



## Guidelines for Trail Running Events in the COVID-19 Era

[www.racedirectoralliance.com](http://www.racedirectoralliance.com)

The Race Directors Alliance is a coalition of like-minded trail race directors formed in the Spring of 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Our objective as race directors is to create a safe and fun environment to celebrate athletic endurance and personal achievement. These guidelines offer suggestions to modify event management in the COVID-19 era.

### Pre-Race Prep in the COVID-19 era

- Compare your ideas to our guidelines to formulate your own guidelines.
  - Create documents and/or videos to share with your staff and volunteers.
  - Create documents for runners to read and be accountable for.
1. **Know your State and Local Phases 1, 2, 3, 4,** and specific policies regarding outdoor gatherings and trail running events.
  2. **Know your State and Local Health Codes,** County/City Environmental Health rules, and food service regulations. Regulations may have changed recently; be sure you are following the current rules and regulations.
  3. **Check in with your Land Agencies and Managers** to learn whether new guidelines are in place in the COVID-19 era. You may be asked to develop and provide an enhanced COVID-19 era safety plan.
  4. **Contact your Insurance Company** to clarify your coverage in the COVID-19 era.
  5. **Create a “COVID-19 Era Safety Plan”** that is appropriate for your event, including size and location, that minimizes everyone’s exposure to contracting and/or spreading COVID-19.
    - a. Recommend that all attendees get a swab test at least 72 hours prior to traveling to the event.

- b. Conduct risk assessment of your race procedures relative to COVID-19 transmission. Establish an appropriate and legal number of participants, volunteers, staff, and spectators for your event.
    - i. Create race-day screening plan using questions about COVID-19 exposure and taking temperature.
    - ii. Include the number of people along the course, at start/finish area, aid stations, packet pick-up, etc.
    - iii. Consider space needed for social distancing.
    - iv. Modify your course to avoid bottlenecks that bunch runners up, e.g., entry to singletrack from wider paths within a mile of the start, two-way traffic sections, narrow "lanes" at aid stations.
  - c. Consider travel guidelines mandated by your State and/or local authorities. Confirm that lodging and campgrounds are accepting reservations.
  - d. Assess your equipment, e.g., tables and tents, and supplies, e.g., PPE, cleaning products) in terms of COVID-19 era sanitization.
  - e. Have a list of required items your participants are expected to show at check-in, e.g., hand sanitizer, face covering, waste bag.
  - f. Define runner accountability, runner equipment checklist, drop bag procedure, crew accountability, social distancing practices.
  - g. Update your waivers (runners, pacers, volunteers, staff, and spectators).
    - i. Consult attorney.
    - ii. Have all participants sign a new waiver. New waiver includes statement that participant will not attend race if they have been recently diagnosed with covid-19, exposed, or test positive.
    - iii. Will notify race if develop symptoms and/or test positive within three weeks after the race.
  - h. Include sections for runners/pacers, volunteers/staff, spectators/crews and the general public. Include how the race will implement and enforce these new measures, e.g., screening all attendees as testing becomes more widespread.
- 6. Create and Enact a Pre-Race Communication Plan** - define your objectives, key audiences, media channels, and timetable.
- 7. Communicate with your Suppliers, Vendors, and Sponsors** - share your guidelines to ensure they align.

8. **Update your Emergency and Medical Response Plan** - emergency methods, contact tracing, and response may comprise additional safety equipment and personnel when providing medical support.
9. **Update your Environmental Responsibility Plan** - consult national, regional and local requirements to ensure proper management of recycling, trash, composting, and human waste in COVID-19 Era.
10. **Update your registration, refund, rollover, COVID-19 Era and race cancellation policies** - communicate your policies for runners to understand prior to signing up, and then confirm their agreement to all policies when they register for your event.

## Race Day Guidelines

### 1. Check-in

- a. All attendees sanitize or wash hands upon arrival.
- b. Verify entrants have required PPE. e.g., hand sanitizer, face covering, waste bag.
- c. Use signage and volunteers to minimize contact.
- d. Implement the procedures you've established to screen all attendees.
- e. Provide minimum contact Drop Bag area (if offered).
- f. Provide minimum contact race day registration (if offered).
- g. Have sanitizing wipes at each portapotty/bathroom. Ask each participant to wipe down the seat before they sit down.
- h. Make relevant announcements throughout the check-in process.

### 2. Runner Responsibility & Accountability

- a. Refer to Runner Guidelines below.
- b. Create Virtual Pre-Race Briefing.

### 3. Race Start Format Options

- a. Chip-timing, with either mass socially-distanced start, or open time-window start.
- b. Staggered starts
- c. Spaced Corrals
- d. Heats

### 4. Aid Stations

- a. Set up flow to maintain distancing
- b. Provide hand washing or sanitizing station

- c. Hydration (water, soda, and electrolytes)
  - i. Liquids “menu” board, including distribution method of ice, visible as enter aid station. Assign volunteers to pouring pitchers. Runners only handle their bottles/packs.
  - ii. Consider not supplying liquids. All runners to bring own hydration.
- d. Nutrition (food handling and distribution)
  - i. Foods “menu” board visible as enter aid station. Create flow for distribution for each food order.
  - ii. Consider not supplying food. All runners to bring own food.
- e. Location of spectators and crews.
- f. Drop bag corral - allot more space for drop bags and consider space and volume needed to transport drop bags.
- g. Waste management: trash, recycling, compost, and porta-potties

## **5. Shuttles and DNF Transportation**

- a. Create a plan that reflects federal, state and local regulations for public transit. Local schools may have examples that you can follow.
- b. See what’s available with rideshare options.
- c. Include DNFs in your transportation plan.

## **6. Camping**

- a. Create a plan that reflects federal, state and local regulations for camping
- b. Consult permit rules regarding social distancing in campgrounds.
- c. Communicate guidelines to participants who are camping race weekend.

## **7. Emergency and Medical Procedures**

- a. Operate assuming *every* runner is an asymptomatic carrier.
- b. Work with your medical team to create your operations and emergency response plans.
  - i. Have a plan for someone who develops COVID-19 symptoms during the event.
- c. Discuss additional necessary PPE, including N95 masks.
- d. Provide single-use space blankets or single-use sleeping bag liner, i.e., no shared blankets.

## **8. Finish/Post Race Options**

- a. Set up flow to maintain distancing through finish chute, and offer medical assistance as needed.
- b. Hydration and celebration (water, soda, electrolytes, beer)
  - i. Liquids “menu” board. Assign volunteers to pouring pitchers.

- ii. Consider not supplying liquids. All runners to bring own hydration.
- c. Nutrition (food handling and distribution)
  - i. Foods “menu” board visible as enter aid station. Create flow for distribution for each food order.
  - ii. Consider not supplying food. All runners to bring own food.
- d. Location of spectators and crews
- e. Hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations
- f. Drop bag retrieval
- g. Waste management
- h. Minimal-contact goodie bag, medal, and award distribution

**9. Provide Virtual Spectating Options** - consider limiting the number of attendees.

- a. Utilize Social Media Crew Campaigns: Online cheers, kudos, and message boards.
- b. Dedicated WhatsApp stream and/or Twitter feed for broadcasting positive messages.
- c. Interactive live tracking.
- d. Live streaming via Facebook, Instagram for online spectating.

## **Volunteer Guidelines**

### **1. Participation Considerations**

- a. Volunteers must agree to follow all race policies, especially noting new systems to long term volunteers.
- b. Consider self-quarantine for two weeks prior to the event.
- c. Volunteers in the “at risk” category should consider their health and safety before attending.
- d. Consider current travel restrictions and recommendations.
- e. Follow the current recommendations by the CDC and the most recent public safety standards issued by the federal, state, and local authorities.
- f. Any volunteer who has been exposed to a known COVID-19 case or exhibits symptoms themselves, including cough, fever, headaches, fatigue, or trouble breathing, may not participate. Race medical team may take temperatures, and will send away any volunteer with cold or flu-like symptoms.

### **2. Equipment and Supplies**

- a. Encourage volunteers to bring their own face coverings. Have extra available.
- b. Provide ample disposable gloves for all volunteers.
- c. Provide hand-washing or hand-sanitizing stations.

### 3. Procedures

- a. All Volunteers must agree to all race policies.
- b. Update your aid station instructions and make sure aid station captains review them with all volunteers.
- c. Volunteers to wash/sanitize each time they move between tasks to avoid cross contamination.
- d. Volunteers to wear disposable gloves and change them frequently to avoid cross contamination.
- e. Outline sanitation procedures if/when “no touch” procedures fail.
- f. Volunteers to use tongs to hand out all nutrition items.
- g. Volunteers do not touch runners’ bottles or packs, or take trash from them for disposal.
  - i. Option to facilitate hydration with single-use cups.
- h. Volunteers unload, organize and retrieve drop bags to minimize runner contact in the drop bag area.
- i. Create a volunteer position to enforce current social distancing and face covering rules, e.g., Race Marshall

## Runner Guidelines

### 1. Pre-Registration

- a. Runners in the “at risk” category should consider their health and safety before registering.
- b. Consider current travel restrictions and recommendations before registering.
- c. Agree to follow all race policies.

### 2. Pre-Race

- a. Consider self-quarantine for two weeks prior to the event.
- b. Follow the current recommendations by the CDC and the most recent public safety standards issued by the federal, state, and local authorities.
- c. Runner is responsible for communicating all race policies to pacers, crews and spectators.
- d. Refer to the registration document to see whether the race offers a refund, credit or deferral if the runner has to cancel due to being exposed to the virus. (RD may require physician confirmation.)
- e. Review virtual pre-race briefing.

### 3. Race Morning

- a. All runners answer COVID-19 screening questions
  - i. Any runner who has been exposed to a known COVID-19 case or exhibits symptoms themselves including cough, fever, headaches,

fatigue, or trouble breathing, may not participate. Race medical team may take temperatures and will send away any runner with cold or flu-like symptoms.

- b. Runners are restricted to authorized areas as directed by race management.
- c. Runners will wear PPE as directed by race management.

#### **4. Start Area**

- a. Follow guidelines for pre-race briefing and at the start.
- b. Carry all required gear and supplies specified in race instructions. These items can be checked at any point during the race. Not showing an item can result in disqualification.
- c. Keep appropriate social distance.

#### **5. On Course**

- a. Consider physical distancing throughout the race, especially when passing others, including the public.
  - i. Announce your intention to pass.
  - ii. If necessary, step off trail to allow a minimum of six feet.
  - iii. If you cannot achieve a six-foot gap, put on your face covering and turn your back toward people you are moving past.
- b. Be aware of spitting and snot rockets – move off the trail and allow extra distance from other trail users.
- c. Follow race rules regarding headphones and external speakers.
- d. Follow race rules regarding pooping.
  - i. Use Leave No Trace (LNT) principles: move 10 feet away from the trail. Dig a six-inch-deep hole with your trowel. Cover the mess. Pack out all toilet paper and personal hygiene products.
  - ii. Use a blue bag to contain poop and paper if LNT is not possible and no portapotty is available. Dispose of bag at next aid station.
- e. Carry out trash
  - i. Runners must contain all trash in a sealable bag to avoid any contamination to others. Multiple bags may be needed.
  - ii. Follow race policy regarding disposal of your trash bag(s).

#### **6. In Aid Stations**

- a. Wear face covering.
- b. Remove cold weather gloves.
- c. Use hand washing or sanitizing station as you arrive.
- d. Follow race no-touch guidelines and volunteer instructions.

- i. e.g. Open your bottle or present your personal cup. Volunteers pour water or other beverages in compostable cups. Volunteers distribute food using gloves or tongs.
- e. Follow race guidelines regarding retrieval and replacement of your drop bags.

## **7. Finish Line**

- a. Wash hands as soon as possible.
- b. Change clothing and put on a clean face covering.
- c. Continue social distancing and follow race direction while you celebrate your finish.
- d. Collect your drop bag(s). Race management will have to dispose of remaining drop bags immediately post-race.

## **Pacers, Crews, and Spectators Guidelines**

Runner is responsible for communicating all guidelines to their pacers, crews, and spectators.

### **1. Pre-Race**

- a. Consider staying home and cheering virtually. Those in the “at risk” group should not attend.
- b. Consider self-quarantine for two weeks prior to the event.
- c. Follow the current recommendations by the CDC and public safety standards issued by state and local agencies.
- d. Consider current travel restrictions and recommendations before accompanying a runner to an event.
- e. Number of spectators and crews may be limited by race management and permit regulations.
- f. Anyone who has been exposed to a known COVID-19 case or exhibits symptoms themselves including cough, fever, headaches, fatigue, or trouble breathing, may not participate. Race medical team may take temperatures and will send away anyone with cold or flu-like symptoms.

### **2. Race Day**

- a. Take proper precautions, maintaining recommended social distancing and procedures; bring and use PPE, and wash/sanitize hands regularly.
- b. Do not linger at the start/finish area. Be safe, respectful and courteous to allow others access without crowding.
- c. Spectators and crews are restricted to authorized areas as specified by race management.



- d. Be self-sufficient on race day.
- e. Stay in your car when possible.
- f. Maintain a “no contact” form of celebration and congratulations.

*This document considers the changes in how trail running events are managed and offers guidelines toward best practices moving forward. Nevertheless, we recognize you cannot completely eliminate the risk of leaving your home and attending a trail running event. We feel race directors can reduce the risk of this outdoor activity. **These guidelines are suggestions for race directors to modify, apply, and expand, to fit their event.** First and foremost, consider when it is legal, ethical, and practical to begin hosting events again. As the environment evolves this document is subject to change.*

### **Disclaimer**

By following any of these guidelines, you agree to this disclaimer and accept full responsibility for all decisions you make.

The information contained in these guidelines is for general information purposes only. You should not rely solely upon this information as a basis for making any business, legal, or any other decisions. The Race Director Alliance makes no representations or warranties of any kind, express or implied about the completeness, accuracy, reliability, suitability or availability with respect to this information. Any reliance you place on these guidelines is at your own risk. The views expressed are those of the individuals who developed them and do not represent the events the authors direct.

Any use of these guidelines indicates acceptance of this disclaimer.

### **Developed by the Race Director Alliance**

#### **June 2020:**

- Tia Bodington, Miwok 100K Trail Race (CA/OR)
- Skip Brand, Lake Sonoma 50M & Healdsburg Running Company (CA)
- Luis Escobar, All We Do Is Run (CA)
- Keira Henninger, Keira Henninger Races & Coaching (CA)
- Greg Lanctot, Pacific Coast Trail Runs (CA)
- Krissy Moehl, Runner Girl Races, LLC dba Chuckanut 50k (WA)
- Jubilee Paige, Aravaipa Running (AZ, UT, CO)
- James Varner, Rainshadow Running (WA, OR, CO)

*With special thanks to our colleagues, including RDs, medical directors, industry professionals, government agencies, and land managers, for feedback.*