



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



Table 1: Field Work Activities, Risk Level and Quarantine/Testing Guidelines:

Fieldwork Activity Description	Characterization of Risk	Recommended/Required Action
Pre-Departure Protocols by Risk Level (risk level designation discussed below table)		
High-risk field work, including non-UNOLS research vessel work (UNOLS research vessel requirements described below)	Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.	Required: Pre-departure RT-PCR test, then 14 days of quarantine, and a second RT-PCR test on day 14. Continue quarantine until departure.
Medium-risk fieldwork, including non-UNOLS research vessel work (UNOLS research vessel requirements described below)	Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.	Required: Pre-departure RT-PCR test, then 14 days of quarantine, and a second RT-PCR test on day 14. Continue quarantine until departure.
Low risk: Short-term (day trip or single overnight) fieldwork, including non-UNOLS research vessel work	Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.	No testing or quarantine needed.
Post-Departure Protocol Considerations		
Return to the US from international travel/overseas	Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to WA.	Required: 14-day quarantine upon return to the US per CDC Level 3 International Travel Advisory for COVID-19.
Return to WA from a state that is not contiguous with WA. Reference local incidence metrics and/or	Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to WA.	Recommended: 14 day quarantine to monitor symptoms upon arrival and before returning on-site at a



contact EH&S to help make this designation.		UW work location. Per Governor’s Safe Start Guidelines for Phase 2.
Fieldwork location is in WA state or in a state contiguous to WA with high COVID-19 incidence. Reference local incidence metrics and/or contact EH&S to help make this designation.	Potential to bring COVID-19 infection back to University work location.	Recommended: 14-day quarantine upon return to UW worksite.
Special Cases		
Fieldwork location involves interaction (potential close contact) with a rural population with no reported COVID-19 cases <u>and</u> limited local medical resources	Potential to expose local population to COVID-19.	Required: 14-day pre-departure quarantine followed by one pre-departure RT-PCR test, or quarantine at a designated isolation area once arriving to research site.
Fieldwork on a UNOLS vessel	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 UNOLS . This includes pre-departure RT-PCR test, then 14 days of self-isolation, and a second RT-PCR test on day 14. UNOLS recommends conducting the second test 4 days before departure to allow for lab results to be confirmed. Protocols are determined by risk level.
High-risk fieldwork/research that includes travel abroad via commercial air with approved travel waiver	Potential exposure of researcher to COVID-19 through interaction with the public. Potential exposure	Required adherence to quarantine and testing guidelines as required by



	of the public to COVID-19 through researcher.	destination country upon arrival.
Procedures for Sick 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 around close contact with a COVID-19 positive person: Self-isolate for 14 days, 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. Quarantine for 14 days, 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 72 hours post-symptom resolution or 10 days after onset- whichever period is longer.



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](#)