



## WVDEP-WAB: Covid-19 Field Work Guidance

The guidance below is modified from a draft guidance for Division of Water and Waste Management (DWWM) field workers and will serve as Watershed Assessment Branch (WAB) policy for the time being. Note: These guidance's are subject to change on short notice.

### DWWM DRAFT Guidance for Field Monitoring Activities

1. Day trips only – No overnight stays until otherwise notified. Consideration should be given to working long days for trips that require travelling a considerable distance and schedule adjusting within the week.
2. For sites that require contacting landowners, attempt to do so via phone whenever possible. This can be done the day of, day before, or when arriving at a site. Explain that you are calling in order to minimize potential exposure from other means of making contact.
3. Don't team up on field activities unless necessary. If necessary, take separate vehicles and observe social distancing guidelines while performing the task. Special allowances are being made to accommodate this. Personal vehicles are OK to use – even if pool vehicles are available. Same with rental vehicles, just mark 'No' in the 'State Car Available?' box on travel Expense form and you will be reimbursed (\$0.575 / mile for personal car).
4. Don't touch items that are frequently touched by others.
5. Do not visit your office without approval from a Program Manager unless it is simply to pick up additional supplies (sampling bottles, preservatives, etc.). Consideration should be given to picking up as many supplies as needed for several weeks at a time to limit time in the office.
6. Be cautious at gas pumps. Wear gloves while pumping gas and touching the keypad.
7. Follow all CDC guidelines for social distancing and wearing of PPE.
8. Wash hands when facilities are available.
9. If you feel there are additional safety items that are needed to perform your job duties, discuss with your supervisor.
10. If you feel you are at risk for any reason at all, discuss with your supervisor.
  - Sites that pose more risk than others can be considered lower priority. Please prepare a list of any sites that pose risk and the reason why (e.g., social distancing would be compromised). These sites will be evaluated to determine if/when they will be revisited.
  - As always, proper personal and equipment sanitation is expected/encouraged for any site with suspected untreated wastewater. For our current understanding of exposure to corona virus via sewage, see <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>. While there does not appear to be evidence of transmission of COVID-19 via fecal matter, additional measures will be supported to sanitize, including cleaning solutions, spray bottles, and gloves.
  - Long gloves are available – hunting supply stores often have 'field dressing' or 'game cleaning' gloves that extend past the elbow.
  - It is understood that there may be cases that fewer public bathrooms will be available. Use your best judgement about how far to drive to a bathroom and be intentional when planning site visits to allow for/take advantage of privacy, including scouting out "pit-stops" in more remote locations.
  - If you are sick, stay home! Talk with your supervisor before returning to work.

Regarding concerns of potential exposure via sewage in streams we sample I couldn't find a lot of information, but it seems like a low risk. Less than five cases reported in most counties: <https://dhhr.wv.gov/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>.

Currently, there is no evidence about the survival of the COVID-19 virus in drinking-water or sewage. The morphology and chemical structure of the COVID-19 virus are similar to those of other human coronaviruses for which there are data about both survival in the environment and effective inactivation measures. There have been no reports of fecal-oral transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

**From the World Health Organization - Water, sanitation, hygiene and waste management for COVID-19.**

<https://www.who.int/publications-detail/water-sanitation-hygiene-and-waste-management-for-covid-19>