

2025 Covid Safety Protocol LUQ-LTER

The following is a suggested plan of action for continuing with LUQ LTER projects while taking safety measures to protect against the spread of Covid-19. These protocols also apply to **Influenza** and **Mycoplasma**. The plan includes precautions, communication plan, isolation time etc. We will operate within the safety directives established by the government of PR.

Interns and technicians often live together and work together in the field with project leaders and collaborating scientists, thus it is important to maintain communication if anyone develops symptoms, and to communicate openly about the best course of action.

General Policies and Procedures

- This information applies to anyone working at El Verde Field Station (interns, visitors, investigators, and research and station staff)
- Upon arrival all interns and visitors will be informed of current COVID-19 safety protocols to ensure they understand what steps to take in the event of someone getting sick.

General safety protocol (Steps to take if someone working at El Verde has symptoms or tests positive)

- **Precautions**
 - Masks, sanitizers, gloves and wipes are available on site (or can be requested)
 - Maintain a regular schedule of cleaning/disinfecting common areas
- **Communication plan**
 - Notify your supervisor if you are not feeling well
- **If you have symptoms/tested positive for COVID**
 - Stay home and isolate until at least 24 hours *after*
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall
 - No fever (without fever-reducing medication)
 - For the next 5 days after returning you should::
 - Wear a mask
 - Keep distance from others
 - Minimize being in shared spaces (if possible)
- **People who were exposed**
 - Encouraged to mask but not mandatory if asymptomatic (not showing symptoms)
 - Should disinfect common spaces and equipment before using
 - Encouraged to test on Day 5 of exposure (immediate if symptoms appear)
- **Office work precautions**
 - Regularly disinfect shared spaces and equipment before using
 - Encouraged to mask
 - Maintain areas well ventilated
- **Field work precautions**
 - Masking not necessary unless distancing isn't possible
 - Avoid sharing tools/equipment when possible
 - Avoid carpooling

Safety protocol specific for people staying at the streamhouse

Interns living together can present a higher transmission risk. Therefore we have a more specific and detailed protocol for the case of an intern showing symptoms.

- **Precautions**
 - Have the following items available:
 - Rapid tests
 - Masks (preferably KN95s)
 - Disinfecting wipes
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Thermometer
 - Communication plan
 - Discuss this safety protocol upon their arrival
 - Make sure they know who to contact and what the steps to take
 - Supervisor should notify other staff members about potential exposure
 - Back up housing area (if possible)t
- **If an intern shows symptoms or tested positive for COVID-19**
 - Stay home and isolate until at least 24 hours *after*
 - Your symptoms are getting better overall
 - No fever (without fever-reducing medication)
 - Isolation and masking within the house
 - Everyone in the house should mask in shared spaces for at least days after sick intern(s) have no fever and symptoms improve
 - Sick intern(s) should isolate in their room as much as possible
 - If multiple people are sick they can isolate together
 - Common spaces
 - Designate a bathroom for people who are sick. If not possible, disinfect between uses
 - Keep the areas well ventilated (fans, open windows etc.)
 - Avoid using communal cloth towel to dry hands
 - Increase the frequency that surfaces are cleaned (tables, doorknobs, faucets, fridge handles, stoves etc.)
- **Isolation time and returning normal activities**
 - Sick intern(s) should stay home and isolate until at least 24 hours **after**
 - Symptoms improve
 - No fever (without fever reducing medication)
 - For the next 5 days after returning intern(s) should:
 - Wear a mask
 - Keep distance from others
 - Minimize being in shared spaces (if possible)

References

- [CDC guidelines for respiratory viruses in general \(COVID-19, Influenza, Mycoplasma\)](#)
- [CDC info on COVID-19](#)
- [CDC info on Influenza](#)
- [CDC info on Mycoplasma](#)