

Bird Conservancy of the Rockies COVID-19 Field Guidance and Protocol

This document serves as the Bird Conservancy of the Rockies (Bird Conservancy) Policy and Guidelines for grant and contract related field work occurring between March and August of 2020. This policy is in addition to our standard policies for seasonal and contract workers as outlined in your hiring packet. Over the past several weeks, Bird Conservancy has worked tirelessly with partners (i.e., federal and state agencies) in planning a response to COVID-19 (also referred to as Coronavirus) as it relates to the implementation of field work. Based on guidance from our partners and because our work is time sensitive (occurring during the breeding season), we plan to carry out a field season to the greatest extent possible while ensuring we comply with the guidelines set forth by the federal government, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and states where the work will be conducted. We strongly believe that our planning and updated logistics, as described below, have minimized employee risk while simultaneously complying with federal guidelines for social-distancing (i.e., virtual trainings, single employee per vehicle and the largely remote nature of the field surveys). These guidelines are aimed at protecting Bird Conservancy staff, staff of our partners, and to prevent community contagion of the Coronavirus. When possible, staff will be provided with letters from our state and federal partners stating that our work and presence in the field, in locations with shelter in place orders, has been deemed essential.

General COVID-19 Information- COVID-19 is a virus that is a respiratory illness currently classified as a pandemic by the World Health Organization. COVID-19 can affect anyone regardless of age, sex or ethnicity with case severity ranging from asymptomatic to hospitalization and possible death. Increased risk factors for severe illness include: Chronic lung disease, liver disease, diabetes, kidney disease, severe obesity, heart conditions, asthma, immunocompromised systems, and people over the age of 65. Symptoms of COVID-19 usually appear 2-14 days after exposure (median 5 days). Infected individuals may be asymptomatic and potentially contagious for 3-6 weeks. Typical symptoms may include: fever, dry cough and shortness of breath. Other symptoms may include: sore throat, body/ muscle aches and a loss of taste or smell.

Precautionary steps to decrease the risk of contracting and spreading COVID-19 include:

- 1) Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds often throughout the day. Particularly after being in public places, blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing
- 2) If you are unable to wash hands with soap and water, use hand sanitizer that has at least 60% alcohol
- 3) Avoid touching your eyes, mouth, and nose
- 4) Avoid close contact with other people, particularly if they are sick. The recommendation is to maintain at least 6 feet between people at all times
- 5) Wear a cloth face cover when in public places such as grocery stores
- 6) Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow
- 7) Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and equipment ([Use EPA List N for alternative disinfectants if standard cleaning supplies may not be available](#))

Pre-field Work

- 1) Each employee must assess their individual risk factors and must communicate directly with their supervisor to determine if they are eligible for out of state travel and field work prior to beginning training. Risk factors that must be discussed with your supervisor include:

- a. Traveling from a state with significant community outbreak
 - b. Any symptoms indicative of COVID-19, cold or flu (symptoms noted above)
 - c. Pre-existing health conditions, as defined above, that increase risk for a severe illness from COVID-19
 - d. Any exposure as a primary or secondary contact (definitions in Appendix)
 - e. Quarantine and Social distancing practice over the last 30 days. For example: have you followed CDC guidelines for staying at least 6 feet away from people outside your home, not gathering in groups > 10 people, and wearing a mask or facial cover in facilities including grocery stores
- 2) Employees must plan to shop for all non-perishable food items and other necessary equipment within their home states before traveling to their study area. Only essential trips to grocery stores, gas stations, locations to access internet, and pharmacies should be made during the field season
 - 3) Supervisors will work closely with field staff to identify and procure safe lodging and camping options throughout the field season

Virtual Trainings

To reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19 among field technicians and the communities we work in, trainings will be virtual as appropriate. Below is an example of planned virtual training implementation:

- 1) The first 2-3 days of training will be entirely online with technicians attending virtually from their home locations. This portion of training will focus on introductory project-specific presentations and protocols (e.g., data entry, landowner database, point count protocol, safety protocol during COVID-19 pandemic), Bird Conservancy Employment essentials (e.g., timesheets, expense reports, etc.) and assessing bird identification skills through online quizzes and trainings.
- 2) The subsequent 2-3 days of training will focus on independent, “at-home” field practice of point count protocol and bird identification. Upon completion technicians will report to their respective study areas for “in-field” practice. During “in-field” practice technicians will work in pairs (one experienced technician/crew leader with one new technician) practicing the appropriate social distancing.

Guidelines to Minimize COVID-19 Risk During the Field Season

- 1) Field staff need to wash hands frequently, especially after being in public places and touching surfaces that are touched by a lot of people, such as door handles, shopping carts, gas pumps, etc. Field staff should carry extra water to ensure they have adequate water for drinking, cooking, washing dishes, and washing hands. If water and soap are not available, use hand sanitizer.
- 2) There is evidence that Coronavirus can persist on surfaces for hours or days, depending on the surface. Commonly touched surfaces must be wiped down with sanitizing wipes before touching them. Bird Conservancy will supply each technician with one container of sanitizing wipes to be used to disinfect rental vehicles at the start of the field season and other high-risk single-use objects (gas pumps, shopping carts, etc.). Bird Conservancy will also provide a box of disposable gloves for technicians to use in similar situations. Gloves are single use and disposable (i.e., worn once and then thrown out). Wearing gloves is not a substitute for hand washing, and technicians are still expected to either wash their hands or use sanitizer after using gloves.

- 3) Bird Conservancy will supply employees with a reusable face mask (Personal Protective Equipment, PPE) to be used in all public settings where social-distancing measures are more challenging. These face masks are meant to protect others, not the person wearing the mask. Although masks are a prophylaxis (i.e., physical barrier for coughs, sneezes and respiratory droplets), they cannot prevent the wearer from breathing in Coronavirus. Cloth face masks should be washed as often as possible and stored in a paper bag when not in use.
- 4) When using public spaces, employees must only make essential trips (i.e., grocery stores, gas stations, locations for accessing internet, and pharmacies). Minimizing trips means making every effort to “stock up” and buying goods to last as long as possible (e.g., every two weeks).
- 5) When in public places technicians must follow all guidelines for social distancing staying at least 6 feet away from everyone, wear PPE, disinfect grocery cart handle and wash hands upon completion.
- 6) More information on how to protect yourself and others can be found under the CDC – How to Protect Yourself & Others (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>).

Travel and Camping

- 1) All Bird Conservancy employees must have only one employee per vehicle at all times during the field season. During back country surveys that require two employees, individuals must engage in appropriate social distancing measures and wear appropriate PPE. Vehicles should be disinfected frequently and before transportation between states.
- 2) When camping employees must select sites that provide distance from other campsites and should not share sites with other people.
- 3) If staying in hotels employees must wipe down frequently touched surfaces with disinfecting wipes (door and faucet handles, remotes, light switches, etc.). Employees should avoid staying in hotels as much as possible.
- 4) On days off, employees must follow all guidelines outlined in this document and should minimize exposure to people and travel.

What to do if you become sick (Self-Report)

1. If any Bird Conservancy employee experiences cold, flu or COVID-19 type symptoms during field work they should immediately isolate, contact their supervisor and seek medical consultation. **Refer to the COVID-19 Contingency Plan Supplement for additional instructions.**
2. If a medical diagnosis, confirms or indicates COVID-19, or if your medical care provider advises you to self-quarantine you are eligible to receive 80 hours of paid sick leave through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Any diagnosis needs to be shared with your supervisor to qualify for the act.
3. Employees that are requesting paid sick leave through the Families First Coronavirus Response Act will need to complete and submit a request form to their supervisors.

Despite all of these precautions there is an inherent risk associated with doing field work during the 2020 field season and all of our field staff need to be aware of those risks and take every possible action to minimize exposure. Bird Conservancy will continue to monitor CDC guidance to provide a healthy and safe workplace for all employees.

Field Guidance and Protocol Acknowledgement

I have received and understand these policies, including the field guidance and protocol, fieldwork appendix, and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act Poster. I agree to comply with the policy and guidelines as outlined in this document while employed by Bird Conservancy of the Rockies. I understand the violation of these policies may result in disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment. I recognize the COVID-19 situation is dynamic and new conditions or recommendations may be put in place and are subject to change; I will comply accordingly. If stay-at-home orders are lengthened or more restrictions put in place, this could impact the ability to complete surveys. I acknowledge that I will stay in regular contact with my supervisor. I understand that if field work is compromised due to changing health and safety guidelines, my position may be terminated prior to the end of the field season.

Employee Signature: _____

Employee Name: _____

Date: _____

BCR COVID-19 Fieldwork Appendix:

Statewide Stay at Home Orders

California Stay at Home Order -

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

Colorado Stay at Home Order - <https://covid19.colorado.gov/stay-home-except-essential-needs>

Idaho Stay at Home Order - <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/statewide-stay-home-order/>

Kansas Stay at Home Order - <https://governor.kansas.gov/governor-kelly-issues-temporary-statewide-stay-home-order-in-ongoing-effort-to-combat-covid-19/>

Montana Stay at Home Order - <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/diseases/coronavirusmt>

Nevada Stay at Home Order - <https://nvhealthresponse.nv.gov/>

New Mexico Stay at Home Order - <https://cv.nmhealth.org/2020/04/06/stay-at-home-order-extended/>

Oklahoma Stay at Home Order (not statewide) - <https://coronavirus.health.ok.gov/>

Oregon Stay at Home Order - <https://govstatus.egov.com/OR-OHA-COVID-19>

Texas Stay at Home Order - <https://gov.texas.gov/news/post/governor-abbott-releases-video-message-to-texans-as-latest-executive-order-goes-into-effect>

Utah Stay at Home Order (not statewide) - <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/>

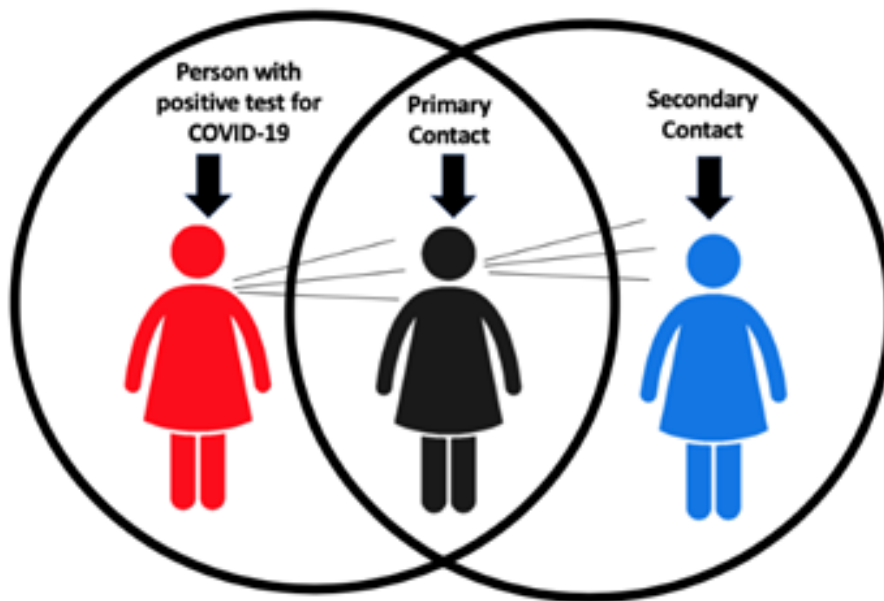
CDC Contact Definitions

Primary contact: A primary contact is someone who has been in proximity to someone who is confirmed (by a test result OR diagnosed by their doctor (in writing)) to have COVID-19. What does proximity mean? It means being in the same room or air space for at least 2 hours or being face to face with the positive person for at least 15 minutes. Primary contacts are usually identified by the Public Health Department in their state and primary contacts will be given guidance to stay home and quarantine for 14 days (to see if any symptoms of COVID-19 arise).

Secondary contact: A secondary contact is someone who has had prolonged contact with a Primary Contact. This means you interacted with a person who had contact with a person who has COVID-19, but you did not directly interact with the person who has COVID-19 (see the infographic). At this time, secondary contacts are not subject to quarantine, but it is recommended that they keep an eye out for any illness symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath), and call their doctor to discuss if further tests or evaluation are needed.

Confirmed COVID-19 case: A confirmed case of COVID-19, at this time, is a person who has been diagnosed (by testing OR diagnosed by their doctor (in writing)) with the disease. It is recommended, by their state health department, they isolate themselves at home for the length of their illness unless they are sick enough to require hospitalization. Public health departments will do an investigation around each person with Confirmed COVID-19 to determine their primary contacts.

What is a COVID-19 contact?



Secondary Contacts:
Continue work as normal, but monitor for any signs of fever, cough, or shortness of breath and call your doctor if you notice any.

Primary Contacts: Need to stay home for a 14 day quarantine period

EMPLOYEE RIGHTS

PAID SICK LEAVE AND EXPANDED FAMILY AND MEDICAL LEAVE UNDER THE FAMILIES FIRST CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE ACT

The Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA or Act) requires certain employers to provide their employees with paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons related to COVID-19. These provisions will apply from April 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

► PAID LEAVE ENTITLEMENTS

Generally, employers covered under the Act must provide employees:

Up to two weeks (80 hours, or a part-time employee's two-week equivalent) of paid sick leave based on the higher of their regular rate of pay, or the applicable state or Federal minimum wage, paid at:

- 100% for qualifying reasons #1-3 below, up to \$511 daily and \$5,110 total;
- ⅔ for qualifying reasons #4 and 6 below, up to \$200 daily and \$2,000 total; and
- Up to 12 weeks of paid sick leave and expanded family and medical leave paid at ⅓ for qualifying reason #5 below for up to \$200 daily and \$12,000 total.

A part-time employee is eligible for leave for the number of hours that the employee is normally scheduled to work over that period.

► ELIGIBLE EMPLOYEES

In general, employees of private sector employers with fewer than 500 employees, and certain public sector employers, are eligible for up to two weeks of fully or partially paid sick leave for COVID-19 related reasons (see below). *Employees who have been employed for at least 30 days prior to their leave request may be eligible for up to an additional 10 weeks of partially paid expanded family and medical leave for reason #5 below.*

► QUALIFYING REASONS FOR LEAVE RELATED TO COVID-19

An employee is entitled to take leave related to COVID-19 if the employee is unable to work, including unable to telework, because the employee:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. is subject to a Federal, State, or local quarantine or isolation order related to COVID-19;2. has been advised by a health care provider to self-quarantine related to COVID-19;3. is experiencing COVID-19 symptoms and is seeking a medical diagnosis;4. is caring for an individual subject to an order described in (1) or self-quarantine as described in (2); | <ol style="list-style-type: none">5. is caring for his or her child whose school or place of care is closed (or child care provider is unavailable) due to COVID-19 related reasons; or6. is experiencing any other substantially-similar condition specified by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. |
|---|---|

► ENFORCEMENT

The U.S. Department of Labor's Wage and Hour Division (WHD) has the authority to investigate and enforce compliance with the FFCRA. Employers may not discharge, discipline, or otherwise discriminate against any employee who lawfully takes paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave under the FFCRA, files a complaint, or institutes a proceeding under or related to this Act. Employers in violation of the provisions of the FFCRA will be subject to penalties and enforcement by WHD.



WAGE AND HOUR DIVISION
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF LABOR

For additional information
or to file a complaint:

1-866-487-9243

TTY: 1-877-889-5627

dol.gov/agencies/whd



WH1422 REV 03/20