

One-Sheet For Visual Journalists Covering Covid-19, by The New York Times

CONSIDER THE ASSIGNMENT: IS IT ESSENTIAL?

Any shoot that requires a photographer/videographer to be in the field will be carefully considered and discussed with your editor. We should have conversations about the best and safest way to report the stories we ask you to shoot, and we should ask ourselves what we can do to minimize risks, including using protective gear and maintaining safe distances, or re-thinking the logistics of the shoot. Your editor can consult with our security advisers if there are particular questions or concerns about how to best mitigate risk, or whether an assignment should not be pursued. Before undertaking any work independently that you intend to submit to The Times, please contact an editor to discuss the assignment and the precautions you will take. As a photojournalist, it is important that you do your own risk assessment and never take an assignment that poses unacceptable risk to you. If you are uncomfortable for any reason with a reporting assignment, please simply tell your editor. You will not be pushed to go or penalized in any way for not accepting the assignment. Your decision will be respected, just as it will be with any risky assignment. Should you accept any assignment, here are some recommendations that can help you stay safe as you shoot.

PRE-SHOOT ASSESSMENT AND PREPARATION:

- Anyone conducting field reporting should be using N95 masks and nitrile gloves. The NYT will supply enough PPE for the following conditions:
 - 1) 1 set to practice donning/doffing (mandatory). Refer to [this](#) and [this](#) for demos.
 - 2) Enough sets for duration of assignment
 - 3) 1 backup set in case of PPE failure or contamination
- If you are reporting or shooting in an area with known community transmission (NYC, Seattle, New Orleans, etc. this list will grow/change) you should assume everyone you come into contact with could have COVID-19 and operate accordingly. That means photographers/videographers are required to wear gloves and N95 or level 3 masks. Our Occupational Health medical specialist recommends that these N-95 and comparable Level 3 masks be changed on a daily basis, or sooner if the one you are using gets damaged, wet or soiled. You are also strongly advised to [shave facial hair](#) to avoid inadvertent exposure through a compromised mask seal.
- On stories that involve known risk -- including the potential of interacting with a confirmed patient, reporting in a medical facility with confirmed cases, or any other high risk facility or location our security advisers will give guidance on safety protocol and additional protective gear required.

- For photographers: All pertinent details of your assignment should be in your Trax assignment, including detail about whether any subject has been feeling unwell or has recently recovered from any illness. For videographers: all pertinent details of your assignment should be summarized in a call sheet detailing where you will be going and who you will be speaking with and should be approved by an EP before you deploy. For high-risk assignments, a WhatsApp or Slack group for each assignment will be created, including your editor/EP and a security adviser. Send updates on movements there.
- Make sure that you have appropriate health insurance coverage. You may be eligible for some coverage under a Times travel insurance policy if an assignment requires you to travel. Check with your editor.
- Review the personal protective equipment you have access to with your editor or EP. If you think you need additional protective equipment for your shoot please get in touch with your editor or EP ASAP. Your editor can facilitate the procurement of appropriate PPE.
- If you expect to encounter or photograph/film someone who is currently infected, was previously infected or thinks they might be infected with COVID-19, you must inform your photo editor, or your EP and seek additional approval before you shoot. Additionally, shooting inside any medical facility or other high-risk location requires special permission, and must be cleared at the highest levels in the newsroom. DO NOT pursue this access without the clearance of your editor or EP. These are coverage targets that we are pursuing on a very limited basis, and these settings require full protective gear, which takes time and clearance to procure.

DURING SHOOT:

- Photograph/film or conduct interviews from outside whenever possible, and shoot from a distance, standing at least 6 feet away from subjects and colleagues.
- Use a boom mic when conducting interviews. Do not use hand held or lav mics without prior approval from your EP, which will include a protocol to sanitize mics.
- Avoid shooting indoors (offices, restaurants, homes, businesses etc.) If you need approval for an indoor shoot, please contact your editor who will consult with our security advisers.
- Protect yourself when you are out shooting:
 - Use the screen instead of the viewfinder if possible to avoid touching the camera to your face
 - Avoid touching surfaces
 - Wear disposable nitrile gloves if possible

- Wear a mask if possible
- Carry hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes if possible
- Do not shake hands
- Be aware of your unconscious habits when shooting (leaning on surfaces, putting bags on floors, putting your cellphone on various surfaces, etc.)
- Wash and/or disinfect your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face, nose and eyes
- Avoid touching live animals or food prep areas.
- Wear glasses instead of contact lenses, if possible.
- Avoid shooting in confined spaces with anyone, including colleagues, even while outside (small courtyards/backyards etc.)
- Maintain a record of who you have come into contact with, including contact information, so that if you need to reach them to inform them of potential COVID-19 exposure you can.

AFTER SHOOT:

- Doff PPE appropriately. Refer to [this](#) and [this](#) for demos.
- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. Take a shower if possible.
- Do not wear your shoes inside your own home without disinfecting them.
- Remove clothes you've worn outside and wash them as soon as possible
- At the end of shoots, clean all equipment with disinfectant wipes or solution, as well as your cell phone, laptop, and any other personal devices you might have used. [A guide on disinfecting your camera gear is here.](#) [And a guide on disinfecting your phone is here.](#)
- If you can avoid going near the people in your life who are high-risk, you should. Cut physical contact, for the time being, with older and/or at-risk family members and friends.
- If you feel unwell, or affected by what you think might be Covid-19, contact your editor immediately, no matter time of day.
- Self Isolation: You will be required to self quarantine for at least 7 days after the assignment if any of the following occurs:
 - Pathogen exposure - someone coughs or expels bodily fluids onto you
 - PPE failure - you identify a PPE failure that was not remedied promptly - i.e your gloves had a tear that you didn't notice
 - Covid Symptoms - you experience any Covid symptoms following the assignment

Additional Background

- [Safeguard While Reporting and General Tips](#)

HAZARD PAY AND QUARANTINE PAY

Discuss with your editor prior to the assignment whether you are eligible for hazard pay for assignments that entail risk and for day rates during quarantine should you be required to self-isolate.