Boating Safety Guidelines for COVID-19

Effective February 10, 2021

Changing conditions in the COVID-19 pandemic require routine review of policies by State and Local governments to assure workplace safety. This policy was developed to permit continued scientific boating and marine operations at FSU while maintaining the safety of students, staff, and faculty.

Note: the policy and guidelines below may change depending on University, County, and/or State mandates.

1. These Guidelines were approved by the FSU Boating Safety Committee, the FSU office of research and will be in effect and will be updated as conditions require.

2. Before beginning work, a fieldwork plan (appendix 1) must be submitted to Matt Edwards (medwards5@fsu.edu) and be reviewed and approved by The Office of the Vice President of Research (OVPR) before any trips are taken. Fieldwork plans may cover multiple trips of the same type. Therefore, make all reservations and turn in fieldwork plans at least one week in advance to allow for time for the review process.

3. The online reservation form can be found here. Reservations can be canceled by emailing Durene Gilbert (degilbert@fsu.edu). FSUCML has the right to cancel a reservation at any time due to changing environmental conditions and or safety concerns.

4. No one will be permitted to participate in any boating activities if they are feeling ill or if any members of their household have COVID-19 or are experiencing flu-like symptoms. Further, personnel who live with people in high-risk groups of COVID-19 should not participate in boating activities.

5. Two avenues are available to ensure the safety of the students, staff, faculty, and outside personnel wanting to complete research on FSUCML vessels.

   A. Research teams may work as a “bubble” in which all team members present documentation of a negative COVID-19 PCR-based test within 72 hours of the beginning of the trip. Once formed, the group maintains strict isolation of its members from non-group members. The research team may travel, live, and work as a group while refraining from contact with people outside of their group. As long as the bubble is maintained, this group is exempt from COVID-19-related restrictions on vehicle and vessel capacity, distancing, and masks. Exceptions to strict isolation must be addressed in the research plan and will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

   B. Research teams that cannot work as a “bubble” must strictly practice these protocols:

      i. All team members must provide documentation of a negative COVID-19 PCR test within 7 days of the projected field workday.

      ii. Upon arrival to FSUCML, all team members maintain physical distance of six feet whenever possible, wear a mask, and follow all boating and vehicle capacity and sanitation rules and practice the safe and healthy action detailed in the remainder of these guidelines.

      iii. Each team member will bring their own food and water. Sharing of coolers and food/water is not allowed.

6. Facemasks must be worn in accordance with current FSU and CDC guidelines.
7. Whenever possible, use designated entrances, exits, and follow foot traffic patterns. If possible, on and off the boat (deck area, launching the boat, etc.), everyone should stay at least 6 feet apart and have their mask on.

8. If not able to form a “bubble” and need to trailer a vessel away from the marine lab, only one person can do so in the small vehicles*, but two people are permitted in the larger vehicles**. Driver and passenger must sit diagonal to each other (passenger in the rear seat on the passenger side), two windows must be opened to properly facilitate air flow and masks must be worn.

9. Vehicle steering wheel, handles and highly touched places must be sanitized before and after each trip with cleaning and disinfection products***.

10. Occupancy of any of the FSUCML vessels will be limited to one person per six feet of deck length. ****

11. Only an FSUCML approved operator may operate the vessel. A float plan must be completed and placed on the float plan board attached to the boat shop door or emailed to Matt Edwards (medwards5@fsu.edu).

12. Enhanced cleaning and disinfection products will be available at FSUCML.

13. Upon returning to the dock, the boat operator and crew are responsible for thoroughly washing and disinfecting the boat.

14. Finally, replace boat keys to the black box on the boat shop door to properly be disinfected and stored.

*Small trucks
2011 Toyota Tacoma
2012 Toyota Tacoma
2001 Diesel Ford ADP

**Bigger trucks
2019 Diesel Ford F250
2011 Diesel GMC 2500 HD

***Enhanced cleaning and disinfecting products
Clorox bleach
Clorox wipes
Boat soap
Lysol
Brushes
Rags

**** Boating occupancy
28’ PONTOONS- 4 people max
28’ Twin Vee- 4 people max
26’ CALCUTTA- 4 people max
20’ SKEETER- 3 people max
18’ POLAR- 3 people max
19’ DUSKY- 3 people max
16’ CAROLINA SKIFF- 2 people max
63’ APALACHEE- 10 people max
Appendix 1 – Example COVID-19 containment without bubble
FSUCML Field Plan and Summary of Exposure Control Operations

Submitted by: Poseidon
Supervisor: Zeus
Number of trips: 5
Date range of trips NTE 4 months: 2/1/21-5/31-21

***This form is in addition to, rather than in place of, the Proposed Research Plan***

Objective:
Perform field work including diving as necessary to support the bivalve surveys of Apalachicola Bay.

COVID-19 containment strategy
Option B: Non-bubble strategy using social distancing, masks, and surface cleaning

Proposal and Justification
A team of researchers led by Poseidon will conduct fieldwork from FSUCML. The team will require use of at least two vessels: a 28’ Twin Vee and a 26’ Calcutta for the collection of bivalves. The team will also require support from ADP, SCUBA equipment, and a minimum team of 3 people, including 2 divers and 1 person for top-side support and vessel operation. It is anticipated that 4-5 days will be spent conducting work inshore.

Personnel Assignments
Boat Operator - Solely responsible for boat operation, and dive logs.
Lead Diver (Poseidon) - Solely responsible for personal diving equipment, grabs, and trident.
Support Diver - In addition to the lead diver, only one other diver will be present each day. They will be solely responsible for their personal diving equipment and search lines as necessary recover missing equipment. The primary job of the support diver is to serve as a dive buddy, as the majority of the work will completed is a single person job.

Social Distancing Concerns:
1) Access to the FSUCML for boats, ramp, dock use, and equipment (including diving equipment)
2) 3-person team, with an alternate, working in close proximity

Response to Above Concerns:
1) All operations will abide by the DCB Exposure Control Guidelines.
2) All members on the boat will have passed a COVID-19 test within 7 days of diving pursuant with the DCB guidelines and quarantine as necessary.
3) Poseidon will coordinate equipment pickup times with T. Mohrman and C. Peters of FSUCML to ensure minimal contact with other employees will not occur.
4) Poseidon will handle any deviations of the group after entering the bubble, such as in the event of food purchases or fueling while traveling.
5) Float plans will be emailed to M. Edwards instead of using hard copies.
6) All personnel will travel separately by vehicle to FSUCML to encourage social distancing.
7) Each piece of equipment will be assigned to one individual to minimize touching or contamination by others, and that individual will be responsible for loading, using, unloading and washing said equipment.
8) All personnel will wear PPE (masks) and maintain social distancing when at all possible.
9) All COVID-19 protocols must always be observed (wearing masks except for short periods of eating and drinking, distancing and surface cleanliness)
10) Each diver will enter and exit the water unassisted, carrying their own science equipment. Entry will be from their assigned section of the boat. Before exiting the water, the diver will rinse the regulator and face to remove saliva. If the diver cannot safely exit the water in full gear, they will tie off their gear and scientific equipment to a line attached to the vessel for recovery by the diver once on board.
11) Hand sanitizer provided by FSUCML will be available on the vessel.
12) At the end of each day, the diving equipment will be properly disinfected on return to FSUCML by the diver using it. The vessel will be disinfected by the operator using supplies provided by FSUCML.
13) Dive logs will be submitted electronically to the DSO via the AAUS Web Logging Service.

***This form is in addition to, rather than in place of, the Proposed Research Plan***
Appendix 1 – COVID-19 containment with bubble
FSUCML Field Plan and Summary of Exposure Control Operations

Submitted by: Poseidon
Supervisor: Zeus
Number of trips: 5
Date range of trips NTE 4 months: 2/1/21-5/31-21

***This form is in addition to, rather than in place of, the Proposed Research Plan***

Objective:
Perform field work including shark fishing in the Florida Keys

COVID-19 containment strategy
Option A: The bubble strategy: Poseidon will pre shop for food and supplies for the research team before departure. While traveling, Poseidon will be the only person to fuel the vehicle, check tire pressure and trailer integrity while wearing a mask and properly socially distancing. If a research member needs to use the restroom while traveling, they will wear a mask and social distance while doing so. All members must use hand sanitizer upon returning to the vehicle. If more food or supplies are needed upon arrival to the Keys, Poseidon will be the only to get the supplies while wearing a mask and maintaining social distancing rules.

Proposal and Justification
A team of researchers led by Poseidon will conduct fieldwork from FSUCML. The team will require use of at least two vessels: a 28’ Twin Vee and a 26’ Calcutta for the collection of sharks. It is anticipated that 4-5 days will be spent conducting work near shore.

Personnel Assignments
Boat Operator - Solely responsible for boat operation, and dive logs.
Lead shark wrangler (Poseidon) - Solely responsible for running longline winch and monitoring weather.
Support wranglers - In addition to the lead wrangler, only one other person will be present each day. They will be solely responsible for their personal equipment. The primary job of the support wrangler is to serve as a second set of hands so no one gets bit, as most of the fishes will be very large.

Social Distancing Concerns:
3) Access to the FSUCML for boats, ramp, dock use, and equipment (including diving equipment)
4) 3-person team, with an alternate, working in proximity

Response to Above Concerns:
14) All operations will abide by the BSC Exposure Control Guidelines.
15) All members on the boat will have passed a COVID-19 test within 3 days.
16) Poseidon will coordinate equipment pickup times with T. Mohrman and M. Edwards of FSUCML to ensure minimal contact with other employees will not occur.
17) Poseidon will handle any deviations of the group after entering the bubble, such as in the event of food purchases or fueling while traveling.
18) Float plans will be emailed to M. Edwards instead of using hard copies.
19) All personnel will travel together by vehicle to and from FSUCML due to the bubble.
20) Each piece of equipment will be assigned to one individual to minimize touching or contamination by others, and that individual will be responsible for loading, using, unloading and washing said equipment.

21) All personnel will wear PPE (masks) and maintain social distancing when at all possible.

22) All COVID-19 protocols must always be observed (wearing masks except for short periods of eating and drinking, distancing, and surface cleanliness) unless together on the boat or at the living quarters.

23) Hand sanitizer provided by FSUCML will be available on the vessel and truck.

24) At the end of each day, the tools will be properly disinfected on return to FSUCML by the wrangler using it. The vessel will be disinfected by the operator using supplies provided by FSUCML.

25) Upon arrival back at FSUCML the vessel will be cleaned and properly disinfected.

***This form is in addition to, rather than in place of, the Proposed Research Plan***