

Guidance on Research and Travel in the Context of COVID-19 and Other Respiratory Illnesses

This checklist provides guidance to faculty, staff and students either conducting research off-campus or travelling* (local, provincial or international) during a rise in respiratory protection illness such as COVID-19, flu, Respiratory Syncytial Virus (RSV), etc. The general expectation is for this guidance to be followed where applicable. If faculty, staff or students are NOT able to follow this guidance, please contact EHS (ehs.office@utoronto.ca) for assistance.

*Travel includes travel to conferences, workshops, etc.

Travel

1. Before travelling:
 - a. Review all local public health requirements at the location (e.g., border crossing requirements, proof of vaccination, quarantine, isolation and testing requirements and general public health measures such as masking, daily health screening, physical distancing, capacity limits, etc.). Individual should be prepared to meet all legal and public health requirements of the location in which the travel is to take place.
 - b. Where available, the infection rate in the community or region should be reviewed and considered when determining the need to travel and the precautions required during the travel.
 - c. Each person should confirm their ability to enter the region or country and should prepare for any mandatory quarantine period (away and home) and associated requirements. Additional costs incurred by the researchers during mandatory quarantine or other related costs (e.g., repatriation) in/from the host country/location will be the responsibility of the researchers.
 - d. Review the UofT memo on [International travel in the course of university business](#) including registering for [International SOS](#).
 - e. For domestic travel, review the Government of Canada's [Provincial and Territorial Restrictions](#) webpage.
 - f. For international travel, review the Government of Canada's [Travel Advice and Advisories](#).
 - g. Review the World Health Organization's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Travel Advice website](#) and [Travel Advice website](#).
 - h. Review any pandemic-related implications to travel insurance coverage under [Green Shield Canada](#).
 - i. For student out-of-country travel, where applicable, contact the [Safety Abroad Office](#) prior to departure, noting country of departure/return.
2. Consider wearing a well-fitting mask, even outdoors, especially if there are large crowds or crowded areas.
3. Contact with sick people should be avoided, especially if they have a cough, fever or difficulty breathing.
4. In the event of illness abroad:
 - a. The advice and instructions of local public health authorities should be followed.
 - b. Medical attention should be sought, if required.
 - c. The closest Government of Canada office should be contacted if consular assistance is required.

Developing Procedures

5. Review institutional guidelines, local public health guidance and 3rd party provider (e.g. transportation, accommodations) requirements ahead of time. Develop and implement procedures with relevant public health precautions. Resource: [EHS COVID-19 webpage](#).
6. Maintain physical distancing (2m or per local public health requirements) to the extent possible.
7. If applicable, the [UofT Working Alone Guidelines](#) should be reviewed and implemented.

Health Screening

8. While health screening is no longer required in most countries, the [Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) is a resource that can be used to provide guidance.

Vaccination

9. If there are no local requirements for vaccination, it is highly recommended that each team member who is travelling be fully vaccinated for COVID-19 and other illness (e.g., flu shot) and where applicable, staying up to date with booster shots.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

10. Review mask requirements of local public health authorities, host location, accommodations and transportation companies.

Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection

11. Review the availability of hand washing facilities (soap and water) and/or hand sanitizer areas at the host location. [Proper hand washing](#) and [hand sanitization](#) techniques should be followed. Where applicable, bring your own hand sanitizer.
12. Where possible, individual equipment, tools, workstation, surfaces, etc. should be used to reduce sharing. If not possible, shared equipment and surfaces should be disinfected before use.
13. Disinfectants that are used should have a [DIN](#) from Health Canada; in other jurisdictions, disinfectants should be used in accordance with local public health guidance.

Communication/Supervision/Compliance

14. Communicate this guidance and any other relevant procedures and processes to all members of the team, including travel requirements and precautions to follow during travel.
15. If the research is being led by undergraduate or graduate students or post-doctoral fellows, procedures should be in place to supervise the student/fellow directly or indirectly (e.g., frequent visits to the space by supervisor, debrief before and after the work shift, direct contact with the supervisor by phone/email, assigning a lead for each shift).
16. Processes should be in place to report and to follow up on non-compliance with public health measures and this should be communicated to the team. Where applicable, the supervisor (academic or administrative) will work with other UofT parties (or third parties for non-UofT locations) to address non-compliance.

Emergency procedures

17. Given the uncertainty of the pandemic, an emergency plan should be in place for the orderly winding down of activities, for isolation and quarantine if asked to do so by local public health, and for transportation arrangements home if any member of team becomes ill and for maintaining a list of local healthcare providers at the host/destination location. For guidance, please refer to: [Procedures in the Event of a Confirmed/Symptomatic Case or Known Exposure to COVID-19](#)

Other Safety Hazards

18. The [Off-Campus Safety Planning Record \(Risk Assessment\)](#) should be reviewed and procedures should be implemented to mitigate other travel or excursion related hazards (e.g. remote locations, extreme weather, wildlife, etc.).