

Guidance on In-Person Unit Meetings and Unit Activities

Updated July 15, 2020

Overview

These guidelines are subject to change. These guidelines are superseded by your state's guidelines. We have made every effort to incorporate guidance from our states, but those guidelines change daily. Please consult with your state websites for up-to-date guidance. If you have questions, contact our Safe Scouting Director, Diane Cloutier at diane.cloutier@scouting.org.

Safety First: As with any Scouting activity the Safety of our members is paramount. Always follow Youth Protection Guidelines, the Guide to Safe Scouting, and all local guidance on COVID-19. Before any meeting or activity ask the question – Can we do it safely and comply with all guidance and regulations?

Respect & Accommodate: Understand that some families may not be able to or be comfortable with resuming in-person meetings and activities yet. They may have family members at home with underlying health conditions or have other concerns. Be respectful and attempt to keep those Scouts engaged with your unit via virtual means even while your unit resumes meetings or activities. Encourage them to resume in-person participation only when it is right for them.

Fundamentals

- Your unit may choose to continue strictly virtual meetings and activities
- Rhode Island units may meet locally in small groups of 15 or fewer per these guidelines
- Massachusetts units may meet locally in small groups of 25 or fewer per these guidelines
- Connecticut units may meet locally in small groups of 25 or fewer per these guidelines
- Overnight activities are not permitted at this time
- Coming into close proximity with someone outside your household increases your risk and should be limited as much as possible
- It is not possible to make a group activity “risk free”. We can take proven steps to reduce risks, but risk cannot be eliminated

Is Your Unit Ready?

If a unit is ready to hold in-person meetings or activities, the unit must agree to:

- Review the BSA's “Restart Scouting Checklist” available at www.ncbsa.org/corona
- Seek permission from your charter organization and from your unit committee. You should discuss risks and ability to follow all guidelines.
- Follow all guidelines as outlined in this document.
- Follow all social distancing policies put in place by local, state, and federal governments. This includes any guidance by the CDC and the Health Department.
- Comply with any other requirements made by meeting location or Chartered Organization.
- Signed waivers by the adult leaders, volunteers or parents/legal guardians of all participants will be obtained and kept on file with the unit.
- Share this document with all leaders parents of Scouts who will be participating

- Adhere to the BSA Youth Protection policies

Procedures

Fundamental procedures for reducing risks in group activities (look for details on each item in this document):

1. Screening
2. Face masks
3. Distancing
4. Cleaning of surfaces and equipment
5. Frequent hand cleaning
6. Keep meetings and activities outside whenever possible

Waiver and Medical History: All parents, leaders and Scouts who are participating must sign the statement of risk prior to participating. All participants (adult and youth) must give to the unit leadership a current (within 12 months) BSA Health and Medical Record Parts A & B (does not require doctor visit). [Download the form here.](#) Parents and leaders must read and sign the participant waiver. The waiver may be downloaded at www.ncbsa.org/corona. The unit must keep a folder of all risk statements and medical records together in a secure location.

Group Sizes: Participants are required to be organized in “stable groups” of a maximum of 25 people. The term “stable groups” means the same individuals, including children, staff and any adult leaders, remain in the same group over the course of the entire summer. Each “stable group” must include at least 2 adult leaders. Children shall not change from one group to another, and groups should occupy the same physical space. Scouts and leaders cannot change groups from week to week. Parents and caregivers should choose one stable group for their child. We expect that the allowable size of groups will increase over the coming weeks—we will follow size restrictions for youth activities as provided by our governors.

Physical Distancing: Physical distancing is encouraged and should be maintained whenever possible. Activities where at least six feet of distance can be maintained are encouraged and 14 feet of distance is preferred. It is acknowledged that when engaged in active play, participants may not be able to maintain the 6-foot distance. When not engaged in active play, members of a stable group should maintain physical distance of six feet between each person and 14 feet whenever possible.

Leaders should not move between groups, even from day-to-day. The same leaders should stay with the same group of Scouts. Overall leaders that will be giving leadership to multiple groups should stay at least 14 feet away from the groups.

Space Between Stable Groups: Stable groups are required to maintain a minimum of 14 feet or more between the outer limit of their group play and any other stable group or passersby.

Large Units: Units or activities with more than 25 people can split into smaller groups: 2 groups of 20 each, for example, for a total of 40 people. Or 3 groups of 25 for a total of 75. Those smaller groups can continue to meet as a “stable group” through the course of the summer. People must stay in the same group for the entire summer. There must be registered adult leaders in each group. People may NOT move from one group to the other. Groups should maintain a minimum distance of 14 feet or more between the outer limit of their group and any other group or passerby.

Screening: Parents should screen their child and take their temperature prior to leaving their house. Screen adult leaders and youth participants daily prior to the activity for any symptoms of COVID-19. A screening tool is available, in English and Spanish, to aid with proper screening at <https://health.ri.gov/covid/for/business/>. Any person exhibiting signs of illness or who have been exposed to a person with COVID-19 must be excluded from the activity in accordance with CDC and RI Department of Health guidelines at <https://health.ri.gov/diseases/ncov2019/>

At-Risk Populations: Anyone who is at high risk to COVID-19 due to age, underlying health conditions, or recent illness should NOT attend in-person Scouting activities.

Face Coverings: Masks are required for adults at all times or when unable to easily, continuously, and measurably keep six feet of physical distance from others. Youth participants should wear face coverings when not engaged in active play. While engaged in the active play of sports or strenuous activities, youth participants do not need to wear a face covering. However, youth participants should be encouraged to wear face masks at all other times. Face coverings shall not be required of those who are unable to comply for health or developmental reasons, including young children who may not be able to effectively wear a mask.

No- or Low- Contact Activities: Activities where distancing can be maintained are ideal (fishing, hiking, bicycling, Scout skills, etc.) Do not participate in high contact activities such as soccer, football, basketball, etc.

Hand Cleaning: Frequent handwashing or sanitization before, during, and after meeting/activity. If soap and water are unavailable, hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol may be used. Leaders must ensure that hand washing facilities are available and/or provide hand sanitizer for all participants.

Facilities: Plan unit activities that happen outdoors. If you are meeting indoors, obtain permission from your chartered partner or place where you hold your meetings. Your meeting space should be following the recommended CDC guidelines for sanitization. If holding an activity, all areas should follow CDC guidelines for sanitization before and after activity. Check with your Chartered Partner/Host on their guidelines and procedures for sanitizing. Narragansett Council camps are **not** open at this time. Check www.ncbsa.org for the latest updates on camp availability.

Shared Objects: Shared objects/equipment is discouraged. If camping (when allowed), tents should be limited to one Scout or a family following all Youth Protection Guidelines. Scouts from different households should not be in the same tent. Food and beverages should not be shared. Each Scout/family is responsible for their own food and beverage. Any shared equipment must be sanitized between each person or groups use of it.

Use of Camps: We are beginning to make limited camp facilities available at no charge for units to use for unit meetings and/or activities such as hiking, fishing, scavenger hunts and other activities so that we can get Scouts in the out-of-doors. [These facilities can be reserved by your unit through our reservation system here.](#) Select the "Summer 2020 Facilities" category. Only limited outdoor facilities may be reserved—we are limited on the facilities we can offer by state regulations and our staffing abilities to clean and maintain those facilities.

Quarantine: If a Scout or leader in a stable group tests positive for COVID-19, the entire group (if they have been in close contact with the participant) needs to quarantine for 14 days. Immediately notify our Safe Scouting Director Diane Cloutier at diane.cloutier@scouting.org.

Daily Briefing: At the start of each meeting or activity, remind participants (youth and adult) of the following:

1. Before beginning the meeting or activity, everyone washes or sanitizes their hands
2. Wash or sanitize hands frequently during the meeting or activity
3. Everyone is to wear face masks except when participating in active/strenuous activities
4. Maintain social distancing of 14 feet whenever possible, 6 feet at a minimum
5. Maintain distance of at least 14 feet from anyone not in your group. You may not interact with any other groups
6. All equipment needs to be sanitized between people using them
7. No sharing of food—you can only eat what you brought with you
8. If you don't feel well, sit down and let a leader know
9. If you experience COVID-19 symptoms after the meeting or activity, let your leader know immediately so that all other participants can be informed and self-quarantine for 14 days. Notify our Safe Scouting Director Diane Cloutier at diane.cloutier@scouting.org
10. Other (non-COVID) reminders: hydration, sunscreen, hats, etc.
11. Set the example for other non-Scouting groups

Stay local/Quarantine: Don't travel to other areas or invite others to join you. Follow State guidelines on travel to other areas.

Communication: Leaders should create and share a plan for safety to share with all parents prior to gathering and appoint one person as the main point of contact for parents. Share this document with all parents and leaders.

Procedures:

1. Adult leaders must provide education and training around safe practices as it relates to hygiene, sanitation (cleaning and disinfection policies), and illness policies outlined in this document.
2. Require all adult leaders, volunteers and youth to report any symptoms of COVID-19 or close contact to a person with COVID-19 to an adult leader. Adult leaders, volunteers and youth should not attend events if they feel sick.
3. Symptomatic persons should be instructed to contact their health care provider to be tested for COVID-19 and self-isolate at home
4. Adult leaders and volunteers should not transport any youth that are not immediate family members. In the event, that this becomes necessary, all parties must wear cloth face coverings and space out seating to maintain maximal distance from each other.
5. During activity/meetings, parents/guardians are encouraged to remain in their cars in a designated parking area.
6. However, when/if watching from outside cars in the parking area, they should maintain safe social distance from others.
7. Adult leaders, volunteers and youth should arrive to the activity/meeting already dressed and prepared to participate.

8. Youth shall bring their own equipment and not share their personal equipment with other youth. Shared equipment provided by the unit must be cleaned and disinfected according to CDC guidance after every use between youth.
9. Unit equipment, handbooks, youth daypacks or bags, equipment, or water bottles should be stored and spaced at least 6' apart so that Scouts don't intermingle when getting their supplies. Scouts should not touch any other Scout's personal items.
10. Centralized areas for congregating should be avoided.

Stay Informed: Guidance from each State is changing rapidly. Stay up-to-date on the changing regulations at:

www.reopeningri.com

https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Phase-II-summer-camp-guidance-05.21.20.pdf

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts>

<https://portal.ct.gov/coronavirus>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Child-Illness-Policy.pdf

<https://www.aspenprojectplay.org/return-to-play>

www.ncbsa.org

SAMPLE TEMPLATE FOR UNIT COMMUNICATION PLAN TO PARENTS—Edit this document with details specific to your unit.

Prior to meeting/activity

- You must complete the Health & Medical Record Parts A & B and sign the waiver form and turn in to the leaders.
- You must complete the pre-screening checklist prior to each day of activity/meeting. Take your child's temperature. If your child has a fever or exhibits any symptoms, they should stay home.

Drop off for meeting/activity

- All adults dropping off Scouts must wear a mask
- When dropping off your Scout enter the parking lot at X entrance and follow instructions for exit
- If meeting is indoors: adults are not allowed in who are not running the meeting
- Hand sanitizer will be provided upon entry

Pick up

- All adults picking up Scouts must wear a mask
- When picking up your Scout enter and exit parking lot the same as when you dropped off
- Do not enter the building, knock on door to alert for pick up, remain in vehicle until meeting is finished, or contact designated leader to let them know you have arrived
- Hand sanitizer will be provided upon departure

Travel

- Scouts must be brought to the location, i.e. there will be no carpooling

Hours

- *what is the timeframe for the meeting/activity*

Stable Group Sizes

- There will be no more than 13 youth in a group in Rhode Island, 10 in Massachusetts (or if you have multiple patrols list the number per patrol, while following the guidance of no more than 15/10 people total).
- Leaders will be wearing masks the entire time

Cleaning

- *Share details on how handwashing and cleaning is being handled by your venue*

Food/Drink

- Scouts must bring their own food/drink that will remain with them
- There will be no heating/refrigeration available
- Food/drink sharing is not allowed. Send your Scout with the appropriate items to meet their needs/the needs of our activity

Other Precautions

- If you have someone living at your home who is at high-risk of COVID-19, your child should not participate in Scouting activities.
- If your Scout feels sick or has not been fever free for 72 hours, they should not and cannot attend
- Scouts will be allowed to interact, in their designated stable group. They will not be able to change groups at any time
- Participants will wear face masks except when engaged in active or strenuous activities
- Participants will social distance when possible within their group realizing that during games or activities, distancing is not always feasible
- Leaders will not be handling any medication, including over the counter medication

Quarantine

If a Scout or leader in a stable group tests positive for COVID-19, the entire group (if they have been in close contact with the participant) needs to quarantine for 14 days. Immediately notify our Safe Scouting Director Diane Cloutier at diane.cloutier@scouting.org.

Risk Statement

It is not possible to eliminate all risks. Precautions are important, but they cannot eliminate the potential for exposure to COVID-19 or any other illness when in-person activities resume. The unit cannot guarantee that all participants will follow all guidelines at all times.