



GMC's GUIDELINES FOR SECTION OUTINGS IN THE AGE OF COVID-19

Edited January 6th, 2021, with newest items in red

These guidelines were created by the Section Outings Working Group (SOWG) in early June 2020. The SOWG is made up of trip leaders, outings coordinators, and experienced section representatives who considered all aspects of section outings. **This guidance has stayed relatively consistent since January and GMC trip leaders and participants have done a great job of putting safety first. Between November 14th and December 22nd all multiple household social gatherings, including outdoor recreation were suspended. The Governor's latest guidance on outdoor recreation, issued December 22nd, allows limited multi-household outdoor recreation, permitting the return of Section Outings.**

Vermont's caseload is still higher than any point during the 2020 hiking season. While multi-household recreation is permitted, we encourage each leader and participant to consider their own COVID-19 risk profile and take every possible precaution when considering outdoor recreation with others.

There is specific guidance for the Organization, Outings Coordinator, Trip Leader and the Participant. For trip leaders and participants, we've broken the guidance into specific time frames.

1. *Planning a Trip*
2. *Before the Trip*
3. *At the Start of the Trip*
4. *During the Trip*
5. *At the End of the Trip (Not for Participants)*
6. *After the Trip*

These guidelines are prescriptive but will inevitably fail to cover some questions and answers. Without being too verbose, consider the below summary of rationale for establishing guidance.

1. Minimize the chances of including potential sources of contagion on our trips.
2. Reduce the opportunities for transmission spread on our trips.
3. Follow rules and regulations established by relevant governing bodies and maintain some semblance of consistency with GMC's other guidelines.
4. Provide consistent and simple guidance for outings leaders and participants.

Resources for COVID-19 Guidance

Vermont Department of Health COVID FAQ's- <https://apps.health.vermont.gov/COVID/faq/#4761>

Dec 22nd Update On New Work Safe Additions to the Be Smart, Stay Safe Order-
<https://accd.vermont.gov/news/update-new-work-safe-additions-be-smart-stay-safe-order#outdoor-recreation-and-fitness>

Governor Scott's COVID-19 Response- <https://governor.vermont.gov/covid19response>

ACCD Cross-State Travel Guidance: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>

FPR Outdoor Recreation and COVID-19- <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/outdoor-recreation-and-covid-19>

Vermont Department of Health- <https://www.healthvermont.gov/response/coronavirus-covid-19>

Green Mountain Club Response- <https://www.greenmountainclub.org/covid-19-response/>



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Participant

Planning a Trip

- Look for a trip that is well within your hiking ability. This is not the time to try pushing your limits and thereby take on added risk for the individual or group.
- For out-of-state participants, the state of Vermont has suspended its leisure travel map and **anyone returning or traveling to Vermont must complete either a 14-day quarantine or a 7-day quarantine followed by a negative test prior to participating in any GMC Outings.**

Before the Trip

- Sign up with the trip leader and provide contact information to be filed securely by GMC Staff for 30 days. Participant contact information will be used only in the event contact tracing is required.
- Review and **acknowledge that you have read, understood and agree to follow these participant instructions.**
- **DO NOT COME** if you or anyone in your household shows symptoms of COVID-19, has been exposed to someone sick or has traveled out of state and not quarantined upon returning. Alert the trip leader you will not be coming.
- Bring a mask (a "buff" is not acceptable) and hand sanitizer that you can keep accessible during the hike, plus all your own usual hiking stuff (water, food, clothing, sunscreen, bug dope...). Bring multiple masks to swap out if one gets dirty or sweaty.
- Drive separately and **do not carpool** to the trailhead or meeting location designated by the trip leader (ride sharing from a single household is OK).

Start of Trip

- Adopt an "arrive, play, leave" mentality, and minimize gathering time.
- Wear a mask as you exit your vehicle, meet the leader and other participants, hear the hike instructions and depart from the trailhead.

During Trip

- Do not share food, water, or equipment outside your own household members.
- Stay spaced out on the trail at least 6 feet apart.
- All participants should be aware of the need for hiker awareness and consideration of others.

- When approaching another hiker to pass, slow down, give a friendly “Hello” and communicate with hiker the next best move for passing while preserving social distancing and the trailside vegetation.
- Step off trail when needed. In areas that don't allow for six-feet of passing, step at a 90-degree angle off the trail onto a durable surface, wait until the passer is gone, and retrace your footsteps to the trail.
- Don't pass the lead hiker and be sure to stop at any trail junction or place where there is any uncertainty about the route.
- Avoid sharing anything and use hand sanitizer if you must share.
- At breaks, stay spread out and avoid blocking the trail or treading on sensitive plants and soils. Avoid using shelters and picnic tables during breaks.
- **Wear masks at all times and avoid coming within 6 feet of others outside your household. This may be difficult when you are breathing hard and sweating, but is required by the current public health directives.**

After Trip

- Give your name and contact information to the trip leader if they haven't received it already.
- If you show signs and symptoms of COVID-19, contact your primary care provider or health provider immediately to request further guidance.