



## Temporary amendments to the Program Manual of the Minnesota Trails Assistance Program for Off-highway Vehicles (OHV)

April 29, 2020

### COVID 19 recommendations for OHV GIA sponsors and clubs

**The following are temporary amendments to the Off-highway vehicle (OHV) Trails Assistance, or Grant-in-Aid (“GIA”) Manual.** This manual is dated February 1, 2017, and is posted online at [https://www.mndnr.gov/grants/recreation/gia\\_ohv.html](https://www.mndnr.gov/grants/recreation/gia_ohv.html).

**These amendments provide updates and guidelines for OHV GIA trails and facilities during pandemic conditions. These are intended to assist sponsors and clubs manage their trail commitments in these unusual times, in coordination with MN DNR Parks and Trails staff.**

The social distancing information here has been modified slightly from DNR documents to provide recommendations to the cities, townships and counties that are the sponsors of grant-in-aid (GIA) trails, and the clubs doing the work out on the trails. These recommendations are based upon what is known as of April 29, 2020. **These temporary changes will take effect once signed on the last page of this document, and will automatically expire on June 30, 2021 unless renewed.**

This document and any updates will be sent directly to sponsors and clubs, added to the Program Manual, and posted at [https://www.mndnr.gov/grants/recreation/gia\\_ohv.html](https://www.mndnr.gov/grants/recreation/gia_ohv.html). Questions about the information in this document should be directed to the MN DNR OHV Program – Paul Purman, [paul.purman@state.mn.us](mailto:paul.purman@state.mn.us), or 651.259.5644.

### Governor Walz’s Executive Orders, including “Stay At Home” and “Allowing for Safe Outdoor Recreation”

Different parts of the state and country are seeing different levels of COVID-19 activity. The duration and severity of each pandemic phase can vary depending on the characteristics of the virus and the public health response.

In response to Governor Walz’s several executive orders listed above, the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is postponing, adjusting, closing and canceling a variety of public events and services.

At this time, these Executive Orders allow people to be outdoors, engaging in recreational activities. Minnesotans can continue to enjoy parks, trails and other public recreation lands for day use. The order urges outdoor enthusiasts to:

- Stay close to home.
- Not congregate when outdoors.

4/29/2020

- Follow social distancing guidelines from the [Minnesota Department of Health](#) .

## General Guidance for Safe Work

For all people, it is always a good practice to:

- Fieldwork is not a reason to break self-quarantine. For specifics on symptoms, please see Minnesota Department of Health [Website](#).
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand rub with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), such as puncture-resistant gloves and face and eye protection.
- Refrain from using others' phones or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Maintain regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of equipment and tools.

## Field Work and Social Distancing Guideline of 6 to 10 feet

Field work/social distancing recommendations were developed for MN DNR Parks and Trails staff doing maintenance and development work in the field during this time of the COVID 19 pandemic. DNR crews are currently using these guidelines. Many field functions are typically done with closer proximity than six to 10 feet, including traveling in vehicles, or other close contact while doing physical work. Fieldwork is being modified to be completed in a safe manner and minimize potential transmission of COVID-19 in a number of ways such as taking separate vehicles to a work site and working 6 to 10 feet or more apart.

One aspect of social distancing is to minimize the number of contacts. Where there are larger crews, people should try to minimize the number of combinations of crew members working in close proximity. When possible, assign crew members to specific vehicles and minimize the sharing of equipment among crew members.

In cases where a facility is opened, but then has important safety-related work that the sponsor/club decide needs to be completed, in which social distancing may be intermittently difficult, the following procedures will be important. Maintain all social distancing possible, as recommended by the CDC and MN Department of Health, **and require all crew members to wear facemasks per CDC guidelines on their use in “settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.”**

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>)

The CDC has [pages specifically for those working on or visiting parks and trails](#):

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/>

## Vehicle Cleaning, Occupancy and Travel cost reimbursement

We recommend that in any situation of shared-use vehicles, including ATVs and other field equipment, to clean “high touch” areas such as the steering wheel, turn signal, interior door handles, and radio buttons both before and after use. Disinfectants are beneficial if available, but any regular cleaning chemical like 409 or Windex, or soap and water, are sufficient.

Avoid sharing vehicles/equipment and tools. Trail Administrators assigning volunteer members to travel in vehicles must determine the minimum number of people required to complete the assigned task safely. It is appropriate to send volunteers in additional separate vehicles during the pandemic to provide social distancing as much as feasible.

The governor's orders encourage people to get outdoors, but stay close to home. For many GIA clubs, members live near the trails they work on. For other clubs, typically those made up of members in the Twin Cities, traveling longer distances to the work on trails is required.

DNR Area Supervisors have the authority, in pandemic condition in which social distancing standard prevent normal ridesharing arrangements, to approve travel reimbursements specifically to support effective social distancing even if these reimbursements would exceed the budgeted administrative amounts and/or go above the normal 15% cap on administrative charges outlined in the Program Manual. **Clubs and sponsors must communicate in advance with their DNR Area Supervisor about eligibility, submit reimbursement requests in a timely manner, and communicate early with their Area Supervisor if the budget is being spent down more rapidly than anticipated.**

### Evaluation of Task Importance

Sponsors and clubs need to evaluate the importance of tasks that require close contact. Delay or forgo tasks when appropriate. **Keep your DNR Area Supervisor informed of proposed changes to your work plan resulting from COVID19 concerns.**

### Delaying the seasonal opening of a trail

Sponsors, clubs, and DNR will need to work together to evaluate whether, under pandemic conditions, temporarily delaying the opening of a trail for public use is warranted. In some ways this is similar to the way in which we already implement temporary delays due to weather/seasonal conditions. From MN DNR Parks and Trails perspective, maintaining public (including riders and club members) health and wellbeing are important objectives, as is providing a diverse statewide system of recreational trails. **If a sponsor and/or club believe current pandemic conditions justify a short term delay to the opening of a trail, please contact your DNR Parks and Trails Area Supervisor immediately to discuss.**

### Additional pandemic-related signage

DNR encourages clubs and sponsors to post additional signage to support social distancing. DNR Parks and Trails has produced a set of signs reminding visitors to maintain proper social distance at trailheads and near toilets. These signs are available to be emailed upon request for local printing; limited quantities may be printed by DNR for distribution from Area offices. Please contact your Parks and Trail Area Supervisor for more information.

### Non-pandemic related clarification regarding reimbursements for portable toilets

Please note that the current grant agreement allows portable toilet services to be reimbursed at up to 90%.

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Approved for distribution by Phil Leversedge, MN DNR PAT Deputy Director

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