



COVID-19 UPDATE

PLANNING FOR IN-PERSON RESEARCH

Updated June 1, 2020

Our Commitment

We hope you are safe and well during this difficult time. Shugoll Research is **committed to the health and safety of our staff, clients, research participants, and partners**. Until COVID-19 is no longer a threat, we will be implementing additional standards and guidelines for in-person research at both our Maryland and Virginia facilities. These guidelines were developed in conjunction with the Insights Association and also incorporate recommendations from local and national health authorities.

Please remember that these guidelines are subject to change and adaptation as more public health information becomes available. Note, health risks can only be mitigated, not eliminated completely.

We look forward to seeing you in one of our facilities very soon! Both the Alexandria, VA and Bethesda, MD facilities will be reopening on [June 15, 2020](#).

We Are Dedicated To Providing Flexible Research Solutions During COVID-19

- Our standard facility **cancellation policy will be waived** through December 31, 2020.
- In-facility projects that were booked/in-progress and need to move online can be moved for no additional rescheduling fees.
- For clients who prefer not to travel to view in-person research sessions, we offer our own **Shugoll Streaming solution** at a **discounted rate** of \$500 per day. Discounted streaming rates are available through December 31, 2020. Shugoll Research also offers FocusVision in both facility locations.
- For moderators who would prefer to moderate remotely via video conference, we can provide, for a nominal fee, an in-room dedicated client assistant to distribute stimuli or materials and scan them back to you.
- Shugoll Research has **in-house moderators** that can support you to limit travel, and we also partner with many other local DC-area moderators for additional support in specialty areas if needed.

Elevated Facility Standards

New standards will be implemented within our facilities with an elevated focus on health and safety.

Social Distancing Facility Policies

Recommended physical distancing guidelines will be followed in all areas of the facility. Occupancy in any room or area of the facility will not exceed the number of people to safely allow for physical distancing.

- **Group size will be limited** to 4 to 8 participants depending on the size and set-up of the focus room.
- **Strict check-in/check-out procedures** for research participants and clients to limit contact between staff and visitors:
 - Group start times will be staggered to limit congestion in the hallways, at the reception desk and in waiting areas.
 - Identification for visitors will be presented to staff behind a clear acrylic panel.
 - Research participants will no longer be required to sign in or out at reception.
 - Consent forms and NDAs will be signed electronically via email prior to participation.
- We will **reconfigure the facility space** on an ongoing basis based on project needs to provide appropriate distancing in waiting areas, focus rooms, and client viewing rooms and lounges. Additional space for client viewing can be provided as necessary through CCTV for remote viewing.
- Plexiglass sneeze guard panels for clients, research participants and moderators can be provided upon request.
- Shugoll Streaming will be provided at a discounted rate of \$500 per day (50% discount) to limit the number of clients needing to travel to view the sessions. FocusVision streaming is also available in all facilities.
- Based on building guidelines, all visitors and staff may be required to wear masks in common areas of the building and upon arrival and departure. Disposable masks will be provided upon request.
- Masks will not be required in focus rooms or client areas unless requested by the client.



Facility Cleaning and Sanitization Practices

- All food and beverages will be **individually packaged**. Snack items will be in **single-serve packaging**. Individual meals should be served as delivered and will not be re-plated.
- **Disposable** tablecloths, plates, cutlery, cup, glasses and napkins will replace any non-disposable items.
- Participant waiting areas and client rooms will be cleared of all candy/treat containers and periodicals/pamphlets or other paper materials.
- Disposable items or items that cannot be sanitized, such as paper and writing instruments, will not be reused.
- Facility staff will be **disinfecting all rooms** prior to use and between any sessions.
- **Hand sanitizer** will be available in all rooms.

Screening For All Facility Visitors (Employees, Clients, Research Participants & Partners)

- **Temperatures** for everyone entering the facility **will be checked** upon arrival. They must not have a temperature above the current CDC guidelines to be on site (100.4 F / 38 C temporal).
 - All **visitors* will be screened** upon arrival at the facility to verify:
 - They have not knowingly been exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the past 21 days.
 - They are not experiencing any symptoms related to COVID-19 such as cough or shortness of breath.
 - They are not currently feeling ill or have experienced a cold, flu or fever within the past 21 days.
- *These screening questions will also continue to be included in all recruitment screeners for in-person research projects.
- All visitors will sign a liability release related to COVID-19.

Personal Hygiene Practices

We encourage everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of viruses, including:

- All research participants will be required to use hand sanitizer prior to entering the focus room.
- Signage within the facility will encourage all visitors and staff to:
 - Wear masks in common areas of the facility
 - Wash hands or use hand sanitizer frequently
 - Avoid touching your face
 - Use tissues to cover cough or sneeze
 - Maintain physical distancing
- All Shugoll staff members will be required to stay home if they are not feeling well.
- In addition, we continue to monitor the CDC guidelines and implemented restrictions on when employees can return to an office if an employee has been exposed or has potentially been exposed to the virus.

Continue To Leverage Our Online Qualitative Platform, *Shugoll Limelight*

Shugoll Research Uses Its Own, Proprietary Virtual Platform To Conduct Online Qualitative Research:

- Our platform utilizes an enhanced deployment of Adobe Connect to provide a **smooth and reliable** online experience to both clients and participants.
- The platform is highly **secure**, can be used for online groups and in-depth interviews, and is compatible with PC and MAC.
- The platform provides a **“backroom chat”** function for the moderator and client observers.
- Included in the cost to use the platform are participant **tech checks** to ensure successful sessions.
- Note, we will also recruit to client preferred platforms, although some exceptions apply based on the target audience.



Resources

Please contact us any time at Info@ShugollResearch.com

- <https://www.insightsassociation.org/article/restarting-person-qualitative-research-after-covid-19>
- <https://www.osha.gov/Publications/OSHA3990.pdf>
- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>
- <https://www.brookings.edu/research/how-to-protect-essential-workers-during-covid-19/>