Introduction

For field work or on-campus projects, researchers are asked to submit a plan to their Dean or Director addressing three components: justification as to why the work should continue immediately and why it cannot be completed remotely; a safety plan which includes mitigation measures and an explanation of travel compliance; and finally, how the work will be completed while maintaining social distancing requirements and minimizing risk of viral transmission.

This document will help guide the process of plan preparation.

Project summary/justification

Briefly describe the proposed work, explain why you cannot complete this work remotely, and clearly explain why the work should resume immediately.

Summarize the specific research activities to be completed. Consider the following:

- If proposed research activities differ in scope, location (lab/office vs fieldwork), participants, etc., summarize those activities separately.
- Include details on location (building/room/fieldwork location), specifically identify who will be present, and indicate when the proposed research activity will begin and end.
- If your request includes work that cannot accommodate social distancing, explain why and how your group will mitigate the risk of viral transmission.

Safety Plan

Explain how you will reduce the likelihood of viral transmission. For example: how will you manage shared spaces/instrumentation? How will you address the requirements for elevated hygiene? How will you manage potentially hazardous materials/processes while maintaining social distancing requirements? If you are working in building on campus, how will you keep others in the building safe? What additional departmental support do you need, and how can that need be safely addressed? Does the group have the PPE needed to support your safety plan (face coverings, gloves)? Do you have hand sanitizer, cleaning supplies, etc.?

Common control measures to support working safely include:

- social distancing (minimum of 6’ of separation - how will your group accomplish this?)
- avoid gatherings
- staggered shifts or alternating work days
- frequent hand washing
- frequent cleaning of surfaces – doorknobs, table surfaces, light switches, electronics

- avoid touching face
- face coverings – these can be cloth
- gloves when needed
- avoid sharing equipment – if this cannot be avoided, wipe down equipment between uses
- avoid travel in the same vehicle

For projects that include quarantine and testing for project participants (forming a social "pod" or "bubble"), please describe your approach.

Is pre-travel testing required for your project? If yes, please contact Tracey Martinson, Director of Environmental Health, Safety, and Risk Management at tamartinson@alaska.edu or 474-6771. Please be advised that testing costs may fall to the researcher if the tests are determined to be optional to the travel.

COVID-19 testing information and locations

Illness in the field or in a laboratory group setting

Researchers should establish a plan to follow in the event someone becomes ill with COVID-like symptoms, particularly when working in the field. Current guidance stipulates:

If one member of a group ***displays symptoms*** consistent with COVID-19, that person should go home immediately (if possible) and self-observe for 10 days. **This is true regardless of vaccination status.** Please note: you are considered fully vaccinated for COVID-19 two weeks after receipt of the second dose in an approved 2-dose series, or two weeks after receipt of an approved single-dose vaccine series.

Unvaccinated group members who have had close contact with that person must:

- Self-observe for 10 days. This requires each person to take their temperature daily before coming to work, and logging the result. Anyone who is sick or has a temperature above 100F must stay home and not come to campus.
- Wear a face mask at all times and maintain strict social distancing while at work.

If a member of your group is ***diagnosed*** with COVID-19, any group member who is **not fully vaccinated** and has had close contact (notified ***or*** self-identified), must self-quarantine for 10 days from the last exposure with the positive individual. Per the CDC, a close contact is defined as "someone who was within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to test specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated".

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has updated its close contact guidance for fully vaccinated individuals. If you are a fully vaccinated close contact of a COVID+ individual (notified **or** self-identified), you should get a COVID-19 test 3-5 days after the last date of exposure, even if you are asymptomatic. You should wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure, or until you receive a negative test result. If your test is positive, you should isolate for ten days as required for any COVID-19 diagnosis.

A COVID-positive employee or COVID-symptomatic employee may not return to work until cleared by their healthcare provider or State public health officials.

If you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, use these forms to report to the University:

Employee & Contractor Reporting Form

Student Reporting Form

Travel

Travel requires additional justification for approval. If your research requires travel, please explain how this travel is compliant with State of Alaska and University requirements. It is the traveler's responsibility to determine any travel, work, quarantine and/or testing, and other COVID-related concerns for their fieldwork (community entry requirements, Toolik, Sikuliaq, etc.).

Consider the following:

- Have you confirmed that you can meet entry requirements or restrictions for communities to which you will be traveling?
- How will you maintain social distancing while in the field?
- For intrastate travel, describe how you can travel while minimizing stops.
- How will you plan interactions with third-party vendors?
- Will social distancing requirements necessitate changes to your communication plan?
- How will you monitor for COVID-19 while traveling and what will you do if a member of your party becomes sick with symptoms consistent with COVID-19? Do you have detailed travel and field protocols to mitigate the spread of the virus?
- Do you have a detailed and specific evacuation plan?
- How will you limit the transmission of the virus from a person in your party who is suspected of having COVID 19? What will other members of your group do in this situation? Who will be contacted if someone becomes ill and who will direct medical treatment (do you have a doctor or other health professional on call?).
- Do you have funds available to cover disruptions in your field work, added time to

accomplish tasks with stringent mitigation practices in place, or other costs that could be incurred if someone becomes ill during travel (cost of quarantine or evacuation, etc.?)

International travel requires the approval of the Chancellor.

Submission for review

Plan review and approval will go through the Dean or Director, and depending on the scope and location of the proposed work, to the Vice Chancellor for Research. Please prepare and submit your request and safety plan with enough time for review at each level.

Resources

COVID-19 Information for UAF Students
COVID-19 Information for UAF Employees
State of Alaska COVID-19 information
State of Alaska Health Advisories
Coronavirus information from CDC
UAF COVID-19 information
UA COVID-19 information
CDC guidance on cough/sneeze control