I. Overview
The information contained in the Weis Earth Science Museum (WESM) Safe Reopening Plan represents the best practices and recommendations for operating the geology museum during the COVID-19 pandemic.

II. Applicability:
This SOP is applicable to the WESM employees, volunteers, and visitors.

III. Procedure: Moderate Alert Protections in Place
A. Procedure/Process
   a. Moderate Alert Protections will be implemented when the risk of infection is present but before reaching dangerous levels requiring closure.

   b. The museum’s hours will be adjusted to minimize individuals on the UWO Fox Cities Campus. This will mean opening only on Saturdays initially. Saturdays are chosen because they are historically the museum’s most visited day, but also limit contact between the visitors and university students during class hours. Under this plan, February 6th will be the first day the museum can officially open.

   c. “No contact” visitor interactions will be implemented. The gift shop will be closed and locked. Entry fees will be taken as a recommended donation through a donation box at the entrance of the exhibit hall. Employees will focus on cleaning and keeping guests spaced apart.

   d. No guided tours will be allowed during this time. Groups will be limited to family-groups (individuals assumed to be living together) and no more than 15 guests will be allowed in the museum at any time (~1 person per 300 sq feet).
e. No volunteers will be allowed to work at the museum during this time. Employees will be limited to no more than two.

f. There will be no special events in person during this time.

B. Face Covering Requirement

All staff, volunteers, and guests will be required to wear masks. Minimum 2-ply cloth masks are required to be worn by all employees. Since food and drink is not allowed in the museum, masks should never be removed in the public spaces. Employees and volunteers are not safety officers and are not expected to discipline the public for violating the rules outlined above. The Director will check for compliance for employees and visitors. Individuals not adhering to this policy will be asked to comply or leave the museum.

C. Physical Distancing Parameters

Interactions with the public is the highest risk activity for all employees. Employees will be asked to maintain a six-foot distance between all visitors, make no physical contact with visitors (unless it is an emergency), and instruct the public on proper procedures to ensure maximum safety during their visit. Visitors and staff will be asked to stay within the hall nearest to the Barlow Planetarium and WESM and follow arrows on the floor proceeding through the museum in a counter-clockwise direction. Restrooms closest to the museum will be open to the public.

D. Hygiene

Guests will be required to use hand sanitizer upon entry of the museum. Visitors will not be allowed to touch most specimens, and those that will still remain on display will be cleaned with disinfectant between visitor groups or regularly on the hour. The museum will be completely sanitized after each day open to the public.

E. Disinfection

Regularly cleaning during peak traffic hours will include surfaces in high traffic areas and uncovered specimens that will not be able to be removed from display prior to reopening. The specimens in the museum are susceptible to alteration from ultraviolet radiation and certain cleaning supplies. No UV disinfection will be allowed in the museum gallery; cleaning agents used in the museum will need approval by the Director before usage.

IV. Procedure: Very High Alert
The WESM will need to close the site until the level of alert is “Moderate.”

V. Procedure Modifications: High Alert
The WESM will need to close the site until the level of alert is “Moderate.”

VI. Procedure Modification: Low Alert
A. The WESM may return to normal business hours. Open Tuesday through Saturday.

B. Tactile exhibits will remain closed and specimens off exhibit will remain unavailable to the public.

C. The gift shop can return to operation but will be limited to one family group at a time. The employee taking admission and payments will wear a mask and be protected behind a plexiglass barrier.

D. Guided tours will begin again, but at a maximum of 10 people per group.

E. Hand sanitizer will be available in the gift shop.

F. Volunteers will be allowed to return in a limited capacity. Collections work and exhibit construction not during visitor hours is considered the lowest risk of infection. Volunteers and employees will be preferentially asked to do these tasks during Low Alert protections.

G. Special events can occur but will be limited to the same capacities as tours.

VII. Guidance Documents/Policy Links:
This document is based on the recommendations created for the American Alliance of Museums and the University of Wisconsin Oshkosh.

VIII. Revision History:
Created: 01/25/2021
Revised/Reviewed: 1/28/2021