

Appendix 1

USGS Close Quarters Safety Guidance During COVID-19 Pandemic - Draft

Reference: **Recommendations for Travel to Complete Fieldwork**

To be used with the **Field Travel Checklist**

ALL EMPLOYEES

- Stay home as much as possible.
- USGS strongly supports/encourages the use of Cloth Face Coverings as a community mitigation strategy on and off the job consistent with CDC's guidance.
- Cloth Face Coverings are intended to reduce the chance that the wearer, who may be infected with COVID-19 but asymptomatic, may spread the virus to others.
- Cloth face coverings are not a replacement for respiratory protection needed when employees are occupationally exposed in high risk situations.
- Cloth face coverings are also not a substitute for social distancing, handwashing, and other control measures.
- The use of Cloth Face Coverings should never be relied on as the only means of exposure control.

JUSTIFICATION AND APPROVAL

- Supervisors and Center Directors shall identify and provide written justification for proposed Mission Essential field work using the Field Travel Guidance and Field Travel Checklist
- The Associate or Regional Director (AD/RD) shall approve the proposed mission essential field work.
- [Headquarters and Regional Safety and Health staff](#) are available for consultation and answering questions related to the protective measures described within this Appendix.

The Job Hazard Analyses (JHAs) for the job task being performed must be developed or revised to include the following COVID-19 specific control measures. Note that these series of controls must be implemented in conjunction with one another.

1. BASIC RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MISSION ESSENTIAL FIELD WORK DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

A. GENERAL

- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer and prior to eating or drinking.
- Avoid touching your face. Don't touch your mouth, nose or eyes unless you wash your hands first.
- [Employee Education](#) or [Protecting Yourself from COVID-19 in the Workplace](#)

B. TRAVEL

- Use one vehicle per person to travel to the work location, if possible.
- Reduce the number of personnel in the vehicle, watercraft, aircraft, or other close quarters.
- If more than one person must travel together, maximize the space between the persons being transported or working together. For example, a second person should sit in the back seat on the opposite side of the vehicle from the driver.

- Keep windows of the vehicle open, if possible.
- [Wash or sanitize with wipes](#) commonly touched areas (e.g., door handles, push bars, railings).
- Pack your own food and drinks if possible.

C. FIELD WORK

- Work alone, if it is safe to do so or work with the fewest number of persons possible.
- Stay at least 6 feet from each other, and the public as much as practical.
- If persons must work within 6 feet of each other, keep as much distance as possible.
- Wear eye protection as appropriate for the job task. For example, goggles (best), safety glasses with side shields, or a face shield.
- Wear Nitrile gloves or gloves appropriate for the chemicals used. You should wash gloved hands frequently to reduce the possibility of transferring surface droplets on the gloves to other surfaces.

The basic recommendations above are in addition to compliance with applicable safety requirements and plans based on the work being conducted, e.g., wearing personal floatation devices when working in or around water, confined space or traffic control plans for bridge work, etc.

2. CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released [updated guidance](#) recommending that all people wear cloth face coverings over their nose and mouth in public settings where separation of at least 6 feet from other people is difficult to maintain. Cloth Face Coverings are intended to reduce the chance that the wearer, who may be infected with COVID-19 but asymptomatic, may spread the virus to others and serve as a control measure intended to prevent community transmission of COVID-19.

In addition to complying with the basic recommendations and safety requirements mentioned in section 1 above, the USGS strongly supports/encourages employee use of Cloth Face Coverings as a means to supplement an overall strategy for controlling/reducing workplace exposure when conducting Mission Essential field work. For employees confirmed to have no symptoms, the basic recommendations and the use of Cloth Face Coverings should adequately prevent/reduce the potential for exposure. Cloth Face Coverings and surgical/face masks are not respirators and should never be relied on as the sole means of exposure control and are not a substitute for social distancing, handwashing, and other control measures.

- Employees using Cloth Face Coverings should familiarize themselves with care, [CDC recommended sequences for putting on \(donning\) and taking off \(doffing\)](#), and when to dispose of the Cloth Face Coverings. Additional information, including [frequently asked questions](#) and [how to make a cloth face covering](#), is available the [CDC COVID-19 website](#).
- Employees should wash their hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer before and after touching or adjusting the Cloth Face Covering and discard obviously damaged coverings or when they become hard to breathe through.

3. MANDATORY PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR CLOSE CONTACT SITUATIONS

Not all employees who work in the field will need to wear a respirator.

Respiratory protection (e.g., N95) is needed when one or more of these are true.

- (1) Basic controls cannot be implemented.
- (2) Where social distancing cannot be maintained for prolonged periods of more than at least 10 minutes (within 2 days of the ill person's symptom onset).
- (3) When an employee is unable to wear or chooses not to wear or does not have access to a Cloth Face Covering in conjunction with other required controls.
- (4) For those that have potential for direct contact with infectious secretions of a COVID-19 case, e.g., first responders, law enforcement, or those occupations directly serving the public.

Each Associate Director and Regional Director will provide the COVID-19 RPP Program Administrators with a list of their Mission Essential employees that are **required** to wear a respirator for COVID-19 operations.

When an employee is determined to be required to wear a N95 or equivalent filtering facepiece respirator he or she must be included in the USGS COVID-19 Respiratory Protection Program (RPP) and meet the following requirements:

- **Medical evaluation.** You must complete a respirator use medical questionnaire. Log into one of these online services and complete the form. [3M Online Medical Evaluation](#), [RapidMEQ](#), [RespClearance](#). It is suggested that one person in a center purchase the medical evaluations for each of the prioritized employees. Include in the medical questionnaire: type of respirator you plan to use (e.g., N95), nature and conditions of your work, and the hazard (COVID-19).
- **Training.** You must complete the DOI Talent online course, **SAFETY: 1570 USGS Respiratory Protection for Users** located at <https://doitalent.ibt.doi.gov/course/view.php?id=9278>.
- **Fit testing.** You must be fit tested prior to use to verify that the make, model, style, and size of any tight-fitting respirator you will wear fits correctly. If you use more than one type of respirator, you must be fit tested for each type. Fit testing is required annually and if you change to a different make, model, style, or size of tight-fitting respirator.
- **Hands-on Training/Virtual Fit Testing** will be completed by video conferencing. Employees shall complete the medical evaluation, and online training prior being scheduled for their virtual fit testing. The USGS industrial hygienists will be responsible for conducting employee hands-on training and virtual fit testing.
- **USGS COVID-19 RPP Program Administrators:** Primary: Cynthia Duffield at cduffield@usgs.gov, 703-648-7597 (O) or 856-575-1477 (M). Secondary: Bruce Kelly at bdkelly@usgs.gov, 303-236-9169 (O) or 720-795-4846 (M).

Reuse. N95 filtering facepiece respirators can be stored until they are safe to reuse, or they can be decontaminated. After use, put used N95s into separate paper bags for at least 5 days or until they can be decontaminated, whichever is first. See the CDC [contingency strategy](#) for reusing disposable filtering facepiece respirators. Store N95s so they do not become damaged or deformed.

Dispose of N95s or filters when they become soiled, wet, or damaged.

Decontamination: Based on the limited research available, ultraviolet germicidal irradiation, vaporous hydrogen peroxide, and moist heat potential methods to decontaminate filtering face-piece respirators. (See CDC's [guidance](#).) [Stanford Medicine](#) tested and published a simpler method of decontaminating filtering face-piece respirators by heating the device in a kitchen-type of oven at 70 degrees C (158 degrees F) for 30 minutes. The Stanford method and a method developed by Duke University were

recommended by Dr. John Howard, Director of the National Institute for Occupational Health, part of the CDC.

Additional N95 Respirator Considerations: While an N95 filtering facepiece respirator is more protective than a Cloth Face Covering, it is more difficult to breathe through and reduces the percent oxygen the user is breathing. When driving a vehicle or performing strenuous work, wearing a N95 may cause a user to become faint or dizzy.

Supplemental References:

*Interim Guidance for Implementing **Safety Practices for Critical Infrastructure Workers** Who May Have Had Exposure to a Person with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19*

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/critical-workers-implementing-safety-practices.pdf>)

Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>).