

COVID-19 TRAVEL AND VISITOR POLICY

CORNELL UNIVERSITY ITHACA CAMPUS – Fall Semester 2020

July 16, 2020

Travel poses considerable risk during an infectious disease outbreak as individuals visiting locations with higher prevalence of disease may return to their homes with the pathogen. This has been demonstrated to be the case with COVID-19 as some of the spread of the disease around the globe came as a result of infected travelers passing on the virus in their local communities. Additionally, during travel it is often more difficult to maintain strict physical distancing for activities of daily living, especially if travel makes use of public transportation. Activities of daily living are also riskier during travel (for example, using shared restrooms, eating in restaurants, etc.). We combine the issues of “travel” and “visitors¹” in a single policy because the fundamental concern is that someone whose workplace is external to the Ithaca or Geneva campuses, or who travels outside the region may have contracted the virus or by spending time in a place with a high incidence of the virus, and may, therefore, upon return to or visiting Cornell, pose a risk to those already on our campus and to our community where prevalence has been low.

Although travel poses risk, some travel may be essential for work, and individuals may feel it necessary to travel for personal reasons. This policy does not restrict personal travel but does offer guidance and references governmental restrictions that should be considered when planning personal travel.

Not all travel poses the same level of increased risk. For example, a local camping trip and a cross-country train ride poses different risks. Although there are obviously others, examples of **high risk travel** include (a) travel to cities or regions with a high number of COVID-19 cases; and (b) travel using public modes of transportation, particularly through airport hubs, in planes, trains, subways, boats, ships and buses (note that regular commuting to and from campus by bus is not included in higher risk travel activities).

This policy covers three main areas: (a) all Ithaca campus staff and faculty, (b) visitors to our Ithaca campus, and (c) a description of a standing committee that will consider exceptions.

Ithaca Campus Staff and Faculty:

- All travel should follow state², federal (<https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel>) and international guidelines.
- Cornell’s international travel guidelines must be followed: <https://global.cornell.edu/travel/international-travel-guidelines-policy-and-recommendations>

¹ Visitors include but are not limited to alumni and parents and friends of students.

² On June 25, 2020, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo ordered (subject to civil penalty of up to \$10,000) new travel restrictions mandating individuals to self-quarantine for two weeks upon entering New York state from nine states named in the order. Importantly, this directive applies both to residents of the impacted states who travel to New York and New Yorkers who have traveled to the impacted states and are returning home to New York. The particular states that trigger the quarantine order will be continuously updated – states that have an infection rate of 10 per 100,000 residents or 10% or higher positivity rate over a 7-day rolling average fall into this category. Please note: The list of states subject to this quarantine will change; you should base your plans for quarantining out-of-state students on the most recent information available. New York will regularly update and publish a list of states for which the quarantine applies.

- Non-essential business travel is prohibited. Essential business travel requires approval by the dean of the college, appropriate vice president, or vice provost, and must follow current Cornell Policies governing travel generally.
- Personal travel that presents increased risk at this time is strongly discouraged. Nevertheless, members of our community may find it necessary to undertake such travel, and it is not prohibited by Cornell.
- Prior to committing to any travel, all employees should carefully review the most current CDC safety guidelines <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html> as well as any New York state guidance: <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>
- As always, employees must seek approval in advance from their supervisor for any time off.
- Employees who undertake personal travel should anticipate potential governmental quarantine restrictions if they will be traveling out of state. Advance guidance is important to anticipate the potential need for testing and possible additional time away from campus upon return. Such time should be built into employee planning, and shared with the relevant supervisor, department chair, or college dean as might be applicable.
- Leave must be requested with **any known return quarantine restrictions** incorporated. Given the length (14 days) of quarantine, upon return to New York from certain states, leave time may not be able to be approved for individuals who cannot work remotely from home. Any leave required to cover required quarantine will need to be covered by the employee or taken as unpaid leave³. Questions regarding New York state travel requirements as applied to essential workers should be discussed with HR.
- All travelers who have undertaken high risk travel are encouraged to obtain COVID-19 testing upon their return to Ithaca. Cornell staff and faculty will have access to testing through Cornell's testing program. Even if not subject to state quarantine requirements, travelers returning from high risk travel should make every effort to work remotely until it is clear that no infection has occurred.

Visitors to the Ithaca campus:

Cornell is accustomed to being an open and welcoming community with virtually no restrictions on who visits and travels through our Ithaca campus. Given the need to de-densify the campus to facilitate physical distancing, and the fact that visitors may unknowingly bring COVID-19 into the community, this policy imposes significant restrictions on visitors through at least December 31, 2020.

- No individual may enter Cornell campus facilities (including residence halls) unless they are (a) approved current students, staff, or faculty; (b) essential visitors as defined below; or (c) approved in writing by the provost, dean, vice president, or a delegate from one of those individuals, in consultation with the standing committee.

The quarantine will be self-administered but the Governor did raise the possibility of mandated quarantine and/or fines for those who do not voluntarily enter into quarantine. <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>

³ In exceptional circumstances, a request for paid leave should be made to the individual's HR representative and must be approved by the Vice President for HR. If the government mandated quarantine is imposed on a state after an individual has left for (or is in or returning from) that state, that individual will be paid during the time of the individual's quarantine.

- Individuals with a need to frequently visit the Cornell campus to provide services, teaching, or other in-person consultation may be proposed for recurring approval by the provost, dean, vice president, or a delegate from one of those individuals, in consultation with the standing committee.
- Essential visitors such as food and delivery workers, construction and service providers all covered under New York state regulations are allowed⁴.
- Individuals visiting Cornell service providers such as the veterinary hospital or clinics are permitted as set forth in applicable guidelines by those units.
- Other units whose services may involve campus access by non-Cornell students, faculty, or staff, must develop and post a unit access plan approved by the Standing Committee on Travel and Visitors.
- Long-term visitors must be approved in writing by the provost, dean, vice president, or a delegate of one of those individuals and will be subject to the daily check-in and will be expected to follow the guidance in the section above on “Ithaca Campus Staff and Faculty.”
- Outdoor spaces (e.g. the trail around Beebe Lake and the Botanic Gardens) currently remain open, but Cornell’s mask and physical distancing policy must be followed⁵.
- We recommend all travelers and visitors follow CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/travel-in-the-us.html>) and must follow New York State travel policies. <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/covid-19-travel-advisory>.

Standing Committee on Travel and Visitors During the Global Pandemic

Exceptions to this policy (including more- and less-restrictive measures) for any reason (including for specific subsets of staff and faculty in a particular college or unit) will be considered by request to the Standing Committee on Travel and Visitors. Such requests can be made after they have been endorsed by the appropriate college dean, vice president or vice provost.

⁴ <https://www.governor.ny.gov/news/governor-cuomo-issues-guidance-essential-services-under-new-york-state-pause-executive-order>

⁵ <https://ehs.cornell.edu/campus-health-safety/occupational-health/covid-19/face-covering-and-mask-requirements>