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 (COVID-19 Prevention). 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. Receiving a COVID-19 vaccine when eligible is strongly encouraged; those who are fully vaccinated with an FDA-authorized vaccine may be permitted to shorten or negate some of the below quarantine and testing requirements. People are considered fully vaccinated:

- 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or
- 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.
Quarantine and Testing Protocols:

- **Pre-Departure:** The standard testing protocol for essential fieldwork travel is pre-departure test within 1-3 days before departure. Avoid contact with others between receiving your test and departure. This guidance aligns with [CDC pre-travel recommendations](https://www.cdc.gov), including getting fully vaccinated for COVID-19 when eligible.
  
  - Individuals should keep a copy of test results with them during travel, and check travel restrictions, requirements and recommendations for their destination as applicable.
  
  - People who are fully vaccinated do **not** need to get tested before departure unless required by the end destination or unless conducting high-risk field work (as defined in this document).

- **Post-Departure:** Quarantine protocols are dictated by [the location the traveler is returning from](https://www.cdc.gov). International and domestic travel is governed by CDC requirements. For all travel, both the CDC and the Washington State Department of Health recommend a combination of quarantine and testing. Individuals should receive a test 3-5 days after travel, remaining in quarantine for a full 7 days regardless of test result. For those who are unable to get tested, a 10-day quarantine is required. All individuals post-travel should:

  - Monitor health daily and watch for symptoms through day 14. If symptoms develop, isolate, seek testing immediately, and notify EH&S.
  
  - Continue 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, and avoiding crowded settings.
  
  - Avoid being around individuals who are at increased risk for illness for 14 days.

Those who are fully vaccinated do not need to quarantine after returning from travel. Individuals who are fully vaccinated should still take the following steps:

  - Monitor health daily and watch for symptoms through day 14. If symptoms develop, isolate, seek testing immediately, and notify EH&S.
  
  - Follow [state and local](https://www.wa.gov) recommendations or requirements on quarantine and testing.
  
  - If returning from international travel, get tested 3-5 days after coming back to the U.S.
Table 1 below summarizes fieldwork activities, risk levels and provides recommendations and requirements for COVID-19 quarantine and testing.

<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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<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. Recommended: In addition, quarantine during the 3-5 days before your pre-departure test.</td>
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<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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<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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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Required: follow the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for the <a href="https://www.cdc.gov">country you traveled</a></td>
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In addition, follow the precautions listed on the CDC’s [After You Travel](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/after-travel/precautions.html) page.

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<th>Potential Risk</th>
<th>Recommended Action</th>
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<tr>
<td>Return to WA from another state.</td>
<td>Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to WA. Recommended: Follow post-departure Quarantine and Testing Protocol.</td>
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### Special Cases

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<tr>
<th>Fieldwork Location</th>
<th>Potential</th>
<th>Required</th>
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<td>Fieldwork location involves interaction (potential <a href="https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/locations/close-contact.html">close contact</a>) with a rural population with no reported COVID-19 cases and limited local medical resources.</td>
<td>Potential to expose local population to COVID-19. Required: Follow pre-departure quarantine protocol, or quarantine at a designated isolation area once arriving to research site.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fieldwork on a UNOLS vessel</td>
<td>Potential to bring COVID-19 onto vessel, posing infection risk to all onboard while at sea. Required: Adhere to the self-isolation and testing requirements per <a href="https://www.unols.org/">UNOLS</a>. Protocols are determined by risk level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>High-risk fieldwork/research that includes travel abroad via commercial air with approved travel waiver</td>
<td>Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher. Required adherence to quarantine and testing guidelines as required by destination country upon arrival.</td>
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### Procedures for Sick or Exposed Individuals

| Fieldwork where a researcher exhibits COVID-19 symptoms while in the field. | Potential exposure of research team to COVID-19 through fellow researcher. Potential for researcher to experience life-threatening sudden onset of COVID-19 symptoms. Required: follow [UW guidelines](https://www.ehs.washington.edu/health-safety/health-safety-guides/communication-safety/communicating-with-covid-19-positive-people/) around close contact with a COVID-19 positive person: Follow instructions on quarantine, monitor symptoms, and all exposed team members are tested if possible. Identify | |

| 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 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 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.
• Most work can be carried out while adhering to UW physical distancing requirements, or additional PPE is used for tasks within close contact.
• Most or all of the research party is fully vaccinated.

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 medevac 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.
• Some but not all work can be carried out while adhering to UW physical distancing requirements, or additional PPE is used for tasks within close contact.
• Some but not all of the research party is fully vaccinated.

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.
• Most work cannot be carried out while adhering to UW physical distancing requirements, and/or it is not feasible to use additional PPE during close contact tasks.
• Few to none of the research party are fully vaccinated.

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