

VIRGINIA HEADWATERS COUNCIL, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CAMPING AND OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

Safe Scouting During the Pandemic for Unit Meetings, Hikes and Camping July, 2020

Safety and Risks with Scouting Activities

Being safe is not the same as risk free in the context of scout unit activities. As the response to the pandemic shifts to a state-focused, phased approach, we must strictly conduct activities following the guidelines of the State of Virginia and BSA to be safe and compliant with their guidelines.

Precautions and mitigation strategies are important, but they cannot eliminate the potential for exposure to COVID-19 or any other illness with in-person activities. People with COVID-19 may show no signs or symptoms of illness, but they can spread the virus. Some people may be contagious before their symptoms occur. The fact is, is that someone with COVID-19 may still pass the required health screenings and be allowed into program activities. Further, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that as people age and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19. These individuals are precluded from participation in in-person unit activities.

Traveling to and from Events/Activities

Most likely you will be traveling in a car, van or bus to your outdoors activity. When indoors (such as these vehicles) you must wear a mask and avoid physical contact. Wash or sanitize hands before getting into the vehicle and immediately afterward leaving vehicle. If you stop for food, restroom etc., again keep mask on, wash or sanitize hands after leaving vehicle and before entering vehicle.

Hiking

Hiking as a key activity for scouts of all ages. Being outdoors does help lower risk of infections and that is a positive, but as noted above, there is always some risk. To mitigate the risk as much as possible the following must be followed:

1. Attestation of pre-activity health conditions signed by parent or guardian.
2. Acknowledgement of recognition of risk associated with the activity signed by parent or guardian.
3. On-site re-check of health conditions.
4. All records are kept by leader for a minimum of four weeks after the event.
5. Physical distancing of a minimum of 10 feet outdoors without masks.
6. Masks must be worn when less than 10 feet except when eating or drinking.
7. Wash or sanitize hands at beginning of event, before and after every meal, and at the end of the event.
8. Report to adult leadership if at any time someone in the group is feeling ill. Also, report to adult leadership if an any time you diagnosed with Covid-19.

Camping.

Camping like hiking is a keystone activity in scouting and likewise being conducted outdoors does help lower risks, but conversely being in a confined campsite, cooking meals and eating together as well as other troop/patrol activities may increase risks for infection. To mitigate the risk as much as possible the following must be followed:

1. Attestation of pre-activity health conditions signed by parent or guardian.
2. Acknowledgement of recognition of risk associated with the activity signed by parent or guardian.
3. On-site re-check of health conditions.
4. All records are kept by leader for a minimum of four weeks after the event.
5. Physical distancing of a minimum of 10 feet outdoors without masks.
6. Masks must be worn when less than 10 feet except when eating or drinking.
7. Wash or sanitize hands at beginning of event, before and after every meal, when you wake up and prior to going to bed and at the end of the event.
8. Sleep in a hammock or alone in a tent to reduce contact.
9. Extra precautions must be taken during food preparation, dining and clean. Regular and repeated hand washing or sanitizing during all of the activity must occur. Strict distancing during preparation and clean up must be enforced. Wearing masks during these activities are recommended. Strict distancing during dining when masks cannot be worn must be enforced.
10. If any shared troop/patrol equipment is used (i.e. axes, lashing poles, lanterns etc.) they must be disinfected prior to use and immediately after use.
11. Report to adult leadership if at any time someone in the group is feeling ill. Also, report to adult leadership if an any time you diagnosed with Covid-19.

Safety During Instructional Activities

1. In addition to the above elements for activities, for instructional sessions you must agree to follow state guidelines to minimize exposure (distancing, hygiene, masks). On arrival to the class you must wash or sanitize your hands as well as when you leave the class. For activities in the water, you will not have a mask on. In aquatic activities, the risk of exposure is greater given the lack of a mask and thus 10 feet distancing is particularly critical. All shared equipment must be sanitized before use and immediately after use. During instruction it may be necessary for you to have physical contact with the instructor or another swimmer. Avoid breathing in each other's face and limit the time of contact to a minimum. Report to adult leadership if at any time someone in the group is feeling ill. Also, report to adult leadership if an any time you diagnosed with Covid-19.

If you are involved in any of the above activities you and family must evaluate your unique circumstances and make an informed decision to participate or not, and then agree to accept the risks.

I _____ acknowledge the risk of exposure to infection of Covid-19 during the attendance of this class and I accept the risk.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____ Date: _____

**VAHC Risk Acknowledgement for Unit Activities
July 2020**

I hereby attest that on the date listed below I do not have any of the following sign and symptoms nor have I been in contact with anyone known to have Covid-19 or Covid-19 signs or symptoms.

- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Repeated shaking with chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- Loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Feeling feverish or having a temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit
- Known close contact with a person who is lab-confirmed to have COVID-19

Name: _____ Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent or Guardian: _____ Signature: _____

Date: _____

Note: This must be attested to on the day of the class for each day of the class.