

DNR Forest Health & Resiliency Division – Forest Health Aviation Operations

COVID Safety Plan for PPE and Screening, v.2.0

Effective, Close of Business June 30, 2021

This safety plan addresses personal protective equipment (PPE), screening processes, and social distancing for Forest Health & Resiliency Division personnel conducting interagency forest health aviation missions. These elements should be followed only when conducting the essential activities of insect and disease aerial detection surveys (ADS). If conducting other activities, then follow the DNR PPE and Disinfectant Protocol.

These procedures integrate and build off of the [June 18, 2021 DNR COVID-19 – PPE & Disinfectant Protocols](#) that are intended to outline the Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and disinfectant needs for Department of Natural Resources employees engaged in work activities during the COVID-19 outbreak. These agency protocols are designed to help DNR meet its objectives related to COVID-19, which are:

1. Reduce risk of new infections of DNR employees from COVID-19;
2. Slow the spread of COVID-19 in the DNR Community;
3. Ensure DNR continuity of operations;
4. Provide for frequent communication to all DNR personnel

Forest Health and Resiliency Division Aviation Operations for aerial surveys is a cooperative interagency project operating under a master agreement with US Forest Service. All crew members are not considered members of the public while participating in the project, and all crewmembers will be following agency approved safety protocols and a cross-agency flight checklist to make sure all agency protocols are consistently followed in operations.

Workplace Controls

DNR Forest Health & Resiliency Division personnel will follow Department Safety Policy and the Injury Prevention Manual. The following controls are for use only when conducting the essential activities of forest health aviation missions.

Screening

- **Personnel are directed not to report to a worksite if they have any symptoms associated with COVID.**
- All personnel shall be screened at the beginning of each shift utilizing [DNR Daily COVID-19 Health Screening protocol](#) and the [DNR Screener Training and Guidance](#), as approved by the DNR COVID-19 Response Management Team, to confirm they are non-symptomatic.
- Screening shall be done maintaining social distancing as defined in the DNR COVID-19 PPE and Disinfection Protocols.
- Use of a surgical mask (or a cloth face covering meeting CDC recommendations should a surgical mask not be available) by the screener and/or person being screened is required.

PPE and Operations Best Management Practices (BMP)

If DNR employees are fully vaccinated and provide proof of vaccination status to DNR, no COVID PPE is required and social distancing is not required for Forest Health Aviation Operations for aerial surveys.

For employees who are not fully vaccinated or have not had provided proof of vaccination, the best Covid-19 protection for aviation personnel is to wear a mask. The Department has determined for unvaccinated employees that masks will be worn when traveling to and from work activities where an employee will interact with other people, or gathering together whether inside or outside. Social distances dictate the type of mask to be worn. For aviation activities, a surgical mask is required for employees that are not vaccinated or have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR, or a KN95 mask. If those are not available, then a cloth face covering meeting CDC recommendations can be worn until a surgical or KN95 mask is made available.

In the event of individuals on the flight that are unvaccinated or have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR, the following best management practices are in place for operations.

Forest Health Aviation Operations BMP:

- Personnel are directed not to report to a worksite if they have any atypical symptoms associated with COVID.
- Prioritize and limit areas of operation by determining priority areas for aerial survey and using alternate survey methods (remote sensing & ground sampling) outside priority areas.
- To the extent possible, minimize crew turnover and reduce pilot exchanges.
- Personnel are encouraged to get vaccinated at earliest convenience; if everyone on crew is vaccinated, crew risk is significantly reduced.
- At all other times (outside of aircraft) where social distance cannot be maintained, unvaccinated crewmembers or crewmembers who have not provided proof of vaccination will use surgical masks. If surgical masks are unavailable, use a cloth face covering meeting CDC recommendations until surgical masks are available.
- Reduce the aircrew size to the minimum necessary to accomplish the mission. No more than 2 observers and 1 pilot on each flight is recommended, as safety and operations allow.
- Increase airflow through the aircraft to the extent possible.
- When available and safe for use in the aircraft, a plastic divider behind the pilot may be used as an added layer of protection. It is understood that this divider does not eliminate the need for PPE for unvaccinated individuals, and it's placement will be done in coordination with the pilot to ensure safe operations are possible.
- For unvaccinated individuals or individuals who have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR, implement social distance as soon as possible upon landing.
- At the end of mission, or as soon as feasible, clean all touch points of aircraft with appropriate disinfectant products.
- For unvaccinated individuals or individuals who have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR, apply social distancing guidelines and mask wearing indoors when conducting pre- and post-flight activities.

- When the crew includes unvaccinated individuals or individuals who have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR, travel in multiple vehicles when feasible.
- When overnight travel is required, for unvaccinated individuals or individuals who have not provided proof of vaccination to DNR wear surgical masks around other people in vehicles and indoors. Limit social contact in the community only to necessary activities (securing lodging, fuel, food, and meals).

If after any flight a crewmember or pilot reports symptoms or a positive test for COVID-19, all exposed individuals that also participated in the flight must quarantine as outlined in DNR's COVID protocols before resuming participation in aerial surveys.