



COVID-19 Operational Guidelines and Procedures

The guiding principles behind the COVID-19 Operational and Risk Management Plan is to provide guidance to AIARE Students, our Instructor Staff, and AIARE Administration to successfully manage a course during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The following guidelines are based on guidance from the CDC, AIARE's medical advisor, and other outdoor industry professionals. As more is understood about COVID-19, including transmission and symptoms, this document will be updated.

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Part 1: COVID-19 Overview

COVID-19 Symptoms

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. The CDC has identified COVID-19 symptoms may include the following:

- Fever or chills
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- New loss of taste or smell
- Sore throat
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Emergency medical attention needs to be sought immediately if someone is showing any of the following signs:

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

When seeking medical care, notify the person in which you make contact that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.

How COVID-19 Spreads

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to COVID-19. The virus is thought to spread mainly from person-to-person.

- Between people who are in close contact with one another (within about 6 feet).
- Through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks.
- Via Airborne Transmission in the following circumstances:
 - Enclosed spaces within which an infectious person either exposed susceptible people at the same time or to which susceptible people were exposed shortly after the infectious person had left the space.

- Prolonged exposure to respiratory particles, often generated with expiratory exertion (e.g., shouting, singing, exercising) that increased the concentration of suspended respiratory droplets in the air space.
- Inadequate ventilation or air handling that allowed a build-up of suspended small respiratory droplets and particles.

Source: [CDC update from Oct 5th, 2020.](#)

- These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly be inhaled into the lungs.
- There is growing evidence of transmission risk from infected people without symptoms (asymptomatic) or before the onset of recognized symptoms (presymptomatic).

Recent Exposure

Recent exposure is defined as having been in close contact (less than 6ft) for a prolonged period of time (15 minutes or more) without adequate PPE to a person with confirmed or suspected COVID-19.

Part 2: AIARE Decision-Making

AIARE Course Cancellation

AIARE's decision to cancel a course as related to COVID-19 will be informed by the following criteria:

- Instructor Staff health and ability to work.
- Public land and/or travel restrictions that might prevent access to the program area.
- Local, state, or federal COVID-19 restrictions, preventing AIARE operations.
- AIARE will strive for transparent communication with students and Instructor Staff in the event of a course cancellation.

[AIARE's Cancellation Policy.](#)

Do Not Attend Course

AIARE asks students and instructor staff to complete a PreCourse COVID-19 Health and Travel Screening prior to the start of the course. Instructor Staff and Students should notify AIARE administration immediately to determine if you should partake in an AIARE course if you answered yes to any of the COVID-19 precourse screening form questions. If you have one or more COVID-19 symptoms within 10 days of the course

start you may be required to submit approval of participation from your primary care physician, have a negative COVID-19 test, and be symptom free for 48 hours prior to the start of the course in order to participate.

Do not attend the course if:

- A recent exposure to someone suspected or confirmed of COVID-19 within 10 days prior to the start of the course.
- You have been asked to quarantine by the health department or similar organization.

Venue Partnerships

AIARE may partner with a third party primarily for permit use. When a course is run in partnership with another institution or organization, Instructor Staff should follow the guidance of the partnership organization and AIARE. If there is a discrepancy between guidelines, Instructor Staff are expected to follow the more conservative guideline.

Community Situational Awareness

AIARE operates courses across six states and many different counties. We recognize that, by nature of the COVID-19 pandemic response, counties and states have differing policies. As a result, AIARE will do the following:

- AIARE will provide resources (ie links to the local Health Department website) to students about the COVID-19 situation in the community in which we are operating both prior to and at the start of the course.
- AIARE will follow local, state, and federal health department guidelines and county regulations while operating. This includes group sizes, mask mandates, etc.
- Instructor Staff are expected to give a COVID-19 briefing on the first day to outline expectations based on AIARE's guidelines and the local COVID-19 situation.

Part 3: Reducing Likelihood of COVID-19 Exposure

The following are steps AIARE is taking to reduce the likelihood of exposure on courses. By participating in the course students agree to the COVID-19 Code of Conduct.

Recommendations for Students and Instructors Prior to the Program

AIARE recommends students and Instructor Staff take the followings actions to limit your exposure to coronavirus for 14 days prior to your program and while traveling to your program venue:

- Practice physical distancing (keep six feet of distance from others)
- Wear a face covering as recommended by the CDC and when physical distancing is not possible
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Avoid dine-in restaurants
- Carry and use sanitizing wipes to clean surfaces you come in contact with
- Minimize your overall public exposure to help ensure success of the program
- Monitor for COVID-19 symptoms (see resources below)

Masks

AIARE Staff and students are expected to cover both mouth and nose with a mask when around others. The mask is meant to protect other people in case you are infected. Instructor Staff and students are responsible for supplying their own masks.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/about-face-coverings.html>

- AIARE requires Instructor Staff and Students to bring enough masks for the duration of the program. AIARE requires Instructor Staff and Students to bring enough masks for the duration of the program. Masks need to be 2 or more layers with no exhalation valve (as recommended by the CDC). Neck Gaiters or Buffs are discouraged.
- Masks are required by all course participants and instructor staff at all times within 6 ft of another person.
- Masks need to be worn correctly: covering both nose and mouth.

Classroom Sessions

Typical classroom sessions will be conducted either virtually or in an outdoor setting to reduce risk of exposure. A classroom may be used by Instructor Staff (no students) for course planning, virtual session execution, etc. When an indoor space is used it should:

- Be well ventilated with windows opening to the outside.

- Have sufficient space to have more than 6ft of distance between Instructor Staff.
- While inside, it is recommended that masks be worn at all times, however it is under the discretion of the Instructor Team based on the venue's airflow and size of the classroom if they decide it appropriate to remove their mask while teaching a virtual session.

Course Pods

On AIARE programs, groups will be split into pods of students and instructors. Pods are a strategy to reduce the impact of and likelihood of COVID-19 transmission. These groups will work with each other for the entire program and minimize contact with other cohorts. Each program will have unique circumstances that influence how the course director and the instructors put together the pods.

- Pods will be assigned by the discretion of the Instructor Team.
- If students are carpooling or sharing lodging, it is recommended that Instructor Staff keep them in them together in the same pods.
- Instructors will share evaluative information to meet the A3 requirement as necessary.

Group meetings that occur during a course should be held outdoors with physical distancing or with online meeting tools such as Zoom.

Physical/Social Distancing

- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 ft of separation.
- AIARE strongly encourages that participants practice appropriate social/physical distancing off-course hours to reduce exposure. This includes, but not limited to, refraining from in-person interaction with other pods or within the local community. Eating and cooking in and avoiding community areas with large numbers of people is recommended and will help the program succeed.
- Note that maintaining physical distance of greater than 6 feet will be important to avoid close contact in the event that there is a positive case (symptomatic or asymptomatic) on the program.

Transportation and Lodging

- AIARE recommends Instructor Staff and Students not carpool unless they are from the same household to minimize exposure risk. If for any reason carpooling is necessary, Staff and Students should wear masks and travel with windows open.
- AIARE recommends students do not share lodging to minimize exposure risk. In the event students share lodging, they should be in the same course pod if applicable.

- AIARE will make individual lodging arrangements when Instructor Staff are required to travel to a venue.

Hygiene, Sanitation, and Disinfection

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, COVID-19 is mainly spread from person-to-person in close proximity (within about 6 feet) via respiratory droplets. It may be possible that a person can get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes, but this is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads.

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze or use the inside of your elbow and do not spit.
- Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds frequently.
- Use hand sanitizer when you are unable to wash hands.
- Students and instructor staff should have at least one personal travel size bottle of hand sanitizer with min 60% alcohol.

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/hand-sanitizer-use.html>

COVID-19 Equipment Cleaning and Disinfecting Considerations

Instructor Staff and course participants are expected to be diligent in cleaning shared equipment as necessary. It is recommended that frequently touched surfaces be cleaned and disinfected. AIARE recommends that students and instructor staff arrive at the course with equipment that is clean prior to the first day of the program.

When possible, Instructor Staff and Students should limit sharing equipment during the program to only when there is not an alternative. Where sharing is necessary, AIARE recommends the following:

- For any shared weather station equipment, use disinfectant wipes to wipe down the equipment before and after each use.
- For rescue practice and exam equipment, use disinfectant wipes to wipe down transceivers and boxes between each use.

Due to the low likelihood of transmission from surfaces, particularly in an outdoor setting, it is not necessary for instructors and students to clean and disinfect equipment on a daily basis. However, if the equipment is known to have been in contact with an infected individual, it should be cleaned and disinfected before it is returned to service.

For most equipment, wiping down with disinfectant wipes will be adequate. If equipment has been in contact with a person known to have COVID-19, then equipment should be disinfected or quarantined for 72 hours.

COVID-19 Self Screening and Reporting

Self screening is a tool to help identify any "red flags" prior to the course start as well as throughout the course.

Pre-Course: Course participants and instructor staff will be asked to submit a COVID-19 screening form prior to the start of the course. AIARE administrative staff will be responsible for reviewing the precourse screening and following-up with course participants if needed.

On-Course: Participants and Instructors are required to self-screen and report daily for the duration of the course. The daily Self Screening Test is the responsibility of the student and instructor at the start of each day.

- It is expected that if a student or instructor staff cannot participate, the individual will notify an instructor staff immediately.
- The Instructors will receive confirmation from students and record on the COVID-19 Self-Screening Documentation that they have completed a self-screening during the AM meeting.

Part 4: Potential COVID-19 Exposure or Infection

In the event of potential exposure, onset of COVID-19 signs or symptoms, or a failed self-screening of a student or instructor staff, the affected person(s) will be asked for further information to provide context and to self-isolate until a decision can be made regarding their engagement and others in the course.

Failed Self-Screening

If a student or instructor staff have one or more of the signs and symptoms listed on the self-screening test, it is considered a "failed" self-screen. The individual should be isolated from others and **not participate in field sessions** until the situation has been evaluated and resolved. The Instructor Staff should do the following:

- Notify AIARE via the Field Communication Line. An AIARE Admin will provide support and/or guidance as required by the Instructor Team.
- Work with the Instructor Staff team and AIARE Admin to determine the next steps for that students based on the circumstances. The decision to separate a student from the is at the discretion of the AIARE Instructor Staff team. The decision to

remove a student from the course is a decision of the Instructor Staff working in conjunction with AIARE Admin.

- Inform the course participants and continue to monitor both the patient and individuals in the course.
- Complete an Incident Report form.

Onset of Symptoms while in the Field

In the event a student or instructor staff develops COVID-19 symptoms while on course in the field, the individual should be evacuated from the field as efficiently as possible and isolated. Instructor Staff should follow the same guidelines as outlined in the Failed Self-Screening.

Post Course Follow-up

AIARE asks any Instructor Staff or Student that shows COVID-19 symptoms and/or receives a positive COVID-19 test within two weeks of the course end to notify AIARE Administration as soon as possible. AIARE will do its best to inform all individuals on the course so they are able to take appropriate COVID-19 spread prevention measures.