Travel Guidance for Field Research due to COVID-19, Approved by the Research & Libraries Working Group June 12, 2020

These guidelines are for domestic and international travel for university-approved research. Domestic and international non-essential travel are currently restricted by the university (https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/university-actions), and depend on the lifting of restrictions, or prior approval by the university. The International Risk Management Committee and the International Program Office (https://www.umass.edu/ipo/) will develop and modify guidelines for the resumption of international travel taking into account the type of activity, country and location specific information, and various governmental advisories.

University-approved field research that includes access to off-campus sites and facilities, including archives and collections, must comply with all COVID-19 restrictions and policies at those locations and organizations. For travel to sites outside Massachusetts, potential quarantine requirements upon entering that jurisdiction or returning to Massachusetts must be met. Information on COVID-19 is available for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts (https://www.mass.gov/info-details/covid-19-dhcd-website), the UMass Amherst general community (https://www.umass.edu/coronavirus/), and the UMass Amherst research community https://www.umass.edu/research/covid-19-resources-guidance. Appropriate country, state and field site location webpages should be consulted for COVID-19 information, and policies.

For all fieldwork, researchers should use best public health practices recommended by the CDC (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html), and follow all state and field location-specific policies and requirements. General best practices include maintaining physical distancing of ≥6 feet, using appropriate equipment handling and disinfection procedures, wearing appropriate PPE such as face coverings, and being aware of and reporting symptoms of COVID-19.

Field research team members should be asymptomatic for at least two weeks prior to travel for fieldwork. If a team member has tested positive for COVID-19, the individual should check in with a supervisor and the UMass Amherst COVID-19 HR Response Team. The individual should not participate in fieldwork until cleared to do so by the supervisor. If individuals feel ill or have reasonable cause to believe they are currently infected or have been exposed to COVID-19, they should not participate in fieldwork.

Before reporting for fieldwork, each team member should complete the UMass COVID-19 Daily Self Checklist. If a team member answers “Yes” to any questions, that individual should skip the fieldwork that day (or remain in place with minimal contact with others if already in the field), and check in with a supervisor and the UMass Amherst COVID-19 HR Response Team. The individual should not return to fieldwork until cleared to do so by the supervisor. Researchers should follow campus reporting protocols if they or a team member, or a colleague, housemate, or immediate family member tests positive for COVID-19.

The Research leader should designate one or more points of contact who are responsible for tracking fieldwork schedules. All employees conducting fieldwork should keep these points of contact apprised of planned travel for fieldwork, and changes to plans.
When conducting field research and travelling to field sites:

- Be aware of and follow all local public health requirements, and university and state policies regarding COVID-19
- Complete the [UMass COVID-19 Daily Self Checklist](#) before reporting for work
- Maintain communication to receive updates or get assistance related to COVID-19 and changing policies
- Maintain communication between team members, while traveling and at the field site
- Maintain regular communications with faculty supervisor/PI who serves as a “remote buddy” for personnel in the field. Notify that individual of the planned fieldwork for that day (including specific location) and check in via phone or text at the end of each day, if possible, after fieldwork is completed.
- Maintain flexibility to alter travel plans at any time, self-isolate if necessary, or return home
- Minimize purchases and contact with the public, and avoid public transportation as much as possible.
- Do not participate in activities with groups larger than those allowed under the current phase of the field location’s state COVID-19 re-opening plan, or state’s current safety standards
- Limit one person per room or tent for overnight trips, unless team members live in the same household
- Limit one person per vehicle unless team members live in the same household
- Meet at the field site to minimize unnecessary contact between team members
- Wipe the fieldwork vehicle with a disinfectant daily, before use by another team member, or prior to and upon completion of fieldwork, if you are not using your own vehicle
- Maintain physical distancing when purchasing fuel, or other required fieldwork items
- Use disinfecting wipes or single-use towels on handles or buttons at service stations before you touch them, and hand sanitizer prior to re-entering your vehicle
- Maintain physical distancing of ≥6 feet from each other at all times in the field, when possible
- Provide dedicated PPE and personal hygiene items to each team member, e.g., face masks, hand soap, and hand sanitizer, and ensure quantities are sufficient for the duration of the fieldwork
- Wear face masks outdoors and in public places where ≥6 feet physical distancing is not possible
- Clean hands regularly during fieldwork with hand soap or with ≥60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol hand sanitizer, if hand soap is not available
- Provide designated field equipment to each team member, if possible, e.g., sample collection materials
- Disinfect field equipment, e.g., with 70% isopropanol at the start and end of each field day, or more often if needed
- Have team members bring their own food and water to the study area to conduct fieldwork
- Have team members prepare all their own provisions, e.g., water, food, snacks, at home if possible
- Do not share food, beverages, utensils or storage containers (i.e. coolers) between team members
- Do not congregate or eat together if that violates physical distancing guidelines
- Conduct as much work as possible in outdoor settings and reduce density to minimum possible numbers when in indoor settings while maintaining physical distancing