



ORCKA Program and COVID-19 Requirements and Recommendations

OVERVIEW

ORCKA recommends following all local, provincial and national guidelines related to COVID-19; in addition, we have some new insurance requirements and supplementary programming recommendations. Remember that public health guidelines are continually changing, so monitor the latest from [Public Health Ontario](#) and the [Government of Ontario](#) -- this is where you should reference provincially endorsed guidelines regarding physical distancing, PPE, cleaning and disinfecting, etc.

Let's all continue to support safe recreational paddling!

Social Responsibility

- Be familiar with the requirements and recommendations of your local health unit: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/common/system/services/phu/locations.aspx> -- class orders, restrictions, and recommendations will change from unit to unit. Plan to minimize the impact on local health units, especially those with limited resources.
- Contact your local health unit and inform them of your intention to re-open your paddling enterprise, and enquire about any special recommendations. Introduce yourself as a member of ORCKA, a not-for-profit which promotes safety in recreational paddling through instruction and trip-leading, and reference the COVID-19 protocol you have in place.
- Be familiar with [Ontario's staged reopening](#) -- if you have any questions about whether an enterprise is allowed to be open you can call the 'Stop the Spread Business Information Line' at 1-888-444-3659 ... to be sure if an enterprise is 'allowed to be open' it may be necessary to contact a local enforcement officer. [Ontario Regulation 263/20](#) is the actual regulation pertaining to 'Stage-2' reopening.
- Be familiar with [workplace guidelines and requirements](#).
- Be familiar with the requirements and recommendations of local townships, counties, municipalities, etc. -- as well as [Ontario Parks](#) and [Parks Canada](#).

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- Stay on top of the news with <https://news.ontario.ca/en/search?keywords=covid-19>
 - You, your staff, volunteers, clients and/or members should take a [self-assessment](#) often and do the responsible thing and self-isolate if you are showing symptoms.

New For Members

- **ORCKA's Program and COVID-19 Checklist**
- **ORCKA's Program and COVID-19 Requirements and Recommendations**
- **ORCKA's Declaration of Compliance - COVID-19**
- **ORCKA's Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims and Indemnity Agreement**
- **ORCKA's Informed Consent and Assumption of Risk Agreement**

REQUIREMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Requirements

In order to be covered by insurance, members must ensure:

- Their ORCKA membership is current.
- Instructor/Participant and Trip Leader/Participant ratios adhere to current Government of Ontario limits on public gatherings.
- [Trip Leader Standards](#) are followed when tripping is included as part of ORCKA programming.
- Their COVID-19 protocol is documented and in place before running programming.
- Risk management plans, waivers and assumption of risk forms have been updated to include risks associated with COVID-19.
 - Either use the new waiver and assumption of risk agreements as they are, or incorporate all their numbered paragraphs into your own forms [especially all reference to COVID-19]. The COVID-19 declaration of compliance should be used as is.

New Protocols for COVID-19

- Participant Registration, Waivers, and Follow-up
 - Participants and Instructors confirm they are COVID-19 symptom-free for 14 days prior to programming and document any pre-course/trip travel
 - Participants and Instructors confirm they are COVID-19 symptom-free for 14 days after programming and agree to facilitate contact tracing.

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- Any concerns are recorded [as per a normal incident-report] and reported to ORCKA and to the local Public Health Unit.
 - The medical portion of your Participant Registration is expanded to make special reference to risk factors for COVID-19, e.g., document any immuno-compromising conditions, chronic respiratory illnesses, etc.
 - Participants and Instructors confirm they are aware that there are safety/emergency protocols for courses/trips which will trump COVID-19 safety protocols as needed, e.g., various remote first-aid responses, certain boating rescue scenarios, etc.
 - Isolation from and protection for the course/trip location's community
 - Provide pre-course/trip documentation regarding protection for a course/trip's surrounding community, and provide plans for keeping isolated from the surrounding community, e.g., wipe-down of surfaces at public put-in/take-out points, courses/trips self-contained with respect to equipment, shuttles, etc.
 - Hygiene, sanitation, cleaning and disinfecting
 - Remove or mitigate use of 'high-touch' items
 - Identify common-use areas, items, and surfaces, and clean/sanitize between use
 - Identify paddling equipment which is not to be shared -- items which participants will provide as part of their own gear [depending on your situation this will be items such as paddles, PFDs, helmets, kneeling-pads, etc.]
 - Log your cleaning protocol
 - Physical distancing
 - Maintain 2m distancing between boats on the water
 - Have shared boats and equipment used by people who are in the same [social circle](#).
 - Proper use of face-masks when physical distancing is not possible, e.g., certain shuttle and transportation scenarios
 - Document staff-training and updated operating protocols
 - Alongside other pre-course/trip documentation [route planning, course itinerary, etc.], include COVID-19 protocol and staff-training considerations -- written documentation and reference

Recommendations

Courses

- Choose locations and routes that minimize risk and the likelihood of needing to perform companion rescues: Stay close to shore, choose easier rivers, etc. Plan to use rescue techniques that do not require you to be “hands-on” with the swimmer if possible: self-rescues, towing, boat bumping, etc. Discuss these techniques before going out to make sure all participants understand any new procedures and are comfortable performing them.
- As much as possible, participants must maintain physical distancing of at least two meters with no touching, handshaking, hugging, and sharing of food or equipment.
- Review health risk-factors pre-trip and/or pre-course; ask participants to honestly self-assess whether the risks of participating are acceptable to themselves and their family unit.
- No participants are to be permitted to attend or participate if they have any symptoms of illness: fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, headache, etc.
- Equipment which is hard to wipe down [PFDs, rope, packs] can be ‘left alone’ for 72hrs. If able, rotate ‘provided’ equipment (e.g., set aside used equipment; clean and don’t reuse for 72 hours).
- Cards & Badges -- fill out cards at home following the course; leave completed cards and envelopes, and badges out for ~48 hours; using gloves, insert in envelope and mail. Dispose of gloves and wash hands.
- Provide training to instructors/volunteers/staff on all new protocols and proper use of PPE.
- Encourage the use of personal equipment (boats, PFDs, paddles, etc.) Recommend family units in single-vehicles transporting their own equipment.
- Designate a first aid responder equipped with more robust PPE equipment (e.g., gown, visor) to prevent undue delays in responding to first aid or resuscitation requirements caused by donning appropriate PPE.
- Participation should include outdoor activities only (until government regulations change).
- Registration in courses based on pre-existing family groups/household members should be encouraged to minimize new interactions.
- Out of province participants should not be considered.
- Instructors and clubs should not be participating in trips or courses held outside of Ontario.
- When possible, courses should be encouraged that do not require a vehicle shuttle which poses challenging conditions for physical distancing.

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- Travel should be limited, and groups need to take care not to put any unnecessary pressure on communities they are travelling through. Unnecessary use of gas stations or convenience stores, etc. should not happen.
 - All participants are to inform the course organizer if they develop COVID-19 symptoms or are tested and confirmed positive within two weeks following the course so that other participants can be informed, self-isolate, and potentially be tested.

Canoe Tripping

General

The aim is to minimize exposure and cross-contamination of participants who go on ORCKA canoe tripping courses - physical distancing and outstanding personal hygiene will be the key. It is recommended that, whenever possible, those already in a life partnership arrangement paddle together. Set physical distancing guidelines for all activities from the first-day put-in to the last day take-out. Minimize the possibility of cross-contamination by having specific participants assigned to specific tasks (i.e., cooking, dishwashing, water purification).

Portaging, Gear and Equipment

The aim is to minimize exposure to all of the equipment that goes on canoe trips. Portages will have to be well planned and thought out at both the take-out and put-in. Participants should limit their contact to equipment and gear owned by the participant, and group equipment and gear assigned to each participant to portage. The use of coloured flagging tape to help identify individual participants with group gear would be useful. When assigning group gear to participants, take into account weight and size of gear compared to the strength and stature of participants.

1. General course/trip hygiene. Bring your own - use your own
 - a. Everyone needs to have at least one set of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) to include a mask and a set of gloves. Having a second backup set of PPE is recommended in case of contamination or loss of the first set of PPE.
 - b. Each participant needs to have a sufficient quantity of hand sanitizer to last for the entire trip - remember you will be using this much more often than is normal.
 - c. Instruct participants to wash and/or sanitize hands regularly (especially before eating) and to cough and sneeze in their elbow-pit.
 - d. No group toilet paper and hand sanitizer bag - everyone is responsible for their own toilet paper and hand sanitizer.

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- e. For food packaging - no common GORP bags or treat bags - all food will be served in individual serving dishes or packages.

2. Course location

- a. Participation should include outdoor activities only (with the exception of short “shuttles”. See shuttle recommendations below). Indoor sessions should be avoided or limited (until government regulations change).
- b. Participants should be encouraged to register from their local region so as not encourage large amounts of long-distance travel. Also, registration in courses based on pre-existing family/social groups should be encouraged to minimize new interactions.
- c. Travel should be limited, and groups need to take care not to put any unnecessary COVID-19 risk pressure on communities they are travelling through. Unnecessary use of gas stations or convenience stores, etc. should not happen. Participants must come prepared with all their food and supplies for the day. Be respectful of communities, especially small ones with limited medical resources.

3. Shuttles

When shuttles must be completed for trips and programs and physical distancing of two meters is not possible, the following measures should be taken:

- a. Minimize long shuttles by having participants drive their own vehicle to the area.
- b. Consider using bicycles or walking for a shuttle if that is reasonable.
- c. Shuttles should be less than 30 minutes. The shorter, the better and stay locally/regionally.
- d. Sanitize hands prior to entering/exiting a shuttle vehicle.
- e. Masks (ex. cloth or disposable) are to be worn while together in the shuttle vehicle.
- f. Minimize talking, especially loud animated talking, laughing, shouting, etc. as this is more likely to produce droplets (consider asking participants to read a book, listen to music, or other quiet activities instead of conversing on the ride).
- g. Ensure there is no crowding or direct touching by leaving at least one empty space between each passenger.
- h. Avoid coughing and sneezing! If you must, use your mask/ elbow pit to contain droplets.
- i. The shuttle vehicle must be sanitized between uses.

4. Trip campsite and kitchen protocol

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- a. Assignment of a designated cook and assistant for each meal, no group cooking.
 - b. As with everyone, clean, clean, clean.
 - c. Assignment of designated dishwashers.
 - d. ORCKA recommends that there will be no assignment of “group” chores for camp routine with the exception of firewood gathering. Focus on assigning specific participants to chores and tasks, keeping in mind the physical distance requirement.
 - e. Single tent occupancy will be the norm with the exception of life partners.
5. Portage protocol
 - a. Participants are responsible for carrying across their own equipment and designated group equipment. Only that participant should come in contact with this equipment.
 - b. Think the portage through prior to landing. This includes spots to put each participant’s specified “load” at both the put in and take out.
 - c. Participants carry across specific canoes. Have personal yoke pads or wipe down yokes and gunwales with a disinfectant prior to portaging.
 - d. It will require two people to load and unload specific heavy and/or awkward gear. Discuss who will work with whom to load these items.
 6. In the event that any COVID-19 signs or symptoms appear for any participant, evacuate the entire trip and seek medical assistance as soon as possible.
 7. At the end of the trip, the trip leader must maintain contact with all participants to ensure that they do not develop any COVID-19 signs or symptoms during the 14-day period following the canoe trip.