

Department of Natural Resources

Guidance for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at Large Recreation Events

*The public health response to the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as any allowed reopening guidelines are subject to change. This document is current as of **January 29, 2021**.*

Who is this document for?

The following guidelines are for event organizers who will be managing motorized or non-motorized races, rides, runs or similar events for large groups on DNR developed recreation sites that are located in Regions that are under Phase 1 or Phase 2 of the [Healthy Washington – Roadmap to Recovery](#) reopening plan that took effect on January 11, 2021. In addition to requiring an approved DNR recreation permit or land use license to proceed, these events are distinguished from other types of outdoor recreation activities or events in these ways:

- Events are one-time events, happening on a specific day or series of days, but are not reoccurring.
- Events do not allow extended opportunities for gathering in large groups before, during, and after the activity (such as an outdoor wedding, funeral ceremony, spiritual gathering or group fitness class)
- Events are individual and/or competitive, meaning they involve regular or constant movement, including, but not limited to running or biking races, motorized poker runs, or competitive target or obstacle events that do not allow gathering opportunities
- Events have pre-registration requirements and are not open to the public on the day of the event
- Events take place within a specific time frame and/or have a timed component for participation
- In accordance with requirements of recreation permit or land use license, event organizers provide adequate insurance and liability coverage for their event
- Participants sign DNR release waivers prior to beginning any event to be submitted to DNR at the time of event

This document does not include guidance for events that allow extended congregation of groups of people, guided outdoor recreation, such as guided hikes or rides, outdoor group fitness classes, “fun runs” or “charity walks” without participant timing, indoor competitive events or races, or volunteer activities.

State and Local Laws

DNR’s requirements for large recreation events are based on reopening guidance issued by the Governor’s Office and have been adapted to be most successfully implemented on DNR lands. Event organizers should reference state guidance to confirm then are following state and local law when organizing events, including the following documents, and any updated relevant guidance found on the [COVID-19 Reopening Guidance for Businesses and Workers](#) resource page. Guidance specific to outdoor recreation includes:

- [Racing non-motorized and motorized COVID-19 Requirements](#)
- [Outdoor Recreation COVID-19 Requirements](#)

In addition to DNR’s large event requirements detailed below, event organizers are expected to comply with COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices, as outlined in the Governor’s “Safe Start” Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces](#) and the Washington State Department of Health [Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations](#).

As the response to the COVID-19 pandemic continues, restrictions to events are likely to change. Event organizers are required to adhere to the most current state and local laws and by proceeding with event organization, acknowledge that changes to pandemic response, including increased restrictions, may result in cancellation or reduction in size of events with little notice.

Requirements for hosting an event

General Guidelines to provide safe participation:

- Pre-registration must occur online. No same-day registration for events is permitted.
- Organizers are encouraged to mail bibs, packets, and other pre-event materials in advance of the event. If pick-up happens in-person, staggering of times, social distancing enforcement and other efforts to reduce congestion must be used.
- Events must have staggered starts allowing participants to begin in waves encouraging faster participants to begin earlier to reduce contact while passing (see chart below)
- Participants must wear face masks. Face masks must be worn by organizers, and event staff and volunteers for duration of event.
- Participants must make every effort to keep a minimum of 6 feet of distance between themselves and others, including when passing other participants or other recreationalists using course.
- Event staff and volunteers are **not** counted in overall participant numbers
- Non-essential travel such as out-of-state travel for sporting events are subject quarantines as detailed in the [Governor’s Travel Advisory](#)

For large events, the chart below indicates the **maximum** number of participants allowed at each phase of an event. The overall size and capacity of a selected and approved start location, and the event organizer’s ability to organize shuttling (if needed) may reduce overall event size.

Component of Event	Phase 1	Phase 2
Participants per wave at start	10 or less	15 or less
Time between waves	2 minute minimum	2 minute minimum
Starting window limit	3 hours	3 hours
Max allowed to start per hour	100	150
Max allowed to gather at start to await their staggered start (if distance possible. The number allowed at the start should be included in COVID safety plan)	50 – masks required	50 – masks required

Spectators	Not allowed	Household members allowed on course as possible. No spectators are allowed at the start or finish.
------------	-------------	--

Component of Event	All Regions in Phase 1 or 2
Aid Stations	No more than 5 people may congregate at one time. Volunteers/staff must wear masks and observe 6 feet of distance from participants at all times.
Coaches/crew	Allowed as needed for hydration/nutrition assistance
Post events	Participants must leave event area when finished. No vendors, concessions, awards ceremonies or after party activities permitted.
PPE	Face masks must be worn by participants at least until activity begins. Participants are highly encouraged to keep a neck gaiter or other facial covering with them during event to use when within 6 feet of others. Face masks must be worn by organizers and event staff and volunteers for duration of event.
Portable toilets	6 ft of distance when waiting in line. Hand washing stations required. See permit application for DNR requirements for portable toilets.
Retention of event data	Organizers must keep registration data a minimum of 30 days

Expectations for Event Organizers: Event organizers must comply with all safety requirements outlined in [Racing non-motorized and motorized COVID-19 Requirements](#) (updated January 11, 2021) including but not limited to the requirements listed below.

- Place signage at activity site to instruct participants that they cannot participate if they have been diagnosed with COVID-19, had symptoms of COVID-19 within the last 24 hours, or had contact with a person that has or is suspected to have COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- Supply site-specific COVID-19 supervisor(s) who is/are trained in safety expectations to ensure safety protocols are followed
 - This person should be a paid staff person of the event organization, unless event is organized by an all-volunteer group
 - Additional safety monitors are recommended based on size of event
- Encourage participants to bring their own water bottles to reduce crowding at water stations
- Hand sanitizer must be provided by event organizers and widely available for use
- Sanitation of all high-touch surfaces is required periodically throughout the event using recommendations from the Department of Labor & Industries.
- If shuttling is used to transport participants to the start or from the finish, organizers must comply with shuttling requirements outlined on page 5 of the document [Racing non-motorized and motorized COVID-19 Requirements](#) and include their shuttling strategy in their COVID-19 Safety Protocols with their permit application.

- Pre-event activities such as course marking events or pre-event camping, must follow the most recent state and local requirements for outdoor gatherings for the Region. [As of 1/28/2021](#), social gatherings outdoors are limited to groups of no more than 10 people from 2 households in Phase 1 Regions, and no more than 15 people from 2 households in Phase 2 Regions.

Applying to host an event on DNR lands

The process for accepting and approving/denying a recreation permit application is managed by each DNR region. Event organizers should contact the appropriate DNR regional staff to learn the recreation permit process for that DNR region. The following guidance applies to all DNR managed lands:

- The release of these guidelines does not imply pre-approval of any proposed event. Event organizers are expected to work with the appropriate regional staff to apply for a recreation permit, and to implement their event.
- Event organizers are required to submit their draft COVID response and mitigation plan to DNR as an attachment when submitting an application for a recreation permit. The COVID response plan should include all information outlined in the document [Racing non-motorized and motorized COVID-19 Requirements](#) (see “Activity Operation Requirements” and “Safety and Health Requirements for all related activities in all phases”).
- Event organizers must submit an updated COVID response and mitigation plan at least 7 days, and no more than 14 days before their event that takes into account any updated safety measures as required by state and local public health officials.
- If shuttling is required for an event, organizers must include their shuttle plans and mitigation in their response plan. Plans should use the most updated guidance from the governor’s office (as of 1/28/2021, this is provided in [Racing non-motorized and motorized COVID-19 Requirements](#))
- Per [WAC 332-52-205](#), recreation permit applications must be received a minimum of 60 days before an event would take place. Regional staff reserve the right to require a longer period to review applications.

The following language has been added to all DNR Recreation Applications:

COVID-19 Safety Protocols

Please include with your recreation permit application your comprehensive plan for ensuring participant safety and following DNR guidelines with respect to COVID-19. See full guidelines in the document Department of Natural Resources Guidelines for Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 at Large Recreation Events. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic is changing rapidly, so you will also be expected to submit an updated response plan with any needed changes based on current state, local, and DNR guidance, at least seven days, but no more than 14 days before your event. Event organizers who fail to produce this document in the stated timeframe risk their event being cancelled. The final version of your plan must be available on the day of your event. Your response plan should include safety measures including but not limited to the following:

- *PPE utilization*
- *On-location physical distancing*
- *Hygiene*
- *Sanitation*
- *Symptom monitoring*
- *Incident reporting*
- *Location disinfection procedures*
- *COVID-19 safety training*
- *Exposure response procedures and post-exposure incident project-wide recovery plan*
- *Shuttling plan (if applicable)*