

## Department of Plant Agriculture Covid-19 (SARS-CoV-2) Field Research Protocol (May 13, draft version 2)

All personnel and supervisors are required to read and sign this document prior to conducting field based research. Please sign and scan the document (or minimally the last page) and return to your faculty supervisor prior to starting or resuming field work.

**A. During Covid-19, no personnel are allowed to work in the field (or lab, etc.) unless specifically approved by the Chair and Administration with a “Request to Undertake Critical and Time-Sensitive Research” form.**

**B. Department of Plant Agriculture SOP Requirements.** *This is an essential separate document checklist available from your supervisor.* It is updated periodically, and it is the responsibility of supervisors to ensure that their personnel are aware of SOP updates. All new personnel must complete all the required SOP modules (e.g. WHMIS) and relevant modules (e.g. use of tractors). However, all pre-existing personnel and supervisors should consult the updated SOP document and determine if any updating is required in their safety training. It is ultimately the legal and ethical responsibility of each supervisor to ensure that all personnel under their supervision are adequately trained. During Covid19, the EHS in-person training is replaced by the “EHS Farm, Field and Landscape” course (<https://ehs.opened.uoguelph.ca/>) and is now part of the Department’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) checklist.

**C. FOR SUPERVISORS including supervising field technicians, to assist with training your personnel during Covid19, the following is recommended:**

- Review written standard operating procedures (SOP) for key aspects where it would be ideal to have photos or video explanations
- Take photos of equipment, controls, tasks, etc., and add photos to the SOP.
- Make a make a video – using a Go-Pro or phone of the specific equipment
- Find a manufacturer training video - a number already being posted for tractor operators
- Have new staff read the SOP / watch videos
- Have the staff trainer / tech explain the equipment controls using pictures or from a distance
- Have new staff sit on equipment and explain equipment controls back to the trainer
- Have new staff practice using equipment in an open environment, showing one task at a time, while observed
- Assign specific tasks for new staff to perform while observed
- Give and get feedback on each step
- Document training completion, as in the past

**B. All field personnel: Please read: “ Field Crop Research - Guidance on the Use of Multiple Person Equipment & Physical Distancing”**

Available at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-tools-and-resources>

**C. All field personnel: Please read: “COVID-19: Guidance for Employees Travelling in a Vehicle”**

Available at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-tools-and-resources>

**D. All field personnel: Please read: “Reuse of N95 Filtering Facepiece Respirator During Shortage”**

Available at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-tools-and-resources>

**E.All field personnel: General guidance:** *This is only general guidance, and station managers and supervisors may impose other measures which supersede this general guidance:*

- Concerning if, when and where personnel should wear masks, supervisors should have this discussion with their personnel. Guidance on mask wearing will be updated by EHS at: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/hr/covid-19-tools-and-resources>.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover coughs or sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after blowing nose, coughing, sneezing and going to the bathroom, and before eating.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Surfaces in the workspaces that are touched frequently, such as workstations, keyboards, doorknobs, countertops should be cleaned often and wiped down by employees with disposable wipes between cleanings.
- Vehicles (personal, tractors, etc) should undergo regular cleanings of the surfaces touched by any passengers and the driver, such as the steering wheel, gear and wiper levers, door handles and seatbelts.
- Limit the number of personnel in a small vehicle (car) to one driver where possible. See Section C above for updates and details to the EHS vehicle policy.
- Load any equipment and wash hands before departure
- Upon arrival, unload any equipment and wash hands
- Limit the use of utility vehicles – gators, scouts, club cars and golf carts – to the driver only
- Limit the numbers of staff who share tractors and other single driver vehicles – such vehicles require regular cleanings between users, as below
- Consider and prepare for physical distancing during breaks and lunch

**F. All field personnel: DEPARTMENT OF PLANT AGRICULTURE SPECIFIC COVID-19 FIELD STATION PROTOCOL (developed by Dave Kells + team; there may be site-specific guidance provided at each field station/site)**

**Reduced personnel numbers, minimal use of buildings, physical distancing, increased hand washing, and improved hygiene practices are the cornerstones of preventing Covid-19 infection.** Each Station’s response will vary based on the number of people that normally access site, nature of the facilities, and number of programs served. At minimum, the following issues and mitigations will have to be considered:

1. On a daily basis, everyone visiting a research station is required to send the Station Manager a text message or email when they plan to visit the station and when they are leaving. This procedure is for both normal working hours and after hours (evenings, weekends). At Elora, the Station Manager is Dave Kells (SMS: 519-830-6141, email: [dkells@uoguelph.ca](mailto:dkells@uoguelph.ca)).
2. The Station Manager must also have the name, email and cell number of everyone planning to work at the Station during Covid-19, organized by research group (a single Excel sheet per research group).
3. Each research team must designate a lead to participate in a station User Committee to develop schedules noted in the plan below, and to communicate COVID and other station related details to their respective teams. The User Committee will be led by the Station Manager and will meet as required to implement the site specific mitigation plan.
4. The following mitigation strategy table must be adhered to:

Issue	Mitigations	Comment
<b>Reduction in general station numbers</b>	Limit number of individual programs / crews accessing the station facilities at one time. Limit of 3 crews working in the main crops building at one time and only one per room. Stagger breaks so everyone is not using washrooms and hand washing at the same time. Once work is completed please be diligent in leaving the research station. (Go Home)	Work with a User Committee to schedule visits to the station that accounts for needs and size of individual crews. Workspaces in the main building such as threshing room, seed treatment room be reserved similar to equipment.
<b>Access / travel to field stations</b>	EHS Directives re use of UG vehicles (e.g. one person per vehicle except for full size vans)	Users to wipe down disinfect touch points when finished with UG vehicles.  Anticipate congestion in parking areas.  Follow station directives and signage for normal and overflow parking areas.
	Use of Private Vehicles	All vehicles to be parked in designated areas only.
<b>Travel within stations</b>	EHS Directive re use of UG vehicles / Utility vehicles / tractors (e.g. one person only per vehicle except for full size vans)	Users to wipe down disinfect touch points when finished with station vehicles. See 'equipment' section.

	Use of private vehicles	Do not block laneways, keep vehicles clear of pathways that normally accommodate equipment & large vehicles. Be mindful of extra pedestrian traffic
	Other modes – e.g. Bicycles	Follow best practices (e.g. helmets), avoid riding, travelling on municipal roads, cross with extreme caution.
<b>Deliveries</b>	Provide notice to Station Manager / Staff of anticipated deliveries dates, times, and other details such as unloading requirements	Courier drop box will be in place.  To the extent possible, arrange to meet all deliveries that cannot be dropped in drop box.  Work with Station Manager or Station Staff to arrange for staging and storage of received materials.
<b>Staff Facilities</b>	Follow all general and station / room specific signage and modified use.	All staff to be prepared to participate in enhanced sanitation
	Avoid non-essential visits to station staff facilities	Users that can proceed directly to the field for sampling or other tasks without access to the facilities, should check in with the Station Manager to advise of their presence on site and anticipated duration.
	<b>Enhanced sanitation</b> - Note that routine station cleaning by contractors and / or station staff will provide for some enhances sanitation, however all users will need to participate in regular sanitization of common contact surfaces	All users should come to the station with adequate supplies for sanitization – e.g. wipes, disinfectant spray. Consult U of G Stock room on main campus for supplies.
<b>Washrooms / lockers rooms</b>	Station washrooms / locker rooms are small and will be restricted to one user at a time, obey 2m markers for line-up at washrooms. 6ft spacing indications have been marked on the floor.	Follow process in place to flag that washrooms are in use.  Stagger shift start/finish times, break times to avoid congestion.

	Low temperature dryer room doors will be left open for washroom access.	Change into safety foot ware either before traveling to the station or in the travel vehicle rather than within the station buildings
	There has been a request for 4-5 portable toilets to be strategically placed around the research station.	Hand washing will be in the station building. Use sanitizer provided within the portable toilets.
<b>Lunchroom facilities</b>	<p>Lunchroom to be closed for seating to avoid crowding.</p> <p>Refrigerator, appliances to be removed to reduce common surfaces.</p> <p>Shared computer terminal to be removed.</p>	<p>Space remains open for hand washing, line up for washrooms, receiving, and to provide 2m separation when accessing building.</p> <p>Users to spread out within open storage areas or outdoors for breaks. Users can bring personal lawn chairs for use outdoors or in open storage areas.</p>
<b>Workspaces (e.g. processing rooms)</b>	Use of workspaces to be scheduled to ensure physical distancing of users. Maximum capacity of high use spaces will be posted (to accommodate 2m separation).	<p>May require evening or weekend shifts.</p> <p>User Committee to work with Station Manager to provide schedules for key work spaces and key equipment.</p>
	Users to clean up after each use and sanitize contact surfaces before and after each use.	
<b>Workshop</b>	No entry to the workshop at this time	<p>Contact Station Manager Station Staff to coordinate access to tools or repairs.</p> <p>Frequent use items (e.g grease) will be left in a common space for general use.</p>
<b>Equipment</b>		
Field equipment (tractors, planters, fertilizer applicators)	Schedule for use of key equipment to be developed by User Committee.	

	SOP for operations where 2m separation cannot be accommodated	SOP to be developed in consultation with EHS.
	Each crew is responsible for their own sanitation supplies. Users are responsible for disinfection of common touch surfaces before and after each use. There will be disinfectant for use at the fuel pumps. All fuel use documentation must be emailed to station manager.	Users to use extreme caution when disinfecting controls on tractors, equipment to avoid damage to electronics or materials. Follow directives posted by Station Manager, in order to reduce the risks.
Small tools, hand tools	Contact Station Manager, Staff for access to station hand tools, common small equipment.  Research teams to provide hand tools / implements for each member to avoid sharing	
<b>Station Communication</b>	All communication regarding equipment booking and use of the station can be done on "Teams". Work areas for your crew will also be booked on "Teams". (including weekends). Arrivals and departures should be sent via text to other workers at the research station (including weekends)	To reduce contact with other patrons and to reduce users of the research station during a certain period of time. As much as possible all communication with the station manager should be done by phone or text.

**Covid-19 Field Station Protocol Signature Page (Please sign, scan and return this page to your faculty supervisor)**

I have read all pages of the Department of Plant Agriculture Covid-19 Field Research Protocol (**May 13, 2020 version**) and agree to follow the guidelines.

Researcher/supervisor Name (print): \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date (day/month/year): \_\_\_\_\_