

Field Operations During COVID-19 Activity

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Revision History Log

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The purpose of this SOP is to outline procedures and tasks to be followed during, before, and after field operations to minimize risk of COVID-19 spread by and between personnel and to describe the contingency plan should an employee become symptomatic in the field.

These guidelines apply to all Sonoran Desert Network (SODN) staff (permanent, temporary, student, and volunteer), cooperators, and contractors participating in field operations.

Table of Contents

1 Background on Virus	5
2 General Guidelines.....	5
3 Before Returning to the Office / Resuming Fieldwork.....	6
4 Planning Field Work	8
5 Working at the Learning Center.....	9
6 Travel.....	10
6.1 Vehicle Travel	10
6.2 Pre-Vehicle Travel.....	10
6.3 Traveling in a Vehicle.....	11
6.4 Post Vehicle Travel.....	11
6.5 What To Do if a Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 Has Been in a Vehicle.	11
6.6 Foot Travel	12
7 Conducting Sampling	12
7.1 Crew Size and Composition	12
7.2 Physical Distancing	13
7.3 Gear Management.....	13
8 Communication	14
9 Overnight Stays	15
9.1 Park Housing Facilities	15
9.2 Camping.....	15
9.2.1 Camp Hygiene	16
9.2.2 Camp Kitchen	16

10 If Someone Becomes Symptomatic	17
10.1 Emergency Evacuation	17
10.2 Non-Emergency Evacuation	17
10.3 Returning From the Field After Crew Exposure to Symptomatic Crew Member	18
11 Return from Field	19
11.1 Returning to the DRLC	19
11.2 Gear	19
11.3 After travel.....	19
12 Contact with Park Staff and the Public	19
12.1 Interacting with park staff	19
12.2 Interacting with park visitors.....	20
13 Works Cited.....	21
Appendix A: Self-Screening Guidance to Minimize COVID-19 Infection for Employees Entering the Workplace	22
Appendix B: CDC Guidance on How to Clean and Disinfect	24
Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces.....	24
Soft (Porous) Surfaces	24
Electronics	25
Linens, clothing, and other items that go in the laundry	25
Appendix C: GSA Fleet Vehicle Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance for COVID-19	26
Appendix D: Face Coverings.....	29
CDC-How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering.....	29
NPS Guidance on Use of Face Coverings.....	29

Appendix E: Safeguarding Privacy.....	32
Safeguarding Privacy During Covid-19 Response	32
Communications.....	32
Emergency Contact Lists.....	33
Additional resources.....	33
Appendix F: Checklists and Guides for Use in the Field	34
Disinfection Procedures Quick Reference	34
Vehicle Disinfection Quick Guide	34

1 Background on Virus

Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is an infectious disease caused by a new virus (SARS-CoV-2). The disease causes a flu-like respiratory illness with symptoms such as a cough, fever, and in more severe cases, difficulty breathing. Symptoms range from mild to severe, with some cases resulting in death. COVID-19 is thought to spread primarily through close proximity to infected individuals through respiratory droplets that contain the virus. It is believed that some people can be contagious while being asymptomatic. Symptoms may appear over a period of 2-14 days from exposure. There is currently no vaccine for this virus.

Common symptoms of COVID-19 as defined by the CDC include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

2 General Guidelines

This section outlines the basic CDC recommendations everyone should follow for protecting yourself and others. The CDC is updating their guidance regularly at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>.

Current recommendations include:

- Frequent handwashing or regular use of hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol
 - Proper handwashing technique is as follows:
 - Wet your hands with clean, running water (warm or cold), turn off the tap, and apply soap.
 - Lather your hands by rubbing them together with the soap. Lather the backs of your hands, between your fingers, and under your nails.
 - Scrub your hands for at least 20 seconds. Need a timer? Hum the “Happy Birthday” song from beginning to end twice.
 - Rinse your hands well under clean, running water.

- Dry your hands using a clean towel or air dry them.
- Proper use of hand sanitizer is as follows:
 - Apply the gel product to the palm of one hand (read the label to learn the correct amount).
 - Rub your hands together.
 - Rub the gel over all the surfaces of your hands and fingers until your hands are dry. This should take around 20 seconds.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with hands that haven't been washed or sanitized
- Maintain a 6ft distance between yourself and others (12ft during physical activities when respiratory rate and intensity are elevated.)
- When distance cannot be maintained, a cloth face covering may be worn to minimize your risk of spreading the virus to others. (Detailed guidelines on use of cloth face coverings may be found in Appendix D).
 - Please note that wearing a mask may not be used as a substitute for physical distancing and is only an additional precaution.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with the bend of your elbow or a tissue, immediately dispose of tissue, and clean hands.
- Routine disinfection of high-touch and shared surfaces (Disinfection Guidelines can be found in Appendix B).

During field operations it will be the responsibility of the crew lead and their office contact to monitor changes in State, Federal, and CDC guidelines.

3 Before Returning to the Office / Resuming Fieldwork

Prior to returning to the workplace and/or resuming field work all staff must evaluate their health. During this evaluation utilize the following self-screening steps taken from the NPS's *Self-Screening Guidance to Minimize COVID-19 Infection for Employees Entering the Workplace* (Appendix A):

- **Have I had any recent known potential exposure (household contact or close contact within 6 feet) to anyone with COVID-19 infection?** If your answer is yes you should stay home until 14 days after the last exposure, consistently maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others,

and self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), including taking your temperature twice daily. Discuss telework and/or leave options with your supervisor while in quarantine.

- **Have I had fever, cough, or shortness of breath within the last 72 hours including today?**
[Note: Check for fever before entering the workplace. A fever is a temperature greater than 100.4°F]. If you answer, “yes”, do not report to the workplace. Contact your supervisor for work and leave instruction. Follow up with your healthcare provider as needed.
- **Did I develop symptoms during the day while working?** If you develop symptoms during the workday, go home immediately. Notify your supervisor, isolate yourself, and follow up with your healthcare provider as needed.

An additional guideline should be considered when completing fieldwork that involves overnight travel. Overnight travel involves extended contact time with other crewmembers and provides limited options for rapid evacuation if someone presents with symptoms.

- **Have I followed CDC recommended social distancing guidelines for two weeks prior to the start of work-related travel?** If your answer is no, you should refrain from field work for a period of 14 days, during which time you are following these guidelines. During this time you are still allowed to work, but it is limited to teleworking.

Additionally, individuals may want to consider:

- Am I member of a population that is at higher risk for the illness to become severe? (CDC 4)
- Do I live with or care for someone who is at high risk for severe illness?

Based on the answers to these questions, individuals should follow the appropriate guidelines as laid out by the CDC and local health departments. After complying with the appropriate CDC guidelines, staff may reassess their fitness to return to work.

Individuals should be aware that any supervisors they notify of their status will take great care to protect their privacy and that they will not face any repercussions for their decision to continue teleworking regardless of their answers to the questions above. This section represents the most important precaution we can take. The best way to limit exposure to the virus is to isolate when you are feeling sick.

4 Planning Field Work

Before calling field staff back from telework status, supervisors and managers must determine whether to conduct field work based on considerations from COVID-19. Supervisors should consider the benefits of completing field work against risks to field crew members, park staff and community members they must come into contact with. Use the following guidelines when deciding whether to resume field operations:

SODN Field Work Checklist:

- The field work is necessary and critical to support SODN's or partners' mission and goals
- The field work cannot be delayed, and protocols cannot be altered to avoid field work
 - Field work tasks are time-sensitive
 - Data cannot be collected remotely
 - Tasks cannot be performed by existing park staff
- Field sites are accessible and safe, and will remain so for the duration of the planned field work
 - Existing closures do not impede access to field sites or emergency/contingency resources, and further closures are not planned or likely
 - Current state, local, and park regulations allow field operations to take place, and regulations are unlikely to change during planned field work
 - Field sites, normal access routes, and necessary resources have not become compromised by changes (especially increases) in park visitation
- Sufficient planning and preparation has been done to ensure adequate safety of all field staff and their households, park staff, and local communities
 - Specific COVID-19 GAR has been performed and risk level has been assessed at an acceptable level
 - Field protocol has been revised to reflect risks from COVID-19, and crew members have been trained in new protocols
 - Crew leaders have completed additional safety training and attended a recent Safety Committee field leaders meeting

- Field itinerary and overnight arrangements minimize field staff exposure to park staff, park visitors, and local communities
- Appropriate COVID-19-specific communication measures and emergency evacuation plans have been put in place
- Appropriate additional safety equipment, including handwashing supplies, hand sanitizers, gloves, masks, etc. have been supplied in appropriate quantities to field staff
- There are an adequate number of field staff, vehicles, and equipment to safely and effectively carry out field protocols in accordance with COVID-19 safety protocols

5 Working at the Learning Center

In addition to following the general CDC guidelines outlined in Section 2 of this SOP, remember that the Desert Research Learning Center (DRLC) is home to residents, including some that may be at higher risk for serious illness if exposed to the virus.

Follow these additional guidelines when entering the DRLC cannot be avoided:

- Field crews should limit the number of people needed to enter the DRLC and attempt to schedule visits outside of normal business hours or when other crews will not be present. The “Field Scheduling 2020” Excel form may be utilized for scheduling.
- Touch only what you need to
- Keep items isolated. When packing for trips, consolidate your equipment to an appropriate area. Coordinate with other crews or individuals who share your office spaces in order to minimize the number of people around. Recommended gear storage spaces are as follows:
 - Wildlife: Intern office
 - Uplands: Clearly marked area in workshop bay of garage
 - Veg Map: Back Building Veg Office
 - AEPS: Soils/Hydro Lab
 - IPMT: Back building
 - COATI: IPMT trailer
- Follow the disinfection guidelines in Appendix B before leaving the DRLC

6 Travel

6.1 Vehicle Travel

Vehicle travel is likely the area with the fewest options to maintain an appropriate distance from coworkers. Take precautions to minimize the risk of transmission by following the recommendations for vehicle cleaning adapted from the GSA Fleet Vehicle Cleaning & Disinfecting Guidance for COVID-19 (Appendix C) and the general CDC guidelines in section 2 of this SOP.

6.2 Pre-Vehicle Travel

Prior to departure for a field tour, a number of options should be considered to allow for appropriate distances to be maintained while travelling. Whenever possible, single occupancy of a vehicle should be the preferred option, with employees being assigned to vehicles. Supervisors and staff should also consider the use of personal vehicles and park or partner vehicles to minimize crew proximity while traveling to and from field sites. If these options are not available, vehicle occupancy is limited to two crew members per vehicle with occupants riding in separate (back vs. front) seats. Any tour that involves overnight travel should, at a minimum, have two vehicles at their disposal. If anyone begins to show symptoms, this will allow them to leave the field site in their own vehicle and minimize the risk of spreading illness. In addition, vehicles should be disinfected prior to the start of each tour and include the following:

- Sanitize frequently touched vehicle surfaces that include, but are not limited to:
 - Door handles (interior and exterior)
 - Truck bed and cap latches and handles
 - Steering wheel and associated levers (turn signal, wiper blade)
 - Seat belts and buckles
 - Gear shifter and 4WD shifter
 - Vehicle console (radio, heating and cooling controls, etc.)
 - Rear view mirror
 - Arm rests and associated buttons (windows and locks)
 - Car keys and credit card sleeve

Do not use bleach products while cleaning vehicles as they will discolor the upholstery and may damage plastic components. Instead use multi-surface disinfectant spray. Do not spray cleaning products directly onto electronic components (radio), first spray a rag, then wipe down the surface. For vehicles with touchscreens (Gnu Gnu F150 and IO), additional steps are required to avoid damaging the screen. First, turn off the vehicle so that the screen is powered off. With a microfiber cloth, gently clean the screen with a cleaning solution designed for this purpose.

6.3 Traveling in a Vehicle

- If possible, designate seats for each crewmember to be maintained throughout the tour. For other safety reasons, it may be necessary to swap drivers. Keys, steering wheel, shifter, seatbelt and doors should be disinfected if swapping drivers. While travelling, crew members should each have a personal container of hand sanitizer and follow standard sanitation guidelines.
- If travelling in a vehicle with more than one person, each person will wear a cloth face mask.
- If eating while travelling, be sure to keep the vehicle clean.
- Set ventilation on the non-recirculated mode, allowing for fresh air to circulate through the vehicle.
- If stops are required during vehicle travel, crew members should refrain from touching any unnecessary objects outside of the vehicle and sanitize their hands prior to reentering the vehicle. This is in addition to washing your hands after using the restroom.
- Attempt to park in open areas of parking lots, away from densely clustered vehicles. If possible, use gas stations outside of densely populated areas where crowds of people are less likely to be encountered.

6.4 Post Vehicle Travel

Once vehicle travel has been completed for the day, frequently touched surfaces, especially common surfaces such as the radio and tailgate/door handles, should be sanitized. Upon returning to the office at the end of the tour, complete all bulleted items in section 6.1.2 list.

6.5 What To Do if a Laboratory-Confirmed COVID-19 Has Been in a Vehicle.

If a person with a laboratory confirmed case of COVID-19 has been in a work vehicle, a set of guidelines must be followed before that vehicle is safe for travel. These guidelines are from the NPS Coronavirus Response – COVID-19 FAQs sheet and are accessible at <https://inside.nps.gov/node/393#vehicles>. These guidelines are as follows:

- Wait 24 hours since the person with the confirmed case was present in the car before proceeding with cleaning and disinfection.
- Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products used. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.
- If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Follow normal CDC cleaning recommendations as described in Appendix B

6.6 Foot Travel

While travelling on foot to and from the field site, a number of precautions should be taken to minimize the chance of virus transmission. As with vehicle travel, attempt to work in smaller groups (no less than two people) and maintain those same groupings whenever possible. As the frequency and intensity of respiration accelerates with increased physical activity, respiratory droplets are likely to spread farther. As such, it is vital to maintain an appropriate distance from other crew members. During strenuous physical activity, crew members should maintain a distance of 12 feet between one another and avoid hiking directly behind anyone.

7 Conducting Sampling

Field crew members should take appropriate precautions to minimize potential contacts with the virus while maintaining crew and personal safety, as well as fulfilling operational objectives. Along with following the general CDC recommendations outlined in Section 2 of this SOP other strategies may include:

7.1 Crew Size and Composition

- Evaluate the minimum number of crew members necessary to safely and effectively perform field tasks and bring only the necessary number into the field to minimize exposure to field crew members.
 - As per SODN safety protocol, a minimum of two crew members must be present for all field operations.
 - Crew members who are able to work independently, or with minimal proximal support from others are preferred. Avoid operations that require staff to be in close proximity to each other or to share gear.

- When possible, maintain a consistent crew to minimize new exposures. Minimize the risk of transmission to park and local communities by avoiding inclusion of park staff, non-SODN interns, volunteers, or other rotating staffing sources on SODN crews.

7.2 Physical Distancing

- Establish standard distancing cues, verbal reminders, or periodic check-ins within the crew to promote consistent distancing.
- If a crew member requires assistance to complete a task, helpers should issue oral instructions first. For tasks that require field identification or measurements, consider sending pictures via phones. If an assisting crew member's presence is absolutely required at a specific site, the requesting crew member should remove themselves and all contaminated gear to a 6ft distance before the helper arrives.
- For protocols that involve "partnered" tasks (i.e. observer and data recorder), assign permanent partners to decrease multi-person exposures. Consider merging traditionally partnered tasks to allow for greater distancing.

7.3 Gear Management

Though it is not thought to be a primary mode of virus transmission, people may contract COVID-19 by touching contaminated surfaces and transferring the virus to the eyes, nose, and mouth. To minimize the risks of cross-contaminating gear, it is recommended that whenever reasonable plot gear be signed out and labelled to specific crew members for the duration of the field hitch.

- For protocols involving "paired" gear items that are used together, assign paired items to a single crew member.
- Crew members should only touch or handle gear that has been signed out to them, treating all other gear as potentially contaminated. Avoid "gear piles," or the piling up of crew gear.
- Assign crew members to only the field tasks to which their assigned gear pertains.
- Attempt to minimize personal contact with permanent plot fixtures.
- For protocols that involve touching or otherwise contacting permanent plot fixtures (i.e., a permanent meter), consider designating a single crew member for all tasks involving the permanent fixture.

- For protocols that involve attaching crew gear to permanent plot fixtures (i.e., attaching tapes to rebar), consider designating a single crew member and their gear for tasks involving a specific fixture. If this is unreasonable, consider alternate means of attachment (i.e., using personally assigned chaining pins instead).
- Isolate crew gear when not in use to avoid contamination of communal surfaces (truck tailgates, tables and chairs, etc.). Crew gear should remain in the designated crew member's pack when not in use.
- When gear sharing is necessary, if possible, gear should be sanitized between users (See Disinfection Guidelines in Appendix B). Consider having crew members wear clean gloves while handling shared gear.

8 Communication

Communication is and will always be an important component of field safety. During a pandemic and in the absence of such an event, communication between field crews and local dispatch and/or office contacts is vital. During the COVID-19 pandemic and any others that may occur in the future, crews should follow communication guidelines that are already outlined in the Safety Tracking and Field Communications SOP (P:\Operations\Safety\SOPs and Forms\Field\Safety_SOP_Tracking_Field_Communications_v200.docx).

The primary communication that should be altered during such events is between crew members. On a daily basis, crew members should check in with one another about their physical and mental well-being. If crew members identify any potential symptoms of COVID-19 or other illness, the guidelines covered in Section 10 (If someone becomes symptomatic) should be followed. In addition, the office contact should immediately be altered to the situation. This contact should also be informing the crew of any important updates regarding COVID-19, whether it be new CDC guidelines or updates on current hot spots.

With the increase in discussion about crew member health, it is important to protect privacy whenever possible. As outlined in the safeguarding privacy during COVID-19 response (Appendix E):

“It is important that we remember to protect the privacy of our employees, contractors, and other affiliated personnel during our COVID-19 response. Supervisors and employees are reminded to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of employee information while discussing, documenting and sharing information for COVID-19 preparation, coordination and response activities.”

Whenever practical, attempt to follow the guidelines in Appendix E. As crews are small and working in close contact in remote settings, it may not be feasible or safe to abide by all guidelines. At a minimum,

avoid discussing details about anyone's medical condition with people outside of supervisors, necessary crew members, and medical personnel. In order to remain safe, we need to be able to discuss our current physical health; however, only those outlined above need to be a part of those discussions.

9 Overnight Stays

Due to the nature of I&M work, travel and overnight stays are integral to meeting field-based sampling objectives.

9.1 Park Housing Facilities

Indoor, front-country facilities are the preferred housing arrangement as access to hot running water improves sanitation capabilities and access to electricity minimizes the necessity of interacting directly with park staff and facilities. Park housing is preferred to hotels as more information is known on the occupancy history of park housing than commercial operations. However, park housing is currently unavailable (April 30th, 2020). Some suggested criteria for park housing are:

- Choose housing that has not been occupied for 3 or more days prior
- Reserve sufficient housing to minimize the number of staff in a single unit
 - Housing in which staff has access to their own restroom and kitchen facilities are preferred; however, if that is not possible it is recommended to have no more than 2 individuals per unit

While occupying park housing units staff should continue to observe CDC guidelines and perform regular disinfection of high traffic surfaces (Appendix B).

9.2 Camping

If field crews need to camp at a park, they should utilize all available options to camp at a safe distance from each other, park visitors, park staff, and park volunteers. Field crews should take extreme caution to avoid individuals deemed by the CDC as “higher risk” for serious illness from a COVID-19 infection. Coordinate with your park contact to identify and arrange appropriate camping areas.

Overnight camping facilities are listed in generalized order of preference:

- Camping in the backcountry at secluded locations or utilizing dispersed camping.
- Camping at group sites separated from the general campground (especially if this means that bathroom or other facilities will not be shared with the general public).

- Camping in a develop campground.

9.2.1 Camp Hygiene

Camping will inherently place members of a field crew in close proximity to one another. In addition to the normal CDC guidelines, some recommendations for hygienic camping are:

- When setting up camp, tents should be set up 6 or more feet apart.
 - If camping in a developed campground, consider reserving a block of sites to allow the crew to spread out and to create a buffer between crew sites and the public. Give preference to sites that are away from high-traffic areas such as bathrooms, information kiosks, and water spigots.
- Consider packing enough gear such that crew members will not need to share items such as coolers or chairs.
- Consider checking tents out to crew members for the entire season.
- Field crews should be supplied with a high quality “camp sink” and ample hand soap to promote hand washing at camp.

9.2.2 Camp Kitchen

All normal guidelines for health and food safety should be followed in any backcountry or camp kitchen. The following extra precautions are recommended to account for COVID-19:

- To minimize a buildup of people in the kitchen area, attempt to stagger crewmember’s morning routines. Note that the normal field work schedule may need to be altered.
- Disinfect high traffic areas as often as reasonable.
 - High traffic areas may include camp tables, cooler handles, pot/pan handles, bear bin handles, etc.
- Use camp hand washing station before touching any common surfaces at camp.
 - Follow proper hand washing procedures as recommended by the CDC.
- Consider storing each crew member’s cold food in separate coolers.
- When working in the kitchen, it is recommended that crew members wear a mask and gloves to avoid the potential for contamination of the meal by means of talking, coughing, or sneezing.

- Consider taking additional stoves and fuel, such that multiple people can cook at appropriate distances apart, at the same time.

10 If Someone Becomes Symptomatic

If a crew member becomes symptomatic, the main priority of the crew lead should be to get the sick person to safety and protect other individuals from infection.

- A symptomatic individual should be immediately isolated from the rest of the crew. CDC guidelines should be followed in order to prevent the spread of germs (CDC 1).
 - Maintain 6-ft distance as much as possible.
 - All crew should begin always wearing face masks.
 - All crew should be vigilant in hand-washing procedures when near the infected individual.
 - Evacuation procedure should begin as soon as symptoms are detected.

10.1 Emergency Evacuation

- **Emergency protocol should be considered for:**
 - **Trouble breathing**
 - **Persistent pain or pressure in the chest**
 - **Altered mental status**
 - **Bluish lips or face**
 - **Any other concerning signs of decreasing health. This list is not all inclusive and medical providers should be consulted if there is any concern with a sick individual.**

10.2 Non-Emergency Evacuation

- If safe and possible, have the infected individual self-evacuate.
 - Crews should avoid contact with the symptomatic individual as much as possible.
 - Symptoms can be self-treated using fluids or over-the-counter medications.
 - Crew lead should continuously check-in to verify that the individual is capable to self-evacuate and the condition is not worsening.
- If symptoms are moderate or other circumstances cause a need for increased assistance, the crew lead should assist the infected individual with evacuation.

- Crew lead should continuously check-in to verify that the individual is capable and the condition is not worsening.
- Crew lead can assist in treating symptoms using fluids and over-the-counter medications according to the level of first aid training that they have completed.

10.3 Returning From the Field After Crew Exposure to Symptomatic Crew Member

After returning from the field crew should practice self-isolation and self-monitoring for 14 days in order to reduce the spread of the virus (CDC 3).

The infected crew member can stop home isolation under the conditions recommended by the CDC (CDC 1)

- **If they will not have a test** to determine if they are still contagious, they can leave home after these three things have happened:
 - They have had no fever for at least 72 hours (that is three full days of no fever without the use medicine that reduces fevers)
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)
 - At least 7 days have passed since their symptoms first appeared
- *If they will be tested* to determine if they are still contagious, they can leave home after these three things have happened:
 - They no longer have a fever (without the use of medicine that reduces fevers)
 - Other symptoms have improved (for example, when their cough or shortness of breath have improved)
 - They have received two negative tests in a row, 24 hours apart. Their doctor will follow CDC guidelines.

11 Return from Field

11.1 Returning to the DRLC

Interaction with office staff should be kept to a minimum. Options are ordered by preference:

- Return from the field outside of normal working office hours (M – F 9:00 – 17:00)
 - Schedule a time slot to return from the field, and make sure to inform office staff so they know when you will be in the area. The “Field Scheduling 2020” excel sheet may be utilized for this.

11.2 Gear

Crew gear should be kept in the vehicle until CDC-recommended decontamination can occur. Wear gloves and treat all gear as contaminated until decontaminated. Perform decontamination outside of the office to minimize contact surfaces. If there is a suspected COVID-19 case, leave gear in vehicle for 24 hours before proceeding with decontamination procedures (Appendix B).

11.3 After travel

The crew may need to go into a quarantine period (CDC 3).

- If there is a suspected COVID-19 case or extended interactions with the public, crew is to begin self-isolation and self-monitoring procedures for 14 days upon return home.
- If there is no suspected COVID-19 case, crew is to self-monitor until the next trip while continuing carefully observe CDC recommendations.

12 Contact with Park Staff and the Public

12.1 Interacting with park staff

An essential portion of most I&M crew’s job is interacting with park staff to help complete field-based objectives.

- Favor communication with park resource staff through email and over the phone.
 - If meeting with park staff face to face is unavoidable, follow the applicable CDC guidelines listed in Section 2 of this SOP.

- Extra precaution should be exhibited when interacting with park staff deemed by the CDC to be in the “higher risk” category for serious illness from an infection by COVID-19.
- Whenever possible prearrange the pickup of keys or signs ahead of time with park contacts.
 - Have park staff leave items to be picked up at a predetermined location to minimize interaction with park staff.
 - If possible, disinfect all received items before handling them.
- If a mule packer is needed the field crew will coordinate a drop off location for the gear to be hauled by the mule packer.
 - All field gear to be hauled by the mule packer will be disinfected following the most current CDC guidelines (Appendix B) before the gear is dropped off to the mule packer.
 - It is recommended that all field gear hauled by the mule packer be disinfected following the same guidelines when that gear has been delivered to the field staff.

12.2 Interacting with park visitors

National Parks have seen a surge in visitation over the past decade. Field crews should take precautions when engaging any and all park visitors.

- Field crews should minimize interactions with park visitors, **especially** those visitors deemed by the CDC to be in the “higher risk” category for serious illness from an infection by COVID-19.
- Treat all park visitors as if they (and you) are asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19. If interaction with park visitors is unavoidable, follow the most recent guidelines recommended by the CDC to limit your potential exposure to the disease (Section 2 of this SOP).

13 Works Cited

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Appendix A: Self-Screening Guidance to Minimize COVID-19 Infection for Employees Entering the Workplace

Self-Screening Guidance to Minimize COVID-19 Infection for Employees Entering the Workplace

Protecting ourselves and our colleagues throughout this pandemic of COVID-19 infection is of utmost importance. Each day, all NPS employees reporting to work should follow the Daily Self-Screening Steps.

Daily Self-Screening Steps:

1. Have I had any recent known potential exposure (household contact or close contact within 6 feet) to anyone with COVID-19 infection?

If your answer is “yes” **and** you are a critical infrastructure worker or mission essential employee reporting to work, wear [a cloth face covering or surgical mask](#) at all times while in the workplace for 14 days after your last known potential exposure, and self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), including taking your temperature twice daily.

If your answer is yes and you are *not* mission critical or essential, you should stay home until 14 days after the last exposure, maintain social distance (at least 6 feet) from others at all times, and self-monitor for symptoms (fever, cough, or difficulty breathing), including taking your temperature twice daily.. Discuss telework and/or leave options with your supervisor while in quarantine.

2. Have I had fever, cough, or shortness of breath within the last 72 hours including today? [Note: Check for fever before entering the workplace. A fever is a temperature greater than 100.4°F].

If you answer, “yes”, do not report to the workplace. Contact your supervisor for work and leave instruction. Follow up with your healthcare provider as needed.

3. Did I develop symptoms during the day while working?

If you develop symptoms during the workday, go home immediately. Notify your supervisor, isolate yourself, and follow up with your healthcare provider as needed.

Remember: Employees and supervisors must practice social distancing and sneeze/cough etiquette, maintain hand hygiene, and increase cleaning and disinfection of work areas to prevent COVID-19 transmission. Where possible, increase air exchanges in rooms.

All employees who cannot maintain consistent social distancing (greater than 6 feet) within the workplace, should wear [a face covering](#).

If you develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection, please see and follow the appropriate [CDC guidance for caring for yourself](#) or [family member](#) and the [Guidance for safely returning to work](#).

Contact: Contact Susan Eaves, Occupational Safety Manager, at seaves@nps.gov or 202513-7196 for questions.

April 16, 2020

Appendix B: CDC Guidance on How to Clean and Disinfect

Taken from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>

A more concise version for field use of these guidelines may be found in the Section 15 of this SOP.

Hard (Non-porous) Surfaces

Wear disposable gloves when cleaning and disinfecting surfaces. Gloves should be discarded after each cleaning. If reusable gloves are used, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other purposes. Consult the manufacturer's instructions for cleaning and disinfection products used. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

If surfaces are dirty, they should be cleaned using a detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.

For disinfection, most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.

A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available at https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf. Follow manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products for (concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).

Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions (at least 1000ppm sodium hypochlorite) can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application, ensuring a contact time of at least 1 minute, and allowing proper ventilation during and after application. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.

Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:

5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or

4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Soft (Porous) Surfaces

For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present and clean with appropriate cleaners indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning:

Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely.

Otherwise, use products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 and that are suitable for porous surfaces.

Electronics

For electronics such as cell phones, tablets, touch screens, remote controls, and keyboards, remove visible contamination if present.

Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

Consider use of wipeable covers for electronics.

If no manufacturer guidance is available, consider the use of alcohol-based wipes or sprays containing at least 70% alcohol to disinfect touch screens. Dry surfaces thoroughly to avoid pooling of liquids.

Linens, clothing, and other items that go in the laundry

Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from an ill person and then discard after each use. If using reusable gloves, those gloves should be dedicated for cleaning and disinfection of surfaces for COVID-19 and should not be used for other household purposes. Clean hands immediately after gloves are removed.

If no gloves are used when handling dirty laundry, be sure to wash hands afterwards.

If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air.

Launder items as appropriate in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry from an ill person can be washed with other people's items.

Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces. If possible, consider placing a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

Appendix C: GSA Fleet Vehicle Cleaning & Disinfecting

Guidance for COVID-19

Updated on April 6, 2020

GSA Fleet values the health and safety of our customers, employees, and communities. GSA leadership wants to assure you that we are here to support you and will continue to do so during this evolving situation. We are actively monitoring COVID-19 developments and have taken precautions to safeguard our customers and employees.

A question frequently asked is how to appropriately clean vehicles. The response below is a summary of information gathered from the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), Consumer Reports, and Original Equipment Manufacturers.

We encourage all drivers to take additional precautions to limit the spread of COVID-19. The CDC and the WHO emphasize how important it is to frequently wash one's hands and to regularly clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in order to prevent COVID-19 spread. We recognize that vehicles represent a special challenge as they are most often used as shared resources. As with all other surfaces you come into contact with, it is impossible to be positive that COVID19 is not present and the potential for COVID19 exposure exists after each use.

Therefore, we believe it is in your best interest to frequently clean the vehicles you are using; especially after the vehicle has left your custody for use by others, for oil changes, for maintenance activities or other events.

What to Do:

- Sanitize frequently touched vehicle surfaces on a regular basis.
- Be mindful of the cleaning / disinfecting agents used on vehicles to avoid inadvertently damaging the interior or exterior.
 - Many of the same household cleaners (such as **non-bleach, unscented, non-chlorinated** disinfectant cleaners and wipes) that kill coronaviruses on hard surfaces at home can also clean most car interiors without causing damage.
 - Alcohol solutions that contain at least 70 percent alcohol are effective against coronavirus, according to the CDC. Nearly every interior surface of a vehicle can be cleaned with isopropyl alcohol.
 - Vigorous washing with soap and water can also destroy a coronavirus. Soap and water are safe for most car interiors. Be careful not to saturate the surfaces.
- Consult the cleaning directions provided in the Vehicle Owners' Manual.
- Follow the cleaning agent manufacturer's product label guidance for the recommended

disinfecting procedure, as guidance varies by cleaning product. Read all instructions and precautions of the materials being utilized and follow all safety recommendations when utilizing cleaning products to ensure personal safety.

- When using wipes, remove excess liquid before wiping surfaces, especially electrical components and touch screens.
- Test selected cleaning agent in an inconspicuous location.

What to Avoid:

- Don't use bleach or hydrogen peroxide on the inside of your car.
- Don't use scented wipes or wipes containing bleach.
- Don't use ammonia-based cleaners on car touch screens or dashboards, as they can damage anti-glare and anti-fingerprint coatings.
- Never combine cleaning chemicals as doing so may lead to toxicity.

Vehicle High Touch Areas:

- Car keys and fobs
- Door handles, door latches and lock buttons
- Steering wheel
- Shift lever
- Any buttons or touch screens (radios, mirror adjusters, climate controls, etc)
- Wiper and turn signal stalks
- Center console and cup holders
- Driver and passenger armrests and seat belts, grab handles, and seat adjusters
- Headrests and seat pockets

Other Suggestions:

- Wash your hands before and after driving.
- Wear gloves when possible outside of your vehicle, especially when fueling. Pumps, keypads and other surfaces are frequently touched and may not have been sanitized.
- When possible use contactless payment methods to avoid touching keypads or pens.

- Consider using your knuckles rather than fingertips to touch common use contact areas. Compared to fingertips, knuckles will generally have less contact with other things throughout the day.
- When finished driving the vehicle for the day, thoroughly wipe down the vehicle with disinfectant wipes or other appropriate cleaning solutions.

Resources:

1. [CDC Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection](#)
2. [EPA List of Cleaning Chemicals Effective Against Coronavirus](#) (note check to make sure they are safe for vehicle interiors)
3. [How to Kill Coronavirus in your Car Without Damaging Interior Surfaces](#)

Lastly, GSA Fleet has been asked if we will approve vehicle deep cleaning and sanitization services for our leased vehicles with the expenses charged back through the Agency Incurred Expense (AIE) process. Yes, we will allow agencies to have the sanitization performed without requiring prior approval from GSA; but agencies must use their own procurement mechanisms to arrange and pay for these services. We believe the decision of when to deep clean and sanitize is best left to the leasing agency.

Appendix D: Face Coverings

CDC-How to Wear a Cloth Face Covering

Cloth face coverings should:

- fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face
- be secured with ties or ear loops
- include multiple layers of fabric
- allow for breathing without restriction
- be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape

NPS Guidance on Use of Face Coverings

United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W. Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

Memorandum

To: Regional Directors

From: Associate Director (A), Visitor and Resource Protection

Subject: Guidance on the Voluntary Use of Cloth Face Coverings

Purpose. The National Park Service is committed to taking every precaution to ensure the health and wellbeing of our workforce. This memorandum authorizes National Park Service employees to wear voluntary use of cloth face coverings, in and out of uniform, per DOI Guidance, to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This memorandum also seeks to ensure that all employees understand that the voluntary use of cloth face coverings are not a substitute for, nor shall they be used as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Background. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, especially in areas of significant community-based transmission. CDC also advises the use of simple cloth face coverings may slow the spread of the virus and help people who may have the virus and do not know it from transmitting it to others. The cloth face coverings recommended are not surgical masks or N-95 respirators. Those are critical supplies that must continue to be reserved for healthcare workers and other first responders, as recommended by current CDC guidance.

Scope. This memorandum, and associated guidance is specific to the voluntary use of cloth face coverings to help slow the spread of COVID-19. This memorandum does not provide guidance for the use of PPE, specifically respiratory protection systems or devices, which can be found in separate memo for COVID-19, and in NPS Reference Manual 50B for respiratory protection for hazards other than COVID-19.

Definition. An approved cloth face covering is a non-Personal Protective Equipment made of fabric that covers the nose and mouth. It can be:

- A sewn or unsewn cover secured with ties or straps around the head or behind the ears.
- Made from variety of breathable materials, such as fleece, cotton or linen.
- A solid color without wording, designs, or logos.

Guidance.

Each Regional Director or their designee(s) will do the following:

- A. Ensure that employees who choose to voluntarily use cloth face covers are to be briefed that the face coverings are not PPE and afford no protection from COVID-19.
- B. Ensure that employees are directed that they cannot use a cloth face cover as a substitute for PPE.
- C. Ensure that employees understand that a face cover is not a substitute for existing guidance to maintain 6-feet of physical distance from non-household members and performing frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

Procurement.

Procurement of appropriate cloth masks for mission critical and mission essential employee use at work to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 can be covered with appropriated funds, given the current circumstances and CDC guidance. It is only appropriate to use federal funds to buy face coverings for employees who are not teleworking. Purchases can be made at the operating unit level using a government purchase card.

Termination.

This guidance shall be effective until such time as it may be modified or rescinded.

For any additional information or guidance on the NPS response to the COVID-19 pandemic, please see <https://inside.nps.gov/coronavirus>

cc: Deputy Director for Operations
Chief, Law Enforcement, Security, and Emergency Services
Chief, Office of Risk Management
Director, Office of Public Health

Appendix E: Safeguarding Privacy

Safeguarding Privacy During Covid-19 Response

It is important that we remember to protect the privacy of our employees, contractors, and other affiliated personnel during our COVID-19 response. Supervisors and employees are reminded to maintain the confidentiality and privacy of employee information while discussing, documenting and sharing information for COVID-19 preparation, coordination and response activities.

Supervisors should refer to the [DOI COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Supervisor's Guide](#) for information on protecting the health and safety of employees.

- An infected employee's privacy should be protected to the greatest extent possible; therefore, his or her identity should not be disclosed.
- Share only that information determined to be necessary to protect the health of the employees in the workplace but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, Privacy Act, and other Federal laws. Consult with the Office of Solicitor to determine releasable information.
- Managers should treat this as they would any other illness in the workplace and continue to protect employee privacy interests while providing sufficient information to all employees related to protecting themselves against the spread of illness.
- If social distancing, information sharing, or other precautions to assist employees in recognizing symptoms or reducing the spread of the illness can be taken without disclosing information related to a specific employee, that is the preferred approach.
- Managers should address privacy concerns with employees and refer employees who may be exposed to COVID-19 to CDC guidance for how to conduct a risk assessment of their potential exposure at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/assess-manage-risk.html>.

Communications

- Protect sensitive information in audible or email communications. Information about individuals' health condition should only be shared with authorized officials to protect the health and safety of employees or with explicit consent of the individual.

- Use caution when widely disseminating communications or using Reply All or Forwarding functions. Identifying specific individuals should be limited to authorized officials to perform duties or to protect those who may have had direct contact or have a higher risk of exposure.
- Do not use the Microsoft Teams chat feature to identify individuals with confirmed or presumptive cases of COVID-19 or include sensitive PII.
- Communications and documentation that identify individuals or contain sensitive information must be encrypted and secured with access restrictions when stored electronically or in paper format, whether at a duty station or during telework.
- Use Controlled Unclassified Information (CUI) markings on sensitive communications and documents.

Emergency Contact Lists

- Supervisors and emergency response personnel may collect personal contact information for their teams when necessary for official purposes, but must protect and limit access to sensitive information.
- Use official contact information to the extent practicable to limit the collection of personal information.

Additional resources

- Employees should reference the [All DOI Employees COVID-19 Portal](#) for guidance documents.
- Contact your Associate Privacy Officer for additional guidance:
<http://www.doi.gov/privacy/contacts>

Appendix F: Checklists and Guides for Use in the Field

Disinfection Procedures Quick Reference

Hard (non-porous) gear should be cleaned and disinfected using bleach or another EPA-registered disinfectant (EPA). Follow CDC and manufacturer's instructions.

- Bleach concentrations can be prepared by mixing 1/3 cup bleach per gallon (4tsp bleach per quart). Bleach should be allowed to sit on the surface for one or more minutes.
- Diluted bleach loses effectiveness quickly. A new solution should be mixed daily for each use.
- For all disinfectants, verify the expiration date before use. Expired solutions may not be effective against COVID-19.

Soft (porous) gear should be laundered or decontaminated according to CDC and manufacturer's instructions. Launder using the hottest water acceptable for the gear.

Electronics may be decontaminated using 70% alcohol or electronic wipes. Follow CDC and manufacturer's instructions.

Personal gear should be treated as contaminated. Decontaminate or place in a plastic bag before placing gear into a personal vehicle. Clothing should be laundered in the hottest water acceptable for the garments.

Vehicle Disinfection Quick Guide

Quick Reference for Vehicle Cleaning

Cleaning should be done with soap and water or another detergent. For disinfection, use an EPA-registered household disinfectant and follow instructions on the label. Registered disinfectants include but are not limited to:

- Clorox Disinfecting Wipes
- Peak Disinfectant Wipes
- Purell Professional Surface Disinfectant Wipes
- Sani-Prime Germicidal Disposable Wipes

Do not use bleach on vehicle interiors as you risk damaging or discoloring the upholstery.

For vehicles with touch screens, first make sure power the touch screen is fully powered down before using a microfiber cloth and a cleaning solution specifically formulated for this purpose.

Before each tour and upon return from the field:

Thoroughly sanitize the vehicle interior and high touch surfaces, paying extra attention to:

- Door handles (interior and exterior)
- Truck bed and cap latches and handles
- Steering wheel and associated levers (turn signal, wiper blade)
- Seat belts and buckles
- Gear shifter and 4WD shifter
- Vehicle console (radio, heating and cooling controls, etc..)
- Rear view mirror
- Arm rests and associated buttons (windows and locks)
- Car keys and credit card sleeve

For multi-day trips:

When returning to base each day, assuming field staff will maintain consistent seating, sanitize the following:

- Door handles (interior and exterior)
- Truck bed and cap latches and handles
- Vehicle console (radio, heating and cooling controls, etc..)
- Car keys and credit card sleeve