

# COVID-19 Preparedness Plan for Team Echinacea

19 June 2020

**The Echinacea Project** is committed to providing a safe and healthy workplace for all team members. To ensure we have a safe and healthy workplace, we have developed the following COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. PIs, interns, students, and participants, hereafter referred to as team members) are all responsible for implementing this plan. Our goal is to mitigate the potential for transmission of COVID-19 in our workplaces and communities, and that requires full cooperation among all members of our team. Only through this cooperative effort can we establish and maintain the safety and health of team members.

All members of Team Echinacea are responsible for implementing and complying with all aspects of this COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. The Echinacea Project PIs have our full support in enforcing the provisions of this policy and we encourage all team members to ask questions, raise safety and health concerns, and offer suggestions related to the plan and its implementation.

Our team members are our most important assets. We are serious about safety and health and keeping all team members working at **The Echinacea Project**. Team member involvement is essential in developing and implementing a successful COVID-19 Preparedness Plan. We have involved team members from previous summers in all stages of development of this plan. Our COVID-19 Preparedness Plan follows State of Minnesota Guidance, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Guidelines, federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) standards related to safety and health precautions required in response to COVID-19, and applicable executive orders. The plan addresses the following:

1. policies and procedures that help identify sick workers and ensure sick workers stay home;
2. implementation of engineering and administrative controls for social distancing;
3. worker hygiene and masks (source controls);
4. workplace building and ventilation protocols;
5. workplace cleaning and disinfecting protocols;
6. drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocols; and
7. communications, training, and supervision practices and protocols.

Most of our work occurs outside in remote locations. Many aspects of this plan apply to the Hjelm house, the building that serves as our research base, and the equipment storage building, G3.

## 1. Policies and procedures that assist in the identification of sick workers and ensure sick team members stay home

Team members have been informed of and encouraged to self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19. The following policies and procedures are being implemented to assess team members' health status prior to entering the workplace and for team members to report when they are sick or

experiencing symptoms. 1) Team members will self-monitor by keeping personal daily logs of temperatures, symptoms, and contacts. 2) Team members will be asked daily to assert that they are symptom-free. Team member who are not coming to the Hjelm house in the morning should communicate their symptom status to Stuart. 3) If a team member exhibits symptoms, they will stay at home and contact the team or PI. If symptoms persist, the team member will get a COVID-19 test. 4) If a team member experiences symptoms at work, they will immediately isolate and go home as soon as possible. Outside is the best place to isolate, but inside locations are possible in G3 and the Hjelm house.

**The Echinacea Project** encourages team members to stay at home or away from all other team members when they are sick, when household members are sick, or when they are required to isolate or quarantine themselves or a member of their household.

Team members will inform the PI, and any other team members they choose, if they have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 at their workplace and self-quarantine for an amount of time that protects the rest of the team. In addition, a policy has been implemented to protect the privacy of team members' health status and health information: The PI will not share the health status or health information of any team member, unless that team member has explicitly given permission to do so.

If a team member tests positive for COVID-19, they will be free to decide if and how they continue working, if they feel healthy enough to do so. Infected team members with severe symptoms will self-quarantine and seek medical assistance as needed. Infected team members who are asymptomatic or have mild symptoms are also welcome to self-quarantine and cease field work. If a team member is well and wants to work, they may submit a plan of action for solo field work to the rest of the team. The plan will outline what activities the infected team member will do, what supplies they will need, and the measures they will take to negate the risk of direct or indirect transfer of COVID-19 to the other team members. If the rest of the team unanimously agrees that the plan is safe and will not increase the risk of exposure to COVID-19, then the infected team member may conduct field work in accordance with their plan.

## **2. Social distancing – maintaining 2m (six feet) of physical distancing**

A. Social distancing of 2 meters (six feet) will be implemented and maintained between team members in the Hjelm House and in the vicinity of the Hjelm house through the following engineering and administrative protocols:

- Eating lunch
  - We will designate locations to eat that are socially distanced. Team members are expected to bring their own "lunch spot" (a chair or blanket) and expect to eat on the lawn, porch, or at their vehicle.
  - Team members may eat in the field, when circumstances allow it.
  - Team members are encouraged to bring lunches that do not require refrigeration or microwave.
  - We will supply refrigerated water for filling water bottles outside, so team members do not need to go in the Hjelm house.

- Using data collection devices
  - Team members will pick up and drop off data collection devices in a location that is distant from the person who is syncing visors (data collection devices).
  - Only one team member at a time will sync data collection devices.
- Team building & daily reporting
  - All onboarding and daily reporting activities will be done while socially distanced, including remotely via computers.
- Getting & returning tools, supplies and equipment
  - We will limit the number of team members in G3 at a given time to two.
  - Existing protocols for fieldwork will explicitly include a) procedures for gathering and returning tools, supplies and equipment, b) checklists of required tools, supplies and equipment to minimize time in G3, and c) instead of storing regularly used equipment in G3, team members will keep it with them, such as boots.
- Using computers & printers in the Hjelm house
  - We will designate socially-distant workstations and limit the number of team members in the main room of the Hjelm House at any time to three people.
- Entering and exiting the building
  - When more than two people are present, the West door of the Hjelm house is exclusively an entrance and the East Door is an exit to avoid team members crossing paths.

B. Social distancing in the field will be encouraged. Some common activities that we have done in the past, such as taking core data in experimental plots, has been a group activity. We will implement administrative protocols to accomplish data-taking goals while maintaining social distance. Avoiding working in groups of three or more will go a long way to maintain social distance. We will implement the following engineering and administrative protocols:

- Conducting Fieldwork
  - Schedules and plans for fieldwork will be developed and communicated ahead of time so that team members can plan out what they need and reduce time at the Hjelm House.
  - Team members will work alone or in pairs when safe and possible. We will avoid planning fieldwork that includes groups of three or more.
  - Before heading to a field site, team members will discuss strategies to maintain social distance when working in a pair.
  - Team members will be encouraged to travel to and from field sites alone or with household members.
  - Use of bicycles will be encouraged for travel to and between field sites.

C. We will avoid the need to gather in the following engineering and administrative protocols:

- Presenting (proposals, update, and results)
  - We will avoid in-person meetings and use video or audio conferencing.
- Conducting Fieldwork

- When possible, team members will travel directly to or from the field from home to minimize gathering at the Hjelm house.
- Training new techniques
  - Whenever possible, team members will be trained by one person or in small groups to facilitate social distancing.
  - When possible, we will develop written or video protocols to limit in-person training.
  - We will limit the number of techniques each team member is required to learn.

### 3. Worker hygiene and source controls (masks)

Worker hygiene and source controls are being implemented at our workplaces at all times. We have developed daily chores to facilitate worker and workplace hygiene.

- We have set up a hand washing station outside the Hjelm house and will require all team members to wash hands every time they arrive from off-site, immediately before entering the Hjelm house, and immediately after leaving the Hjelm house.
- Team members are encouraged to carry a bottle of hand sanitizer to use in the field and in vehicles.
- Eating lunch
  - All team members will be encouraged to wash hands before lunch.
  - Team members are encouraged to bring lunches that do not require refrigeration or microwave. Also team members should bring their own dishes and utensils.
  - Only one team member may be in the kitchen at a time.
  - Ethanol solution and bleach solutions in spray bottles and paper towels are supplied for team members to disinfect every surface they touch in the kitchen.
  - Team members should bring their own "lunch spot" (a chair or blanket) and expect to eat on the lawn, porch, or at their vehicle.
- Team members will wear masks in the vicinity of the Hjelm house and at all times in the Hjelm house.
- Team members will wear masks when traveling between the Hjelm house and field sites, unless they are on a bike or alone in a vehicle.
- Fieldwork
  - Team members must use masks when working in groups of three or more.
  - Team members must wear masks if they are working in a pair and cannot maintain social distance.
- Bathrooms
  - We will supply soap, paper towels, and no-touch waste bins.
  - We encourage good habits, such as: closing lid when flushing toilet, washing hands, opening door with paper towel used to wash hands.

## 4. Workplace building and ventilation protocols

To encourage ventilation, we will keep doors and windows of the Hjelm House open as much as possible. We have door stops for the entrance and exit of the Hjelm house. We will use the ceiling fan to encourage additional ventilation. We will keep the doors to G3 open as much as possible. Workstations that are used regularly will be located away from high traffic areas. E.g. Drake's seedling station will be moved from the porch to under the deck.

## 5. Workplace cleaning and disinfection protocols

Regular housekeeping practices are being implemented, including routine sanitizing of the workplace and frequent sanitizing of high-touch areas. All chores will be distributed among team members and we will develop effective protocols using appropriate and effective cleaning and disinfectant supplies. Team members will use products in accordance with product labels, safety data sheets, and manufacturer specifications. Team members will use personal protective equipment appropriate for each product.

Team members have been instructed that personal equipment and tools should not be shared and, if shared, should be disinfected between users.

- Fieldwork
  - We will avoid sharing tools, supplies, and equipment as much as possible. When we do need to share, we will use disinfection protocols specific for each tool (visors, GPS units, etc)
  - We will store tools, supplies, and equipment in G3, except for visors.
  - We will wash hands or used gloves before using equipment from G3.
- Visors (data collection devices)
  - We have a hygiene protocol for syncing visors.
- Bathroom
  - Disinfect all touched surfaces after use.
- Kitchen
  - Disinfect all touched surfaces after use.
  - Team members should bring their own dishes and utensils. If dishes or utensils are borrowed, clean them immediately after use.

## 6. Drop-off, pick-up and delivery practices and protocols

All tools, equipment, and supplies picked-up by or delivered for team members will be done with social distancing practices and will be disinfected prior to use.

## 7. Communications, training and supervision practices and protocols

This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was developed by 10 returning members of Team Echinacea via email and video conferences May 18 - June 5, 2020. The resulting draft was shared with all team members on 6 June 2020. We provided training starting June 14th. All team members will monitor how effective the program has been implemented and report through weekly meetings of the entire team. PIs and all team members will work through this new program together and update the training as necessary. This COVID-19 Preparedness Plan was updated on 19 June after discussions on 18 & 19 June, in which all members of **Team Echinacea** participated. On June 26 we updated the plan for persons who might test positive with input from all Team Members. It will be updated again, as necessary.

Certified by:

**Stuart**

**Team Echinacea coPI**

TO DO

Supplies Needed (more details necessary)

- Nicer paper towels
- Walkie-talkies (& batteries)

Infrastructure required

- Checklist for daily log of symptoms
- Rain and shade shelters for designated eating areas
- Cool potable water outside for drinking
- Bins for individually- assigned equipment
- Clean out and straighten g3 to facilitate moving
- Assigned chores (see below)
- Clipboard for reporting symptoms at beginning of day
- Clean surfaces in Hjelm house