

## University of Montana COVID-19 Guidelines for Off-campus Field Research

### REVISED FOR MOVE TO RESEARCH LEVEL 1 (as of Monday, MAY 4)

The Office of Research and Creative Scholarship (ORCS) proposes the following guidelines, dynamically updated with changing conditions, for **off-campus field studies** conducted by University of Montana researchers.

- **NOTE: At any point field research restrictions may change. Before travel the PI should check current restrictions and guidelines as provided by the CDC, county/city, and the Governor's office of Montana and any other state where the field work is conducted, and the external funding agency. Specific Considerations for Off-Campus Field Work**

#### I. Prior to Travel:

A) All relevant trainings and permissions (e.g., IACUC, first aid, trapping permits, consent from landowners, Institutional Review Board, etc.) must be in place before initiating any travel to field sites.

B) The PI should provide appropriate safety equipment to the crew. This includes face masks appropriate to the project (ranging from simple cloth bandanas to fitted N95 masks), as determined by local and national guidelines, and the expected closeness of interaction and potential contagion within the field crew and between the field crew and others.

Also, if the field crew member does not have their own thermometer, the PI should provide one for the crew member to use as part of their 12-hour personal health check while in the field (see IVA).

C) Before departure, each person going to the field should self assess their health, and not depart for the field if they show Covid-19 symptoms.

D) Before departure, the field crew supervisor should review with the PI a written contingency plan in case someone becomes symptomatic for COVID-19. At a minimum, it should include the following:

- nearest clinic to the field location that will run COVID tests, with phone #s, hours of operation, etc.
- reliable means of communicating this to PI/ UM (InReach, etc.), with phone #s, etc.
- plan if the clinic refuses to run tests on a person that is not feeling well (this is fairly common right now). This would probably include isolation and a call to the PI
- ability to isolate the field crew with food and water, if they become symptomatic and cannot return to Missoula, for periods up to 14 days
- back-up plan to "evacuate" field crew in the event that they test positive or become debilitated and are unable to care for themselves
- basic first aid kit with things like Tylenol for fevers
- Communicate this document to each individual and make it easily accessible.

E) Field crews should follow local, regional and federal guidelines for quarantines. Currently, no quarantine is required for UM Research Personnel returning from out of state back to Montana.

## II. Vehicles:

At Research Level 1, vehicles can contain the driver and one passenger per passenger seat row (for example, driver and one back-seat passenger in a crew-cab pickup). Bandana-type masks may be worn at the discretion of the team leader or crew member.

## III. Lodging During Field Research

*Every effort should be made to provide individual living arrangements for field researchers.*

A) The PI is responsible for providing all necessary disinfectant and sanitation supplies including gloves, masks, cleaners, etc.

B) Social spacing (>6 feet) must be enforced at all times during field research. This includes sleeping arrangements, cooking arrangements, and other activities. Other precautions include:

- General Hygiene: Wash hands often. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands. Cover all sneezes/coughs with a tissue or with your shirt sleeve. Wear protective gloves (latex, nitrile, or rubber) whenever using furniture, cookware, equipment, or vehicles shared among team members.
- General disinfecting guidelines: Use disinfectant wipes on surfaces used by multiple team members. As a substitute: a spray bottle diluted household bleach solution (4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water) or alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol. **Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.**
- Sleeping: everyone will have their own personal sleeping space.
- Cooking: When first entering the kitchen, wash hands with soap for >20 seconds. Sterilize cooking surfaces (while wearing rubber or plastic gloves) as part of kitchen cleanup. Wash dishes in hot soapy water and rinse in diluted bleach.
- Bathrooms: Take all personal items (towels, hand towels, shampoo/conditioner) with you and leave them in your personal space. Do not leave them in the bathroom.

## IV Conducting Field Research:

A) Every day each crew member must self-assess their health and fill in the "[Employee 12-Hour Check-in Form](#)," measuring their own temperature and recording any potential symptoms of COVID-19. This form will be kept by the crew member and will provide an important record for medical treatment if the need arises.

B) At all times maintain spatial separation, and enforce crew members wearing appropriate masks (see IB above).

C) Shared gear (e.g. binoculars, GPS units) must be disinfected before handing over to someone else.