

Covid Plan for RMCC Events (March 2021)

SUMMARY

RMCC's general rule for events during the Era of Covid is to follow the Covid-specific rules for the locations of our events – that is, follow the rules/guidance of federal, state, county, tribal, and other local jurisdictions. While we have no control over our members' individual paddling trips, nor even 'pick-up trips' arranged and advertised through our GoogleGroup, we are asking our Trip Coordinators (TCs) to design and operate RMCC (i.e., ACA-sanctioned and insured) trips in accord with these government/health department requirements and guidelines. In short:

- Colorado trips will be limited in size in accord with state guidelines:
 - No limit on number of participants in Green Level counties;
 - 50 participants for trips in Blue and Yellow Level counties;
 - 10 participants in Orange, Red and Purple Level counties.
- Socializing in camps, on beaches, etc. is separately limited:
 - Gathering size/mix is not limited in Green Level counties;
 - 10 people from no more than two households in Blue, Yellow and Orange Level counties; and
 - Multi-household social gatherings are not allowed in Red and Purple Level counties.
- All trip participants agree to follow these safety measures:
 - Wear masks when social distance cannot be maintained (e.g., during car shuttles, on small beaches/boat ramps, in camp), except in the case of emergency (e.g., during a water rescue);
 - Social distance 6' between non-household member participants not wearing masks;
 - Travel with shuttle vehicle window open;
 - Avoid group activities, such as group cooking, to limit human-to-human contact and contact with shared items; and
 - Users are responsible for sanitizing shared items (e.g., groovers) after each use.

BACKGROUND AND REASONING FOR RMCC'S COVID-19 PLAN

The ACA has directed its Paddle America Clubs (e.g., RMCC) to follow local area rules (see box). The following explains the Colorado public health requirements that shaped our Covid plan and provides a map of county color levels (the Color Dial). See the end of this document for a summary of the parameters that will be used for planning and participating in an RMCC paddling trip.

ACA COVID-19 Guidelines for Instructors and Event Organizers; May 22, 2020

<https://www.americancanoe.org/page/COVID19Guidelines>

Excerpt: "ACA members live in all 50 states and in over 20 countries around the world. Given this diversity, it is challenging and unrealistic to provide detailed guidelines relevant to all of our members. Therefore, our overarching directive is that all paddlers adhere to federal, state, and local public health guidelines, rules, and regulations. These are subject to change, and it is imperative to closely monitor them on a regular basis."

LIABILITY WAIVERS

Regardless of precautions – stuff happens. Which is why we sign Release of Liability waivers as a condition of membership and participation in club events. Waivers that we sign as RMCC members are intended to protect both the club and the individual event participants from being sued for actions, inaction, and injuries related to the event.¹ In signing these waivers, we are acknowledging that we are accepting personal responsibility for the risk that we are taking in participating in the activity. Last year we added an infectious disease waiver addendum (Covid Waiver) for participation in ACA-sanctioned events.

In short – what the Covid Waiver means for individual paddling participants (me and you!) is that we agree to (1) comply with any trip restrictions attached to RMCC events, and (2) proactively remove ourselves from participation in any part of an event that poses ‘unusual or significant hazard.’ Furthermore, we agree to bring this type of hazard to the attention of the TC.

Covid Waiver – Waiver/Release for Communicable Diseases including Covid-19
(excerpt):

3. I willingly agree to comply with the state and customary terms and conditions for participation as regards protection against infectious diseases. If, however, I observe any significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participation and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately; . . .

In 2020, the TC was responsible for collecting those waivers from event participants. This year we are streamlining the waiver process for TCs and requiring BOTH the standard RMCC liability waiver and the Covid Waiver to be submitted with new and renewal memberships. Membership chair Bill Ashworth keeps TCs apprised of who is current on membership and waivers.

No signed waivers: No participation in ACA-sanctioned (insured) RMCC events.

When possible, TCs will be asking participants to submit waivers and pay trip fees (e.g., permit/shuttle/camping fees) BEFORE the event so that less in-person coordinating has to be done at put-ins.

Regarding waivers, you will either:

1. Provide the TC your ACA annual membership number, if you have a current, signed ACA on-line waiver; or
2. Submit an ACA event waiver that includes your ACA number; and
3. If you are not a current ACA member, submit this event waiver and pay the \$10² ACA event membership fee.

¹ ACA insurance is only liability coverage. It does not provide evacuation, medical, or any other kind of personal injury coverage. The ACA General Liability Insurance Policy pays amounts that insured persons and organizations become obligated to pay (including fees for defending insured persons and organizations) for bodily injury, property damage, and/or personal advertising injury, subject to the policy's terms, conditions, limits, exclusions and limitations.

² Note that ACA increased their individual event membership fee from \$5 to \$10 for 2021.

Please cooperate with the TCs' requests for pre-trip info and fee payments! They are all volunteers and work hard to coordinate safe and fun trips. If you pay ACA fees by check, TCs can easily "refund" your payments by destroying the check if you have to cancel. TCs have the option of refunding your share of payments for permits, campgrounds, shuttles, etc. that they may have to pay or guarantee before the trip especially if other paddlers do not fill your cancelled trip spot.

PADDLING TRIP COVID-SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS

Since RMCC paddling trip participants are agreeing to follow the Covid-specific rules of the places you are paddling – federal, states, counties, and other local/tribal jurisdictions – we are doing our best to identify those rules for participants before you sign up for the event.

Individual Requirements

Please note, however, that the jurisdiction may also have individual-specific requirements or guidelines that each individual, especially particularly vulnerable individuals,³ must consider when participating. See 'High Risk Populations' in Table 1 for a summary of this guidance. For RMCC paddling trips, this individual responsibility includes:

- Extra care to only boat within your comfort zone to avoid burdening yourself and other participants with unnecessary up-close-and-personal rescues or burdening the local emergency responders and health care system with emergency medical situations.
- Self-evaluate your health before starting out on a paddling trip. Cancel if you have any symptoms that might suggest Covid (fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches (beyond those of an aging boater), headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea).

RMCC Activity Requirements

In Colorado, the question of requirements for various activities, including paddling trips, translates to:

1. *What sector of regulated activity applies to RMCC trips?* and
2. *What capacity restrictions, i.e., number of participants allowed at an event, apply in the paddling location?*

1. Activity Sector:

Table 1 (*What are the capacity restrictions at all levels*), at the end of this document, summarizes the major sectors of activity regulated by Colorado. Unfortunately, it does not include all of the sectors/subsectors most applicable to RMCC paddling trips and does not use terminology consistent with its own detailed guidance.⁴ Table 2 (*Colorado Covid Color Dial Attendance Limitations*), however, summarizes the Colorado activity sectors or subsectors listed and described below, that, somewhat awkwardly, fit our lake and river trips. While RMCC

³ See *People at higher risk for severe illness* at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/higher-risk-severe-illness>

⁴ The particulars for these sectors are found at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/guidance-by-sector>

padding events do not fit neatly into any sector, Colorado’s sector descriptions provide restrictions on participant numbers and suggest practical precautions for our padding events. With this information, we hope to comply with the spirit of Colorado’s restrictions.

The most applicable sectors are the following (described further below):

- *Recreational Activity (Outdoor)* – primarily guided services
- *Personal Recreation* – Outdoor Swimming and Parks subsectors
- *Public and Private Gatherings* – not otherwise regulated
- *Necessary Activity*

2. Number of Participants

Once the appropriate sector is determined, the number of participants allowed is easily determined by viewing the Colorado’s Dial map⁵ that indicates the Covid status of each Colorado county. The capacity restrictions (number of allowed activity participants) varies with this Covid status level. As of 3/23/21, all of northern Colorado counties are either designated Level Blue or Yellow and all of those Yellow Level counties are authorized to function at Level Blue.

TCs and participants in Colorado padding events should revisit the Dial Map to re-check the padding county’s Covid status as the scheduled event approaches.

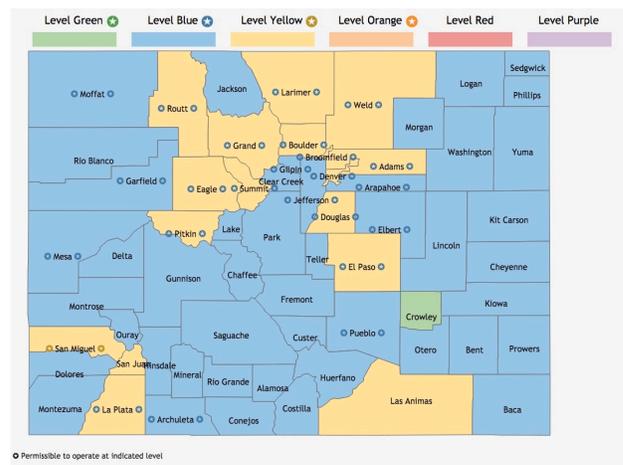
Activity Sectors and Participant Limits

The following describes each of the applicable sectors and the capacity restrictions corresponding to each. See these sectors summarized in Table 2. A summary of safety requirements for these sectors – those particularly applicable to RMCC padding events – follow the sector descriptions and capacity restrictions.

Outdoor Recreation –

This sector looks plausible for RMCC, but is mostly applicable to guided outdoor services including river outfitters. RMCC is always careful to recognize that our padding trips are not guided. TCs are not trip leaders, but ‘merely’ coordinators. Trip participants are responsible for their own equipment, safety, etc.

The maximum number of participants allowed, indicated in Table 2,⁶ are 500 in Level Green, 25 in Level Blue, 10 in Levels Yellow, Orange and Red, and 10 participants from only one household



⁵ See the Dial map at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/data/covid-19-dial-dashboard>

⁶ Also listed at the bottom of Table 1 as Outdoor Guided Services.

in Level Purple counties. The text of the guidance on this sector⁷ further limits activities to ‘groups up to 10, not including staff’, and a maximum of two households included in a tour vehicle, e.g., raft or jeep. The most recent (3 7 2021) public health order further provides that participants must maintain 6’ social distancing from non-households contacts in Levels Red and Purple.⁸

Personal Recreation –

This large sector includes organized sports and both indoor and outdoor public recreation facilities. The most applicable aspects for RMCC paddling are the Outdoor Swimming Pool and Parks venues. The latter includes bike tracks and fields.

As indicated in the sector description⁹ and Table 2, the maximum number of participants allowed in outdoor pools is 500 in Level Green, 175 in Level Blue, 50 in Levels Yellow and Orange, and 10 participants in Levels Red and Purple. Maximum participants in parks are the same for Levels Green, Blue, and Yellow, but limited to ‘groups of less than 10 people’ for Levels Orange, Red and Purple.

Public and Private Gatherings –

The 3 7 21 Public Health Order and Table 2 list the following maximum participants in public and private gatherings not otherwise regulated, as: Up to 500 and per local guidance in Level Green, up to 10 from no more than two households in Levels Blue, Yellow and Orange, and None in Levels Red and Purple. That is, public and private gatherings involving two or more people are prohibited at Levels Red and Purple, except for the limited purposes expressly authorized in the Order and for Necessary Activities.

Necessary Activity –

Necessary Activity is defined 3 7 21 Public Health Order as “*Engaging in outdoor activity, such as, by way of example and without limitation, walking, hiking, nordic skiing, snowshoeing, biking or running.*” Boating could, logically, be included as a Necessary Activity.

This sector is the most liberal in terms of number of participants allowed because the necessary activity is allowed – if social distancing is maintained – without any mention of limiting the number of participants. It is unlikely, however, that Colorado intended to allow any of these ‘necessary activities’ to occur in a large group.

Safety Requirements by Sector (applicable to our unguided trips)

The following is a list of Colorado’s Recreation Sector safety requirements that seem applicable to RMCC trips.

Outdoor Recreation –

⁷ See Outdoor Recreation at <https://covid19.colorado.gov/outdoor-recreation>

⁸ Eight Amended Public Health Order 20-36 Covid-19 Dial, March 7, 2021 at <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KPNMKVzWx2KbAqAjjia-IGfO6v4CqFOZ7/view>

⁹ See <https://covid19.colorado.gov/recreation>

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet . . . except in cases where it is unsafe to maintain that distance.
- Wear face coverings as much as possible, especially during staging and disembarking operations. Where safe, wear face coverings during trip operations.
- Conduct staging operations . . . outdoors with members of different households spaced at least 6 feet apart.
- Encourage hand washing.
- Vehicle windows should be kept open at all times when transporting
- Curtail [group] ancillary services, such as food preparation, or adjust practices to limit human-to-human contact and contact with shared items.

Personal Recreation –

- Discourage use of any shared equipment
- Stay at least 6 feet apart from members of other households, both in and out of the water.
- Regarding socializing outside, the guidance states: “It is best to socialize only with your household members, but physical activity promotes health and well-being. If you are engaging in outdoor activities with people outside your household, limit group size to 10 or fewer, and make sure there is at least 6 feet of physical distance between all people at all times. . . . People should not gather in any outdoor space where they cannot maintain 6 feet of physical distance from one another. That includes pavilions, areas that offer shelter, or other outdoors areas that invite people to congregate in groups and do not allow for 6 feet of physical distance.”

RMCC COVID PADDLING TRIP PLAN – DECISIONS AND RATIONALE

COLORADO PADDLING TRIPS

In order to help limit the spread of Covid-19 among our members, families, and contacts, RMCC TCs will organize Colorado paddling trips – in the Era of Covid – according to the requirements of Colorado’s Public Health Orders. This will mean (1) limiting the number of trip participants, based on application of the Colorado system of activity sectors and the Covid status Dial for each paddling locations, and (2) trip participants implementing specific Covid safety measures.

As noted above, our activities do not fit neatly into any one of the State’s activity sectors, but we feel that we can reasonably apply a couple of the activity sectors described in this document that are the most likely sectors to apply to RMCC. In our evaluation, we have made a conservative choice – not allowing us the maximum number of participants of any of these ‘most likely’ sectors – but a reasonable number for RMCC. Our choice is also conservative in the sense that we can – if everyone implements the safety measures – be more Covid-safe than other participants in these activity sectors might be.

The most applicable activity sectors for the paddle-related portions of our trips (rigging, shuttling, paddling) are the *Personal Recreation – Outdoor Pools* and the *Personal Recreation – Parks* sectors. This categorization would allow us many more participants than we usually have on trips – 50 or more paddling participants for trips in Green, Blue, and Yellow Level counties.

In Orange, Red and Purple Level counties, however, we would be limited to 10 participants, if we are conservative and apply the *Outdoor Recreation - Parks* subsector requirements.¹⁰ In addition to paddling, RMCC trips are traditionally social gatherings as well. Consequently, RMCC should further limit the size of socializing groups regardless of the total number of trip participants. Colorado regulates social gatherings via the *Public and Private Gatherings* sector. Applying this sector's requirements to our trips, gatherings to socialize in camps and on beaches must be limited to 10 people from no more than two households for Blue, Yellow and Orange Levels. Multi-household social gatherings are not allowed in Red and Purple Level counties. But gathering size/mix would be unlimited in Green Level locations.

Participating in RMCC trips will also require all participants following Covid safety measures, derived from the requirements of the Recreation sector:

- Masks must be worn when social distance cannot be maintained (e.g., during car shuttles, on small beaches/boat ramps, in camp), except in the case of emergency (e.g., during a water rescue);
- Social distancing of 6' between non-household member participants not wearing masks;
- Windows of shuttle vehicles should remain open;
- Avoid group activities, such as group cooking, to limit human-to-human contact and contact with shared items; and
- Users should sanitize shared items (e.g., groovers) after each use.

OUT-OF-STATE PADDLING TRIPS

RMCC TCs should organize out-of-state paddling trips – in the Era of Covid – according to applicable State and local requirements of the paddling location. TCs have the option of adapting more stringent Colorado requirements to these trips. Note that TCs always have the option of limiting the size of their trips and adding trip-specific requirements.

A quick search for other states' requirements (or lack thereof) yield:

- For Montana— <https://www.huschblackwell.com/montana-state-by-state-covid-19-guidance>. MT's new governor is loosening up restrictions from the previous administration and the legislature is trying to restrict what local health departments restrict. Traveler beware in MT!
- For Arkansas— *NOTE: There is no quarantine requirement in effect at this time for travelers arriving in or returning to Arkansas.* But Arkansas has guidance on several topics at <https://www.healthy.arkansas.gov/programs-services/topics/covid-19-health-guidances>.
- For Utah — *"There are currently no COVID-19 travel restrictions in the state of Utah. Visitors to Utah or those returning home to Utah after traveling are not required to quarantine upon arrival."* (<https://coronavirus.utah.gov/travel/>); Utah characterizes counties as High, Moderate or Low Levels of Transmission and has Public Health Order requirements for the various levels. See <https://coronavirus.utah.gov/utah-health->

¹⁰ Using the more liberal *Outdoor Recreation - Pools* category would also allow 50 participants in Orange Level counties.

Table 2.

Colorado Covid Color Dial Attendance Limitations						
Function	Green	Blue	Yellow	Orange	Red	Purple
Outdoor Recreation - primarily guided services	Lesser of 500 people or 50% of capacity; in groups up to 10; max. 2 households in tour vehicles	Lesser of 25 people or 50% capacity - in groups up to 10; max. 2 households in tour vehicles	Lesser of 10 people or 50% capacity; max. 2 households in tour vehicles	Lesser of 10 people or 25% capacity; max. 2 households in tour vehicles	Lesser of 10 people or 25% capacity - maintaining social distance; max. 2 households in tour vehicles	Lesser of 10 people in one household or 25% capacity
Personal Recreation - Outdoor Pools	Lesser of 500 people or 50% of capacity	Lesser of 175 or 50% capacity	Lesser of 50 people or 50% capacity	Lesser of 50 people or 25% capacity	10 people maintaining 6' distance	10 people maintaining 6' distance
Personal Recreation - Parks	Lesser of 500 people or 50% of capacity	Lesser of 175 or 50% capacity	Lesser of 50 people or 50% capacity	Less than 10 people	Less than 10 people	Less than 10 people
Public and Private Gatherings - Otherwise Unregulated	Per local jurisdiction up to 500	10 individuals from no more than 2 households	10 individuals from no more than 2 households	10 individuals from no more than 2 households	1 individual except for Necessary activities	1 individual except for Essential Necessary activities
Necessary Activity	Allowed while social distancing	Allowed while social distancing	Allowed while social distancing	Allowed while social distancing	Allowed while social distancing	Allowed while social distancing