship, quarantine may be ended at shorter intervals (either day 10, or day 7) if the following conditions are met by the individual in question:
  
  o Remains Asymptomatic. Monitor health daily and watch for symptoms through day 14. If symptoms develop, isolate, seek testing immediately, and notify EH&S.
  
  o Receives a negative test result: Get a test between 3 and 5 days post-return or later and wait for negative result before ending quarantine (recommended).
  
  o Continues to take strict precautions: This includes keeping a distance of at least 6 feet from others, wearing a mask consistently outside your home and in common areas of congregate living environments, avoiding crowded settings. Avoid being around individuals who are at increased risk for illness for 14 days.

Note that the shorter the quarantine period, the higher the risk for exposing others to potential COVID-19 infection acquired during field work or travel. Decreasing quarantine duration should only be considered for those who are unable to commit the full two weeks due to employment or personal obligations or hardships.

Table 1 below summarizes fieldwork activities, risk levels and provides recommendations and requirements for COVID-19 quarantine and testing.

*Continued on next page*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fieldwork Activity Description</th>
<th>Characterization of Risk</th>
<th>Recommended/Required Action</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pre-Departure Protocols by Risk Level</strong> (risk level designation discussed below table)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>High-risk field work, including non-UNOLS research vessel work (UNOLS research vessel requirements described below)</td>
<td>Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.</td>
<td>Required: Follow pre-departure Quarantine and Testing Protocol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium-risk fieldwork, including non-UNOLS research vessel work (UNOLS research vessel requirements described below)</td>
<td>Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.</td>
<td>Required: Follow pre-departure Quarantine and Testing Protocol.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low risk: Short-term (day trip or single overnight) fieldwork, including non-UNOLS research vessel work</td>
<td>Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.</td>
<td>No testing or quarantine needed.</td>
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**Post-Departure Protocol Considerations**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Return to the US from international travel/overseas</td>
<td>Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to WA.</td>
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</table>
## Return to WA from another state

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to WA.</th>
<th>Recommended: Follow post-departure Quarantine and Testing Protocol.</th>
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## Fieldwork location is in WA state in an area with high COVID-19 incidence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to University work location.</th>
<th>Recommended: Follow post-departure Quarantine and Testing Protocol..</th>
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</thead>
</table>

### Reference local incidence metrics and/or contact EH&S to help make this designation.

## Special Cases

### Fieldwork location involves interaction (potential close contact) with a rural population with no reported COVID-19 cases and limited local medical resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential to expose local population to COVID-19.</th>
<th>Required: Follow pre-departure quarantine protocol, or quarantine at a designated isolation area once arriving to research site.</th>
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### Fieldwork on a UNOLS vessel

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential to bring COVID-19 onto vessel, posing infection risk to all onboard while at sea.</th>
<th>Required: Adhere to the self-isolation and testing requirements per UNOLS. Protocols are determined by risk level.</th>
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</table>

### High-risk fieldwork/research that includes travel abroad via commercial air with approved travel waiver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.</th>
<th>Required adherence to quarantine and testing guidelines as required by destination country upon arrival.</th>
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</table>

## Procedures for Sick or Exposed Individuals

### Fieldwork where a researcher exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while in the field.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Potential exposure of research team to COVID-19 through fellow researcher. Potential for researcher to experience life-threatening</th>
<th>Required: follow UW guidelines around close contact with a COVID-19 positive person: Follow instructions on quarantine,</th>
<th></th>
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</table>
sudden onset of COVID-19 symptoms.

monitor symptoms, and all exposed team members are tested if possible. Identify nearest medical facility capable of high-level treatment of COVID-19 for sick individual.

Fieldwork where a researcher is exposed to a COVID-19 positive individual (non-UW) while in the field.

Potential exposure of research team to COVID-19 through community interaction.

Required: follow UW guidelines around close contact with a COVID-19 positive person. Follow instructions on quarantine, monitor symptoms, and exposed team members are tested if possible.

*Trips that require RT-PCR testing may be able to utilize the UW Medicine process for that service. See this FAQ for information on how to obtain testing.

Researchers who experience symptoms during quarantine, or whose RT-PCR test is positive are prohibited from participating in UW fieldwork until at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared, at least 24 hours with no fever without fever-reducing medication and symptoms have improved.

GUIDANCE ON RISK LEVELS

Risk is assessed as low, medium or high using the following criteria. Not all line items need to be applicable within a given risk category for the risk category to apply.

**Low Risk**

Science operations are strictly local – within a two-day transit back to a US port or within two-day’s normal transit to medical care facility (not accounting for emergency medivac transport).

- Local/state COVID-19 regulations/guidelines at the field site do not prohibit personnel performing field work or departing for field work via boat or ground transportation.
- Local crew and science personnel have strictly adhered to local governmental quarantine guidelines/regulations and UW social/physical distancing requirements.
• Non-local personnel (non-UW crew and science personnel) have a written COVID-19 Prevention Plan that fulfills UW requirements. A written agreement that the non-UW personnel will adhere to a UW-provided plan shall also suffice.
• Science party from all participating institutions and entities has been reduced to the minimum necessary to carry out the work. Ideally the vessel/accommodations are not at full sleeping capacity. This allows room for single-isolation if one or more persons become sick during the trip.
• All overnight stays are single occupancy.

Low risk work may be conducted with an appropriate COVID-19 Field Work Safety Plan. Additional guidance on what fieldwork is allowable can be found on the Office of Research’s website.

Medium Risk

• Science operations are greater than 2 days and less than 5 days in duration or within 2-5 day transit to medical care facility (not accounting for emergency medivac transport).
• Local/state COVID-19 regulations/guidelines at the field site do not prohibit personnel performing field work or departing for field work via boat or ground transportation.
• Local crew and science personnel have strictly adhered to local governmental quarantine guidelines/regulations and UW social/physical distancing requirements.
• Non-local personnel (non-UW crew and science personnel) have a written COVID-19 Prevention Plan that fulfills UW requirements. A written agreement that the non-UW personnel will adhere to a UW-provided plan shall also suffice.
• Local and incoming personnel have undergone RT PCR testing, at least once, at the end of self-isolation, with multiple tests preferred.
• Science party from all participating institutions and entities has been reduced to the minimum necessary to carry out the work.
• Some accommodations are shared but the vessel/accommodation is not at full sleeping capacity.

Medium Risk work may be conducted if sufficient risk mitigation strategies are identified and implemented. Each instance of this work will also require approval through COVID-19 Site Supervisor.

High Risk

• The expedition intends to stop at a non-US port or involves other international travel.
- The vessel/accommodation is at full sleeping capacity with little or no available space for single isolation of sick individuals.
- Science operations have dependencies that may also be impacted by the pandemic (e.g., multi-ship operations, critical equipment preparation, etc.)
- Personnel (esp. crew and science party who have traveled to the location of research) are unable to successfully self-isolate and test at the location of research being conducted.
- Science operations are greater than 5 days in duration when on a vessel.

High risk work may only be conducted with suitable risk mitigation strategies and approval by the funding agencies and unit head or designee. Due to the increased risk, it is highly recommended that the most stringent self-isolation and testing procedures be applied. Approval through the COVID-19 Site Supervisor and Dean or designee is required, and review will result in recommendation to conduct the work or postpone/cancel.

**References:**

- CDC COVID-19 Recommendations for Ships
- UNOLS COVID-19 Considerations for Seagoing Science
- Office Of Research COVID-19: Mitigating Impacts to Research
- UW COVID-19 Field Health and Safety Plan
- Johns Hopkins COVID-19 US Cases By County