

OVERVIEW: The purpose of this guide is to identify and minimize potential risks associated with fieldwork during the coronavirus pandemic. “Fieldwork” can be defined as activities conducted by University faculty, staff, or students in outdoor areas (on or off campus) for the purposes of teaching or research.

COVID-19 PREVENTIVE MEASURES: COVID-19 is a severe respiratory illness caused by a coronavirus. COVID-19 symptoms include: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever or chills, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Knowing the facts and how to protect yourself is critical to avoiding infection. The potential for infection during fieldwork can be reduced by taking the following precautions:

- The size of the fieldwork group should be kept to the minimum number that permits safe completion of the necessary tasks.
- Establish a limit of one individual per vehicle. Special arrangements should be put into place if this cannot be accomplished.
- Practice effective physical distancing by avoiding close contact with other individuals. Maintain a distance of six feet from others.
- You must wear a mask anytime you will be around individuals who you do not live with, even outside.
- Pennsylvania limits for outdoor meetings and events continues to evolve. Currently (as of 12/18/2020) outdoor meetings of 10 or fewer participants are permitted with no prior extra permission required.
- Wash your hands often for at least twenty seconds with warm water and soap or use hand sanitizer.
- Avoid touching your face or eyes.
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow.
- Avoid sharing tools, phones, or other objects if possible.
- Pay special attention to state and local requirements if your fieldwork includes travel away from your normal location. Additional information about travel can be found on the [Coronavirus Information page](#).

EMERGENCY CONSIDERATIONS: Adequate consideration must be given to emergency preparedness during all fieldwork. This includes the following points:

- **Emergency contacts:** Emergency contacts are people at or near the fieldwork site who

can reach you if necessary and who are familiar with your schedule. The contact should be informed of any medical conditions or allergies of the fieldworkers. This individual should be provided with information regarding who to contact if the fieldworkers do not return or report in within a predetermined length of time. Fieldworkers should advise of any changes in schedules or contact information.

- **Emergency procedures:** Emergency procedures are plans developed in advance regarding how to properly respond to adverse situations that might be encountered during fieldwork. The fieldwork leader is responsible for organizing emergency procedures and ensuring all members of the group are aware of the arrangements.
- **Communication:** Methods must be established prior to fieldwork to ensure communication within the group and to local emergency services is maintained. Effective communication allows fieldworkers to be forewarned of dangers as well as calling for help in an emergency. Communication mechanisms can include the following:
 - Verify that your communication device (i.e. cell phone, radio, etc.) functions at the work site.
 - Establish a predetermined frequency of contact or “roll call” with all fieldworkers.
 - Always carry a photo identification in case of an accident or injury.

ADDITIONAL FIELDWORK CONSIDERATIONS:

Care must be taken to minimize any damage associated with the fieldwork. Be sure all specimen collections are legal by obtaining all required permits. Do not enter private property without prior authorization.