

Guidance on Research and Travel During the COVID-19 Pandemic

This checklist provides guidance to faculty, staff and students either conducting research off-campus or travelling* (local, provincial or international) during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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.

Please also visit these webpages for the latest updates on:

- [Update on COVID-19 and Research Operations](#)
- [Face to Face \(F2F\) Human Participant Research](#)
- For student-related travel, please visit the [VP Students COVID-19 FAQ page](#).

Travel

1. Before travelling:

- Review all local public health requirements at the location (e.g., border requirements related COVID-19, current COVID-19 measures, proof of vaccination, quarantine, isolation and testing requirements, masking, daily health screening, physical distancing, capacity limits, etc.). Individuals travelling should be prepared to meet all legal and public health requirements of the location in which the travel is to take place.
- 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.
- 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 COVID-19 related costs (e.g., repatriation) in/from the host country/location will be borne by the researchers.
- For domestic travel, review the Government of Canada's [Provincial and Territorial Restrictions](#) webpage.
- Review the UofT memo on [International travel in the course of university business](#) including registering for [International SOS](#).
- Check the Government of Canada's [Pandemic COVID-19 website](#) and the Health tab for the research / travel destination in the [Travel Advice and Advisories](#)
- Review the World Health Organization's [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Travel Advice website](#)
- Ensure awareness of any pandemic-related implications to travel insurance coverage under [Green Shield Canada](#).
- For student out-of-country travel, where applicable, contact the [Safety Abroad Office](#) prior to departure, noting country of departure/return.

Health precautions, guidelines and advice per the resources above should be followed.

- Large crowds or crowded areas should be avoided. Consider wearing a well-fitting mask, even outdoors.
- Contact with sick people should be avoided, especially if they have a cough, fever or difficulty breathing.
- In the event of illness abroad:
 - The advice and instructions of local public health authorities should be followed.
 - Medical attention should be sought, if required.
 - The closest Government of Canada office should be contacted if consular assistance is required.

Developing Procedures

- The activity should be evaluated to determine that it must take place in-person.
- 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 COVID-19

requirements. Resources: [COVID-19 General Workplace Guideline](#), [EHS COVID-19 webpage](#) and [Update on COVID-19 and Research Operations](#).

7. Maintain physical distancing (2m or per local public health requirements) to the extent possible.
8. If applicable, the [UofT Working Alone Guidelines](#) should be reviewed and implemented where applicable.

Health Screening

9. If there are no local requirements for daily health screening, it is highly recommended that all trip participants complete the [Ontario COVID-19 Self-Assessment](#) each day of the trip.

Vaccination

10. 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 where applicable, staying up to date with booster shots.

Masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

11. Review mask requirements of local public health authorities, host location, accommodations and transportation companies. Depending on the stage of the pandemic, a mask may be required in addition to other public health measures such as physical distancing (if applicable).
12. Manufacturer instructions on the use of a mask and PPE should be reviewed where applicable. Resources: [instructions on non-medical masks](#), [proper use of medical masks](#) and [eye protection tip sheet](#).

Hygiene, Cleaning and Disinfection

13. Hand washing facilities (soap and water) and/or hand sanitizer areas should be available at the site. [Proper hand washing and hand sanitization techniques](#) should be followed.
14. 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.
15. 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

16. 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.
17. 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).
18. Processes should be in place to report and to follow up on non-compliance with COVID-19 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

19. 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

20. 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.).