



Toolik Field Station COVID FAQs

Toolik Field Station has a [new 2024 COVID mitigation policy](#) for your review before making reservations. If you have questions, consult the FAQ list below or contact the Toolik Management Team (uaf-iab-toolik@alaska.edu) or Safety Officer Scott Filippone (smfilippone@alaska.edu).

Pre-Departure Protocols

Where can I read the Toolik COVID-19 Mitigation Plan?

The most current version of the [mitigation plan](#) can be found on our website.

How many cases of COVID are currently present in Toolik?

We update our COVID statistics weekly on our [TFS COVID-19 Information webpage](#).

Do I need to be vaccinated? How do I submit proof of vaccination or exemption?

All travelers to TFS are required to be up-to-date on vaccination against COVID-19 according to [CDC guidance](#), unless they have obtained a vaccine exemption from their home institution and/or medical provider. Current CDC guidelines consider those who have received a 1) full primary series of an approved COVID vaccine and 2) a bivalent booster dose to be up-to-date.

If you have any questions about vaccination status, reach out to smfilippone@alaska.edu for clarification. Proof of vaccination/exemption will be self-verified via a mandatory attestation on the [TFS Pre-Departure COVID Form](#).

I live outside the US and have received a vaccination that is not listed on the CDC website. Will I still be able to travel to Toolik?

In most cases, yes, but please communicate your situation to smfilippone@alaska.edu to see if any further action is needed.

How many tests will I need to obtain?

Each individual traveling to Toolik must provide five total tests for their stay: two pre-departure tests, one on-station test, and two surplus tests in case an outbreak occurs and TFS staff needs to conduct station-wide testing.

You will need to provide these tests for each trip to Toolik. For example, if you plan to travel to Toolik once in June and once in August, you will need five tests for June and an additional five for August. Unused surplus tests can carry over from reservation to reservation as long as they have not expired.

Am I responsible for obtaining my own rapid antigen tests?

Yes, each individual is responsible for purchasing five antigen tests. For those funded by the National Science Foundation, these are a grant-allowable expense. Whether or not tests will be purchased by the project or the individual is at the discretion of the project's PI. Test kits can be purchased from most pharmacies, grocery stores, or big box stores (Walmart, Target, etc.).

When should I take my COVID tests?

Individuals must take two COVID-19 rapid antigen tests before they depart for Toolik. One test is to be taken 48 hours (two days) prior to departure and the other is to be taken the day before departure. Both will be self-administered.

Additionally, once at the station, residents must take an antigen test on day five of their stay. See the calendar below for an example testing schedule of an individual planning on traveling to Toolik from April 11 to April 20, 2023.

MAY 2024						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
28	29	30	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 1st Pre-Departure Test	13 2nd Pre-Departure Test	14 ↑ Depart for Toolik	15	16	17	18
19 On-Station Test	20	21	22	23 ↓ Leave Toolik	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	1

I will be at the station for less than five days — do I still need to bring five tests?

No. If your stay is shorter than five days, you only need to provide two tests for pre-departure testing.

Do I need to schedule a telehealth appointment to oversee as I self-administer the pre-departure tests?

No.

Where do I send the results of my pre-departure COVID tests?

All COVID test results will be submitted via the [TFS Pre-Departure COVID Form](#). All travelers will receive an email containing instructions for accessing the form one week before their scheduled departure date. This form should be completed only once per reservation and should be submitted after **both** pre-departure COVID tests have been taken. Please do not text or email your test results to any TFS staff members.

What happens if I test positive pre-departure?

You will not be allowed to travel to the station that day. We ask that you isolate for at least seven days. You will be permitted to travel to Toolik if you test negative on two sequential rapid antigen tests taken 48 hours apart and have been asymptomatic for at least 24 hours.

Additionally, if you traveled to our Logistics Garage in close proximity to other scheduled passengers, they will also not be allowed to depart to TFS.

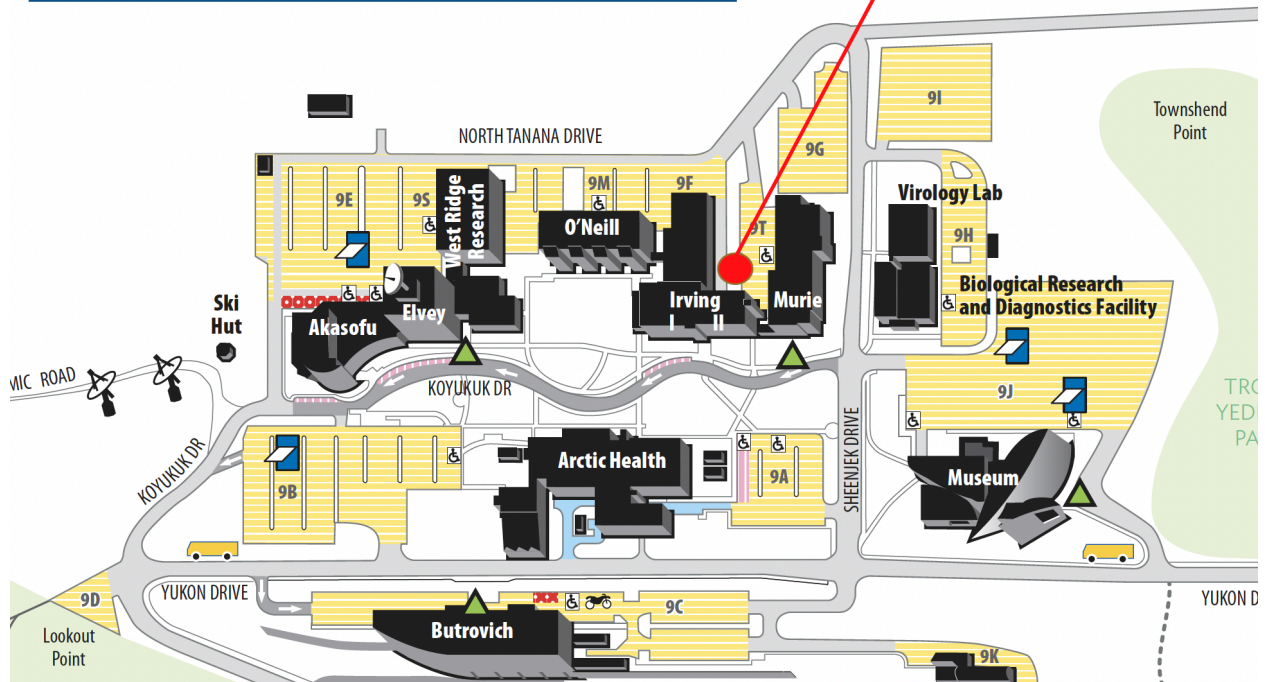
You or your project will be responsible for food and lodging costs associated with isolation of your own project members. Projects will need to cover the cost of local lodging and transportation in the event that their departure date is delayed as a result of COVID-19 precautions.

Traveling to Toolik

When and where will I depart for TFS?

We no longer meet people at their pre-trip lodging for their TFS-provided transport to the station. Please meet at our Logistics Garage on UAF's Troth Yeddha' Campus at 8:15 am for your pre-departure orientation. We will provide directions via email, several days before departure.

UAF FAIRBANKS CAMPUS **Toolik Garage**



Am I required to wear a mask during the drive to TFS?

No, but we encourage you to wear a mask if you would like to do so.

I plan to travel to Toolik Field Station using project-provided transportation. Can I arrive on a day other than Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday?

Projects planning to arrive on days other than Tuesday, Thursday, or Friday will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact our Management Team (uaf-iab-toolik@alaska.edu) to request approval for your alternative arrival day to TFS.

If traveling in a project-provided vehicle, please send the on-site managers an email (uaf-iab-tfs-manager@alaska.edu) or phone call (907-455-2511) when you depart so that they can estimate your arrival time.

Station Protocols

Can I choose to eat elsewhere than the Dining Hall to avoid spreading or being exposed to COVID?

Yes. Please inform the Station Manager or on-duty EMT if this is your plan — we will be working to provide outdoor dining options where available.

Am I required to wear a mask while at the station?

No, but you are encouraged to wear a mask while indoors for the first seven days of your stay.

Am I responsible for providing my own masks?

Yes, please bring your own mask to TFS. We suggest bringing at least one mask per week that you are at the station.

How will testing be conducted at the station?

All testing at the station will be coordinated with you by the on-site EMT, whether it be the standard day five test or station-wide screening as the result of an outbreak. You will receive an email on the fifth day of your reservation as a reminder.

To whom should I report a breach in COVID protocol?

To help ensure the safety of everyone at the station, please alert the Station Supervisor, Assistant Station Manager, or on-duty EMT if you see a Toolik resident not following COVID protocol.

What happens if I test positive at the station? Can I still conduct fieldwork in isolation?

You will be isolated in your room for a minimum of seven days. The on-site EMT monitor symptoms during your isolation period. You are also welcome to reach out to the EMT at any time to request anything else you may need.

Those in isolation will be tested on days five and seven of their isolation period. Individuals can leave isolation if one of the following criteria are met:

1. They present negative test results on two rapid antigen tests spaced 48 hours apart **and** have been asymptomatic for a minimum of 24 hours.
2. Ten days have elapsed since the start of their isolation period **and** they have been asymptomatic for a minimum of 24 hours.

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.

Will I be able to receive medical attention if needed?

Yes, the on-site EMT will work with the TFS physician sponsor to coordinate treatment plans as they would during any other medical emergency at Toolik.

If I traveled to TFS using project-provided transportation, can I leave the station after testing positive?

Yes.

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Potentially. The on-site Station Manager will work with you to try and accommodate your request, but southbound truck availability may be limited depending on the time of season and station population.

In the case of a medical emergency, air-ambulance medevac can be arranged pending weather conditions. In the case of severe weather conditions when flights are grounded, the TFS EMT will work to organize an alternative evacuation method.

If my roommate tests positive, will I need to isolate as well?

You will be required to wear an N95 or KN95 mask for an additional 10 days and eat meals in your room. During this time, you may conduct field and lab work as planned.

Additionally, you will be required to test after five days of your roommate's confirmed positive. If you test positive, you will be relocated to a sick bay wherein you must start the previously mentioned isolation period from day one.

Will TFS close the station in the event of an outbreak?

A total station closure is not likely but could happen if we are unable to function due to a large outbreak. Additionally, 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.