



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

Edited April 15th, 2021

These guidelines were created by a staff-volunteer working group in June 2020 and have been edited to reflect current conditions and guidance. Trip leaders and participants have done a great job following the guidelines and putting safety first.

Vermont's caseload is still higher than at 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.

As of April 9th, the Vermont Forward Plan universal guidance is the baseline guidance for outdoor recreation. That guidance is below, and the GMC's guidance expands on the universal guidance. Also as of April 9th, unvaccinated Vermonters who have traveled outside the state must be tested within 3 days of returning to Vermont. Unvaccinated people planning to visit Vermont must have a COVID-19 test within 3 days before arriving in Vermont. More details are found at the travel links below.

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 Forward Plan, Universal Guidance: <https://www.vermont.gov/vermont-forward#gsc.tab=0>

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

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



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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, follow the Agency of Commerce and Community Development Cross-State Travel guidelines, viewable here: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/restart/cross-state-travel>.

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 not followed the travel guidance. 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.
- Do not carpool or shuttle with others unless carpoolers are from a single household or if all carpoolers have had at least 14-days pass since their final vaccine dose.

Start of Trip

- Adopt an “arrive, play, leave” mentality, and minimize gathering time at the trailhead or summit.
- 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

- The GMC recommends all participants wear masks and practice social distancing on group trips. Due to advances in vaccination, Vermont guidance currently provides certain mask and distancing exemptions. It is the trip leaders choice to allow these exemptions on the trip. Those exemptions are below.
 - If all individuals on an outing have had 14-days since their final vaccine dose.
 - If the outing includes one or more vaccinated household and no more than one unvaccinated household.
- 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.

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.