



EFMLS / EFAC Suggested Mask Protocol

Hi all..... I think it's an understatement to say that Covid-19 has certainly thrown a monkey wrench into our collective mineral worlds this year! We've all been affected by the cancelation of mineral shows, travel restrictions, masks and social distancing, and above all, not being able to meet as a group and participate in regular society activities! Some of us have been able to be out collecting while others have had to isolate to stay safe and well.

We may all be in the same ocean, but we definitely aren't all in the same boat! With that said, we felt it was necessary to come up with some kind of **mask protocol** for field trips. The Eastern Field Access Council (EFAC) was asked to come up with something that all mineral societies could **adopt and adapt either whole or in part** to their field collecting practices. The one thing that we do know is that conditions everywhere are not the same. For example, some relatively remote areas are much less affected than other more populated ones. That's why I mentioned **adopt and adapt** to these new protocols when it comes to mask wearing on field trips. I think it's safe to say that masks and social distancing are the rule all across the country and it certainly is the case in New England where I'm from.

It's the belief of the EFAC that if a mineral society is going to be running field trips then it's up to the leadership and field trip coordinators to have a policy in place for masks and social distancing. We all know that our hobby isn't one where we are in close proximity while we are digging and hammering on rocks. However, at times we do tend to congregate, and these are the times we need to be aware, mask up, and social distance. When we meet up at a site, gather for pre trip safety talks, stop for breaks, or show each other our specimens, we need to remember that we are in a new time and we all need to be careful!

I think it makes it easier to wrap our heads around these new safety practices if we look at it like just another piece of personal protective equipment (PPE). If you wouldn't go collecting without your safety glasses then you shouldn't go without your mask. There will be times you need your mask and times you don't. We can't get into a working quarry without a hard hat, steel-toed shoes and safety glasses so let's just add a mask to the list, it's in your car already anyway!

We are all responsible for safety and the betterment of our recreation so bring your mask and set the example, we'll all be better for it. Let's not have the next outbreak be from members of the same mineral society!!

Respectfully,
Andrew Brodeur, EFAC Chair