Vehicle Travel Considerations for Field Research during Covid-19 Pandemic

General Considerations:

- Team members have the right to refuse participation without fear of penalty if they feel the conditions are unsafe.
- Follow CDC guidance to Prevent Getting Sick.
- Remain aware of campus policies regarding COVID-19 and any local ordinances relevant to your destination.
- Each team member should be asymptomatic for at least 2 weeks prior to fieldwork and will not participate should they feel ill or have reasonable cause to believe they have been exposed to COVID-19.

General Safe Practices:

- Maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet, whenever feasible
- Keep from touching face (specifically eyes, mouth and nose)
- Wear a face covering in common areas, while in proximity to others; follow local public health requirements and Campus guidance.
- Wash hands with soap and water frequently for at least 20 seconds
- Use hand sanitizer (>60% alcohol) when soap and water are not available
- Cover coughs and sneezes; cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of your elbow. Throw used tissues in the trash and immediately wash your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.

Team Considerations:

- Identify tasks that can be completed from home or while working alone on campus to reduce time in the field and in-person interactions. For example, pre-label sample collection bags, conduct daily pre-trip briefings and training via video conferencing, or pre-assemble and repair equipment for field deployment.
- Consider dividing into smaller teams that will work separately from other teams for the season. This minimizes personal interactions and the number of team members who must self-isolate if one co-worker becomes ill.
- Avoid sharing equipment. Where possible, assign each team member a personal kit of field tools and equipment, to be stored in separate labeled containers. When equipment must be shared, disinfect between users.
- Maintain awareness of; distancing from one another as much as possible, equipment handling, disinfection procedures, signs/symptoms of COVID-19, communication options in the field, check-in procedures, and emergency procedures.
- Team members should have dedicated PPE, provisions, and supplies, if feasible, to minimize sharing.
- Maintain reliable communication to receive updates or get assistance; maintain a frequent check-in schedule.
- Avoid working out of the visual or audible range of other team members, whether in the field or on campus.
- Review responsible conduct in the field, community; minimize contact with the public during pandemic.
• Maintain flexibility to alter plans at any time, self-isolate, or return home.

**Vehicle Occupancy & Disinfection:**

• The driver of the vehicle is responsible for cleaning and disinfecting high touch surfaces inside and outside the vehicle.
• High touch surfaces include: exterior and interior door handles and grips, interior door and window controls, arm rests, safety belts, cup holders, glove/storage compartment latches, air vents, gear shift, center console (climate/audio controls), steering wheel, visors, rear view mirror.
• Surfaces will be cleaned before and after use and if occupants change position. Disinfectant wipes, soap and water, or alcohols >60% are acceptable.
• When fueling the vehicle consider wearing disposable gloves to minimize contact with high touch surfaces. Use pay at the pump options if available.
• Consider assigning a specific seat - maintaining the same driver and passenger seat assignments will decrease the need for cleaning.
• Alternate seating positions to maximize physical distance between vehicle occupants with a maximum of one person per row - for instance, a four-door vehicle with two rows of seating can have one driver and one passenger. At this time, vans and SUV’s with more than two rows are not recommended.
• All occupants in the vehicle must wear a face mask / cloth face covering at all times while in the vehicle. Only exception is when complying with “Travel without Masks” section of this document.
• Maximizing the movement of air within the passenger compartment of the vehicle using a combination of the vehicle’s climate control system and windows, so that each passenger is in the vehicle is supplied with fresh, un-recirculated air.
• Researchers participating in field work should be assigned to a specific travel group and remain in that travel group for the duration of the work season/semester, to minimize potential transmission to others participating in the same field research project(s).

**Travel without Masks** – For extensive travel duration or with larger groups, it may not be desirable to wear masks in order to improve driver and passenger(s) comfort, or to allow more individuals to ride together.

• Not wearing masks in a vehicle is allowed under the following conditions:
  o All participants are tested for Covid-19
  o All participants strictly self-quarantine until results come back
  o All participants results are negative
  o Continue self-quarantine until the trip
  o Maintain distancing and wear face coverings when getting fuel, ordering food, or similar activities.
• No masks are required if individuals going on the field trip are part of the same household and have been in constant contact for more than 14 days (roommate, partner, spouse, etc.)

**Self-quarantine involves:**

• Using personal hygiene and washing hands frequently
• Not sharing things like towels and utensils with members of household/apartment
• Staying at home & not having visitors
• Staying at least 6 feet away from other people in your household/apartment unless they have also been tested, are negative for Covid-19, and are practicing social distancing.