

Guidelines for Resuming Field Animal Research

Issued August 3, 2020

These guidelines are to be used in conjunction with the [Plan for Phased Resumption of On-Campus Research for Princeton University \(Plan\)](#). While the Plan focuses on on-campus research, field researchers are encouraged to become familiar with it, as it provides general safety and precautionary information that may be practicable for field research being performed during the COVID-19 pandemic. The Plan describes four levels of on-campus operation, which include 1 (normal operations), 2 (phased resumption), 3 (essential operations), and 4 (operations suspended). Princeton is currently in level 2.

These guidelines are predicated on the assumption that all research has previously been approved by the Princeton IACUC and IBC as necessary. The guidelines provide a safety overlay to protect field researchers and to ensure the safe conduct of field animal research once researchers have reached their field site. It provides specific instruction applicable to aspects of field animal research conducted off campus including research conducted at Stony Ford, within the United States, and internationally. Note that [University international and domestic travel restrictions](#) are still in effect. These guidelines apply to all field animal research faculty, students, researchers, staff, postdocs, and non-Princeton personnel, who may be considered part of the research team, regardless of whether the research occurs domestically or internationally.

This document will be revised in accordance with any relevant changes to guidance issued by Princeton University, or any other relevant changes to the current understanding of the COVID-19 pandemic.

General Guidelines

- Field research that is conducted outdoors entails lower risk for the spread of the virus than indoor laboratory research. We recognize that in some situations (e.g. observational research performed alone in the field) many aspects of the University Plan may not apply. However, there are also situations (e.g. pop-up field labs, shared equipment, etc.) when many aspects of the University Plan do apply and researchers should plan to follow the University guidelines as appropriate and relevant, regarding social

distancing, hygiene, sanitation, PPE, space requirements, and self-monitoring as outlined in the [Guidelines for Safe Research During COVID-19 Pandemic](#). If University guidelines cannot be followed due to circumstantial or research-related reasons, this must be disclosed in the Field Animal Operations Plan (FAOP) described below and submitted to EHS (ehs@princeton.edu) with plans to minimize the risk of spread or being infected by the virus.

- Until modified, [University international and domestic travel restrictions](#) still apply.
- Researchers must follow all local, state, federal and [CDC guidelines for how to protect oneself and what to do if you are sick](#).
- Each Principal Investigator (PI) is to submit a [Field Animal Operations Plan](#) (FAOP) to EHS for review and approval. In making their determination, EHS will consult with the UHS, IACUC, IBC, IRB, or any of the Deans as appropriate to safeguard individual researchers. This plan should include processes to ramp up and ramp down research as the COVID-19 incidence changes over time and by region.
- Every researcher (faculty, student, postdoctoral researcher, staff), who is part of a team, must self-evaluate and report symptoms every day prior to beginning their research using the self-screening app in [TigerSafe](#).
- Collaborators, who are from outside the Princeton community and part of the research team, are expected, at a minimum, to follow these guidelines and may be required to follow additional guidelines provided by their home institution.
- Researchers who will interact with team members from outside the Princeton community have an obligation to screen them for potential coronavirus infection or exposure. The following questions are recommended and should be asked prior to engaging the outside members with the research team:
 - In the past 14 days, have you traveled internationally?
 - In the past 14 days, have you had any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever greater than 100° F
 - Cough

- Shortness of breath
- Loss of taste or smell
- In the past 14 days, have you lived with, visited, cared for, or been in a room for a prolonged period of time (within 6-feet for more than 10 mins) with someone who is being monitored or has been confirmed to have COVID-19?
- If the outside team member answers “yes” to any of the above screening questions or currently has a skin temperature greater than 100°F the researcher should remove the outside member from the team and encourage them to consult with their medical provider.
- In addition to the above screening questions, a number of states have imposed quarantine requirements for individual’s entering the state from certain other states. Researchers must assess whether outside members have traveled to or from states within the previous 14 days that may require quarantine. If you are unsure whether you are required to quarantine, check with the State Department of Health in which you are performing your research. Outside members who have traveled to or from states that require a quarantine must either complete self-quarantine prior to participating or cancel their participation in the research effort.
- In accordance with the University's phased resumption of research plans' no coercion and safe workplace statements ([Section 4., page 4](#)), it is expected that the FAOP is shared with all researchers working on the project and that all have confirmed they feel proper safety precautions have been implemented in order for the research to be conducted safely. If a researcher has raised concerns that cannot be easily accommodated through adjustments to the FAOP, they should first reach out to EHS (ehs@princeton.edu) and then contact Director of Undergraduate Research Pascale Poussart (poussart@princeton.edu) for concerns related to undergraduates, Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs Christine Murphy (cm15@princeton.edu) for concerns related to graduate students, and Associate Dean for Academic Affairs Karen Haskin (khaskin@princeton.edu) for concerns related to postdocs.

- PIs must monitor the local situation where the field animal research is occurring with regard to the progress, phase, or level of the COVID-19 pandemic. If concerns arise or the situation deteriorates, the PI should alert members of the research team, EHS, their Chair, and their Dean, regardless of whether they are on site or not.
- PIs should periodically check in with their students and research team to understand their feelings and level of anxiety with regards to continuing their work in the field during the changing COVID-19 environment. If, at any time, students or members of the research team express concerns about their personal safety, the PI should alert EHS, their Chair, and their Dean.

For the purposes of this guideline, field animal research is divided into three categories based upon the ability to maintain social distancing. Specific considerations, which are to be addressed in the [Field Animal Operations Plan](#), are listed for each category.

Category #1: Field researchers who are acting alone, live locally and have no need to travel or can travel alone using their own personal vehicle.

Category #2: Field researchers working as part of a team where social distancing is easily maintained.

Category #3: Field researchers working as part of a team where social distancing guidelines cannot be easily maintained.

Conditions that must be met for each research category

Category #1: This category of research presents low risk of exposure. Researchers should plan to follow the [CDC guidelines on how to protect yourself and what to do if you are sick](#). This research can proceed once the FAOP is submitted and approved by EHS.

Category #2: This category of research presents minimal risk to participants if the research is designed to minimize travel and contact with other individuals. In addition to the conditions outlined for category #1 research, the following additional restrictions apply to category #2:

- Researchers should plan to follow University guidelines ([Guidelines for Safe Research During COVID-19 Pandemic](#)), as appropriate and relevant, regarding social distancing, hygiene, sanitation, PPE, space requirements, and self-monitoring, and must follow all local and state requirements.
- Any local travel plans should be submitted to EHS in the FAOP
- Overnight stays require that researchers are housed in separate rooms with private bathroom facilities

Category #3: This category of research presents greater than minimal risk to the researcher and those they may come in contact with in order to meet the goals of the research. In addition to the conditions outlined for category #2 research, the following additional restrictions apply to category #3:

- EHS must review and approve all practices in which social distancing, hygiene, sanitation, PPE, and space requirements cannot occur, especially with respect to animal or environmental manipulation, lodging and dining.
- EHS must review and approve the use of any equipment that is used by multiple users.