FIELD WORK EXPECTATIONS DURING THE PANDEMIC

Updated March 3, 2021. The most recent version will always be posted on the COVID updates page. Please confirm this is the latest.

The Pandemic Response Team supports field research activities within Canada. To ensure field work is done safely, USask researchers require approval by their Dean or Associate Dean, using the JIRA request form, with a documented exposure control plan, based on safe working guidelines.

General considerations
All team members must strictly follow provincial health directives and complete the USask COVID-19 health and safety training.

As supervisors, principal investigators are responsible for ensuring all field team members are fully informed of the field work safety plan and rigorously follow it.

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, the following practices are essential:

- Wearing of non-medical masks or cloth face coverings.
- Physical distancing of at least two metres from others. To maintain appropriate distancing, crew size may need to be lower than in pre-pandemic field seasons.
- Frequent handwashing with soap and water, or using hand sanitizer.
- Routine and appropriate sanitizing of frequently touched surfaces and objects. This includes identifying all shared equipment and specifying within the exposure control plan when and how they will be sanitized.
- Strict requirement that field team members follow a 14-day self-isolation protocol if they arrive from outside the country.

Local communities
Some communities and regions are closed to outsiders at this time. These restrictions must be respected.

Field work safety plans must carefully explain how interaction with local communities will be avoided and how food, housing and fuel needs will be handled to minimize in-person interactions.

Travel
USask’s vehicle-use guidelines must be followed. One person per vehicle should apply whenever possible. In cases where vehicles must be shared, the field work safety plan must specify how risk will be mitigated, including self-monitoring prior to the trip, maximizing distances in the vehicle, wearing masks, and following stringent cleaning protocols.

In situations where airplane travel is necessary, field team members must, of course, follow the enhanced health and safety protocols required by airlines.

Accommodation
To support physical distancing, team members should have separate accommodation. If separate rooms in the same accommodation with shared common spaces are necessary, the field work safety plan should account for sanitization of common spaces.

Food
Food should be prepared by only one person or separately by each individual. Each person should bring their own containers, dishware and utensils. No sharing of dishware/utensils should occur unless an adequate means of sanitization (such as a dishwasher) is available.

_if you have any questions or concerns, contact Dion Martens, Director of Research Excellence and Innovation, at dion.martens@usask.ca._