



# Guidance for Outdoor Recreation and Facilities

Updated: May 17, 2021

## Background

This guidance applies to outdoor recreational activities and all business and places of public accommodation (“businesses”)—as defined by Executive Order 21-11, as amended by EO 21-21 and 21-23 (“EO”)—that operate outdoor recreation facilities from Friday, May 7, 2021 at 12 p.m. (noon) through May 27, 2021. Businesses must continue to follow all other applicable Stay Safe Industry Guidance found on the [Stay Safe Guidance website](#). The EO requires all businesses to have and implement a written COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that addresses EO requirements and applicable Stay Safe Industry Guidance. For more information about Plan requirements, see the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities webpage](#).

This guidance has been updated to align with EO 21-11, 21-21, and 21-23, a CDC transmission of COVID-19 update (05/13/2021 update), and removal of face covering EO requirements (05/14/2021).

### These guidelines do not address:

- Organized youth and adult sports/athletics and nonmotorized recreational, competitive, and non-competitive races and similar events, which are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports](#).

- Youth programming, including overnight camps, subject to the child care and youth-serving programs section of [MDH's Schools and Child Care: COVID-19](#) web page and [Centers for Disease Control \(CDC\) guidance](#).
- Recreational entertainment and events occurring at outdoor venues (e.g., movies, concerts in the park, horse shows, mini-golf, amusement parks, etc.), which is subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#) for outdoor venues.
- Recreational entertainment and events (e.g. video arcades, games, live performances) at indoor venues associated with outdoor recreation facilities, which are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#) for indoor venues.
- Entertainment events, parties, receptions, and similar events held in a venue, which are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#).
- Operation of public swimming pools, which is subject to the [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance for Public Swimming Pools](#).
- Retail services, which are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Retail Businesses](#).
- Food and beverage operations at outdoor recreation facilities and related indoor facilities, which are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#).

Please refer to the EO in addition to the referenced guidance documents for requirements regarding the above activities and settings.

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## Recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people; land in their eyes, nose, or mouth; or land on surfaces that people touch. The risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather with other households. Several key strategies can reduce the risk of getting sick or transmitting COVID-19:

- Get vaccinated. Vaccination is one of the best things you can do to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19. Visit the [MDH COVID-19 Vaccine](#) webpage.
- Wear a face covering when recommended by MDH or CDC.
  - There is no longer a statewide requirement to wear face coverings in most settings. However, other federal, state, and/or local laws may require face coverings in some settings, and businesses may set their own requirements. Additionally, Minnesota's Safe Learning Plan, along with the existing face covering guidance for schools and childcare settings, remains in effect.
  - For more information about face covering recommendations, see [MDH Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations](#) and [MDH Frequently Asked Questions About Wearing Face Coverings](#).
- If you are not vaccinated:
  - Keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from other households and follow the face covering recommendations in the above MDH resources.

- Vaccinated or not vaccinated, MDH strongly recommends that everyone:
  - Wash their hands often.
  - Follow guidance on staying home (quarantine) if you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19. People who are fully vaccinated may not need to quarantine in many situations. See [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 for more details](#).
  - Stay home if they are sick. Visit [If You Are Sick: COVID-19](#).
  - Follow testing recommendations for when they travel, have COVID-19 symptoms, or are exposed to COVID-19. Visit [COVID-19 Testing](#) for information about who should get tested and how to get a test.
  - Work from home if possible. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations as required under existing federal and state law. Employers are strongly encouraged to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with one or more members of their household who have underlying medical conditions and who are unable to be vaccinated.

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## GUIDELINES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

### General Requirements and Recommendations

#### Requirements

1. Except as stated otherwise in this guidance or other applicable industry guidance, follow the applicable requirements in the [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities](#), which establish different requirements for indoor and outdoor settings.
2. All outdoor recreational facilities must develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan to manage exposure to the virus. Facilities must ensure the Plan is evaluated, monitored, executed, and updated under the supervision of a designated Plan Administrator. Employers must ensure the Plan is posted at all workplaces in readily accessible locations that will allow for the Plan to be readily reviewed by all workers, as required. For more information about Plan requirements, please see the [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities](#).
3. Maintain social distancing of at least six feet between households when indoors, unless different indoor social distancing requirements apply to the facility in Stay Safe industry guidance (e.g., restaurant, venue).
4. Outdoor recreation facilities may provide food and beverage and allow on-site consumption consistent with the EO, applicable licensing requirements, and the following:
  - Restaurants, bars and concessions must follow the [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#). In entertainment venues, concessions must follow the requirements in the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#).
  - All other food and beverage consumption (including vending and “grab and go” convenience food and beverages) must be consumed in an indoor seating area that ensures social distancing

requirements between households can be maintained; outdoors; or in the visitor's tent, car, RV or lodging (provided that social distancing requirements are met in indoor spaces).

- Food or beverage carts that travel a golf course or other outdoor recreational facility may dispense packaged food and beverages. For information specific to the sale of alcohol, please see this [Minnesota DPS webpage](#).
5. Regularly review all applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for Businesses & Organizations](#) to ensure facilities are up-to-date on implementing safe workplace practices.

## Recommendations

1. Place appropriate signage and other messaging on site at locations that can be easily seen by customers and visitors. Print materials are available online at [MDH Materials and Resources](#) and at [CDC Communication Resources](#).

Examples of messages:

- Maintain social distancing of at least six feet from people from other households in indoor businesses and public indoor spaces. Social distancing between households is also recommended when outdoors as a means of reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
  - Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; if soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
  - Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) should stay home and follow the information on the State of Minnesota's [Get Tested](#) web site and [CDC's What to Do If You Are Sick](#).
2. Adapt practices to provide for physical distancing of at least six feet between people from different households when outdoors.
  3. Consider minimizing face-to-face employee and customer interaction. Implement contactless (e.g., online) or socially distanced measures to take reservations and payments, provide instruction, or sell supplies such as gas or bait.

## Employees

1. Employers must establish and implement health screening for staff upon or prior to arrival at a work location. See MDH's [Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist](#). Staff whose responses to the health screening indicates they are potentially infectious must stay or be sent home and follow the information on the State of Minnesota's [Get Tested](#) web site and MDH's guidelines for COVID-19: When to Return to Work on [Businesses and Employers: COVID-19](#). See the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities](#) for more information about health screening requirements.
2. Employees must use proper handwashing and observe respiratory etiquette.

3. Just as facilities need to ensure that customers are following social distancing while indoors, employees of the facilities also need to follow social distancing. This means maintaining a physical distance while indoors of at least 6 feet between all workers, and between workers and all patrons.

## Facility Access and Cleaning

1. Unless addressed by a separate Stay Safe Guidance (for example, the [Stay Safe Guidance for Retail Businesses](#)), occupancy of indoor facilities must follow the requirements for managing occupancy in the [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Indoor Venues](#). Local authorities may also limit activities or close facilities within their purview.
2. For bathroom and shower facilities, post signs reminding those in the facility to maintain at least six feet of social distance from members of other households and ensure handwashing supplies are available. It is not necessary to disable or tape-off sinks, bathroom stalls or showers that are closer than six feet since people from the same household may safely use adjacent facilities. If an indoor facility size does not allow for social distancing between households, limit use to one household at a time.
3. Clearly post the occupancy limit and social distancing requirements at facility entrances, and be prepared to remind patrons of requirements or ask patrons to leave if requirements are not followed.
4. Ensure that employees and customers have access to handwashing/hand sanitizing facilities and supplies.
5. Bathrooms and surfaces such as doorknobs, counters, and other items that are high-touch should be regularly cleaned and sanitized. Follow [CDC's Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#). These EPA-registered household disinfectants are recommended by the CDC for cleaning.



## Events, Guiding and Instruction

1. Limit indoor social gatherings to no more than 50 people. There is no limit on the size of outdoor social gatherings.
  - Social gatherings are groups of people who are not members of the same household, congregated together for a common or coordinated social, community, or leisure purpose.
2. Organized youth and adult sports or athletics and nonmotorized recreational races or non-competitive similar events must follow the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports](#).
3. Other outdoor recreation events, guided or instructional services (e.g., fishing or birding guides, safety training, skill building) and outdoor workouts and training not addressed in the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports](#) must meet the requirements below.
  - The organizer develops an event- or activity-specific COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.
  - The applicable requirements in the [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities](#) are followed.
  - Any events, or portions of events, held in a venue where admission and occupancy can be controlled and predictable must follow the occupancy limits and other requirements for venues

in the EO and the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#), including social distancing requirements.

- Any portion of an outdoor recreational event or service held in an indoor public space that is not a venue must not involve gatherings of more than 50 people. These limits include all participants, organizers, officials, and spectators, and all involved must follow the social distancing requirements in this guidance. There is not a gathering-size limitation or social distancing requirement outdoors.

## Charter and Launch Boats

1. Charter and launch boats are outdoor recreation facilities subject to this Guidance for Outdoor Recreation and Facilities, and may also be subject to other StaySafe Guidance depending on the use of the boat (e.g., entertainment offerings or events – including cruises or tours – are subject to the [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#); food or beverage operations must follow the [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#)).
2. The occupancy limit of a charter or launch boat is the full legal load/capacity for the boat. The occupancy of any indoor facilities on a charter or launch boat must follow the requirements for managing occupancy in the [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Indoor Venues](#) and ensure all workers and patrons maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between people from different households. If all patrons are members of the same household, the indoor occupancy may be the full capacity.

## Equipment Rental and Transportation Services

1. Indoor rental facilities must implement clear check-in and check-out procedures that minimize contact between customers and workers, and reservation or other procedures that help avoid people from multiple households congregating while waiting for rental equipment. Outdoor rental facilities are encouraged to follow these practices as well.
  - Follow the [COVID-19 Guidance for Hotel Managers and Owners](#) for cleaning live-aboard rental equipment such as houseboats or RVs.
  - Any instruction on the operation or use of rental equipment that occurs indoors must be provided in a manner that complies with social distancing requirements.
2. Transportation services to and from authorized outdoor recreational activities, such as transport to a boat launch or hiking trailhead, must follow the [COVID-19 Preparedness Plan Guidance: Requirements for Passenger Transportation](#).



## Marinas and Docks

1. Public and private marinas and docks may provide storage, docking, and mooring services to slip owners, seasonal renters or the general public. This includes allowing boaters to purchase fuel, use access ramps, or purchase or receive services authorized by the EO. Any food and beverage offerings, including onsite consumption, must be consistent with applicable licensing requirements, the [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](#), and this guidance.

## Camping

1. Private and public developed campgrounds, and dispersed and remote campsites may all be open for recreational camping consistent with this guidance and the [Stay Safe Guidance for Campgrounds](#).

## For More Information

If you have questions about the information in these guidelines, please [email us](#). Also, please see [Stay Safe MN](#) for information about various business and social settings not addressed here.

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# GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC

Time spent outside provides many benefits. We encourage outdoor recreation as a good way to stay healthy, reduce stress, and enjoy time with family. To continue to protect yourself and others against COVID-19, please observe the following practices while recreating outdoors:



## General Considerations

1. Explore the range of public lands available to you. If you arrive at a park, playground, water access site or other public recreation land and see that it is busy, choose a different option. This will reduce impacts on staff and resources. Also, consider visiting at off-peak times, such as mid-week, or early or late in the day on a weekend.
2. Respect signs and instructions limiting access, specifying occupancy requirements for indoor spaces, and providing temporary direction regarding facility, trail or site usage.
3. Be aware that some facilities may not yet be open at this time. Be sure to call ahead or visit applicable websites so you are aware of what to expect. For Minnesota DNR-managed parks and lands, consult the [DNR website](#) or call the DNR information center (651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (888-646-6367)).
4. Maintain social distancing of at least six feet from people from other households in indoor public spaces. Although social distancing is no longer required outdoors, it is recommended as a means of reducing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

5. When using or renting equipment indoors, social distancing is required between households at all times. Consider only sharing outdoor rental equipment that does not allow for 6 feet of social distancing with people from your household.
6. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
7. Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) should stay home and follow the information on the State of Minnesota's [Get Tested](#) web site and [CDC's What to Do If You Are Sick](#).

## Outdoor Events, Guiding and Instruction

1. Organized youth and adult sports or athletics and nonmotorized recreational races or non-competitive similar events are not addressed in these guidelines; please see instead the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports](#).
2. Outdoor recreational events, guided or instructional services (e.g., fishing or birding guides, safety training, skill building) and outdoor workouts and training not addressed in the [Stay Safe Guidance for Organized Sports](#) are allowed subject to the following:
  - The applicable requirements of the [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities](#) must be followed.
  - Any events or services, or portions of events or services held in a venue where admission and occupancy can be controlled and predictable must follow the occupancy limits and other requirements for venues in the EO and the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues](#), including social distancing requirements.
  - Any portion of an outdoor recreational event, guided or instructional service, workout, or training held in an indoor public space that is not a venue must not involve gatherings of more than 50 people. These limits include all participants, organizers, officials, and spectators, and all involved must follow the social distancing requirements in this guidance. There is not a gathering-size limitation or social distancing requirement outdoors.

## Camping, Cabins, Live-Aboard Rentals, and Other Accommodations

1. To help ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for you and others:
  - Plan ahead. When you are able, make reservations and purchase permits, firewood, and other items online or by phone before you arrive on site. Check online resources or call ahead so you know what to expect when you arrive.
  - Be self-sufficient. For example, arrive prepared for the weather you may encounter, and bring your own disinfectant supplies, hand sanitizer, towels and toilet paper, in case these necessities are not available onsite.
  - Those renting or reserving campsites, cabins, live-aboard rentals (e.g., RVs, houseboats, etc.), and other similar accommodations must ensure that they comply with the [Stay Safe In Social](#)

Gatherings guidance, including the requirements to maintain social distance between households and to limit gatherings to no more than 50 people indoors.

- Follow all verbal and written rules and instructions from the business or entity issuing the rental, permit, or accommodation.

## For More Information

Do you have questions about the information provided here? [Email us](#). Please see [StaySafe MN](#) for information about reopening various business and social settings not addressed here.

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## RESOURCES

EPA-approved Cleaning and Disinfecting Supplies and Procedures – [epa.gov/coronavirus/guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-public-spaces-workplaces-businesses-schools-and-homes](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/guidance-cleaning-and-disinfecting-public-spaces-workplaces-businesses-schools-and-homes)

Guidance for Hotel Managers and Owners – [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/lodgingcleaning.pdf](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/lodgingcleaning.pdf)

Minnesota Department of Health – [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/index.html)

National Park Service Coronavirus Updates – [nps.gov/aboutus/news/public-health-update.htm](https://www.nps.gov/aboutus/news/public-health-update.htm)

State of Minnesota Executive Orders – [mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp](https://mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp)

State of Minnesota Get Tested site – <https://www.mn.gov/covid19/get-tested/index.jsp>

Stay Safe MN – <https://staysafe.mn.gov/>

Information for Individuals and Families – <https://staysafe.mn.gov/individuals-families/index.jsp>

Information for Businesses and Organizations – <https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp>

U.S. Forest Service Coronavirus Updates – [fs.usda.gov/about-agency/covid19-updates](https://www.fs.usda.gov/about-agency/covid19-updates)

CDC Communication Resources – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html)

CDC's Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)



Minnesota Department of Natural Resources | [mndnr.gov](https://mndnr.gov) | 651-296-6157  
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Minnesota Department of Health | [health.mn.gov](https://health.mn.gov) | 651-201-5000  
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