

STOCKTON UNIVERSITY | MARINE FIELD STATION

Marine Operations and General Field Procedures during COVID-19 Government and Institutional Workplace Restrictions

V1 May 15, 2020

V2 May 26, 2020 (minor changes to form requirements)

V3 August 25, 2020 (updates to government and institutional information links and some language)

Purpose

This guidance is intended to provide staff, faculty and student engaged in activities based out of the Marine Field Station with procedures for limited vessel and field work practices during the current COVID-19 restrictions. Due to the nature of the evolving pandemic and corresponding government guidance this document may change, and all users are encouraged to seek the latest guidance from the following sources;

[Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[New Jersey COVID-19 Information Hub](#)

[Stockton University COVID-19 Update](#)

[Stockton University Return to Campus Update](#)

General considerations

This guidance is for staff, faculty and student activity in both instructional (registered courses) and research activities. This guidance will be updated as University, State and Federal guidance recommendations change over time in response to the ever-evolving pandemic. Self-screening reports, social distancing, face covering, and disinfecting guidelines will be required of all participating persons. The University has implemented stringent protocols via its [Institutional Plan for Fall 2020 Restart](#). A summary of these precautions can be found on the [Guidelines for Campus Health and Safety](#) website.

Many precautions can be well handled through an honest self-assessment program that respects the safety of your co-workers, colleagues and fellow students. The University's daily health pledge system will track this participant's agreement to these standards for self-screening. It is expected that all individuals will self-identify any potential exposure, actual exposure, and/or symptoms associated with COVID-19 and will remove themselves from the activity. It is important to note that only individuals comfortable with the guidelines and the planned activities are expected to participate. Do not hesitate to discuss any concerns with your faculty, the Field Station Manager or the operator in charge of the day.

Exposure and symptoms screening

It is expected that individuals who intend to participate in a vessel or on-site activity, including students registered for courses, but who have reason to believe they were exposed and/or show symptoms of COVID-19 self-identify and remove themselves from the activity. A self-reporting checklist will be required for research projects (Appendix 1). The marine operations safety briefing agreement and any Stockton pledges will be required for course participation. If COVID-19 symptoms arise during the day alert the person in charge and the trip will be terminated with immediate and additional precautions taken for end of day clean ups and distancing measures until such time that individual has left the vessel and work site. In general symptoms include; cough,

fever, shortness of breath, chills, muscle pain, sore throat and loss of taste or smell. A complete description of symptoms is provided by the CDC here; [CDC symptoms listing](#). Symptoms may appear 2 -14 days after exposure.

All participants in marine operations activities will be required to complete the COVID-19 screening questions on-line before boarding the vessel or engaging in multi-person and close quarters tasks at the Marine Field Station. This survey requires participating individuals to self-identify exposure or actual symptoms concerns related to COVID-19 and to self-monitor themselves and those they live with during the duration of the project or academic term. This survey needs to be completed only once at the beginning of the semester and is in addition to the daily University pledge to be conducted electronically each day by University faculty, staff and students. For visitors this form is also in addition to the Stockton University COVID-19 Visitor Health Pledge required to be completed on-line by [clicking here](#).

Common practices required

Staff and faculty are to follow applicable [precautions supported by the CDC](#), partially summarized and customized for our operations here;

1. Do not report to work or class if you or any one in your home has any reason to believe you have been exposed to COVID19 or have any of the [symptoms associated with COVID19](#).
2. Research trips; the person in charge of the day's operations is to have all participants fill out and sign the screening form (Appendix 1) prior to disembarking via vehicle or vessel.
3. Wash your hands when you arrive to work and frequently throughout the day, especially after eating or sneezing/coughing. Follow [CDC-recommended best practices](#) and wash for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer aboard small vessels, vehicles and whenever away from hand washing facilities. Use the hand sanitizer station as you enter the docks.
4. Wear a [cloth face covering](#) or CDC-suggested mask whenever you cannot achieve [social distancing](#) of 6' or more (i.e. in vehicles or small enclosed boat cabins). Seating or standing distances on boats and vehicles should always be maximized.
5. Use appropriate CDC-recommended sneeze and cough etiquette. Generally, this includes doing so into your arm and preferably stepping away from the area. See [sneeze/cough etiquette here](#).
6. Have disinfectant wipes and spray with disposable paper towels and trash bags available. Wipe down any surfaces frequently touched throughout the day and especially at the end of the day (i.e. steering wheels, electronics, door handles).
7. The inflatable orange work vest lifejackets are numbered 1 – 20. Choose a jacket for the project duration and do not allow others to use. Store in your own area (staff).
8. The hard hats aboard the *R/V Petrel* are numbered. Choose a hat for the day's operation and label it as necessary with blue tape or other marking.
9. Label And keep track of your drinking and food containers and do not share food.
10. When possible, do not share equipment tasks (i.e. whomever is deploying or using one instrument continue, do not go back and forth between tasks and instruments). For courses where equipment sharing is necessary students may, at their own discretion, wear disposable gloves or use hand sanitizer between shared tasks.
11. Only one operator shall manage the helm requirements and controls for the duration of the trip unless a safety issue requires otherwise or a planned switch is implemented with disinfecting methods used between operators.
12. Wipe down all commonly touched surfaces with an approved disinfectant occasionally throughout the day and at the end of the field day. All other areas and equipment, including life jackets, are to be washed with soap and water between trips.

Weather considerations

To successfully and safely conduct field operations while limiting personal contact and adhering to social distancing guidelines, calm weather is required (low wind, flat seas, little swell). Therefore, as much as reasonably possible fieldwork will be limited to (especially) good weather days, at the discretion of the boat captain. This means some operations that “could be done” before may be limited more than prior times based on conditions in order to help maintain distancing protocols and contact precautions.

Vessel considerations

Vessel capacities will be limited until further notice via update or cancellation of this policy. No overnight or extend (>12 hours) trips are permitted at this time. Face coverings are required to be worn at all times during instructional trips and any time where 6’ or more of distancing cannot be achieved. These restrictions are intended to allow for practical social distancing and decreased times in enclosed spaces;

- MFS Suburban vehicle; 3-person limit with masks during transit.
- *R/V Petrel* (36’); 9-person limit with no more than 4 in the wheelhouse at any one time. Seating during transit should be maximized. Passage through wheelhouse door should be conducted in a way that minimizes close contact.
- *R/V Osprey* (24’); 6-person limit with transit seating maximized at all times
- *R/V Skimmer and Scoter* (21’); 6-person with transit seating maximized at all times
- *R/V Zosteria* (21’); 3-person limit with transit seating maximized at all times.

It will be the responsibility of the operator to ensure that each participant has an appropriate face covering or mask. It will also be the responsibility of the operator to ensure that disinfecting wipes are available and used as suggested and that the end of the day cleaning procedures are completed with special attention to frequently touched surfaces.

This guidance may change over time and end-users are encouraged to review the listed sources for best practices and to check with the marine operations team for updates by e-mailing MFS@stockton.edu.

***PLEASE protect your colleagues and fellow students by
self-identifying any concerns to your faculty or project leader***