



OARS COVID-19 GENERAL MITIGATION PLAN

Specific plans will vary by region

Updated: July 30, 2020

RISK ASSESSMENT

Based on reported rates of infection, COVID-19 appears to be highly contagious, with some evidence that pre-symptomatic people are able to pass the virus before knowing they are sick. There is also a percentage of cases confirmed in people who are asymptomatic. Therefore, it's difficult to prevent participation from carriers of the virus if the individual guests or employees don't know they're sick, yet are still potentially contagious.

So accepting this shortcoming in mitigation planning as a given, we have to consider the question of risk acceptance. To begin, we note that adventure travel outfitters, and our guests who sign up for a trip with us, may have a higher tolerance for risk than the general public. Running wild rivers or hiking on remote trails means purposefully taking part in an activity that can result in serious injury or death. These are our inherent risks, and we pursue these untamed environments precisely because of the thrilling rewards that these activities provide.

Further, we assume that because there is risk of contracting the virus during activities like visiting the grocery store, getting fuel, eating out at a restaurant, or getting a haircut, there will be a portion of the population that will be completely comfortable with, and longing for, an outdoor adventure where fresh air is abundant and physical distance can be maintained in most circumstances.

In our current outlook, which observes increasing availability of testing, our ability to maintain small group sizes, and evidence that outdoor transmission of the virus is very rare, we believe that our mitigation plan—which includes a Health & Hygiene Pledge for guests and guides, pre-screening protocols, sanitation procedures, and measures to maintain as much physical distance as possible—charts a reasonable path forward to operating group outdoor adventures during the pandemic.

EXPECTATIONS

We expect all guides, staff, and guests to be familiar with and follow the guidance provided by state and local authorities for mitigating the spread of COVID-19. Leading up to your trip, it is critical that you exercise extra caution to reduce your risk of exposure to anyone who could be infected with COVID-19 and that you monitor yourself and your family for any symptoms. If you are sick, be conservative in your approach. Think of the greater community. The wilderness is a harsh place to feel sick, let alone being

sick with a potentially life-threatening disease. Evacuation may not be an option. Prudent measures are necessary to minimize risks to everyone.

Additionally, we expect the following:

- Inform us of any COVID-19 symptoms you/your family experience before, during, or after your trip or if you have tested positive for COVID-19
- Approximately 5 days prior to your trip, we will email the guest who placed your reservation a Health & Hygiene Pledge, which must be completed prior to arriving at the meeting place
- All guests must supply their own hand sanitizer and reusable/washable face coverings (minimum of two) such as a bandana, cloth mask, or neck gaiter. A clean face covering should be used each day of your trip; masks may be reused if they are washed
- A temperature check and review of screening questions will be required before anyone is allowed into the meeting area for your trip and on a daily basis on multi-day trips
- Whenever possible, maintain a physical distance of at least six feet from OARS staff and other people who are not part of your household or with whom you did not travel to the meeting place for your trip (your travel unit)
- Generally, when at least six feet of distance isn't possible, a properly-worn face covering will be required, including at the pre-trip meeting, in vehicles & aircraft, and in food lines (if applicable)
- Travel units will travel together in vehicles, aircraft, and boats with no more than one or two travel units per boat (one travel unit per inflatable kayak) with limited mobility between rafts, dories, inflatable kayaks, and SUPs during the day
- Paddles will be assigned to guests or sanitized between uses
- Personal gear will be assigned for the whole trip, clearly marked and distinguishable from others (PFD, helmet, dry bags, tent, sleep kit, sleeping pad, etc.)
- Group games that involve close contact and touching of a common object will be restricted
- Frequent & thorough hygiene practices like hand washing and reducing or eliminating shared items
- No handshakes, high fives, fist bumps, or hugging with anyone outside your travel unit
- Parents are responsible for ensuring their children adhere to physical distancing and all other mitigation procedures while on the trip

GUEST SCREENING & COMMUNICATION

This advisement comes from the National Park Service (NPS)

We strongly recommend that people at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 SHOULD NOT GO on backcountry trips. High risk individuals include, but are not limited to, people with the following conditions:

- Over 65 years of age
- Chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma
- Severely obese
- Diabetes, chronic kidney disease, or undergoing dialysis
- Liver disease
- Other immunocompromised individuals (HIV, undergoing cancer treatment, or other underlying medical conditions)

If you have any of these conditions and would like to cancel your trip, we will work with you to provide a credit toward a future trip or a refund.

Thirty+ days before the trip (or at the time of booking), you will receive an email with our updated Risk/Release form (if not already on file) that includes direct reference to the inherent risk of contracting an airborne pathogen, specifically COVID-19, on the trip. Additionally, you will receive an email outlining expectations for the trip, a warning to high risk individuals, and an overview of our enhanced screening process.

Fourteen days before the start of the trip, you will receive a reminder email with information on how to prepare for your trip, including monitoring for symptoms, and what to expect when you arrive.

Four to five days before arrival the guest who placed your reservation will be emailed a link to sign and complete our Health & Hygiene Pledge stating that you/your travel unit are healthy and you will abide by OARS protocols and participate in all screening measures, which include answering the following questions:

1. Have you, or anyone under your reservation, recently (within the last 14 days) experienced any of the following symptoms?
 - a. Had a new fever (100.4 °F or higher, or a sense of having a fever)?
 - b. Developed a new cough that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
 - c. Developed shortness of breath that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
 - d. Developed a new sore throat that you cannot attribute to another health condition?
 - e. Experienced muscle aches that you cannot attribute to another health condition, or that may have been caused by a specific activity (such as physical exercise)?
 - f. Experienced a loss of taste or smell?
 - g. Any other symptoms you cannot attribute to another health condition?
2. Within the last 14 days, has anyone under your reservation been in contact with an individual who has been ill with flu-like symptoms, respiratory complaints or fever, or who you know has tested positive for COVID-19? *Exception details listed below.
3. Has anyone under your reservation been diagnosed with COVID-19? If “yes”, please enter their name and the date this individual was notified that they were no longer contagious with COVID-19.
4. Within the last 30 days, has anyone under your reservation been tested for COVID-19? If yes, who, when, and what were the results?
5. Has anyone under your reservation been tested for COVID-19 antibodies? If yes, what were the results?

If you answer “yes” to questions 1 or 2, you will not be permitted to join the trip. Instead, we will provide full credit toward a future trip for you and any members of your travel unit who were living at the same physical address during any of the seven days prior to the trip and/or traveled in the same vehicle to the meeting location.

*Exception for a positive response to question two: frontline healthcare workers who are taking necessary precautions and can show proof of a negative test for COVID-19 within three days of their scheduled trip will be permitted to join as long as all other conditions are met.

The decision to allow a guest who previously tested positive for COVID-19 on a trip may be based on: the absence of symptoms for at least 10 days, a negative test and/or clearance from a physician stating that the guest is healthy and not contagious.

The guest who placed the reservation or another representative from each household/travel unit must sign and complete the Health & Hygiene Pledge or your group will not be allowed to travel on one of our trips.

Screening While on Multi-Day Trips

- Daily temperature check of all trip participants, including guides
- Daily review of symptoms and questionnaire

GUESTS UPON ARRIVAL

- Please follow all posted signs and park accordingly
- Keep any personal items with you or stored in your vehicle
- When you get to the meeting area, please either wash your hands or use hand sanitizer, depending upon which has been provided
- Wear a face covering
- Practice physical distancing of at least six feet—no handshakes or hugs
- Check in will occur outside at a table set up with hand sanitizer and/or hand wash system
- Staff will wear personal protective equipment (PPE) at check in
- You will be asked if anything has changed since completing the Health & Hygiene Pledge and verbally review the COVID-19 Symptoms Questionnaire
- A staff member will take the temperature of each person in your travel unit
- If temperature is 100.4 or higher and/or you answer “yes” to any questions, we will not allow you, or your immediate traveling party, to travel with us and will offer a credit toward a future trip
- Staff will advise you that your household/travel unit cannot stay for any time and to call the manager on duty for further information
- The manager's contact information will be available for guests to use. This is to avoid in-person conversation with staff
- All guests will be required to pass the COVID-19 symptom screening process before being able to join the meeting/safety talk

WEARING A FACE COVERING OR MASK

- All guests must supply their own hand sanitizer and reusable/washable face coverings (minimum of two) such as a bandana, cloth mask, or neck gaiter. A clean face covering should be used each day of your trip; masks may be reused if they are washed
- Wear a face covering or mask when physical distancing is not possible or when a distance of six feet cannot be maintained
- Wearing a face covering or mask is required in the following situations:
 - Traveling in a vehicle or aircraft
 - When entering any building
 - When meeting someone for the first time, at the pre-trip meeting, or when approaching another group on the river/trail
 - In the food line for breakfast, lunch, and dinner

- OARS does not require a face covering when traveling in a boat in part due to the additional risk to a person's airway if they swim or get their face covering wet. However, face coverings should be accessible while on the river. At times, physical distance of six feet may be compromised such as when high siding or pulling a swimmer from the water is required.

TRANSPORTATION

- All employees and guests will sanitize hands (or wash hands when possible) and put on a face covering prior to getting into any vehicle, including planes and helicopters where applicable
- A staff member will organize the group and load the vehicle from back to front
- Vehicles will be unloaded from front to back
- The number of people in vehicles will be reduced to accommodate physical distance between travel units
- Travel units need to stay together to create physical distance from other travel units
- Windows will be opened whenever possible
- The air conditioner/heater will not be used in recirculating mode.
- Vehicles will be cleaned and sanitized after each time they are used to carry passengers

AT PUT IN/TRAILHEAD

- Wash hands upon arrival or use sanitizer after exiting vehicle
- Avoid physical contact with other visitors and groups

HAND WASHING ON THE RIVER

In addition to convenient locations for two to three foot pump-operated hand wash stations at every camp, along with a heavy emphasis on their required use, we also bring a supply of hand sanitizer on every trip.

- The soap and water hand wash system will be set-up first when arriving in camp and will remain available for the duration of the stop.
- Hand wash water sourced from the river will be treated with bleach (or similar) to 100ppm.
- Handwashing stations will be set up at the entrance to toilet facilities, near the kitchen area, and near the communal or group area (within 25 feet, or in the most convenient and obvious location).
- Additionally, each boat will be equipped with hand soap and/or hand sanitizer.

FOOD SERVICE PROTOCOLS

When packing, preparing, or otherwise handling food or beverages, staff will wear face masks and gloves. At camp, no congregation will be allowed in the kitchen. All prepping surfaces will be disinfected with wipes or disinfectant spray pre and post prep. There will be special attention and enhanced efforts of sanitation during the food pack, while preparing food during a trip, and while serving guests. Guests will not be allowed to serve their own food.

POST-TRIP GEAR CLEANING PROCEDURES

- Tents and sleeping pads will be sanitized and/or cycled out of use for 72 hours between trips
- Dry bags are washed and sanitized between trips
- Sleeping bags, sleeping bag liners, and pillow cases will be laundered after every trip
- PFDs, helmets, paddles, wetsuits, and splash jackets are to be washed and sanitized after each trip and hung to dry outside

- Boats will be washed at the boat ramp or at base of operation.

PATIENT CARE & MANAGEMENT FOR GUEST OR STAFF WITH POSITIVE SYMPTOMS

- The symptomatic person will immediately be physically distanced (at least six feet) from others and required to wear a mask for the remainder of the trip
- Family members and friends who were traveling with the person who displayed positive symptoms will also be placed on a separate raft and required to wear a face covering
- Temperature and pulse oximeter (when available) testing will be increased to twice daily
- We will consult with local agencies on availability and justification for evacuation. If this is not feasible, they will be isolated from others for the remainder of the trip
- One liaison (guide or a family member/traveling companion) will be identified to interface with this person to provide care. That person will also be physically distanced from the rest of the group for the remainder of the trip
 - While treating someone on the trip who is symptomatic, liaison will wear PPE:
 - Gown—either a painters suit or splash pants paired with a splash top
 - Goggles/face shield
 - N95 Mask
 - Gloves
- We will follow EMS/WFR protocols and provide appropriate medical treatment—monitoring temperature, oxygen saturation with pulse oximeter if available, and vital signs
- Testing for COVID-19 will be performed at the earliest opportunity and OARS will notify the appropriate agencies along with all crew and other travelers on the trip of the results. Confidentiality will be maintained by using generic terms to describe a “traveler” or “participant” who has a confirmed (negative or positive) test

TRIP COVID-19 PPE KIT

Each trip will carry a COVID-19 PPE Kit, this kit contains resources to be used in an incident where there is someone showing signs and symptoms that can possibly be COVID-19

MANAGEMENT OF GUIDES WHO HAVE BEEN ON A TRIP WITH A SUSPECTED POSITIVE CASE

If a guide has been on a trip with a suspected or confirmed positive case, he or she will be asked to self isolate and will not be allowed back to work without a negative test result and following a 14-day quarantine period

EMPLOYEE COMMUNICATION & EVALUATION

We will inform all staff of this plan and re-evaluate and update as needed

All employees need to practice and commit to the best practices of hygiene. In cases where employees think or know they have been exposed to COVID-19, employees should contact their doctor or other medical professional immediately for guidance and avoid work and any public places. Employees are required to report to their manager if they have been exposed or think they have been exposed to COVID-19, are experiencing symptoms, or have been diagnosed.

GENERAL WAREHOUSE GUIDELINES & ACTIONS

- Hands must be washed upon entering the building, in between tasks, and following current CDC guidelines

- Masks or face coverings will be worn in the warehouse unless working alone or within a travel unit on a task
- High-contact and frequently-used surfaces will be cleaned regularly
- Signage reminding employees and guests of expected practices and behavior will be frequently reviewed
- Employee training on these practices will be reviewed and updated as necessary

EMPLOYEE TRAINING

Information and training are at the heart of infectious disease planning and containment. Our goal is to ensure employee comprehension and understanding of how employees may be exposed to infectious disease, what their responsibilities are, and what protective measures they can take. All training will be documented and will include all elements of the OARS COVID-19 Prevention Plan.

SCREENING EMPLOYEES

Every day, before work, each employee must pass a temperature check and then answer the same questions about symptoms as guests. This will be done verbally by a member of the management team or a Trip Leader; both participants will be wearing face coverings. If an employee answers yes to any of the screening questions, the screener will immediately activate the response protocol for COVID-19.

SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Please be aware of your potential impacts on the small communities you may travel through on your trip. The same measures we take to minimize the spread of the novel coronavirus on our trips need to also take place while traveling. Physical distancing, using a face covering when you're close to others outside of your travel unit, avoiding crowded places like restaurants & bars, and not traveling at all if you have symptoms are important elements of this plan. We also recommend driving instead of flying if at all possible. An outbreak in a small community could end your river trip and work for our employees—but more importantly it could be devastating for that community.