

Field Trips and the additional risk of catching/spreading COVID-19

Since March 2020 the UK has been in the grip of the COVID-19 pandemic. Nearly all Field Trips and Indoor meetings have been cancelled. Government lockdowns and social distancing guidelines have been issued in an attempt to prevent the disease spreading.

During the summer of 2020 the number of COVID-19 cases reduced. With social gathering limits lifted, a number of geology groups managed to hold field trips with limited numbers in attendance. This document summarises the learnings related to holding **Covid19 compliant socially distanced field trips**; it is by no means complete. It is compiled from email correspondence with the following people; Julie Schroder, David Rowley, Andy Harrison, Mark Eller, Dave Green and Jill Eysers. Many thanks Graham Hickman

Example Main COVID-19 Risks

HAZARD (type)	RISK (to health caused by hazard)	SEVERITY (high, med., low)	ACTION(S) REQUIRED (to reduce/mitigate risk)
<i>COVID-19 Catching or spreading through close contact with other people</i>	<i>Possibility for spreading or catching the disease</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>Maintain 2m separation Use of face coverings</i>
<i>COVID-19 Catching or spreading through contact with hard surface e.g. tools, gates.</i>	<i>Possibility for spreading or catching the disease</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>Wash hands frequently Use hand sanitizer Don't share tools, hammers etc.</i>
<i>People attending who are unwell</i>	<i>Possibility for spreading or catching the disease</i>	<i>high</i>	<i>Do not to attend sessions if you are unwell and especially if you have a persistent cough or temperature or loss of smell/ taste within the last 14 days. Confirm this with attendees at start of trip.</i>
<i>People who attend event and subsequently become ill.</i>	<i>Possibility for spreading or catching the disease</i>	<i>mod</i>	<i>Ensure contact details are taken to assist with track, trace and isolate.</i>
<i>People who have underlying conditions or complicating factors</i>	<i>Person is higher risk category of being seriously ill or dying if they catch the disease</i>	<i>mod</i>	<i>Consider carefully whether it is appropriate to encourage people to attend who may be worried about self-isolating or shielding</i>
<i>Close contact required for first-aid</i>	<i>Possibility for spreading or catching the disease</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>Extra Covid-19 protection to be carried by leader/organizer: face masks, sanitizer, disposable gloves and visor - in the event first aid is to be administered.</i>
<i>Sudden change in plans. E.g. trip is cancelled at short notice.</i>	<i>Stress and wasted journey</i>	<i>low</i>	<i>Check in the morning or call if in doubt. Share contact details.</i>

This is a summary of learnings related to holding **Covid19 compliant socially distanced field trips**;

Choose location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choosing a good location to visit where social distancing is easier to maintain.
Group size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow government guidelines. Currently the rules allow for a group of six in an outdoor setting.
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not attend sessions if you are unwell and especially if you have a persistent cough or temperature or loss of smell/ taste
Contact tracing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leader to keep a register of those attending and insist that should anyone develop symptoms after the trip they inform the leader, who will pass on details.
Face masks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be worn as appropriate, compulsory on public transport or in situations <2m
Social Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remind group to maintain space, an individual's arm length is generally between 0.8 and 1m, being close enough to touch another person is too close.
Moving between outcrops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Split into small groups to maintain social distancing while on the move.
Attention to touching handles gates and styles.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid touching hard surfaces such as handles/gates/styles which may be touched by multiple people, sanitize hands after touching.
Hand sanitiser	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be used at start/end and as appropriate
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoid car sharing if possible. Otherwise open windows to increase ventilation and wear face masks.
Laser pointer at outcrop	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strong laser pointer can be used to point out features without getting too close. However be careful to avoid eyes and reflections.
Individual equipment (no sharing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not share equipment, e.g. hand lenses, hammers, hand-outs. Consider using plastic bags to separate individuals' equipment and sanitize before and after group use.
Handouts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Laminated handouts can be sterilized between sessions and reused if necessary.
Demographics – Age and risk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Young people have a low risk of serious illness from Covid19. However for Geology Groups which have mostly retired within the high-risk group for Covid19. Consider carefully whether it is appropriate to encourage people to attend who may be worried about self-isolating or shielding.
Food and drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take your own food and drink as pubs or cafes may not be open. Avoid mixing and maintain social distancing during informal lunch time.
Toilets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Toilets may be closed, consider shorter sessions and plan alternative locations where toilets may be available.
Avoid shouting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider wind directions and where to stand you can be easily heard but maintaining social distancing.
Alternatives:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Technological solutions such as tour guide audio headsets could be used in the field but are quite expensive. Individual equipment would need to be sterilized between uses. Downloadable, self-guided geological walks and trips, both urban building-stone walks and rural geological excursions that can be done alone or in Bubble groups.