

Yosemite and Sequoia Field Stations Notice of Policies

Dear Yosemite and Sequoia Field Stations Researchers, Students, and Educators,

YSFS and UC Merced have adopted operating procedures to protect the health of staff, participants, and our community while minimizing disruptions to research and education. Please read this letter carefully prior to your visit as it contains important information for what to expect and what to bring.

COVID-19 remains a real threat to individuals and communities. Our ability to gradually and sustainably return to 'normal' research and scholarly activities will depend on everyone's commitment to vaccination, masking, physical distancing and other safety measures at work and in our personal lives.

All UC Merced reserves and field stations operate under the SARS-CoV-2 (COVID-19) Vaccination Program policy requiring all UC students, staff, and faculty to be fully vaccinated or have an institutionally approved exemption. All non-UC visitors should adhere to this policy as well. See UC Merced COVID-19 mitigation measures [here](#) for implementation of this policy.

Field station operations and guidelines may change as campus policies and local conditions change.

Please note that these expectations are *in addition to* the normal guidelines for field research and access to UC Merced Natural Reserve System facilities.

*All visitors are required to read and acknowledge this form **within the 5-day window prior to arriving** at the field station. The current version of this form will be provided to all visitors upon reservation. However, these protocols are subject to change and will be updated based upon public exposure risk and coordination with UC Merced and NPS administration. If any updates are made to our notices and policies, an updated form will be sent to all visitors prior to their arrival.*

Reservation policy

Use of the field station is at the discretion of UC Merced, the UC Merced Natural Reserve System administration, and the National Park Service. Use may be denied, revoked, or cancelled at any time as conditions change with no penalty for COVID-19 related cancellations.

Criteria Prohibiting Visitation of UC Merced Field Stations

1. Individuals experiencing key symptoms of the virus are not permitted to visit the field station. These symptoms include but are not limited to fever, cough, shortness of breath, fatigue, muscle aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
2. Individuals who have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2, shall [follow CDC guidelines for quarantine/isolation](#) prior to arrival at the field station. .

Vaccination and Testing

All overnight users will adhere to UC Merced [vaccination requirements](#) and obtain a negative PCR-based or antigen test for SARS-CoV-2 within the 72 hours prior to arrival at the field station.

No Guests

Guests are not allowed at the field station properties at any time.

Face Coverings

Face coverings should be worn in all common areas including the kitchen and living room except while sleeping, bathing, or eating. This is especially important in mixed housing and at the office/classroom where multiple participants from multiple institutions are present. Surgical-grade masks are recommended, though non-medical face coverings are acceptable, ideally double layered, tightly woven, and washable fabric. Face coverings must cover the mouth and nose. All field station users are responsible for providing their own face coverings. Visitors are encouraged to mitigate disease spread by maintaining distance while eating, staggering eating times, and/or utilizing outdoor dining spaces if conditions permit. Face coverings are also recommended outdoors when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Note, individuals who are visiting the field station following a recent SARS-CoV-2 illness must [follow CDC guidelines for masking following isolation](#).

Contact Tracing

Please keep a record, to the best of each participants' ability, of the name and contact information of individuals considered 'close contacts' during your visit.

Contingency Planning

Each group leader is responsible for creating an [evacuation plan](#) in case a group member becomes sick that will be reviewed by the UC Merced NRS staff for completeness and feasibility. If a participant becomes ill with COVID-19 or with COVID-19 symptoms, they will immediately isolate in a bedroom. All personnel will follow their evacuation plan, notify the Field Station Director of any housing needs or changes, and comply with all instructions provided by public health officials and / or the Field Station Director. All other individuals in the house/group as the affected individual should consider themselves "exposed". At a minimum, close contacts should follow CDC guidelines for quarantine, per their personal history of vaccination and/or infection. If possible, the remaining participants in the group will be evacuated at their own expense from the field station within 24 hours. A stay-at-home order conferred in the middle of a reservation will trigger evacuation of the entire reservation unless the affected parties are doing essential work or have a previously scheduled 'long-term' (15 days or more) reservation at the field station.

Cleaning and Disinfection

Participants will clean and disinfect frequently used surfaces in the house daily. Surfaces include faucets, door handles, light switches, thermostats, telephones, sinks, countertops, toilets, and railings. Cleaning supplies will be provided in each building for this purpose. At the Yosemite facilities, all linens and mattress covers will either be placed in the washing machine within the house or in a provided garbage bag. All used dishes will be cleaned in the dishwasher (if available) except where this would cause damage. In this case, wash dishes with soap and hot water and leave in dish rack. All garbage and recycling will be removed from the house and placed in the appropriate dumpsters (located near the Wawona Fire Station at Yosemite or in the parking lot adjacent to the cabin at Sequoia). Users should turn on fans when they depart if the cabin has them.

As an additional safety measure, cabins at Yosemite Field Station will be cleaned and disinfected periodically. All users may be assessed a cabin cleaning fee to help pay for these increased costs. The exact amount will vary depending on the cabin but is expected to be \$50-200 per cabin per stay. We will seek to place all users in the smallest cabin that fits their needs, but due to our operational requirements and constraints, some small groups may be placed in larger cabins that will require a larger cleaning fee.

At the Sequoia Field Station cabin, due to the remote nature of the site, users should take special care to clean the cabin regularly during their stay and at the end of their visit. All users must fill out and send the cabin cleaning form to the Field Station Director within 1 day of the end of their stay, or risk being assessed a cabin cleaning fee of \$250. The cabin will remain unoccupied for at least 24 hours between visits as an additional precaution.

On-site assistance and operations

In an emergency, call emergency personnel first and if the situation allows it, follow up with the Director. For non-emergencies, staff assistance during a stay will be limited. Should you experience an issue that requires staff assistance, first call the Maintenance Steward or Director to discuss the issue. If the issue involves a minor resupply of essential items such as cleaning products, etc., field station staff will coordinate to safely transmit the items to the participant in a manner that ensures social distancing and wildlife safety. Maintenance issues will be resolved

remotely if possible. If an issue cannot be solved remotely, but the issue is minor and can be safely ignored until the group has left the field station, it will be addressed when the building is empty and once disinfection has occurred. If an issue creates a safety hazard for users, it may be possible in rare cases for the Director, Maintenance Steward, or other personnel to solve the safety hazard while maintaining their own safety and compliance with UC Merced guidelines regulating interactions with participants. In most cases where there is a safety hazard in a house, participants will be asked to relocate to a different house, or if no additional facilities are available, to leave the field station.

Name of Group Leader: _____

I acknowledge that I have read the Notice of Policies in full and will comply with all provisions.

Printed Name of Participant

Date

Signature of Participant