



Administrative Memo #258
Field-Based Research Travel Guidelines: COVID-19 Pandemic

March 16, 2020

Subject to change on short notice

The goal of this policy is to prevent the spread or exposure to SARS-CoV-2 and the disease it causes, COVID-19. This policy adheres to the latest OSU and governmental restrictions, as well as CDC recommendations, and is, therefore, subject to change on short notice.

Researchers should strongly consider canceling or postponing field research trips, recognizing that they present unique risks because of the potential for shared transportation, cooking and eating meals, and housing. These attributes, in addition to the fieldwork involved, can make it challenging to practice social distancing and hand-washing necessary in establishing a safe work and learning environment. Supervisors may also have limited ability to send someone home or for treatment should a participant become ill.

Non-essential travel is not permitted. If you can demonstrate how you can consistently and effectively meet each of the challenges and requirements noted in the previous paragraph, your travel may be considered for approval if it is deemed essential.

Process for obtaining permission to conduct essential local field-based travel

Submit the following via email to [Interim Dean Anthony Davis and Associate Dean Katy Kavanagh](#) at least three (3) days before travel would begin:

1. Briefly describe what makes this research essential.
2. Outline the length or frequency of the requested travel, location, and travel time.
3. Provide a list of participants and their status (student, faculty, guest, etc.).
4. Describe how you are going to meet or exceed each one of the applicable guidelines listed below.

Who can travel?

Only essential personnel that have no signs of any illness and have not knowingly been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 for the past 14 days will be considered for approved research travel to the field.

Travel to the field

No more than two people per vehicle will be the only acceptable transportation. All occupants must have facemasks ([properly worn](#)), and passengers must wear the facemask while in the vehicle. The driver must wear the facemask as long as it does not interfere with their ability to operate their motor vehicle safely. All hard surfaces in the vehicle must be sanitized by wiping down with approved cleaners (must contain at least 70% alcohol) before beginning the trip, when there is a change in drivers or passengers, and at the end of the trip.

In the field

Maintain a distance of at least 6' from each other at all times. If this cannot reliably be accomplished (e.g. you need to have someone hold a piece of equipment while a second person is installing it), you need to cancel or postpone these tasks.

Have soap and water available for hand-washing, as well as hand sanitizer along with your emergency kit. **Note: hand sanitizers do not work well on dirty hands, so you must be able to wash hands with soap.**

Food and gas

When feasible, food and drinks should be brought from home, individually. No sharing of food or cooking as a group is allowable. If you must stop at a restaurant, only takeout food or delivery is allowable. It is permissible to stop for gasoline and utilize hand sanitization measures.

Housing

Overnight stays must be in individual rooms where cleaning protocol is likely to meet the standards to limit SARS-CoV-2 or in individual tents with individually owned sleeping bags.

Illness

At any sign of illness, everyone must return from the field immediately. Those showing signs of illness should stay away from other participants as much as possible. Upon return, individuals must self-quarantine and immediately report illness to health officials and supervisor.

Allowable distance from campus

It is not likely that trips more than 6 hours travel from campus will be approved. Due to the nature of the pandemic, all travel may be suspended.

Staying in contact

You must be in contact with your supervisor and have the ability to make contact with others regularly throughout the entirety of the travel. Contact is defined as able to receive daily updates and advice from your supervisor and the ability to contact medical or emergency services. It is not acceptable to be out of service for an extended period during the trip. A sudden shift in policies may occur at the Federal, State, or University level requiring an immediate return.

Upon returning

You must inform your supervisor of your return and note the health of all participants. You must also identify if there were any unacceptable risks taken while conducting this research and how you can avoid them in the future.

Maintaining safety

Safety in the field is paramount. If you cannot conduct your fieldwork while minimizing risk, then it is best to reconsider your approach for the time being. It is not acceptable to increase risk in one area to accommodate the guidelines designed to limit exposure to SARS-CoV-2.

Approval:

Anthony S. Davis, Interim Dean

Date