

TOOLIK FIELD STATION COVID-19 MITIGATION POLICY

The following **COVID-19 mitigation policy for Toolik Field Station (TFS)** will remain in effect until stated otherwise by TFS management. This policy was created in accordance with [CDC guidance](#) at the time of writing. While most of the procedures outlined in this policy are written to be as close as possible to CDC guidelines, in some instances TFS may be more restrictive due to the remote, communal nature of the station.

1) Vaccinations

All travelers to TFS must be up-to-date on vaccination against COVID-19 according to CDC guidance, unless they have a vaccine exemption from their institution.

2) Pre-Travel Guidelines

1. Travelers are encouraged to practice social distancing in the 10 days preceding their scheduled departure date.
2. Travelers are required to take two rapid antigen COVID-19 tests and report their results to the Toolik EMT using the HIPAA compliant email address uaf-tfs-covid-hipaa@alaska.edu as follows:
 - One test two days prior to departure
 - One test within 24 hours of departure
3. Individuals may travel to TFS if both test results are negative. If an individual tests positive, they will be permitted to travel to TFS on a later date, when they meet the clearance conditions described in *5.0 Guidelines for Positive Test Results*.
4. Travelers will be asked the following questions prior to transport:
 - *In the past 48 hours, have you experienced symptoms consistent with COVID-19? Symptoms include:*
 - *Fever or chills*
 - *New or unexplained onset of cough, shortness of breath, or difficulty breathing*
 - *New or unexplained loss of taste or smell*
 - *New or unexplained muscle aches*
 - *In the past 10 days, have you been exposed to someone who had or was suspected to have COVID-19?*
5. Travelers who answer “yes” to either question will be evaluated by the Toolik EMT on a case by case basis, and may be unable to travel to TFS on their scheduled date of departure.
 - Projects are responsible for providing lodging in Fairbanks for any of their personnel who encounter COVID-related travel delays.
6. Individuals are responsible for providing all rapid antigen tests for their trip to TFS. All travelers need five rapid antigen tests for each trip to TFS: two for pre-departure testing, one for testing during their first week post-arrival, and two in case of exposure at TFS. Rapid antigen tests are an allowable NSF grant expense.

3) Post-Arrival Guidelines

Station residents must abide by the following COVID-19 mitigation precautions after arrival:

1. Self-monitor for COVID-like symptoms and immediately report any abnormalities to the on-site EMT or Station Manager.
2. New arrivals must take one additional rapid antigen COVID-19 test five days after they arrive, and report their results to Toolik EMT using the HIPAA compliant email address uaf-tfs-covid-hipaa@alaska.edu
3. Persons exhibiting COVID symptoms at TFS may be required to undergo additional antigen testing, per direction from the on-site Toolik EMT.
4. New arrivals are strongly encouraged to wear an N-95 or KN-95 mask indoors for their first seven days at TFS.
5. If a person tests positive for COVID-19, they must observe the requirements described in *5.0 Guidelines for Positive Test Results*.

4) Screening Guidelines for Symptomatic Individuals

Station residents who exhibit COVID-like symptoms must self-report to the on-site Toolik EMT and observe the following screening requirements:

1. Take two rapid antigen COVID-19 tests spaced 48 hours apart. If either test is positive for COVID, the resident must observe the requirements described in *5.0 Guidelines for Positive Test Results*. If both antigen tests are negative, no further screening precautions are required.
2. Wear an N-95 or KN-95 mask in public areas and avoid contact with other station residents.
3. Consume meals in their room or an outdoor location separate from the station population.
4. Outdoor fieldwork is allowed if distanced from other people, but access to laboratories may be restricted.

Depending on room availability, individuals with roommates may be relocated into single-occupancy housing during their screening period.

5) Guidelines for Positive Test Results

A station resident who tests positive for COVID-19 must:

1. Isolate in their room for seven days and test every 48 hours starting five days after the initial positive test.
2. Wear an N-95 or KN-95 mask when leaving their room.
3. Avoid contact with other station residents and do not enter other buildings unless necessary.
4. Obtain food from the Dining Hall, while wearing an N-95 or KN-95 mask, during designated times at the end of breakfast, lunch, and dinner service.
 - o Meals must be consumed in the resident's room or an outdoor location separate from the station population.
5. Those in isolation may continue conducting outdoor field work, if they feel up to it, and are able to distance themselves from other people. Lab access should be avoided but may be granted on a case-by-case basis, as determined by the on-site Toolik EMT and Station Manager.

The individual will be permitted to leave isolation and stop wearing a mask indoors when:

1. They test negative on two sequential rapid antigen tests taken 48 hours apart.

These tests are to be taken starting no sooner than 5 days after the initial positive test results. And,

2. They have no symptoms consistent with active illness for at least 24 hours (continued loss of smell/taste or a lingering cough or mild fatigue will not extend the isolation period).

The on-site Toolik EMT will monitor the health status of COVID-positive residents. Anyone with severe, life-threatening symptoms, as determined by the on-site Toolik EMT in consultation with medical direction, will be immediately sent out of TFS via medevac. Those who wish to leave TFS when sick will be able to do so, depending on truck and driver availability.

6) Mitigating outbreaks at TFS

1. The on-site Toolik Station Manager will try to relocate confirmed COVID-positive individuals into single-occupancy housing if available. However, a healthy person may need to continue to room with a COVID-positive person.
2. The on-site Toolik EMT will maintain a public log of current COVID cases on the TFS website to allow research groups to make informed travel decisions.
3. People planning to travel to TFS in the near future should check the [TFS COVID-19 website](#) to be informed of potential outbreaks.
4. We may defer new arrivals into the station if more than 10% of the station population is confirmed to have COVID-19, or if staff function is severely compromised.
5. Projects are responsible for funding accommodations for their personnel during COVID-related travel delays.
6. Ground transportation to Fairbanks or Prudhoe may be limited. Those wishing to leave the station as a result of an outbreak will be triaged and transported based on their health status.
7. We may close the station entirely if we are unable to function due to a large outbreak.

7) References

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Isolation and Precautions for People With COVID-19. Updated May 11, 2023. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/isolation.html>