Dive Locker and Dive Operations COVID-19 Safety Plan:
SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Introduction
“Risk management is the process for identifying, analyzing, and communicating risk and accepting, avoiding, transferring, or controlling it to an acceptable level ...” (DHS Risk Lexicon, 2010 Edition). Diving operations during the COVID-19 pandemic requires estimating and mitigating a new dimension of risk when managing diving safety. Nothing is absolutely risk free and safety is a personal and/or societal judgment of the acceptability of the estimated risk.

Risk
COVID-19 is spread primarily, by respiratory droplets, through close person-to-person contact with someone who is infected. People who are infected may have symptoms of illness or be asymptomatic. It may also be possible a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes. Currently COVID-19 is spreading easily and sustainably and the CDC indicates that the transmissibility of COVID-19 is higher than influenza (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-covid-spreads.html). The CDC states that the latency period is 2 to as 14 days on average but there are a few reports of longer incubation periods.

These symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell

There are no reliable quantitative estimates for the risk of an individual acquiring COVID-19 due to their work environment but OSHA has divided job tasks into four qualitative risk exposure levels: very high, high, medium, and lower risk (https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/hazardrecognition.html). Most university employees will fall in the lower exposure risk (caution) or medium exposure risk levels since their interactions at work do not have a high potential for exposure to known or suspected sources of COVID-19 infection. Workers who do not have frequent close contact with coworkers, customers, or the public are classified as lower risk and jobs that require frequent/close contact with people who may be infected, but are not known to have or suspected of having COVID-19 are classified as medium risk. Examples of medium exposure jobs include schools and high-volume retailers.

Current Accepted Mitigations
Current CDC recommendations to control the spread of COVID-19 in communities with active spread include:

- Be alert for symptoms and take temperature if symptoms develop
• Practice social distancing
  o Maintain 6 feet of distance from others
  o Stay out of crowded places
• Clean hands often
• Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces
• Follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop


In addition to CDC recommendations the state of Connecticut requires that individuals wear a cloth mask in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained.

**Recommended Mitigations to protect divers and the university from COVID-19 risk at the lower exposure risk category**

Continued support of student and faculty research by the Marine Sciences should require the following COVID-19 mitigations.

**Dive Locker**
- The dive locker should continue to be cleaned and disinfected by the janitorial staff with particular attention paid to disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- Regulators and face masks should be cleaned and disinfected with Steramine before and after use.
- If there is more than one person in the dive locker working employees should wear masks.

**Dive Platform**
Due to its larger size of the R/V Lowell Weicker it is possible to maintain a social distance most of the time during diving operations, if the crew is limited to two people and the dive team is limited to two people.

- Diver should wear protective masks when possible.
- Diver should maintain a social distance of six feet while gearing up and entering the water
- Divers should only approach each other after enter and while breathing from the regulator with the dive mask in place.
- Verbal communications while at the surface should take place with the divers spaced at least six feet apart.
- Boat crew should wear protective masks during all operations
- High tough surfaces should be disinfected before and after operations
- Hand sanitizer should be available on the boat
Dive Team and Crew Selection

- Per UCONN diving standards the individual diver has the right to refuse to dive with no reprisal if they deem the risks are too high. This policy will remain in effect.
- The dive team and boat crew should be symptom free.

Recommendations for Diving from the AP Dock

- Diver should maintain a social distance of six feet while gearing up and entering the water.
- Divers should only approach each other after enter and while breathing from the regulator with the dive mask in place.
- Verbal communications while at the surface should take place with the divers spaced at least six feet apart.
- follow the dive locker and dive team selection recommendations listed above

Recommended Mitigations to protect divers and the university from COVID-19 risk when working from small boats or traveling by truck to dive sites

It must be recognized that social distancing is not possible in a truck or small boat and thus these operations will fall into the medium exposure risk level defined by OSHA but the following recommendations will help prevent exposure to COVID-19.

Operations

- High tough surfaces in vehicles and boats should be disinfected before and after operations.
- Hand sanitizer should be available.
- Boat crew should wear protective masks.
- Diver should wear protective masks when possible.
- Divers should gear up one at a time in bow or stern of the boat separated as much as possible from others.
- Divers should only approach each other after enter and while breathing from the regulator with the dive mask in place.
- Verbal communications while at the surface should take place with the divers spaced at least six feet apart.
- Dive Team and Crew Selection criteria listed above will apply.