# UT FIELD STATIONS

# POLICY FOR RESEARCHERS TO MITIGATE COVID-19 RISKS

***UT Field Station Mission Statement***

To innovate and successfully prepare students through hands-on and field-based studies of diverse natural systems, and to promote discoveries that improve our world through a better understanding of our ecosystems in a rapidly changing world that our students will inherit.

# GUIDELINES FOR RESEARCHERS DURING COVID-19 RISK LEVELS 1-5

1. The Field Station Director may grant access for Researchers to the field areas at **Brackenridge Field Laboratory** (BFL) and **Stengl Lost Pines Biological Station** (SLP) under relevant University criteria. Guidelines for the University’s policies and procedures can be found at: [coronavirus.utexas.edu/](https://coronavirus.utexas.edu/) and  [covid-19-research-faq/](https://research.utexas.edu/covid-19-research-faq/).
2. These policies only cover research access to the Field Station field areas and do not cover access to buildings and facilities which must be applied for through the CNS/VPR portal.
3. In addition to the standard Research Application ([bfl.utexas.edu/visitors-users/research-application](https://bfl.utexas.edu/visitors-users/research-application)), Researchers requesting access during Research Phases 1 – 5 shall also submit an application via email to the Director stating:
	1. Relevant Research Phase.
	2. Brief (1 paragraph) rationale responsive to the relevant Research Phase criteria.
	3. Dates and times of requested access.
	4. Number of essential people included and tasks they will perform.
	5. Vehicle access requirement.
	6. Proposed risk mitigation steps (PPE, sanitizing & social distancing).
4. The Director shall determine approval in consultation with CNS APR as needed.
5. Violation of these covid-19 policies will likely result in suspension from the Field Stations.
6. Researchers shall comply with the general User Guidelines: [bfl.utexas.edu/visitors-users/user-guidelines](https://bfl.utexas.edu/visitors-users/user-guidelines).
7. Field Stations will be available for different levels of research activities depending on the Research Phase (VPR [covid-19-research-faq/](https://research.utexas.edu/covid-19-research-faq/)). The Table below summarizes the principles that will determine access.

**ACCESS AND SOCIAL DISTANCING**

During Research Phases 1-5, the following steps are required in addition to the general User Guidelines:

1. Access must be arranged with the Field Station leadership 24 hours prior to each visit unless a blanket arrangement has been provided in writing.
2. Every day, before coming onto any UT campus or property, each person must complete a Health Attestation report <https://utexas.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_d76CLjIQprnr31z>
3. Access to the BFL field areas shall only be through the locked Gate 1, NOT the Main Building entrance (unless permitted for that researcher under Phase 2 or 3). Researchers at BFL shall sign in and out of the COVID visitor log situated in a box at Gate 1.
4. Access to SLP field areas will be determined in conjunction with the SLP manager to be the Lab, Central or North gates, depending on research needs. On arrival and departure, a text message shall be sent to the SLP manager, who will record these events into a visit log.
5. Researchers may not enter the Field Stations if they have any covid-19 symptoms.
6. Researchers shall follow all UT social distancing (6 ft) and sanitizing guidelines [coronavirus.utexas.edu/](https://coronavirus.utexas.edu/).
7. Restrooms are high use areas requiring particular attention. Restrooms may be used in the BFL breezeway at F20, and at the SLP Wyer lab. These restrooms are designated as single-occupancy rooms and so users must knock and call out before entering. Users must carry their own sanitizer and then wipe-down all contact surfaces after use (e.g. handles, switches). Minimize time spent around buildings and facilities.
8. Researchers may not use electric carts or any Field Station tools and equipment unless given prior permission. If use is allowed, then contact surfaces must be wiped down after use.
9. Vehicles are not allowed inside BFL gates or away from the SLP parking areas, unless with written approval.

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| **Research Phase** | **Permitted Research Activities. See VPR notes for full definition.** | **Field Station status** |
| 5 | Only maintenance of critical equipment, samples, and/or animal colonies is permitted. | **Closed for research**. Exceptions from VPR may include critical cases. |
| 4 | On-campus access to maintain essential research capability or prevent catastrophic disruption is permitted. | **Closed for research.** Exceptions from VPR may include critical cases to maintain research capacity. Prioritize seasonal data collection or experiments close to completion. |
| 3 | Permitted research activity relaxed to include time-sensitive research. | **Restricted access to field areas by application to Director.** Seasonal data collection such as field research or experiments close to completion. Access for graduate students and postdoctoral fellows close to completing. Up to 15 people (or 1 class) on site at any time. No access to buildings.  |
| 2 | Gradually expand the number of researchers on campus while maintaining social distancing. | **Restricted access to field areas by application to Director.** Expand user access to field areas on case-by-case basis depending on local user demand, space requirement and time on site. Up to 30 people (or 2 classes) on site at any time. Limited access to buildings only when permitted.  |
| 1 | Continued expansion of the number of researchers on campus while maintaining social distancing. | **Restricted access to field areas by application to Director.** Expand user access to field areas on case-by-case basis depending on local user demand, space requirement and time on site. Up to 50 people (or 3 classes) on site at any time. Access to offices allowed generally, with attention to social distancing and cleaning. |
| 0 | Resume normal, full-capacity research operations. | **Normal usage and access per User Guidelines.** |