NOAA Small Boat Program

COVID-19 Guidance and Best Management Practices for NOAA Small Boat Operations

Version 2

Updated March 26, 2021

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PURPOSE:

This guidance supplements the NOAA phased reintegration policies and procedures by focusing specifically on the risks associated with COVID-19 in the context of NOAA small boat operations and offers recommendations and best management practices (BMPs) to protect the health and safety of persons embarked on NOAA small boats.

APPLICABILITY:

This guidance is applicable to NOAA small boat operations that have received prior approval under the criteria established by NOAA and Line Office policies for return to operations and clearance of engaged personnel. This guidance shall be taken in context with overarching CDC recommendations, NOAA and Line Office policies, and the State/Local guidance specific to locations where boat operations will occur. If there is a discrepancy among the various sources of guidance, the guidance that provides the greatest protections (i.e. most stringent) shall take precedence. A relaxed COVID-19 posture in a local area does not negate the BMP recommendations in this guidance document.

REASONS FOR UPDATE:

The initial guidance and best management practices issued in June 2020 did not address:

- Extended Duration Operations operations
- COVID-19 testing and the OMAO Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract
- COVID-19 vaccines

INTRODUCTION:

These best management practices are intended to support the NOAA small boat community in developing individual vessel and mission specific plans for operational risk assessment, management, and implementation.

Safe small boat operations are impacted by the potential risk of exposure to COVID-19 due to the proximity of persons onboard and by the additional requirements for PPE, distancing, reductions in crew size, modifications in mission protocols and additional procedures for sanitation. The best management practices in this document reflect current CDC guidance for reducing potential transmission of COVID 19 by means of separation, physical barriers, and sanitation of common surfaces.

It must be recognized that the risks and mitigations associated with the potential exposure to COVID 19 are in addition to the normal mitigation of risks identified in the SBP GAR risk assessment.

The health and safety of all personnel is the primary consideration. However, the implications of these emergency circumstances must not distract from compliance with established regulatory, safety, or operational requirements.

GUIDANCE AND BEST MANAGEMENT PRACTICES:

All asymptomatic personnel must assume COVID is present and follow prevention/mitigation frameworks.

The mitigations listed in this guidance depend on the personal responsibility of those assigned to small boat operations. All personnel must communicate clearly and early if circumstances prevent effective adherence to the guidance. **All personnel are empowered to communicate these things without fear of reprisal or disciplinary action.**

Personnel are encouraged to review the CDC list of comorbidity factors (Appendix C) and discuss any pre-existing medical conditions with their medical provider to understand the risks to their health of participating in small boat operations. **Each member of a boat crew must decide for themselves if the level of risk is acceptable.**

Further guidance can be found on the NOAA COVID-19 Information for Employees / Supervisor Resources webpage

It is recognized that the risk profile is unique to each small boat operation and the mitigation efforts necessary to protect crews from COVID-19 will vary. Mitigation strategies to consider include periods of isolation prior to an operational event (commonly referred to as Shelter In Place) and COVID-19 testing. For some operations, forming smaller working groups that do not interact with other working groups may be an effective measure to limit the spread in the event of an outbreak aboard a small boat The level of protection increases with each successive mitigation measure that is implemented. Small boat operations like single occupancy non-motorized vessels (kayak, Stand-up Paddle Board, canoe, etc) may only need to implement the Universal Guidance to provide adequate protections. Extended duration operations may require Universal Guidance, SIP, and testing. Other small boat operations that fall along the spectrum between these examples need to determine the appropriate combination of mitigation strategies for the vessel and mission. This effort may require additional support from subject matter experts, health professionals or elevation of risk acceptance to higher levels of authority.

Universal Guidance:

Follow CDC's guidance to protect yourself and others. These prevention/mitigation measures represent the minimum level of protection. Adherence to the Universal Guidance, to the greatest extent possible, is required during all phases of small boat operations.

- Wear an approved face covering (See Appendix F)
- Stay at least 6 feet away from people who don't live with you
- Avoid crowds
- Avoid poorly ventilated areas
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available
- Avoid touching face (specifically: eyes, mouth, and nose)
- Frequently sanitize commonly touched surfaces
- Watch for the following symptoms:
    - Fever
    - Cough
    - Headaches
    - Fatigue
    - Muscle or body aches
    - Loss of taste or smell
    - Sore throat
    - Nausea
    - Diarrhea
- Stay home if you are sick (except to get medical care)

Redefine Mission Parameters:

When planning small boat operations, consider ways to limit exposure such as: reducing number of embarked personnel to the minimum necessary to safely complete the mission; spacing out embarked personnel to the greatest extent possible; and limiting the duration of exposure by limiting the duration of the mission and mission scope or specific aspects of the mission that require personnel to be in closer proximity to one another. Risk assessments should take into consideration the added risks of crew fatigue and hazards associated with marginal crewing when redefining mission parameters and mission scope.

Cohorts and Working Groups:

Establishing cohorts or working groups that have limited interaction with one another is an effective method of limiting the potential spread of COVID-19, if an outbreak were to occur. This type of strategy may not be suitable for all small boat operations, but may be particularly beneficial when several boat crews operate a shared vessel or when there are higher numbers of embarked personnel on the boat for a particular operation.

Shelter in Place (SIP):

Implementing a period of SIP before an operational event will provide a greater degree of protection to boat crews by reducing the likelihood of COVID-19 entering the operational environment. SIP is to stay at home or your current place of residence (hotel) leaving only for essential activities related to urgent or emergency medical issues, food, and outdoor exercise. Guidance on the duration of SIP has been provided by CAPT Rathke, USPHS - Director, OMAO Office of Health Services see Appendix E.

COVID-19 Testing:

COVID-19 testing is another mitigation measure that can lower the risk of COVID-19 entering the work environment. Testing strategies may include: surveillance testing for the purpose of early detection, isolation, and contract tracing when effective SIP is not feasible; or diagnostic testing for the purpose of keeping SARS-CoV-2 out of the work environment when an effective SIP is feasible for all persons involved in a small boat operation.

When COVID-19 testing is implemented, SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR tests should be used. SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR testing is a real-time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test intended for the qualitative detection of nucleic acid material (DNA) that specifically identifies SARS-CoV-2. These tests are now widely available. OMAO has an indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract for COVID-19 testing and this IDIQ is available for use by all NOAA offices. More information about the OMAO IDIQ contract is available in Appendix D.

Vaccinations:

At present, vaccines are shown to prevent severe illness from COVID-19. More studies are needed to determine if vaccinated individuals are actually immune to contracting the virus and spreading it to others. Until additional information is available, vaccinations will not relax the COVID-19 mitigations contained in this guidance document.

Limitations on Vessel Operations

- Small boat operations must be compliant with State and local, NOAA, and Line Office policies.
- Vessels shall be crewed with the minimum number of persons required for safe operations and mission execution.
- Guests, volunteers, or persons not essential to the mission shall not be permitted on board
- Public onboard events are not allowed.

COVID Exposure Mitigation Equipment

- In accordance with DOC and NOAA Policy, all personnel must wear face coverings aboard NOAA Small Boats when in cabin spaces with multiple occupants and when on deck within a six-foot proximity to other persons. Personnel should wear face coverings at all times aboard small boats to the greatest extent practicable.
- Each person should bring their own double layered cloth face covering or surgical style mask. An adequate supply of single use, surgical style masks must be maintained aboard the vessel for persons that either do not have their own or as spares in the event that someone's face covering becomes wet, soiled, or otherwise compromised. The supply of single use, surgical style masks must support projected replacement needs.
- Disposable gloves should be used for shared workstations, and immediately removed and disposed of at completion of the task.
- When appropriate, each person shall also be assigned an individual Type III PFD, foul weather gear, hard hat, safety glasses, gloves, and ear protection to eliminate common or shared use PPE. Individuals are responsible for cleaning and disinfecting assigned equipment pre and post mission.

Before arriving at the vessel

- Personnel should complete the Self Check Questionnaire (see APPENDIX B) to identify influenza-like illness (ILI) or COVID-like illness (CLI) symptoms. Any personnel having ILI or CLI symptoms shall NOT report to the vessel. They shall notify their supervisor and self-quarantine. If symptoms persist, they should contact their medical provider and seek COVID-19 testing. Further guidance can be found on the NOAA COVID-19 Information for Employees / Supervisor Resources webpage
- Personnel that are symptom free and travel to the vessel should take separate vehicles (to the greatest extent practicable). When taking separate vehicles is not an option, passengers must follow CDC and GSA guidance, which include:
  - Wear face coverings
  - Maximize separation
  - Increase ventilation
  - Set the HVAC to draw air from outside (not recirculate cabin air)
- Personnel that use commercial air to travel to a field unit should not join the vessel until they have met the mitigation requirements identified for the mission.
- Consider impact of public exposure during trailering and travel in mission planning and mitigations

Pre-Mission Safety Brief

- Maintain social distance between crew members during the meeting.
- Personnel must self-certify eligibility, meaning that they are compliant with the required mitigation measures identified for the mission and that they are ILI/CLI symptom free and fit

for duty.
- Personnel should be encouraged to communicate potential COVID-19 exposures.
- All personnel should confirm their willingness to participate in boat operations.
- All personnel are empowered to excuse themselves from participation based upon their assessment of the implemented mitigations and personal health without fear of reprisal or disciplinary action. Personnel are encouraged to communicate their desire to excuse themselves from participation at the earliest opportunity to minimize disruption to planned operations.
- Confirm that all engaged persons have been cleared for participation by local unit policies and supervisors.
- Confirm that all engaged persons have self-administered a temperature check. Persons with an elevated temperature (100.4°F or greater) must be restricted from the mission.
- Elements of the established mission risk assessment (GAR) must be expanded to include implications of COVID-19 exposure mitigations
- Include specific instructions on equipment handling, maintaining social distancing, PPE, and sanitation protocols under COVID-19 exposure mitigation plans.
- Identify the impacts and challenges presented by COVID-19 exposure mitigations such as impact on communication, workload, and crew fatigue.
- Resolve any individual concerns or noted plan deficiencies that have been raised.

Interaction at public facilities

- Maintain social distancing and comply with local and state requirements
- Be cognizant of what you touch and maintain awareness for incidental exposure. Wash hands or use sanitizer wipes after each encounter.
- Prohibit the public from vessel access
- Limit interaction with outside support personnel (i.e. mechanics, service technicians, etc.). Outside support personnel must wear a face covering at all times while onboard, maintain social distancing, and stay off the boat if experiencing any COVID-like symptoms.

Routine Duration Operations (<12 hrs) - Onboard provisions and common areas

- Restrict vessel access for individuals that are non-compliant with Universal Guidance or any additional mitigation measures required for the mission.
- Restrict vessel access for individuals that present any symptoms or are suspect of having been exposed to COVID
- Create contingency plans in the event that health conditions indicate possible COVID 19 presence onboard. These plans must include provisions for cruise cancellation, personnel isolation and surveillance
- Each crewmember is responsible for field provisions for the duration of the mission.
- Water, food, snacks, etc., should be prepared and brought from home and isolated to the greatest extent possible.
- If coolers are required for provisions, each crewmember will have their own assigned cooler.
- The use of galley equipment should be restricted or eliminated. If equipment must be used, cleaning protocols must be implemented.
- Use of common spaces should be limited and scheduled to minimize the number of persons in a space at the same time. Concentration of shed virus in the air and the duration of exposure are critical elements to manage. Ventilation of common spaces is necessary.
- Schedules and protocols for cleaning and disinfecting common spaces, heads and lavatories

must be developed and strictly followed
- First Aid / CPR response inventory must be reviewed to ensure an adequate supply of PPE and biohazard supplies, including face shields, face masks, and gloves

Extended Duration Operations (>12 hrs) - Onboard provisions and common areas

The risk of exposure to COVID 19 is significantly increased during extended duration missions due to the inherent close proximity and prolonged contact of embarked persons. These missions typically require close proximity in cabin spaces, shared berthing and common galley service. Most SRV's and Class III boats that have extended duration capabilities do not have interior space that would allow full capacity under current distancing protocols. Extended duration (greater than 12 hours) missions that are deemed essential, and have Line Office approval, must incorporate Universal Guidance and should consider additional mitigations as listed in Table 1, to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 entering the operational environment.

The following steps are necessary for Extended Duration Operations. These are in addition to the steps necessary for Routine Duration Operations listed above.

- Limit berthing to single occupancy private spaces to the maximum extent practicable. If filling multiple bunks in a single berthing space, it may be necessary to implement additional levels of mitigation and consider elevating mission approvals to a higher level of risk acceptance authority
- Create plans for work space assignments and rotations that maximize separation of personnel
- Create plans for common area rotations (e.g. a Galley Plan to provide separation during meal service)
- Schedules and protocols for cleaning and disinfecting common spaces (galley, heads, work areas) that address shift changes/watch rotations

Crew and Personal Responsibility

- Follow Universal Guidance mitigation measures to the greatest extent possible during all phases of small boat operations
- Comply with all additional mitigation measures as required for the mission
- Conduct a self-assessment for ILI/CLI symptoms, potential COVID-19 exposures, and degree of comfort with mitigation plans and communicate concerns
- Self-administer a daily temperature check to identify fever conditions
- Self-certify eligibility, meaning compliance with the mitigation requirements of the mission, ILI/CLI symptom free, and fit for duty. If testing has been implemented, self-certifying eligibility means that test results are negative.
- Throughout the course of the mission, everyone onboard must self-evaluate and communicate any changes in their health or their comfort with the planned evolution
- Participation in a COVID-19 testing program is encouraged
- Maintain minimum duration in shared enclosed spaces
- Individuals are responsible for cleaning of personal PPE and assigned gear
- Use sanitizing wipes before touching commonly touched surfaces (door handles, gas pumps, navigation equipment, controls, science gear, etc.)

Emergency procedures

Non-life-threatening injury:

- Person requiring care should make every effort to provide self-treatment.
- If aid is needed, both the injured person and the person rendering aid should don PPE to include: gloves, face shield, and face mask.
- Personnel not involved in the medical treatment should maintain the appropriate 6 feet of physical distancing.

Life threatening injury:

- Use the minimum effective number of persons to provide treatment.
- Emergency Medical Services (EMS) should be notified immediately.
- The person(s) rendering aid should don all appropriate PPE to include: gloves, face shield, and face mask.
- If CPR is required:
  - A bag valve mask (BVM) should be used as the primary breathing method, if available
  - A pocket mask should be used if BVM is unavailable.
  - Avoid Mouth-to-mouth during CPR unless other options are unavailable and chest compressions alone are ineffective

Sanitation

- Boats must be supplied with disinfecting cleaning supplies and hand washing/disinfecting supplies
- Vessel operators will be responsible for ensuring that daily disinfection and cleaning of all common areas and high touch surfaces is completed. Use the appropriate cleaning product: https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2
- Shared tools, controls and instrumentation must be disinfected before and after each use when used by multiple individuals.
- Type III PFD's should be hand washed/rinsed with soap/water, and dried thoroughly follow guidelines detailed: http://www.lifejacketassociation.org/life-jackets/covid-19-virus-cleaning-storing-your-pfd/

Special Considerations for Primary Mission Essential Functions and Emergency Response Operations:

Programs that have Primary Mission Essential Functions (PMEF) that involve emergency response or law enforcement operations may not be able to fully implement some mitigation measures, (e.g. SIP) prior to commencing emergency response operations. These Programs must perform a risk assessment specific to emergency response operations and develop a plan that documents the mitigation measures that will be taken to protect embarked personnel under these special circumstances. Ensure all stakeholders are involved in mission planning, risk assessments and mitigations. VOC, OIC, SBO, crew, PI, scientists, UDS (if dive operation) lab leadership, LESCO and Line Office approval authorities should be involved. It is recommended to elevate this risk acceptance to a higher level of authority.

Periodic Review and Update:

The SBSB will review this document at least quarterly. Updates will be issued if/when necessary.

Suspense of COVID-19 Mitigation Efforts:
COVID-19 mitigation efforts will be required until SARS-CoV-2 is fully contained in the United States.

APPENDIX A: COVID-19 EXPOSURE RISK ASSESSMENT

The following GAR matrix is provided as a tool to assess the relative risks presented by personnel encounters and proximity; duration of encounters and the environment where the encounter takes place; and risks associated with various mission profiles such as total duration of operations, remoteness of operations, and time to emergency medical services. The Risk Assessment assumes compliance with Universal Guidance during all phases of small boat operations.

Where feasible, procedures should be modified, and engineering controls implemented so that tasks may be safely completed by a single person. Mission and vessel specific GAR assessments must further refine this general guidance.

Table 1 - Mitigation Strategies

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D	Column E
Redefine Mission Parameters - density, duration, and proximity	**Cohorts and Working Groups -** divide larger groups into smaller groups and limit their interactions.	**Shelter in Place** - limit potential exposure before a small boat operation in an effort to keep COVID-19 out of the operational environment.	**COVID-19 Testing -** limit likelihood of COVID-19 in the operational environment through diagnostic testing and early detection through surveillance testing	**Vaccination -** limits the risk of severe illness for individuals that have chosen to get vaccinated.

Note: Mitigation Strategies in columns A - D may be implemented from a management position. Column E is a mitigation strategy that may only be implemented by choice of the individual. Vaccinations are not a mitigation strategy that may be implemented from a management position under current NOAA guidance.

Guidance for using the COVID-19 Operational Risk Assessment tool

Element A - For Element A, a personnel encounter occurs between 2 people. For example, if there are 4 persons onboard, e.g. Persons A, B, C, and D, then there is potential for 6 encounters - A/B, A/C, A/D, B/C, B/D, and C/D. Not every person will necessarily have an encounter with all embarked persons, and likewise, multiple encounters may occur among embarked persons while completing assigned work. It is necessary to consider how each embarked person may interact with the other embarked persons and evaluate each encounter in terms of proximity and duration. Choose a value from the matrix that represents the number of expected

encounters and best represents the expected proximity of those encounters. The encounters from Element A are further evaluated in Element B

Element B - For Element B, evaluate each encounter in terms of the duration of the encounter and the environment in which the encounter will occur.

Element C - For Element C, choose the applicable mission profile from the column on the left and consider mission specific factors that may elevate the risk should a COVID medical emergency present while underway. Factors may include total duration of the mission, remoteness, reliability of communications, time to emergency medical services, etc. Choose a value from the provided range that best represents the added risk factors specific to the mission profile.

Element D - For Element D, record the mitigation strategies that have been implemented from Table 1. Each mitigation strategy reduces the residual risk by some degree. Minimum Mitigation is the implementation of 1 additional mitigation strategy from Table 1, Columns A-D; Moderate Mitigation is the implementation of 2 additional mitigation strategies from Table 1, Columns A-D; and Extensive Mitigation is the implementation of 3 or more additional mitigation strategies from Table 1, Columns A-D. Risk reduction will vary based on the mitigation strategies and the combination of mitigation strategies that are implemented. Choose a value that best represents the level of effort to reduce risk from the corresponding ranges provided.

The total of Elements A, B, and C indicate the Unmitigated Risk Score, i.e. risk prior to implementing additional mitigation strategies (see Table 1). Element D represents risk reduction as a result of mitigation strategies implemented from Table 1. The score from Element D is subtracted from the total of Elements A, B & C to provide a value for Residual Risk.

Unmitigated Risk Scores and Residual Risk Scores that are in the red sector indicate a need to re-evaluate the mission plan and consider additional engineering or administrative controls, PPE, or mitigation strategies from Table 1. Multiple iterations through the COVID-19 Operational Risk Assessment tool may be necessary to effectively mitigate risk to an acceptable level.

Ensure all stakeholders are involved in mission planning, risk assessments and mitigations. VOC, OIC, SBO, crew, PI, scientists, UDS (if dive operation), lab leadership, and Line Office approval authorities should be involved.

NOAA Small Boat: COVID-19 Operational Risk Assessment

*Assumes compliance with Universal Guidance in all phases of small boat operations

Element A: Personnel and Proximity		**Score:**	
	Number of Personnel Encounters* An encounter is between 2 people		
Proximity	**0 - 2**	**3 - 6**	**>6**
<6 ft	5 - 8	6 - 9	7 - 10
12 to 6 ft	2 - 4	3 - 5	4 - 6
>12 ft	1 - 3	2 - 4	3 - 5

Element B: Duration and Environment		**Score:**	
	Duration of Personnel Encounters		
Environment	**<5 min**	**5 - 15min**	**>15 min**
Confined Space Limited/poor ventilation	3 - 4	5 - 6	7 - 10
Large or Well Ventilated Space	2 - 3	3 - 4	5 - 6
Outdoors	1 - 2	2 - 3	3 - 4

Element C: Mission Profile		**Score:**	
	Additional Risk Factors such as total duration of operations, remoteness, time to emergency medical services, etc.		
Mission Profile	**Additional Risk Factors**		
Extended Duration Operations (>12 hrs) Shared Enclosed Spaces	6 - 10		
Routine Duration Operations (<12hrs) Shared Enclosed Spaces	4 - 10		
Routine Duration Operations (<12hrs) No Shared Enclosed Spaces	2 - 6		
Routine Duration Operations (<12hrs) No Enclosed Spaces	1 - 5		

Instructions: Add the scores for Elements A,B&C.	**Green (Go, Acceptable Risk) 4 - 9**
	Amber (Elevated Risk) 10 - 19
	Red (No Go, High Risk) 20 - 30 Reevaluate Mission Parameters and Consider Implementing Additional Mitigations from Table 1, Columns A-D.

Element D: Risk Reduction Through Mitigation		Reduction Value:	
	Risk Reduction Through Mitigation Measures		
Additional Mitigations (List implemented mitigation measures)	Minimum Additional Mitigation	Moderate Additional Mitigation	Extensive Additional Mitigation
	1 - 5	3 - 7	4 - 9
Instructions: Add the scores for Elements A, B & C to get the Unmitigated Risk Score. Subtract the value of Element D to get the Residual Risk Score.	Element A		
	Element B		
	Element C		
	Unmitigated Risk Score		
	Element D		
	Residual Risk Score		
	Green (Go, Acceptable Risk) 4 - 9		
	Amber (Elevated Risk) 10 - 19		
	Red (No Go, High Risk) 20 - 30 Reevaluate Mission Parameters and Consider Implementing Additional Mitigations from Table 1, Columns A- D. Elevate Mission Approval to Higher Authority		

APPENDIX B: SELF CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE

COVID 19 SELF CHECK QUESTIONNAIRE

Prior to reporting to the vessel each time, please conduct a self-check to screen for possible COVID19 symptoms.

Do you currently have or had these symptoms in the last 14 days?

- Cough---------- Yes / No
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing---------- Yes / No
- Fever---------- Yes / No
- Chills---------- Yes / No
- Muscle pain---------- Yes / No
- Sore throat---------- Yes / No
- New loss of taste or smell ---------- Yes / No
- Have you been in contact with anyone believed to be infected with COVID-19 (presumptive or confirmed)? --Yes / No

If Yes to any of the above, even if mild; DO NOT report to the vessel, you should notify your supervisor and VOC, self-quarantine, call your medical provider, and seek COVID-19 testing.

Further guidance can be found on the NOAA COVID-19 Information for Employees / Supervisor Resources webpage at:
https://sites.google.com/a/noaa.gov/covid/supervisor-resources

APPENDIX C: Comorbidity Factors and Increased Risk of Hospitalization

CDC maintains a list of medical conditions that increase the risk of severe COVID-19 illness: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-with-medical-conditions.html

Risk for hospitalization if you have any of these conditions and get COVID-19 compared to people without the condition(s)[1]

Asthma	Hyper-tension	Obesity (BMI ≥ 30)	Diabetes	Chronic Kidney Disease	Severe Obesity (BMI ≥ 40)	2 Conditions *	3 or More Conditions *
1.5x	3x	3x	3x	4x	4.5x	4.5x	5x

*Conditions include asthma, obesity, diabetes, chronic kidney disease, severe obesity, coronary artery disease, history of stroke and COPD.

1 Ko JY, Danielson ML, Town M, Derado G, Greenlund KJ, Daily Kirley P, Alden NB, Yousey-Hindes K, Anderson EJ, Ryan PA, Kim S, Lynfield R, Torres SM, Barney GR, Bennett NM, Sutton M, Talbot HK, Hill M, Hall AJ, Fry AM, Garg S, Kim L; COVID-NET Surveillance Team. Risk Factors for COVID-19-associated hospitalization: COVID-19-Associated Hospitalization Surveillance Network and Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

APPENDIX D: COVID TESTING and OMAO IDIQ CONTRACT INFORMATION

SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR testing, is a real-time Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR) test intended for the qualitative detection of nucleic acid material (DNA) that specifically identifies SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. Specimens for this type of test are collected from a mucous membrane (saliva, nasal, throat, etc.). Results from SARS-CoV-2 RT-PCR testing may be available within 24 - 48 hours. The accuracy of this test is the highest of the various diagnostic tests currently available. There are other types of testing available, including tests that offer rapid results (approx. 20 minutes). These rapid tests do not have an acceptable accuracy and are not approved.

OMAO has established an IDIQ contracting vehicle for COVID-19 Testing which is available to all NOAA Line Offices. Specific details about ordering against the IDIQ are provide below:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
NATIONAL OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

ACQUISITION AND GRANTS OFFICE
EASTERN ACQUISITION DIVISION

Ordering Guide

OMAO'S COVID-19 Testing and Support Services Multiple Award IDIQs

July 2020

Introduction

This guide contains the information needed to properly use the Office of Marine and Aviation Operations (OMAO) COVID-19 Testing and Support Services multiple award Indefinite Delivery, Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contracts to award a Task Order (TO). The guide contains general information, instructions on placing Orders, roles and responsibilities of key points of contact, how to prepare a proper requirements package for ordering and direction in initiating and managing Orders. This document is applicable to all NOAA line offices and individuals with authority to award and administer Orders against this contract. Ordering authority for these multiple award IDIQs is limited to only members of NOAA's Acquisition and Grants Office (AGO), Eastern Acquisition Division (EAD).

Scope of the IDIQ

The objective of this IDIQ is to provide COVID-19 Testing and Support Services to OMAO, or other NOAA Lines Office as dictated by the requirement. Only Firm-Fixed-Price (FFP) Orders may be issued in accordance with this IDIQ for COVID-19 Testing and Support Services. Use of this IDIQ is not mandatory, but is highly suggested to reduce procurement costs and streamline the acquisition process.

Award was made to two vendors, BioIQ, Inc. and Lab24, Inc. on July 22, 2020.

Period of Performance

This IDIQ is awarded with a two year ordering period as follows:
-Ordering Period 1: Date of Award through July 31, 2021
-Ordering Period 2: August 1, 2021 through July 31, 2020

COVID-19 Testing and Support Services IDIQ Points of Contact

Direct all questions and comments to the individuals listed below. To receive a copy of the IDIQ please submit a request to the following individuals:

IDIQ Contracting Officer
Andrew Hildebrandt
Branch Chief and Supervisory Contracting Officer
Phone: 757-441-6865
Email: andrew.hildebrandt@noaa.gov

IDIQ Contracting Officer
Ashley Perry
Team Lead Contracting Officer
Phone: 757-364-6903
Email: ashley.perry@noaa.gov

COVID IDIQ Contract Specialist
Jennifer Peters
Senior Contract Specialist
Phone: 757-441-6475
Email: Jennifer.Peters@noaa.gov

Purchase Limitations

Prior to the initiation of a TO, program offices are required to verify the remaining purchasing capacity with the COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs listed above and obtain written consent prior to placing an order:

Minimum Order
When the Government requires supplies or services covered by this contract in an amount of less than $2,500.00 the Government is not obligated to purchase, nor is the contractor obligated to furnish, those supplies or services under the contract.

Maximum Order
The contractor is not obligated to honor--

(1) Any order for a single item in excess of $2,000,000.00

(2) Any order for a combination of items in excess of $2,000,000.00 or

(3) A series of orders from the same ordering office within seven calendar (7) days that together call for quantities exceeding the limitation in paragraph (b)(1) or (2) of this section.

Issuing Task Orders

Authority:

Any warranted Contracting Officer (CO) belonging to NOAA AGO's Eastern Acquisition Division may order against this contract within their delegated warrant authority, provided the IDIQ does not exceed the $2,000,000.00 limit. OMAO's requirements will take precedent under this vehicle, as they are the primary user for which these vehicles were intended.

All COs seeking to place orders against this contract consent to the terms and conditions set forth in the IDIQ. Once an Order is awarded under this contract, a signed copy of the Order must be submitted to the COVID-19 Testing and Support Services Point of Contacts (POCs) (As previously mentioned, the above listed COs must be contacted prior to the initiation of an Order to ensure limits are not exceeded). A certified Contracting Officer Representative (COR) from the representative NOAA Line Office must be identified for each Order.

Roles and Responsibilities

COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs:
The individuals have the overall responsibility for managing and administering the IDIQ, as well as the following:

o Serving as a general informational POC for COVID-19 Testing and Support Services IDIQ users
o Providing administrative procedures guidance for placing orders
o Monitoring the ordering period, the volume of orders, and the contract maximum

Order CO:
The Order CO is responsible for the following:

o Serves as the local contracting focal point for coordination and award of the Order,
o Ensures TO requirements are within the IDIQ scope, rates and terms and conditions,
o Ensures certain TO request packages are properly prepared and provide all required information,
o Coordinates TO requests with the COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs, in order to monitor and track purchasing limits,
o Provides copies to the COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs of all TO awarded against this contract,
o Prepares vendor performance assessment reports as required by CORs.

COR:
This authority typically encompasses the following:

o Accomplish day-to-day surveillance of vendor performance,
o Inform the CO of any potential performance problems ,
o Prepare and submit to the CO a written evaluation of the vendor's performance upon, completion of a TO, as necessary,
o Review invoices in comparison to actual performance accomplished and route to IDIQ COR for payment and Order COR evidence of confirmed approval via email.

COVID-19 Testing and Support Services IDIQ Vendor:
The vendor under this contract is responsible for the following:

o Submitting monthly summary reports to the respective COR and CO that updates the status of all Orders submitted and currently in progress,
o Guaranteeing performance and deliverables meet the requirements set forth in the primary contract and each consequent Order,
o Performing work and providing the services in accordance with the terms and conditions enclosed in the IDIQ,
o Submitting quotes in accordance with the request from the ordering office.

The Requirements Process and Placing Orders:

Order Requirements

At a minimum, the requirements should be organized to include:

o Description of the overall requirement to include number of tests required
o Delivery location
o Delivery Date
o Deliverable schedule (if applicable)
o Applicable performance standards
o Any special requirements (e.g. special shipping instructions, test results due date, etc.)

Order IGE

The Independent Government Estimate (IGE) is developed primarily for funding and budgeting purposes, as well as determining an estimated cost magnitude for the order. This should be based on the published price list and an estimate of the items necessary to complete requirements.

Ordering Procedures

The ordering CO must solicit responses to requirements from the vendors in written or verbal form. A formal purchase request should be prepared and issued for each requirement. The request and supporting documentation should clearly define the scope of the requirements. At a minimum, a properly formatted Statement of Work (SOW) or Specification and IGE should be included in the request package.

1. Purchase Request

This should be prepared by the program office and submitted to the ordering CO. It must include a SOW or Specification, and IGE, points of contact and any other supplemental documentation critical to the requirement.

2. Solicitation

Upon approval and receipt of the purchase request, the CO may then solicit the vendors for a quotation. If in writing, the solicitation package should include a cover letter with all applicable deadlines, points of contact (including the anticipated COR), the SOW or Specifications and any other applicable documents.

The quote shall describe the items the vendor will provide to meet the SOW or specifications and how the vendor will meet the delivery schedule or period of performance.

3. Evaluations

The Government will review the quotes and comment as necessary. The government also reserves the right to award Orders without discussions. Once

analysis is complete, award may be made to the vendor who has been determined to be in the best value to the Government in accordance with the solicitation.

Order Administration and Monitoring:

The COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs are responsible for administration and management of the IDIQ. Under no circumstances shall any understanding, agreement, modification or any other action in deviation from the terms and conditions of the IDIQ be effective or binding upon the Government. The COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs, are available to answer questions concerning planning and developing Orders, review and approval procedures, and can provide overall guidance, oversight and general information regarding this contract.

TO Administration
All administration associated with individual TO will be performed by the CO issuing the Order. Additionally, all official order files will be maintained at each ordering office.

Performance Assessment Reports

In accordance with FAR 42.1502(b), "Agencies shall prepare an evaluation of contractor performance for each contract that exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold."

For the IDIQ As required, vendor performance will be monitored and entered into the Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS). On each order meeting the simplified acquisition threshold (currently $250,000.00), a vendor performance report will be generated in CPARS format and combined with all other orders into one CPARS report. This one CPARS report will record vendor performance at the contract level covering all orders under the IDIQ.

For Orders Therefore, at the completion of each Order that exceeds $250,000.00, the issuing CO shall complete a vendor performance report in the CPARS format and forward it to the COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs. Completed reports will be kept in the primary IDIQ file. The preparation and completion of these reports is the responsibility of the ordering CO, but should include input from the assigned COR.

Invoicing and Payment
Invoicing instructions shall be included in each TO.

IDIQ Tracking Log
The COVID-19 Testing and Support Services POCs herein will maintain the vehicle tracking log, including details from all issued task orders.

APPENDIX E: ELEMENTS OF AN EFFECTIVE SHELTER IN PLACE

Guidance in Appendix E was provided by CAPT Rathke, USPHS - Director, OMAO's Office of Health Services (OHS)

Shelter in place means staying at home or your current residence (*hotel*), leaving only for essential activities related to urgent or emergency medical issues, food, and outdoor exercise. The SIP residence must be close enough to the vessel's location to drive safely to and from that location with no stops. Before beginning SIP, it is necessary to plan accordingly, such as fueling vehicles and meal preparations. Do not visit restaurants, bars, hair salons, barbershops, or gyms. Do not participate in public gatherings or social functions. Do not host events or entertain people in your home or other quarters. If you live with other people, those people must also comply with SIP criteria to the maximum extent possible. Do not SIP with people that don't otherwise ordinarily reside in your household. Prepare food at home or use a restaurant's curbside or home delivery service. Maintain safe personal and environmental hygiene by frequently washing hands and disinfecting surfaces and objects you often touch. Maintain 6 feet social distancing and wear an authorized two-layered cloth face mask over your nose and mouth outside your residence. Wash your hands immediately when you return to your residence.
The duration of SIP is dependent upon the implementation of COVID-19 PCR testing.

> If a COVID-19 test is completed on day 4 or 5 of SIP, then the SIP can safely be 7 days long. Testing cannot occur before day 4 of SIP to be effective. Daily self-medical screening per the small boat medical screening form should be completed throughout the SIP with any "yes" answers reported to the supervisor. When getting tested, there should be no stops at any location during travel to the testing site. Avoid sharing taxi cabs, Uber/Lyft, rental cars. Avoid public transportation (buses and local train services) if at all possible. Hospitals reserve the use of N95 masks and surgical masks but, if available, can provide added protection during travel. Upon arrival at the test site, avoid unnecessary interaction with others, and follow the testing administrators' safety protocols.
>
> If testing is not implemented, a full 14-day SIP in the general location that the small boat operations will occur with daily self-medical screening per the small boat medical screening form should be completed throughout the SIP with any "yes" answers reported to the supervisor.

APPENDIX F: EXECUTIVE ORDER 13991

Pursuant to Executive Order 13991 - Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask Wearing, all individuals inside NOAA workplaces are required to follow Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) implementation guidance.

In accordance with these policies, as well as DOC guidance provided on February 3, 2020, employees and on-site contractors must wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth, and is in accordance with any current CDC and OSHA guidance. CDC recommends the following: Non-medical disposable masks, masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face), masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton), masks made with tightly woven fabric (i.e., fabrics that do not let light pass through when held up to a light source), masks with two or three layers, and masks with inner filter pockets. Novelty/non-protective masks, masks with ventilation valves, or face shields as a substitute for masks are not permitted.

Appropriate masks should be worn consistently. Masks should be worn in any common areas or shared workspaces (including open floor plan office space, cubicle embankments, and conference rooms). Masks should also be worn in outdoor shared spaces when physical distancing cannot be maintained. Individuals may remove masks in limited circumstances consistent with CDC guidelines, for example when an individual is alone in an office with floor to ceiling walls and a closed door or for a limited time when eating or drinking and maintaining distancing in accordance with CDC guidelines.

Examples of Acceptable and Unacceptable Face Masks	
Acceptable	**Unacceptable**
Non-medical disposable masks	Scarfs or ski masks
Masks that fit properly (snugly around the nose and chin with no large gaps around the sides of the face)	Masks that do not fit properly (large gaps, too loose or too tight)
Masks made with breathable fabric (such as cotton)	Masks made from materials that are hard to breathe through (such as plastic or leather)
Masks made with tightly woven fabric	Masks made from loosely woven fabric or are knitted
Masks with two or three layers of fabric	Masks with one layer of fabric
Masks with inner filter pockets	Masks with exhalation valves, ports or vents
	Other types of face protection (e.g., face shields)

APPENDIX G: REFERENCES

This guidance draws on information provided by:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) COVID-19 website (https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/)
- Executive Order 13991 - Protecting the Federal Workforce and Requiring Mask-Wearing (https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/presidential-actions/2021/01/20/executive-order-protecting-the-federal-workforce-and-requiring-mask-wearing/)
- NOAA OHCS website (https://sites.google.com/noaa.gov/ohcs/current-event)
- The NOAA COVID-19 Information for Employees webpage (https://sites.google.com/a/noaa.gov/covid/home)
- Marine Health Services COVID-19 Outbreak Management Plan (https://drive.google.com/drive/u/2/folders/19CIIRMg-GXYlXW-lAgfPLi1-yV75aAi0)