

SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR TU CHAPTER OUTDOOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19



MAY 28, 2020

Trout Unlimited



FIRST, ASK THE QUESTION: *SHOULD* OUR TU CHAPTER HOST OUTDOOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES RIGHT NOW?

As we practice social distancing and comply with federal, state and [organizational mandates](#), we are reminded of the value and importance of TU members, supporters, and partners as well as those who are providing essential services during the pandemic. We recognize that our commitment to those within our communities is more important than ever.

Communities are experiencing stress in unprecedented and very different ways. Many businesses have had to shut their doors, lay off employees, and shift business plans on short notice. Some rural and gateway communities are concerned about resource access due to limited healthcare availability and supply shortages.

Community trust is a critical aspect of chapter and council work, and TU volunteers are strongly encouraged to balance building and maintaining community trust with the decision to re-engage in any sort of in-person activity in this time.

As your chapter or council determines your best route forward, your team will want to review your work window and project priorities to better understand your timeline options. If you face deadlines, contact your funder or agency partners to discuss possible extensions. Once your team understands the pressing need, if any, to pursue restoration project, social event and other outdoor activities at this time, you may opt to postpone efforts or, if timelines cannot be adjusted, cautiously move forward.

If your team has decided to pursue outdoor events and activities, it is recommended that you communicate early and often with community leaders to determine their comfort level with gatherings in their area. For example, a TU chapter recently conferred with tribal leaders to explore the chapter's June tree planting, adjacent to tribal lands. The discussion resulted in an arrangement that suited the health and well-being of the community.

When contacting community leaders, consider sharing project details, your decision-making process and these protocols to gather community perspective on conducting in-person engagements during this time. If the outcome is favorable, continue forward. If the conversation results in apprehension or disinterest, the chapter might inquire to learn more about points of concern and how the chapter might ease specific community concerns.

As your planning efforts continue, also take into account the volunteer perspective as well. COVID-19 is a new disease and there is limited information regarding risk factors. Based on currently available information and clinical expertise, older adults and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions might be at higher risk. Learn more about [higher risk individuals](#) and review your volunteer roster to guide your decision.

Please remember that when determining whether to re-engage in outdoor activities and events, it is critical to stay apprised of all federal, state and local guidelines or requirements related to COVID-19. As your team discusses outdoor event and activity options for the spring and summer seasons, contact your [Volunteer Operations staff](#) if you have questions about how to connect with your community, how to apply these protocols, or other questions related to conducting outdoor events and activities.

SAFETY PROTOCOLS IF ORGANIZING OUTDOOR EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES DURING COVID-19

All TU chapters and councils opting to participate in outdoor events and activities during the COVID-19 outbreak are asked to heighten awareness of basic personal hygiene and safety, and are required to follow continual and evolving guidance and orders from the Centers for Disease Control Prevention (CDC), the World Health Organization (WHO), your state officials, county health departments, and [Trout Unlimited's national organization](#). If a federal, state, or local order prohibits or limits outdoor or group activities during the COVID-19 outbreak, TU chapters and councils must comply with the order.

TU volunteers should not plan, organize or participate in outdoor activities or events if you or they are in anyway uncomfortable.

Please review and become familiar with safety protocols before organizing any outdoors events and activities. Be aware that safety guidelines from the CDC and WHO are evolving quickly during this time and that TU's safety protocols may need to be updated in the future if more information about the COVID-19 becomes known.

All outdoor events and activities conducted at this time are optional and all in-person events and activities involving 10 or more people are prohibited through at least May 15. TU volunteers should not plan, organize or participate in outdoor activities or events if you or they are in anyway uncomfortable. Your safety is TU's highest priority.

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1. HEALTH ASSESSMENT

Ask that any attendee of your chapter or council outdoor event or gathering – yourself included – do a self-health assessment before participating to verify that they are negative for any COVID-19 symptoms and have not been exposed to COVID-19. Best practice is to communicate the need for a health assessment along with any health protocols in advance of the event. Follow up with an email within days of the event to remind volunteers to complete the assessment within hours of the event to determine their participation. You might consider asking questions such as:

- o Are you experiencing any of the following?
 - i. Short of breath at rest
 - ii. Inability to lie down because of difficulty breathing
 - iii. Chronic health conditions that you are having difficulty managing because of your current respiratory illness
- b. Do you have any of the following?
 - i. Temperature greater than 100.4 degrees F
 - ii. Cough
 - iii. Shortness of breath
 - iv. Loss of smell
- c. In the past 14 days have you had close contact with someone who is confirmed or suspected of having COVID-19? A close contact is defined as a person who:
 - i. Provided care for the individual, including healthcare workers, family members or other caregivers, or had similar close physical contact without consistent and appropriate use of personal protective equipment (surgical mask or gloves) OR
 - ii. Who lived with or otherwise had close contact (within 6 feet) with the person while they were infectious OR
 - iii. Had direct contact with infectious bodily fluids of the person.

2. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

For all outdoor events and activities, it is critical to ensure all attendees can maintain six feet of social distancing and wear personal protective equipment. Communicate well in advance of the event to inform participants of your safety measures and the expectation to follow them. It is particularly important to share the guidelines for personal protective equipment if you are requiring attendees to provide their own gear and your response plan should they not bring adequate equipment.

Having a thoughtful plan in place should participants arrive without personal protective equipment or disinterest in maintaining social distance is critical to maintaining safety. For instance, you may decide to have extra personal protective equipment on hand so that you can have a side conversation with the individual to remind the participant that safety is priority and they can either choose to use the provided personal protective equipment or volunteer another time.

Follow the CDC's COVID-19 guidelines for personal protective equipment:

- Cloth face coverings should—
 - o Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.

- Be secured with ties or ear loops.
 - Include multiple layers of fabric.
 - Allow for breathing without restriction.
 - Be able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change to shape.
 - Be treated as single use and washed once it has been removed.
- Use work gloves (gardening gloves, or other reusable gloves) and wash after use. Any gloves worn should be treated as single use and should be washed once they are removed or after touching a potentially contaminated object.

3. CLEANING PROVISIONS AND PROTOCOLS

Suggested cleaning provisions to be present at any outdoor activity/ event.

- Containers of water and soap.
- Rinsing stations are ideal, but not always possible. Fully stocked handwash stations can often be rented from portable toilet services.
- Disinfectant wipes.
- Hand sanitizers.
- Paper towels.
- Tissues.

Suggested protocol for cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces at any activity/ event.

- Follow CDC guidelines.
- If surfaces are dirty, clean them. Use detergent or soap and water prior to disinfection.
- To disinfect: use disinfectants appropriate for the surface.
- If using bleach, follow CDC [guidelines](#) for making a bleach solution.
- If using alcohol, ensure solution has at least 70% alcohol.
- Note: Best to create mixture, fill into spray bottles, and store in bed of truck (rather than cab) to comply with open container laws.
- Other EPA-registered household disinfectants are expected to be effective against COVID-19 based on data for harder to kill viruses.

Other best practices to follow at any activity/ event.

- Have enough tools so that there is no or limited shared use. Ideally, there should be one tool per individual per day.
 - Best practice: Mark the tools with colored tape or the like so that an individual can easily recognize their assigned tools.
- Trash receptacles should be kept within easy/quick walking distance of each workstation. Each volunteer is responsible for their own trash.
- Handwash stations within easy/quick walking distance to allow volunteers the opportunity to wash their hands with soap and water.
 - Best practice: Place handwash station(s) at meeting location for fishing outings, clean-ups or other events. Denote six foot spacing for those using the station.

4. TRAVEL

Traveling to and from chapter or council organized events and activities presents another risk factor. Minimize exposure by implementing the following travel protocols:

- Limit the number of volunteers per site visit to the fewest number of persons needed.
- If more than one volunteer is required, all volunteers must drive separately if not in the same family or household. Please consult with your Volunteer Operations staff if you feel that car sharing is unavoidable.
- Bring personal hand washing/sanitizing supplies with you to the field and ensure that field supplies are fully stocked before departing for each trip.
- Ensure all necessary supplies are in each vehicle, including:
 - At least one gallon of water and biodegradable soap for washing hands.
 - Paper products (paper towels, tissues, etc.).
 - Cloth face mask and gloves
 - Disinfectant spray, disinfectant wipes, or hand sanitizer, if available.
 - Trash receptacle to pack out all personal trash. Always dispose of your own trash.
- Minimize the number of stops (e.g., to refill on gas, etc...).
- Follow CDC guidelines for getting gasoline:
 - If available, use gloves or disinfecting wipes on handles and buttons before you touch them.
 - After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water when you arrive home or as soon as you are able to do so.

5. MEALS

Minimize exposure by implementing the following protocols:

- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water before eating.
- Have each participant bring food and beverages from home. No shared snacks or meals.
- Maintain social distancing while eating and do not share food or beverages.
- Wash hands for at least 20 seconds after eating and before touching field equipment.

6. EQUIPMENT

To minimize exposure risks associated with handling equipment, please implement the following protocols:

- Avoid using shared equipment, if at all possible
 - Specific equipment should be assigned to each volunteer to avoid unnecessary sharing of equipment or tools.
 - Example: if hosting a casting clinic, ensure each person has their own rod, including instructors. Do not allow sharing or passing back and forth of equipment.
- Electronic devices should not be shared at any time. Individual computers, phones, cameras, field notebooks and other electronics should not be shared.

- If at any time a piece of equipment is potentially exposed to direct contact with the skin or bodily fluids of another volunteer, wipe down surfaces with disinfectant immediately.
- Any shared equipment should be handled with gloves and disinfected after each use by different volunteers as well as disinfected each day after use.

7. SOCIAL DISTANCING

The CDC dictates maintaining safe social/physical distance, which is a minimum of six feet. Other scenarios might require increasing this distance and should be addressed on a case-by-case basis in concert with general protocol directives. Augments to the personal distancing directive is at the discretion of the chapter/ council but should never be less than the minimum six feet and should take wind direction into account. If six feet of distance between volunteers/ attendees of your event or activity is not possible, do not host the event or activity.

Minimize exposure by implementing the following protocols and sharing them with your event or activity attendees before they show up:

- Always maintain a minimum personal space of at least six feet.
 - Example: Chapters hosting casting clinics may mark individual casting locations for participants, a river clean-up might denote six foot spacing in line for the handwash station and tree planting organizers might notate an individual's tree planting area with pin flags.
- Sneezes and coughs should follow CDC protocol, including:
 - Cover mouth and nose with tissue when you cough or sneeze.
 - Put used tissue in a trash receptacle.
 - If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve, not your hands.
- Always dispose of your own trash.
- Field clothes should be washed promptly each day after fieldwork, especially if intended to be used again for another day. This especially includes work gloves. If possible do not shake field clothes prior to laundering to minimize possibility of dispersing the virus through the air.
- Minimize touching of the face and wash/sanitize your hands as often as possible.
- Be aware of touching common surfaces without gloves. If touching a surface without gloves, cleanse your hands with soap and water or sanitizer as soon as possible afterwards and wipe down the exposed surface with a disinfecting wipe or spray.
- Avoid, when possible, lifting materials or equipment that would require more than one person. If unavoidable, create as much distance as possible while still being safe and complete the lift quickly, consistent with [OSHA standards](#).
- Consider selecting one person to be point on social distancing compliance. In some states this is mandated.

8. EXPOSURE RESPONSE PLAN

Contact the local health district about suspected cases or exposures. Work with local health departments to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals to help facilitate effective contact tracing/notifications.

Keep close and accurate tracking of ALL participants at any event or activity, including name, address, phone and email contact information for quick access to the full attendance list to support potential contact tracing/notifications if a potential exposure event happens at an activity ([example](#)).

9. CONCLUSION

These protocols were developed to address the broad range of outdoor activities conducted by TU chapters and councils. Some outdoor chapter activities such as a stream clean-ups present additional obstacles for ensuring safety, and we urge volunteers to contact [Volunteer Operations staff](#) before organizing such events to ensure they can be done safely.

Please be aware that safety guidelines from the CDC and WHO as well as federal and state mandates are evolving quickly during this time and that these safety protocols may need to be updated in the future if more information about the COVID-19 becomes known. What may be true when you organize your outdoor event and activity may have changed by the time you are headed out to the river. Please check back in frequently for updates to these guidelines and your local, state and federal guidelines.