

MEMORANDUM

To: University Research Community

From: Andrés G. Gil, Vice President for Research & Economic Development, Dean of the University Graduate School

Date: March 19, 2020

Re: Scientific boating and diving activities at FIU in response to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

In response to COVID-19, we have established the following guidelines, which may change depending on University, county, and/or state mandates. These guidelines will be in effect until at least April 15, 2020, at which time the need for continuation will be assessed.

1. Each proposed dive or boat plan should justify why the activities need to be carried out now and not postponed.
2. The night before the research activity, the PI in charge of the laboratory will check in with all participants to ensure everyone is healthy and willing to participate. No job actions will be taken against any employee who does not want to participate because of safety concerns.
3. No one should participate in any boating or diving activity if they are feeling ill or if any members of their household are experiencing flu-like symptoms. Further, personnel who live with people in [high-risk groups](#) for COVID-19 should not participate in diving and boating activities.
4. No more than 2 people may occupy a vehicle used to tow a boat to the work site or in a vehicle transporting participants to the boat. Truck keys, door handles and steering wheel must be disinfected with an agent proven effective against the novel coronavirus before and after the field day.
5. Each boat will have a maximum number of total personnel allowed on the vessel at any time. All FIU airboat crews will be limited to 2 crew. Outboard vessels that are 21' or less will be limited to crews of 2. Vessels over 21' but less than 27' will be limited to a crew of 3. Vessels larger than this will be limited to crews of 4.
6. In these guidelines, all people on the boat is considered a "crew," including the operator and any other people on the vessel.
7. All crew will be required to wear eye protection and exam gloves (if available) while conducting boating activities. Crew will need to re-glove as conditions dictate during the cruise, and dispose of the used gloves in such a way that they could not contaminate other surfaces. Forgetting to order or bring gloves in the field is not an acceptable reason for not using gloves, but unavailability of gloves in the marketplace is. In the case gloves cannot be found, then all participants will liberally use hand sanitizer any time it would be appropriate to reglove.
8. All crew will be required to bring ample water/liquids for themselves in clearly labelled bottles, and no sharing of drinks will be allowed. Each crew member will also bring their own food in a secure, clearly marked cooler or similar small box. No sharing of food allowed. All crew must reglove to eat or drink, and then reglove before returning to work and touching boat surfaces. See above for how to decontaminate hands in the event that gloves are not available.
9. Upon returning to dock, all rails, gunwales and helm areas will be disinfected with an agent proven to be effective against the novel coronavirus.

10. Scientific diving operations are prohibited except in extreme cases where dives are necessary to prevent losses of critical and expensive research equipment. Proposals for such dives will undergo scrutiny by the Dive Safety Officer, the Diving Control Board and ORED, who must all approve the proposed operation.
11. Non-scientific dives or dives consistent with commercial diving operations as governed under the FIU Diving Operations Manual (FIU-DOM-01 Rev-1), are suspended, except when necessary to prevent loss of critical or expensive equipment offshore.
12. Diving operations at the FIU Aquarius Underwater Habitat are suspended until further notice, unless an immediate response is necessary to prevent flooding or damage to the Habitat, related to weather or other circumstances.

Boating plans will be routed to the Boating Safety Committee for review and approval, and dive plans will be routed to the Diving Control Board and Diving Safety Officer for review and approval.