

Florida Institute of Oceanography COVID Reopening Plan Summary

Revised 8 September 2021

FIO Operations Actions & Expectations

FIO is committed to providing our staff and science party members with a safe and healthy environment. While no measures can be 100% effective, FIO and USF have worked with medical experts within USF and external partners to integrate and adapt guidance from the CDC, UNOLS, the American Bureau of Shipping, and numerous other organizations and research vessel operators into a plan to mitigate COVID-19 risk at all FIO facilities. The guidelines provided herein will, with your cooperation and participation, greatly enhance our ability to complete critical research and student instructional activities safely.

General responsibilities and expectations of all FIO staff, visiting scientists and students:

- An internal Infection Control Advisory Committee (ICAC) was established to advise FIO on best practices to conduct safe operations in a COVID-19 or pandemic environment.
- All parties will adhere to the COVID testing requirements outlined separately under each of FIO's operations (research vessels or Keys Marine Laboratory).
- No crew and/or science/education party members shall depart the vessel without obtaining permission from the Marine Superintendent (or designee) during port calls.
- Anyone with a newly diagnosed COVID infection or exposure to a person(s) with a confirmed positive case MUST report it to FIO management and the USF Infection Control Advisory Committee/ COVID Assessment Team within 24 hours in order to facilitate timely contact tracing.
- All persons boarding an FIO vessel or arriving at the KML facility will routinely have their temperature taken and health checks conducted throughout their stay:
 - 1). Prior to boarding a vessel or arrival at the KML facility
 - 2). Multiple daily health checks (at least twice per day). All temperature checks will be recorded.
- All members on board research vessels are expected to wear a mask (disposable, cloth, medical style, etc.), regardless of vaccination status, in all interior spaces, excluding the sleeping quarters of the vessel.
- Adherence to social distancing policies to the greatest extent possible – 6-foot minimum distancing, will be enforced by FIO personnel (e.g. captain, mate, staff, or site manager).
- Adherence to the CDC's recommended hygiene practices is required – wash hands regularly (or use hand sanitizer), avoid touching face, practice respiratory etiquette, thoroughly clean toilet area after use. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>)

- Stay home when sick or if exposed to COVID-19 (defined as within 6 feet of an infected person for a total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) or if diagnosed with COVID-19 by a medical professional. Under no circumstances should a research activity (e.g. voyage, field ops) be undertaken with the possibility of a SARS-CoV-2 individual participating (symptomatic, confirmed COVID-19 positive, and/or high risk contact). If COVID-19 symptoms develop within a science/education party member, student, or crew member, the activity will be terminated immediately and the FIO administrative office and the USF Covid Assessment (assesscovid@usf.edu) must be notified.
- FIO personnel and science/education party members who are "at increased risk" to get severely ill from COVID-19 (e.g., existing medical conditions: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html>) should review CDC guidelines and discuss their underlying risk factors in advance with their medical provider to properly assess risks.
- Each member of the research/education activity shall assist and play an active role with the cleaning/safety team to support increased environmental disinfection and identify areas that require cleaning.

Responsibilities of FIO's Research Vessels at Bayboro:

- Each crew member, shore side support staff and science party member will be required to have a negative COVID-19 test. Acceptable tests for those within the Tampa Bay region are Rapid-PCR, or PCR-lab base viral COVID-19 test. Acceptable tests for those outside of the Tampa Bay region are a Rapid-PCR, PCR-lab base or Rapid Diagnostic Molecular COVID-19 test and present the evidence of a negative test results within 48 hours prior to boarding an FIO vessel. Antigen and antibody tests are NOT acceptable at this time. Members must also minimize interactions/limit exposure to people outside of their households prior to or during travel to St. Petersburg or port of embarkation. Introduction of new personnel to the vessel (crew or science party swap during any phase of the mission) are required to adhere to the COVID-19 Testing requirements.
- Health monitoring will take place at embarkation and, at minimum, twice daily throughout the cruise. Health checks will be logged and the Captain will report any indications of COVID-19 symptoms to the FIO administration and USF Covid Assessment (assesscovid@usf.edu).
- Masks are expected to be worn, regardless of vaccination status, while in the interior of the ship and while on deck if unable to socially distance by six (6) feet. Disposable masks are available on board. Social distancing areas have been identified in labs, enabled through individual stations and reduced lab capacity. Mealtime Procedures: In order to minimize traffic and the number of individuals interacting in the galley area, staggered mealtime schedules will be set by the Marine Cook and self-service meals will be minimized and replaced with "to-go" options when possible.
- Berthing capacity should be reduced where possible.

- U/V lights have been added to the vessels' air handling units to facilitate disinfection of the air stream. Each ship's ventilation has been optimized to facilitate the removal and/or filtration of potential airborne viral particles.
- Focused cleaning/disinfection - daily cleaning of handholds and high-volume touch surfaces and shared objects on the interior of the vessel will be conducted. As well as frequent cleaning of all common spaces with approved disinfectants (minimum of once per day; frequency increased in the event of a confirmed and/or suspected infection). The number of hand cleaning stations have been increased and they are available throughout each ship.
- Strategic use of traffic patterns (one-way traffic with designated exits and entrances) to reduce interactions and cross contamination. Signage is strategically placed throughout the vessels to remind personnel to wear masks and wash hands periodically.
- Cruise length and distance away from a U.S. port is limited. No international expeditions are allowed at this time.
- Following developed COVID-19 response plan to mitigate risk if a person develops the virus.

Responsibilities of FIO at Keys Marine Laboratory (KML) field station:

- It is not deemed necessary at this time for KML support staff to be tested for COVID-19 (unless symptomatic and/or experience high risk contact as defined above). Recommendations may change depending on incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 in Monroe County.
- Each science party member must provide proof of negative results from a diagnostic Rapid-PCR or PCR-lab base viral COVID-19 test seven (7) days prior to travel or arrival at KML; or receive a Rapid Molecular Diagnostic COVID-19 Test within 24-48 hours prior to arrival at KML. Antigen and antibody tests are NOT acceptable at this time.
 - It has been deemed not necessary for visiting researchers residing full-time in Monroe County and requiring Daily Access to KML, to be tested for COVID-19 prior to access. Recommendations may change depending on incidence and prevalence of COVID-19 in Monroe County.
- Each person must submit a Health Status Survey 24-hours prior to access to KML.
- For all KML guests, health monitoring will take place upon arrival at KML and logged twice daily (am & pm) throughout the duration of their stay.
- Each Group Leader/PI staying on site must submit their COVID Illness Contingency Plan for review (found on page 2 of the revised Health Status Survey)
- The number of hand cleaning stations have been increased throughout the KML facility.
- Ventilation throughout each KML building has been optimized to facilitate the removal and/or filtration of potential airborne viral particles.

- Focused cleaning/disinfection - daily cleaning of high-volume touch surfaces (including, but not limited to, tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, faucets, sinks, touch screens, etc.). In addition, frequent cleaning/disinfection of all common spaces (minimum of once per day; frequency increased in the event of a confirmed and/or suspected infection).
- Social distancing areas identified in all labs and common use areas, enabled through individual stations and reduced lab capacity.
- Strategic use of traffic patterns as needed (one-way traffic w/ designated exits and entrances) to reduce interactions, cross contamination, and maintain social distancing.
- Visiting groups will have access to their own kitchen within their dorm and are expected to provide their own food for meal preparations (one group per kitchen).
- Masks are expected to be worn, regardless of vaccination status, while indoors (offices, dorms, labs, classroom) and while outdoors, including on KML's small vessels and working at seawater tables, if unable to socially distance by six (6) feet.
- KML's dormitories are currently operating at full capacity but remain limited to a single group per dormitory unit (no mixing groups within a dorm). In the event of illness while on site, each science party is required notify KML Management immediately and implement their submitted COVID-19 Illness Contingency Plan to mitigate risk.