

A photograph of a person hiking through a dense forest. The person is wearing a blue puffer vest and a grey hat, seen from behind. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees and lush green undergrowth. Overlaid on the image is the text "THE GREAT TRAIL" in a large, yellow, brushstroke-style font. The word "THE" is smaller and positioned above "GREAT". "TRAIL" is the largest word, with a long, sweeping brushstroke extending from the top of the 'T' and another from the top of the 'L' that frame the text.

THE GREAT TRAIL

National Guidelines

Responsible Trail Operations and Visitation during the COVID-19 Pandemic

Version 1.0 – May 27, 2020



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DISCLAIMER

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve rapidly as do the orders, directives and guidelines of Canada's federal and provincial or territorial governments. These guidelines reflect the currently available scientific evidence and expert opinion as provided by public health officials in Canada and is subject to change as new information on transmissibility, epidemiology and effectiveness of public health and risk mitigation measures becomes available. It is the responsibility of all trail operators to ensure they are in alignment and compliant with the most recent public health and local direction in their respective jurisdictions. The intent of Trans Canada Trail is to continue to update and revise these guidelines as new direction and information from public health officials becomes available.

Trans Canada Trail is here to support Canada's trail operators. For additional support and resources, please contact Trans Canada Trail at project@tctrail.ca

This document will evolve over time. Please make sure to use the most up-to-date version of the document by visiting <https://thegreattrail.ca/>

Trail operators should review their:

[Provincial or territorial COVID-19 website](#)

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Trans Canada Trail wishes to thank the consulting team from RC Strategies for leading the research and development of these guidelines. We would also like to acknowledge and thank those representatives and organizations who shared information, ideas and practices with us to inform the development of these guidelines.



1. Introduction

1.1 WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THESE GUIDELINES?

The COVID-19 pandemic has altered life for all Canadians. More than ever, Canadians are turning to their trails as a venue for daily physical activity, family time and mental respite. Trails will become even more important as communities work to reignite their local tourism economies and seek safe transportation alternatives and green infrastructure.

As provinces and territories begin to reopen, trail operators and visitors are in need of guidance on how trails can be operated, maintained and enjoyed in a way that helps limit the further transmission of COVID-19. The purpose of these guidelines is to provide consistent operational and management practices that all trail operators should consider taking to mitigate the risk of transmitting COVID-19 through the trail environment and to help visitors feel safer while enjoying their trail experience.

Trails and the risk they pose for transmitting COVID-19 vary considerably across the country. Recognizing this, these guidelines enable trail operators to evaluate the relative risk that COVID-19 could be transmitted within their respective trail environment and to determine which management tools and guidelines are most applicable.

Unless otherwise stated, the guidelines outlined in this document are relevant to all classes (greenway, mixed-uses, motorized) of land and water trails and all trail settings (frontcountry, midcountry, backcountry).

Public health officials have indicated that Canadians should go outside to recreate if they:

- Have not been diagnosed with COVID-19
- Do not have symptoms of COVID-19
- Have not travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days
- Are not in quarantine (self-isolating)

1.2 HOW WERE THE GUIDELINES DEVELOPED?

These guidelines were developed through a multi-stage approach that began with a robust review of federal, provincial and territorial literature, including public health orders, directives and guidelines specific to COVID-19. A national and international literature review was undertaken within the outdoor recreation sector to identify existing guidelines and best practices that have been developed by sector specific organizations. Interviews were conducted with a sample of Canada's trail operators to determine the most essential information to include in the guidelines and which organizations planned to develop guidelines of their own. Findings from the literature and interviews were synthesized and the guidelines were prepared.



1.3 TRANSMISSION OF COVID-19 IN THE TRAIL ENVIRONMENT

According to public health officials, the risk of COVID-19 spreading through outdoor environments, where physical distancing is practiced, is currently thought to be low. Based on available public health information, the transmission of COVID-19 in the trail environment can occur directly when:

- A trail visitor inhales infected respiratory droplets that have been expelled by an infected person while breathing, talking, coughing or sneezing, or
- Trail visitors engage in close personal contact such as touching or shaking hands¹.

Transmission can also occur indirectly when:

- A trail visitor touches a contaminated surface that contains infected respiratory droplets and then touches their eyes, nose or mouth before washing their hands.

Though uncertainty still exists, current public health information indicates that the virus can survive on surfaces from several hours to days depending on:

- Type of surface (material),
- Temperature, and
- Humidity of the environment.

Some studies have found that the virus has been detectable up to two or three days on plastic and stainless steel surfaces, which are common surfaces in the trail environment (e.g. amenities, signs, gates, rails), and up to four hours on copper surfaces and up to 24 hours on cardboard surfaces¹¹.

For additional information about COVID-19 see:

[COVID-19 Symptoms, Prevention & Risk](#)

For trail operators in Quebec, please also see Rando Quebec's *Mesures de déconfinement pour la randonnée pédestre: Territoires et infrastructures* here:

<https://www.randoquebec.ca/info-covid-19/>

Though the overall risk of COVID-19 transmission is considered to be low, the risks may be increased in certain situations that take place on trails. Rando Québec, in their document "[Mesures de déconfinement pour la randonnée pédestre: Territoires et infrastructures](#)"¹¹ has ranked the relative risk of common situations along trails as follows:

 Most Important Risks	 Important Risks	 Moderate Risks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close contact between visitors where physical distancing cannot be applied (e.g. distances of less than 2m) • Close contact between trail employees where physical distancing cannot be applied (e.g. distances of less than 2m) • Pinch points at the entrances to and exits from infrastructure • Restricted space at amenities and sites of interest during busy periods • Groups visiting the trail together who are not from the same household or cohort family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Close contact between trail employees and visitors • Sharing and renting of equipment • Holding activities indoors or enclosed amenities (e.g. lookouts) • Merging of 2 or more groups on the trail or close contact in restricted locations • Shared accommodations and amenities with shared common areas • Pets contacting others who are not from their household 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gathering of people at sites of interest or common areas (e.g. lookouts, beaches, tables, playground) • Inappropriate implementation of prevention / mitigation measures and directives by trail users • Groups passing on the trail • Interactions between staff and visitors during the sizing and adjustment of rental equipment

Note: Content in this table has been translated from Rando Quebec's *Mesures de déconfinement pour la randonnée pédestre: Territoires et infrastructures* to the best of our understanding. Readers should review content in the report available at <https://www.randoquebec.ca/info-covid-19/>

1.4 FOCUS & CONSIDERATIONS FOR TRAIL OPERATORS

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, trail operators should take deliberate steps to:



1. Manage visitation on their trails to minimize the potential for direct transmission and infection between visitors.



2. Manage trail amenities and infrastructure to minimize the potential for indirect transmission and infection.



3. Ensure trail crew members (volunteer and staff) are protected from infection and transmission of COVID-19.

Trail operators should also consider the following when determining how they will manage their trails during the pandemic:

- Host community consultations about non-local visitation to the community,
- Consider contacting their local government to discuss operations of their trail,
- Potential for unintended consequences as management actions are taken on the trail,
- Lost persons, injuries & rescues that require demands on rescuers where physical distancing is not possible,
- Wildland fires and demands on firefighters where physical distancing is not possible,
- Increasing environmental damage and waste management demands as visitation increases while trail operator capacity is constrained,
- Potential impacts to the trail brand and reputation if visitors do not feel safe and / or are not confident in the measures the trail operator is taking, and
- Equity of access to trails as the equitability of access varies considerably across the country with many Canadians experiencing different types of disadvantages.

1.5 RISK MANAGEMENT, LIABILITY & COVID-19

Trail operators have a responsibility to provide a reasonable “duty of care” to visitors on their trails. This duty of care extends beyond the construction of the trail and into the inspection and maintenance of the trail, and management of trail users^{iv}. Trail operators are obligated to identify and correct dangerous conditions on a trail or, at minimum, make those conditions and the potential for injuries known to visitors.

COVID-19 is a new risk to trail visitors that should be considered by trail operators. Though the true liability of trail operators associated with COVID-19 is not yet known, trail operators should take reasonable steps, in line with the most recent public health and occupational health and safety direction, to protect visitors from the known dangers of COVID-19, and to ensure visitors are aware of the potential for COVID-19 to be present in the trail environment. Trail operators should undertake a standard risk management process on their trail (Figure 1)^v to identify risks associated with COVID-19 and determine which strategies should be applied. Recognizing that it may not be possible for trail operators to fully avoid all risks of transmission, trail operators should take steps to inform visitors of the risks associated with COVID-19 in the trail environment and implement measures to “reduce” the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission and infection – these measures are outlined in sections 2 - 4. Trail operators should also take steps to “transfer” those risks to visitors through “Manage Your Risk” signage.

Though risk and liability are inherently limited and even further limited if trail operators implement measures to avoid, transfer and reduce risks of infection and transmission, each trail operator should deliberately assess their organization’s tolerance for risk and liability before endorsing public visitation on the trail.

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These guidelines do not constitute a legal opinion on your organization’s liability exposure and should not be interpreted as a legal opinion. If concerned, trail operators should seek legal counsel to understand their liability exposure and confirm their risk management practices.

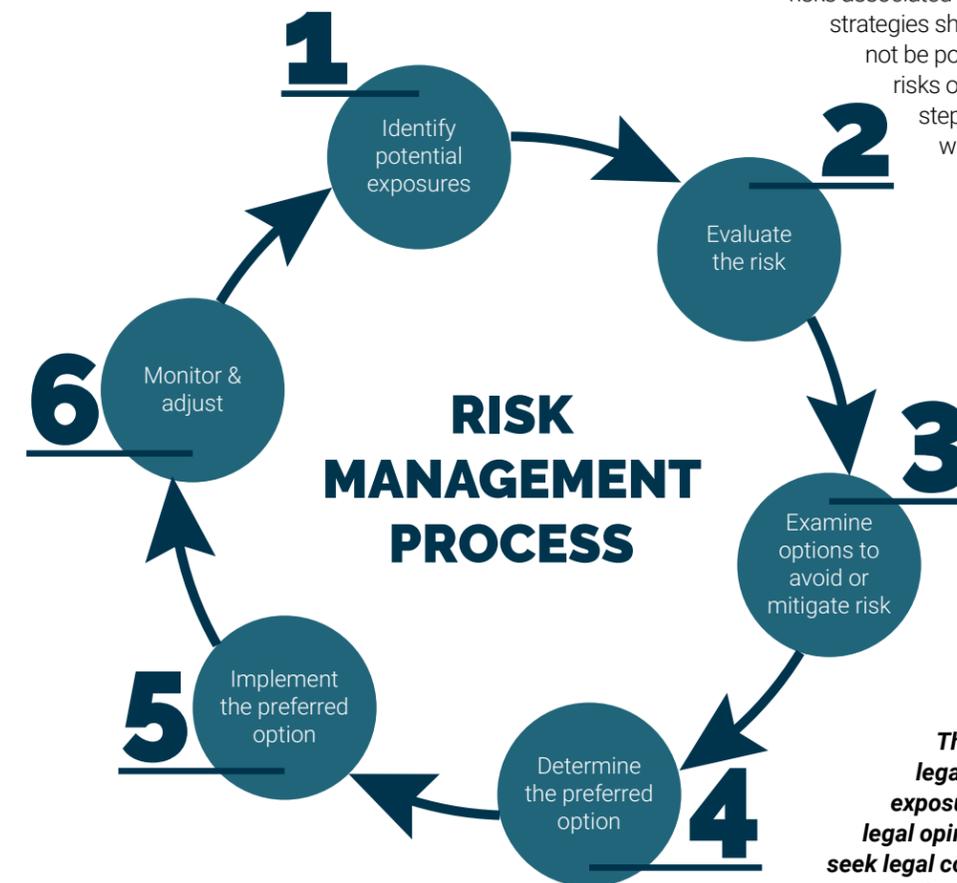


Figure 1: Risk Management Process



2. Visitor Management Guidelines

2.1 DETERMINING FACTORS FOR THE SPREAD OF COVID-19 IN THE TRAIL ENVIRONMENT

In general, there are four predominant trail-related characteristics that combine to determine whether a trail environment poses higher or lower risk for the transmission of COVID-19. These factors include:



1. Trail Corridor Width

Wide trails (2m+) are presumed to pose less risk than narrow trails as people can maintain physical distancing more easily.



2. Number and Type of High-touch Trail Amenities

Trails with more high-touch amenities are presumed to have greater potential for indirect transmission than trails with few to no amenities.



3. Congregating Areas

Trails that have locations where visitors tend to gather and have close prolonged interactions with one another are presumed to be higher risk than trails that do not have these spaces.



4. Potential Volume of Visitation

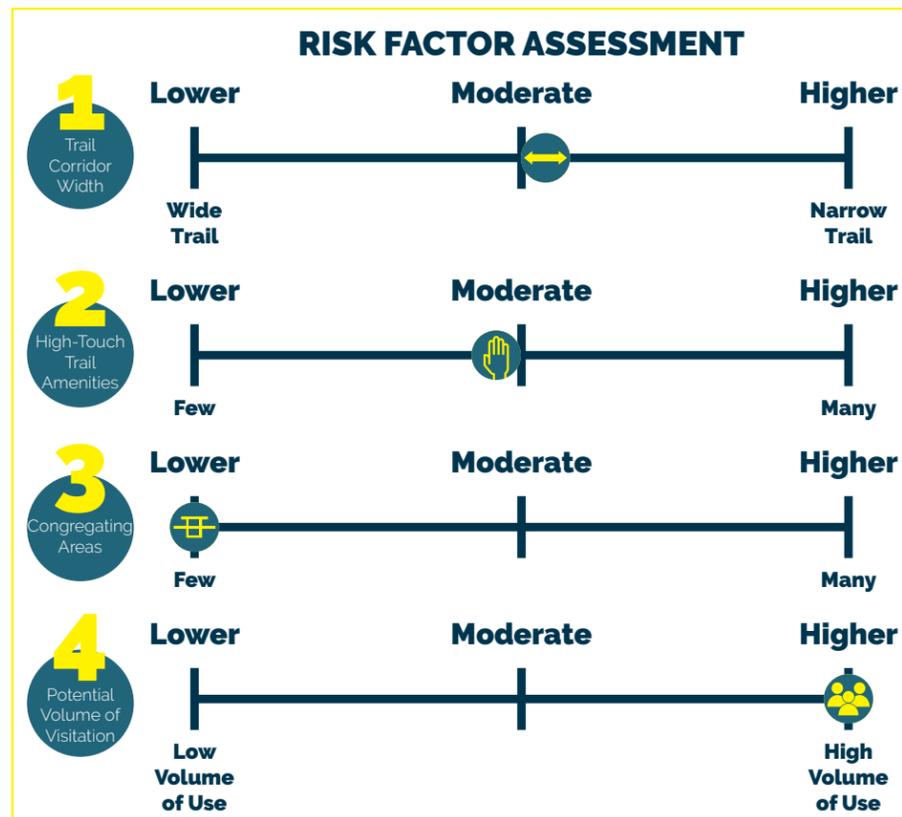
Trails with greater levels of visitation are presumed to pose a higher risk for transmission than trails with lower levels of visitation.

Prolonged Contact

Defined as contact that lasts more than 15 minutes of time where visitors are less than 2m away from each other. Prolonged contact can be cumulative (i.e. over multiple interactions)

- (Public Health Agency of Canada)

RISK ASSESSMENT TOOL



Combining the the results from the above assessment of each risk factor provides an overall relative risk rating for the trail



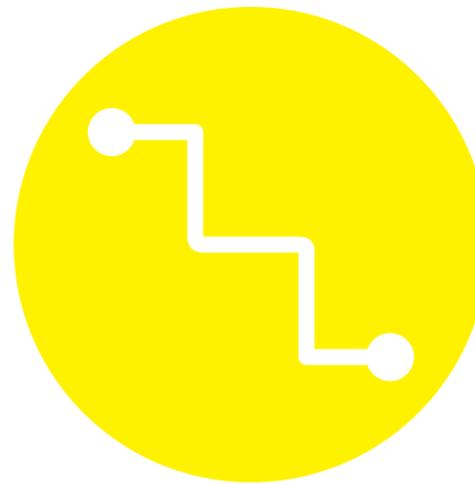
Figure 2: Risk Assessment Tool

Using the COVID-19 Relative Risk Assessment Tool (Figure 2), trail operators should evaluate their trail against each of the above characteristics and determine the relative risk of COVID-19 transmission for their trail. The results of this assessment should then be used to help determine what mix of indirect and direct management actions are most appropriate to apply on the trail (see section 2.2).

2.2 VISITOR MANAGEMENT PLANS & THE VISITOR MANAGEMENT TOOLBOX

Limiting the transmission of COVID-19 while building and maintaining visitor confidence that trails are a safe outdoor recreation pursuit begins with a well thought out Visitor Management Plan (VMP). A variety of indirect and direct management tools are available to trail operators to manage the risk for transmission on their trails.

Public health officials indicate that management tools that involve separating people from one another and shared surfaces are more effective than tools that rely on individuals to consistently follow personal preventative measures (e.g. face coverings). The intensity of management and the mix of tools selected should be tailored to the characteristics of the trail and the relative risk that exists for the transmission of COVID-19. The higher the risk (e.g. narrow trail, many high-touch amenities, high volumes of use), the more intensive the management needs to be, and the more trail operators should implement direct management tools. Trails with lower risk can be managed less intensely and rely much more on indirect management tools. Table 1 provides a general illustration of which management tools tend to be more or less appropriate to apply based on the trail's relative risk for COVID-19 transmission. In all cases, public health officials recommend that taking a "layered" approach that utilizes multiple measures will strengthen the potential for trail operators to help limit transmission.



2.2.1 Indirect Management Tools

The following sections describe a number of indirect management tools that trail operators should consider.



Visitor Education

- Educating visitors about how they can use the trail and amenities safely and responsibly is one of the most critical management tools for limiting the spread of COVID-19. All trail operators should implement an education program that promotes safe and responsible use of the trail. Trail operators should work to deliver the education through a multi-channel education approach including, but not limited to:

- » Trailhead and on-trail signage (see below for specific [signage guidelines](#))
- » Website & online trip planning information
- » Social media channels and influencers
- » Integrating COVID-19 messaging into mobile device apps
- » Trail stewards

Educational messages should be purposefully designed to reach visitors at each phase in their trail experience (e.g. trip planning, arrival at the trail, along the trail and at key decision-making points on the trail).

- The message to visitors should be consistent across the trail network and should integrate the key message provided in [Appendix A.3](#).
- To further engrain safe and responsible behaviours, trail operators should also consider enabling and encouraging visitors to share pictures and stories about good experiences and examples of appropriate behaviours on their social media channels and websites.

Table 1

Management Tools	Trail's Relative Risk for COVID-19 Transmission		
	Higher	Moderate	Lower
Indirect Management Tools			
Visitor Education Program	✓	✓	✓
Signage	✓	✓	✓
Dispersing & Distributing Use through Marketing	✓	✓	~
Adjusting Physical Designs	✓	~	~
Direct Management Tools			
Conversion to a One-Way Trail	~	~	✗
Limiting the Number of Visitors	~	✗	✗
Limiting Parking Density	~	✗	✗
Length of Visit Limits	✓	✓	~
Group Size Limits & Event Cancellations	✓	✓	✓
Prohibiting Specific Activities	~	✗	✗
Altering or Prohibiting Equipment Rentals	✓	✓	✓
Compliance Assurance & Enforcement	✓	~	~
Trail Closures	~	✗	✗



Indirect Management Tools...

Modify visitor behaviours by influencing their decisions while allowing visitors the freedom to choose.



Direct Management Tools...

Regulate visitor behaviours and limit visitor choice.

Legend

✓ Should be Strongly Considered	~ May be Considered	✗ Typically Not Considered
------------------------------------	------------------------	-------------------------------



Signage

- Culturally appropriate and accessible signage should be installed at:
 - » All trailheads to educate on expected behaviours and inform of any rules or rule changes,
 - » Open amenities to remind visitors to manage their own risk and apply hygiene practices and physical distancing,
 - » Amenities that are closed,
 - » Common gathering locations (e.g. viewpoints, attractions, interpretive areas) and where queues are formed to remind of physical distancing, limiting time spent in the gathering area and hygiene practices, and
 - » High-touch areas to remind about hygiene practices.

Though the visual design and brand may differ, visitor messaging should be consistent with the key messages provided in **Appendix A.3**. See **Appendix A.6** for examples of signage that can be applied.

- Where trails are converted from a two-way direction of travel to one-way, directional signage should be installed at:
 - » All trailheads,
 - » All trail intersections, and
 - » Regular intervals along the trail between intersections.
- Trail operators should be careful not to over sign as this will detract from the effectiveness of the signage and detract from the visitor experience.



Dispersing & Distributing Use through Marketing

- Marketing and communications can influence visitor decisions about the trails or trail sections they choose to travel and when they choose to travel. Trail operators should use their communications and marketing channels to promote trails or trail sections that
 - » can accommodate physical distancing better
 - » tend to receive less visitation and
 - » the times the trails tend to be less busy.

Dispersing visitors through intentional marketing can help to alleviate the potential for crowding. Trail operators should engage local Destination Marketing Organizations, clubs and others to promote the same messaging.



Adjust Physical Designs, Circulation & Layouts to Accommodate Physical Distancing

- The current physical design of some trail amenities and areas along trails may create situations where gathering and close contact becomes unavoidable. The physical design of visitor buildings, pay parking kiosks, trailheads, staging areas, viewpoints, amenities, and places along the trail where visitors commonly gather or queue should be reviewed, and, where feasible, steps should be taken to temporarily adjust the designs to enable physical distancing. Some examples include:
 - » Altering confinement points at the entry / exits of amenities where visitors gather for prolonged periods.
 - » Altering the transition zones between the parking lot and trailheads to be more permeable by removing barriers that confine visitors.
 - » Using visual prompts on the ground and pylons to clearly communicate queuing formats at pay parking machines, amenities, viewpoints etc.
 - » Reducing the density of parking lots by closing some stalls.
 - » Removing high-touch amenities that are not critical to the trail experience or visitor needs.
 - » Installing hand sanitizer stations.



2.2.2 Direct Management Tools

The following sections describe a number of direct management tools that trail operators should consider.



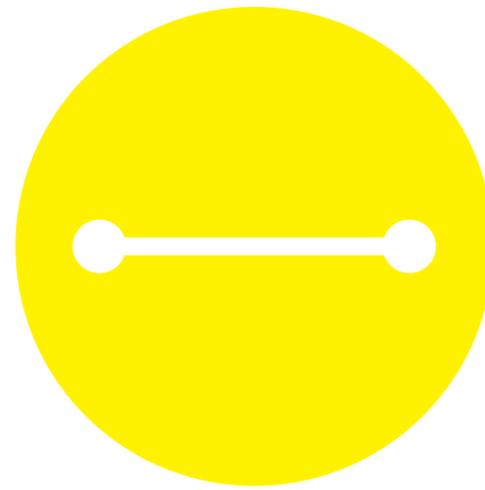
Amenity Closures

- As a last resort, trail operators can implement closures of all or specific trail amenities and infrastructure (viewpoints, toilets, benches, picnic tables, campsites, etc.). However, before closing amenities, trail operators should consider how such closures will impact visitor experience or universal accessibility, and whether the closure will result in other undesirable impacts (e.g. improper human waste disposal). Amenity closures are most appropriate where physical distancing cannot be reasonably maintained at the amenity and / or where there is likely to be a high frequency of visitors touching the surfaces of amenities that cannot be cleaned and disinfected. If amenities and attractions are to be closed, ensure visitors are made aware of the closures before they arrive at the trail, as well as at the trailhead. See [Section 3.0](#) for guidance on the cleaning and disinfecting of trail amenities.



Converting to a One-Way Trail

- Conversion to a one-way trail is most appropriate on looped trails where a) visitors start and end at the same location, b) there are good sight lines and c) where most visitors travel the trail at similar speeds. However, one-way trails can increase safety risks especially on trails that mix motorized and non-motorized modes. Visitors travelling one-way trails are less likely to anticipate oncoming visitors, rates of speed are known to increase, and visitors often change their positioning on the trail. To mitigate that risk, clear etiquette rules should be implemented. For examples, bikes need to signal their presence to pedestrians with a mandatory bell, speed limits need to be reduced, and passing rules need to be defined^{vi}.



Limiting the Number of Visitors

- Limiting the number of visitors permitted on the trail at any given time (known as carrying capacity) is an effective tool to ensure visitors are able to maintain a 2m physical distance. In practice, determining the appropriate number of permitted visitors is challenging and ensuring that only that number of visitors are on the trail at a given time is difficult and can be expensive to implement and monitor. Limiting the number of visitors is most appropriate where a) there is one, or few, trailheads or entry points onto the trail, b) there is a high potential of significant visitation (e.g. destination trail), c) not limiting use would make it impractical for visitors to maintain a 2m physical distance and d) the trail operator has the staffing and funding to ensure the limits are applied.
- If there are indoor or partially enclosed facilities associated with the trail (e.g. day use shelters, visitor centres, booths, etc.) trail operators should reduce the number of visitors permitted inside the facility at a given time. Staff can monitor and manage the number of visitors entering the facility, and they can adjust the designs to limit capacity (e.g. closing every second toilet and sink stall) in order to enable physical distancing. Trail operators should review provincial and territorial guidelines for occupancy loads to determine an appropriate occupancy.



Limiting Parking Density

- Temporarily reducing the physical capacity of trailhead parking lots (e.g. closing / blocking a portion of available parking stalls) can help visitors keep 2m apart in the parking lots and manage the overall number of visitors to a trail at a given period. However, temporarily reducing the capacity of trailhead parking lots may simply push visitors to park nearby and lead to conflicts with adjacent landowners and greater safety concerns. Limiting parking capacity is most appropriate where a) visitors are unlikely / unable to park nearby and create other conflicts and safety risks, b) there is a high potential of significant visitation (e.g. destination trail), c) not limiting use would make it impractical for visitors to maintain a 2m physical distance and d) the trail operator has the staffing and funding to ensure appropriate parking occurs. Where reducing parking density is a desired management action, trail operators should contact local road authorities, adjacent landowners or managers to explore opportunities for temporarily expanding space available for parking on nearby roadways or properties.



Length of Visit Limits

- Visitors should be encouraged to limit the length of their outing on trails in order to improve the sharing of the trail and the potential for more visitors to enjoy it. Length of visit limits are particularly important on trails where it is difficult to maintain a 2m separation and where there is a high volume of potential visitation always or at specific times (e.g. peak periods).



Group Size Limits & Event Cancellations

- If the trail operator does not have the capacity to ensure gatherings remain in compliance with provincial or territorial gather limits, formal organized and commercial trail events, races and other formalized gatherings should be cancelled and prohibited until the respective provincial or territorial health officer permits formalized and commercial events and gatherings.
- The size of trail groups (e.g. cycling groups) should be limited on trails to the gathering sizes permitted / promoted by the respective provincial or territorial health officer.



Prohibiting Specific Activities

- Trail operators can change the mix or permitted trail activities (e.g. restrict motorized vehicles, restrict mechanized or electric assist modes). However, at the time of preparing these guidelines, little conclusive evidence exists to suggest that one trail activity has a greater potential to spread COVID-19 than another. Measures by public health agencies suggest that trail operators should be more focused on maintaining the physical distance between visitors and limiting the potential for visitors to contact an infected surface, regardless of activity. As such, changing the mix of previously permitted activities to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is not deemed a priority management tool except for instances where certain activities on a trail make it unmanageable or impossible to maintain a 2m separation between visitors.
- Consider whether timing allocations can be used to prohibit general use during a specific time period in order to accommodate participants from vulnerable groups (e.g. dedicated times for seniors to use the trail).



Altering or Prohibiting Equipment Rentals

- Operators who rent equipment to visitors are required to follow relevant provincial or territorial guidelines for disinfecting. If operators are unable to meet the requirements of their provincial or territorial guidelines, equipment rentals should be prohibited. If provincial or territorial guidelines specific to rental equipment do not exist, trail operators should ensure that all equipment is cleaned and disinfected between each rental.



Compliance Assurance & Enforcement

- Officer presence and enforcement (verbal and written warnings, violation tickets) should be used judiciously, where officer capacity is available, to backstop visitor education. Enforcement should not be the primary or initial tool to influence visitor behaviours. Education, officer presence and warnings are more effective at changing behaviours over the long-term. Violation tickets should be a last resort and only in flagrant or persistent non-compliance incidents. Trail operators should work with enforcement officers to develop a strategic approach to ensuring officer presence. Enforcement is most appropriate on trails with high potential of visitation.



Trail Closures

- As a last resort or if directed by a local authority or public health official, trail operators can implement a variety of closures such as a full closure for an extended period, closures during periods of peak demand, closures of trail sections in highest demand, or closures of secondary trails that lead to attractions and amenities. Closures should be carefully considered and, although typically a last resort, are most appropriate when directed by a local authority or provincial or territorial health officer, or when the application of other management tools have proven insufficient to reasonably control risks of spreading COVID-19, or where visitors continue to demonstrate an unwillingness to follow prevention practices. Closures of secondary trails that lead to amenities and attractions may be appropriate when a) physical distancing is not practical at those amenities or attractions, b) the amenities or attractions are not visible from the main trail, c) the trail leading to the amenity or attraction is not wide enough to accommodate physical distancing.

2.3 EMERGENCY RESPONSE PLANNING

There is potential that a visitor may begin a multi-day trail-based trip symptom-free but develop symptoms of COVID-19 while on-trail. If serious enough, these symptoms may prevent the visitor from being able to depart the trail and an evacuation may be required.

- Trail operators who manage remote and isolated multi-day trails should work with local first responders to review and update, or develop, an emergency response plan that details the protocols for evacuating trail users who are suspected to have COVID-19.

2.4 LAND MANAGER OR LANDOWNER COMMUNICATIONS

Many trail operators receive permission for the development and management of their trails from land managers (e.g. provincial / territorial government, local government) and private landowners (e.g. individuals, companies). Regardless, all land managers and owners will want to understand how the trail operator is planning to manage risk for transmission and liability.

- Trail operators should contact their respective land managers or landowners to advise them that a visitor management plan is being prepared and to ask if they have any COVID-19 specific concerns that they would like considered. Consider sharing these guidelines with them.
- A draft of the visitor management plan or management actions should be shared with the land manager / landowner for input. Steps should be taken to resolve concerns raised.

2.5 PROCESS FOR OPENING CLOSED TRAILS

The approach to trail closures has been highly variable from province to province, territory to territory, municipality to municipality and between trail operators. Some trail operators were required to close their trails, while others may have chosen to close their trails to help limit the spread of COVID-19. It is also possible that some jurisdictions that may be opening their trails will face future closures should the virus resurge.

Reopening the trail to the public isn't as simple as removing the closure signs. It is important that trail operators take a strategic approach to reopening. At a minimum, the following steps should be taken:

- 1** Become familiar with provincial or territorial public health orders and directives and any local bylaws or orders.
- 2** Evaluate your trail characteristics (e.g. width, amenities, volume of use) and identify risks for transmitting COVID-19 on the trail and through trail amenities.
- 3** Identify management tools that will be applied to manage the risk of transmitting COVID-19 and develop the materials to support implementation of those tools (e.g. signage, education program, physical infrastructure).
- 4** Update / develop safe work practices to help protect staff and volunteers from COVID-19 while working on the trail.
- 5** Train staff and volunteers in the updated / new safe work practices.
- 6** Undertake a physical inspection of the trail and resolve serious public safety and maintenance deficiencies and install management infrastructure required to mitigate risk of transmitting COVID-19.
- 7** Prepare and implement a communications campaign to promote the reopening of the trail.
- 8** Consider reopening the trail in phases that are aligned with the respective provincial or territorial open plan:
 - i. Phase 1 – promote local visitation only
 - ii. Phase 2 – promote both broader local and intra-provincial visitation
 - iii. Phase 3 – promote local, intra-provincial / territorial and inter-provincial / territorial visitation
 - iv. Phase 4 – resume regular visitation including promotion of international visitation
- 9** Monitor the effectiveness of management tools, public health and local orders and directives and adjust as necessary.

2.5.1 Recovery Marketing & Communications

Even as isolation and lockdown measures are beginning to be relaxed, some residents may remain fearful of spaces where people gather. They may worry that others are infected, physical distancing is ineffective, and that sanitation is insufficient. Deliberate efforts are likely to be required to help rebuild trust and confidence of visitors to enjoy trails.

- Trail operators should work with partners (e.g. Destination Marketing Organizations, Economic Development Organizations, Sector Organizations) to develop marketing and communication campaigns to reinforce the relative safety of enjoying the outdoors and to communicate the steps the trail operator is taking to help protect the safety of visitors and mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission. See [Appendix A.3](#) for an sample web and media release.

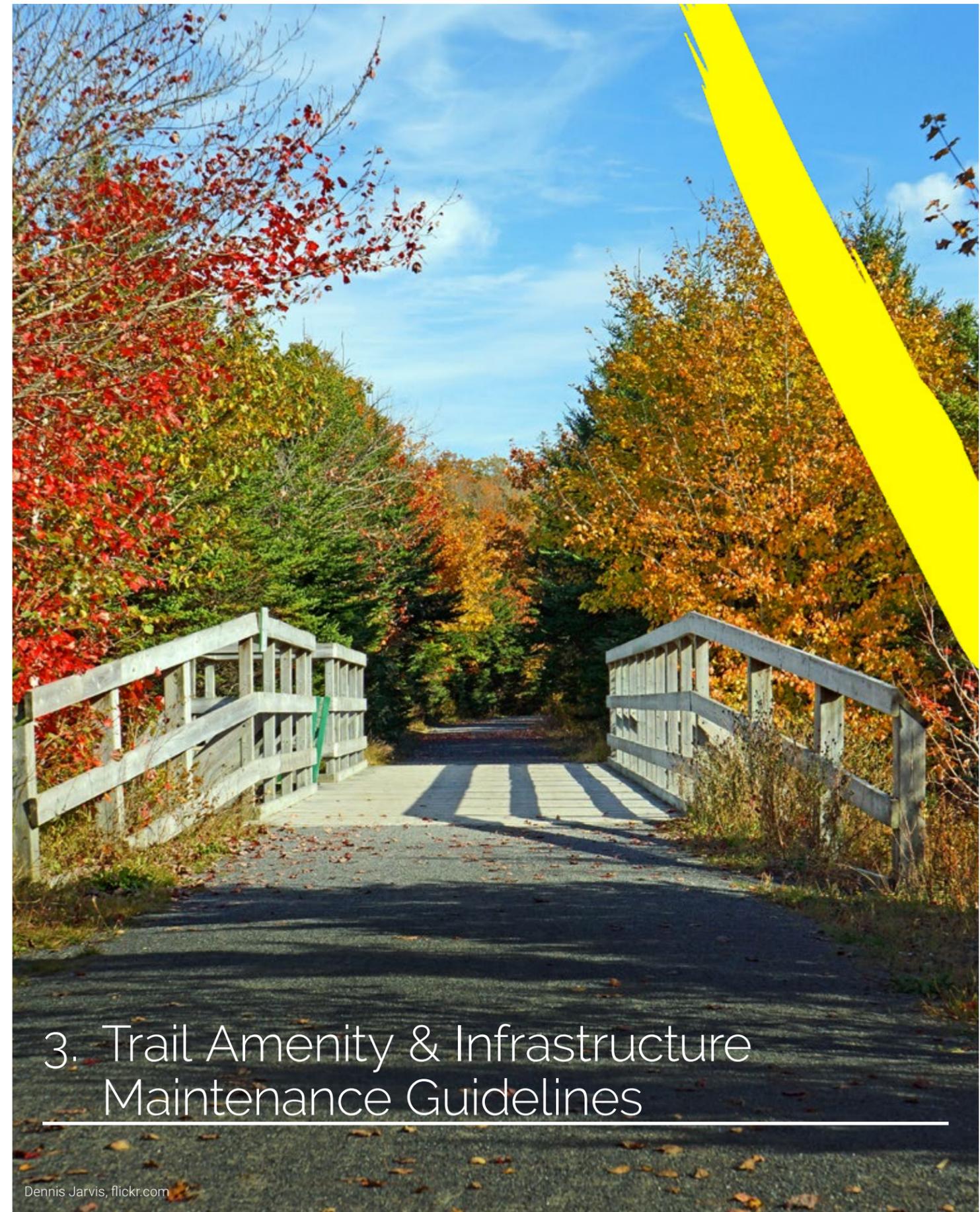
2.5.2 Commercial Use of Trails

Some trail operators may permit commercial businesses (e.g. guides, equipment rentals, food and beverage services) to operate on or adjacent to the trail and in parking lots.

- Trail operators should remind these businesses that they are required to know and follow the provincial or territorial public health orders, directives and guidelines that are relevant to their business.

"Ensuring visitors are aware of the steps that trail operators are taking to help keep them safe will be essential to giving visitors, from near and far, the confidence to return to our trails. Building visitor confidence and trust is fundamental to restarting our trails tourism economy".

– Justin Ellis – Trails Specialist



3. Trail Amenity & Infrastructure Maintenance Guidelines

Dennis Jarvis, flickr.com

COVID-19 can be indirectly transmitted between people when they touch surfaces that contain infected droplets. Surfaces that are most frequently touched by visitors with their hands are the most likely surfaces to be contaminated. Examples of high-touch surfaces in the trail environment include:

 Frontcountry and backcountry washrooms / toilets	 Pay Parking Machines	 Visitor Service Buildings (visitor information centres, pay booths, gate houses etc.)	 Bike Lockers, Racks & Wash Stations
 Signage & Interpretive Displays	 Waste & Recycling Receptacles	 Water Fountains	 Picnic Tables & Benches
 Day Use Shelters	 Railings, Handrails & Fall Restraint Fences	 Gates & Bollards	 Playgrounds, Play Equipment & Outdoor Fitness Equipment
 Equestrian Corrals, Hitching Posts & Highlines	 Docks & Boat Launches	 Campsites	 Donation Boxes

Frequent cleaning and disinfection of amenities and infrastructure are important to preventing the further spread of COVID-19^{vi}. Trail operators should remember that the length of time that COVID-19 can live on surfaces is not fully known and is dependent, in part, on the surface materials and environmental factors (humidity, temperature).

3.1 TO CLOSE OR KEEP AMENITIES OPEN?

Though some government parks and outdoor recreation managers are beginning to open basic amenities for public use, they are being opened with enhanced procedures including:

- Increased cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and
- Installation of signage to warn that COVID-19 may be present and to promote hand hygiene.

It may not be possible for trail operators to ensure that trail amenities and infrastructure will be free from COVID-19 infected droplets. However, trail operators, if they choose to keep amenities open, should take reasonable steps to manage the risks for transmission and to inform visitors of the potential for COVID-19 to be present. In making that decision, trail operators should consider each of the following:

- Relevant provincial or territorial and local health authority orders, directives and guidelines,
- Local government bylaws and directives,
- Potential volume of visitation,
- Secondary impacts that may result from closing amenities (e.g. inappropriate disposal of human waste, littering, etc.)
- Number and type of frequently touched amenities and infrastructure,
- Capacity to apply increased cleaning and disinfecting protocols,
- Capacity to increase signage and education.

3.2 CLOSING AMENITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

For amenities and infrastructure that the trail operator determines should be closed to visitors, the trail operator should:

- Sign the amenity / infrastructure as closed,
- Lock or tape off the amenity, and
- Regularly monitor compliance, and replace damaged or removed signage or posters.

3.3 GENERAL CLEANING & DISINFECTING GUIDELINES

If the trail operator decides to continue public access to trail amenities and infrastructure, the following cleaning and disinfecting guidelines should be applied.

3.3.1 Create a Cleaning & Disinfecting Procedure

- Trail operators should review and update, or develop, protocols and procedures for how they will manage the cleaning and disinfecting of trail amenities and infrastructure. The procedure should identify:
 - » The amenities and infrastructure that will remain open with enhanced cleaning and disinfecting procedures,
 - » The amenities and infrastructure that will remain open without active cleaning and disinfecting but will instead rely on warning signage or posters,
 - » The amenities and infrastructure that will be closed to public use and signed as such,
 - » How and how often amenities and infrastructure will be cleaned and disinfected,
 - » Cleaning and disinfecting products that are to be used,
 - » Required Personal Protective Equipment,
 - » Proper disposal of cleaning supplies and materials, and
 - » How cleaning and disinfecting is to be documented (e.g. cleaning log).



Cleaning

removes dirt, dust and oils that can protect germs but doesn't always kill germs.



Disinfecting

is undertaken after cleaning to kill germs.

3.3.2 General Cleaning & Disinfecting Procedures

- Coronaviruses are one of the easiest viruses to kill with appropriate disinfectant when used according to label directions. When cleaning trail amenities, choose products that clean and disinfect all at once (e.g. premixed store-bought disinfectant cleaning solutions).
- Use only approved hard-surface disinfectants that have a Drug Identification Number (DIN). A DIN is an 8-digit number given by Health Canada that confirms the disinfectant product is approved and safe for use in Canada^{viii}.
- Read and follow manufacturer's instructions for safe use of cleaning and disinfection products (e.g. wear gloves, use in well-ventilated area, allow enough contact time for disinfectant to kill germs based on the product being used).
- Clean and disinfect high-touch amenities and infrastructure in high-traffic areas as frequently as possible.
- Use damp cleaning methods such as damp clean cloths, and/or a wet mop. Do not dust or sweep, which can distribute virus droplets into the air.
- Contaminated disposable cleaning items (e.g. mopheads, cloths) should be placed in a lined garbage bin before disposing of them with regular waste. Reusable cleaning items can be washed using regular laundry soap and hot water (60-90°C).
 - Wash hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer after removing gloves after cleaning.

Cleaning & Disinfecting Frequency

Protocols for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces and high-touch surfaces are relatively consistent across the country. However, there is variability in the frequency in which high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected. Recognizing the staffing and volunteer constraints that trail operators face, trail operators should disinfect high-touch amenities as frequently as possible.

- Rando Quebec recommends cleaning and disinfecting high-touch surfaces every 30 minutes – 2 hours depending on usage,
- Government of Newfoundland recommends cleaning and disinfecting twice per day,
- Other government agencies recommend cleaning and disinfecting "regularly"

3.4 HIGH-TOUCH AMENITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE THAT CANNOT BE CLEANED & DISINFECTED FREQUENTLY

It is likely that some high-touch amenities and infrastructure on certain trails will be impossible or impractical to close or clean and disinfect on a regular basis (bridge handrails, safety barriers etc.). For these amenities and infrastructure, trail operators should:

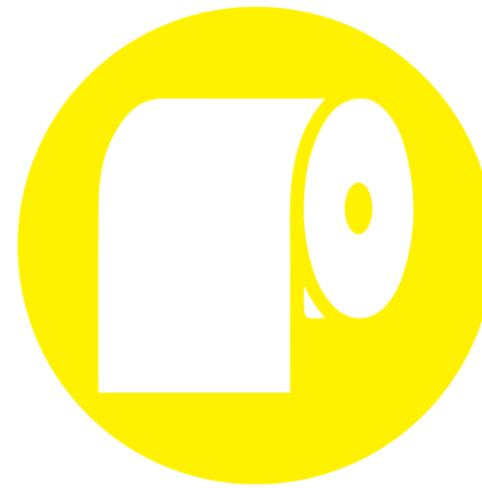
- Install signs or posters advising visitors:
 - » of the high-touch surface,
 - » to manage their own risk,
 - » that the amenity / infrastructure is not regularly cleaned and disinfected,
 - » that COVID-19 could be present, and
 - » to disinfect their hands after contact.

3.5 CLEANING & DISINFECTING CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIFIC AMENITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE

The general cleaning and disinfecting guidelines outlined above should be applied to all trail amenities and infrastructure. The following are additional guidelines specific to certain amenities.

For further information on cleaning and disinfecting practices see:

- [Cleaning & Disinfecting Public Spaces during COVID-19](#)
- [Cleaning & Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- [COVID-19 Cleaning & Disinfection for Public Facilities](#)
- [Hard Surface Disinfectant & Hand Sanitizers \(COVID-19\)](#)



3.5.1 Washrooms & Outhouses

Frontcountry and backcountry washrooms and toilets are important amenities to most visitors. They provide comfort and convenience while managing ecological and social impacts from human waste. However, they are also a higher risk for COVID-19 transmission as they are shared high-touch amenities.

Frontcountry Washrooms & Toilets

Frontcountry washrooms tend to serve greater numbers of visitors and are typically easier to access for cleaning and disinfecting. In general, trail operators should:

- Clean and disinfect busier washrooms and toilets more often than less busy washrooms / toilets.
- Provide handwashing / sanitizing stations (alcohol-based rub) if toilets and washrooms remain open.
- Install signage promoting sanitizing of hands before and after using the toilet.
- Ensure visitors can remain physically distanced while in the washroom / toilet and in queue for it. Distancing can be facilitated using partitioned stalls, blocking access to every second toilet / sink that are less than 2 m apart or staggering entry into washrooms / toilets so that fewer users are present at a time^{ix}.

Backcountry Outhouses, Garden Thrones, Composting Toilets

For many trail operators, maintaining the same level of cleaning and disinfection in backcountry toilets is unlikely. At the same time, these amenities are essential to avoiding improper human waste disposal that can contaminate water sources, attract wildlife, and impact the visitor experience. Recognizing the importance of backcountry toilets, trail operators should:

- Keep backcountry toilets open for visitor use.
- Provide and maintain a sufficient supply of hand sanitizer.
- Install posters or signs warning visitors that the amenity is not disinfected regularly, to manage their own risks of using the toilet, and disinfect their hands before and after using the toilet and before touching their face.

If trail operators decide to close backcountry toilets, they should:

- Install a sign or poster instructing visitors about how they can dispose of their human waste in accordance with the Leave No Trace practices (www.leaveonotrace.ca).

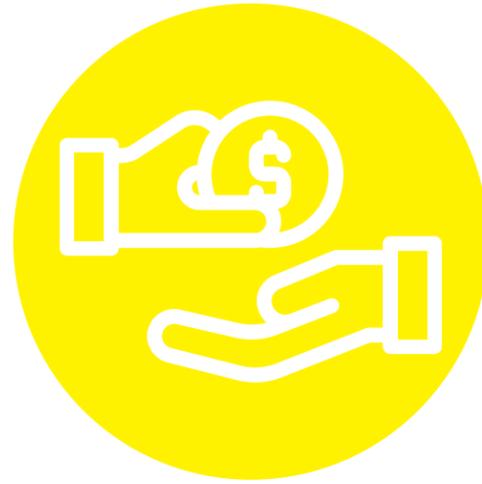
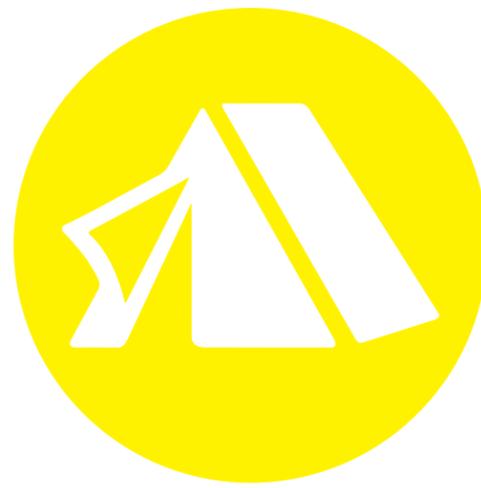
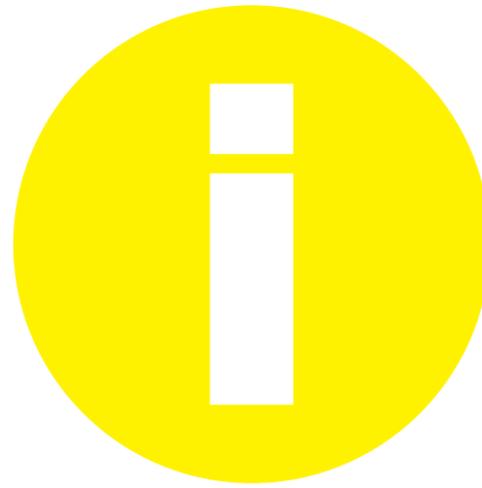
3.5.2 Visitor Service Buildings – Visitor and Information Centres / Gatehouses / Entry Booths

- Trail operators who maintain visitor service buildings (e.g. visitor centres, gate houses, entry booths) and office spaces should refer to and follow the respective provincial or territorial guidelines for work places and retail businesses.

3.5.3 Donation / Permit Fee Boxes

Donation / Permit Fee boxes can become a high-touch surface while the use of cash can increase the risk of transmitting COVID-19. Trail operators should:

- Utilize an online payment / donation system rather than a physical trailhead-based donation / permit payment system.
- Post a sign or poster at the box encouraging visitors to utilize the trail operator's online donation / pay system or providing other alternatives to remit payment to the trail operator.
- Ensure regular cleaning and disinfection of the donation / permit fee boxes if they are to remain open.



3.5.4 Campsites

Trail operators who manage campsites along their trails must review and comply with provincial or territorial public health direction on public /private campground operations. General practices include:

- Clean and disinfect campsite amenities (e.g. picnic table) after the party checks out / departs.
- Campsite reservations should be made online or via phone rather than in person.
- Maintain the names and contact information of campsite permit holders and all people staying at the site for contact tracing.
- Limit the number of campsites to 50% of the normal number of campsites where sites are located 10 m or less from each other.
- Where campsites are located more than 10m apart, limiting occupancy is not as required.





4. Trail Crew Guidelines

Trail operators as well as all trail contractors should update their internal health and safety procedures. See the **Professional Trailbuilders Association PTBA** for more information.

Trail maintenance is fundamental to providing a safe and quality experience for trail users; it is also essential to managing risk and liability to trail operators.

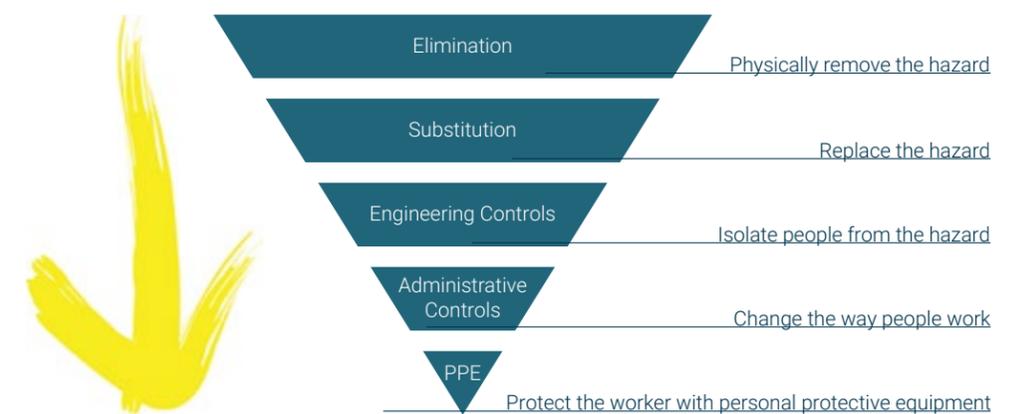
The following guidelines are specific to addressing COVID-19 and are not inclusive of other health and safety requirements that trail operators must adhere to. These guidelines are not an endorsement or direction to continue or resume trail development and maintenance operations. Trail operators and managers must adhere to the public health orders and direction of provincial, territorial and local governments in your region. If your province or region reinstates major health restrictions due to unacceptably high COVID-19 infection rates, it is essential that you be prepared to scale back operations as necessary, in conjunction with those actions.

4.1 RISK ASSESSMENT, SAFE WORK PRACTICES & VOLUNTEER AGREEMENTS

- Trail operators and managers are required to ensure a safe work environment for both staff and volunteers. All trail crew operations must continue to comply with your jurisdiction's relevant health and safety legislation and safe work practices (SWPs) that were required prior to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Trail operators should undertake a risk assessment of trail operations, and amend existing or develop new health and safety SWPs to include practices that will protect staff and volunteers from being infected by or transmitting COVID-19 during trail operations.

HIERARCHY OF CONTROLS

Most Effective



Least Effective

Figure 3: Hierarchy of Controls (adapted from WorkSafe BC)

- Where the risk assessment determines that it is not possible to eliminate the risks of crew members being infected by or transmitting COVID-19, trail operators should apply the following hierarchy of controls:

1

First Choice – Engineering Controls

These controls protect people from the hazard (e.g. installing barriers, work zones)

2

Second Choice – Administrative Controls

These controls change the way the trail crew works, and interacts with each other, with the public and with their equipment (e.g. physical distancing, disinfecting, tool assignment etc.)

3

Third Choice – Personal Protective Equipment

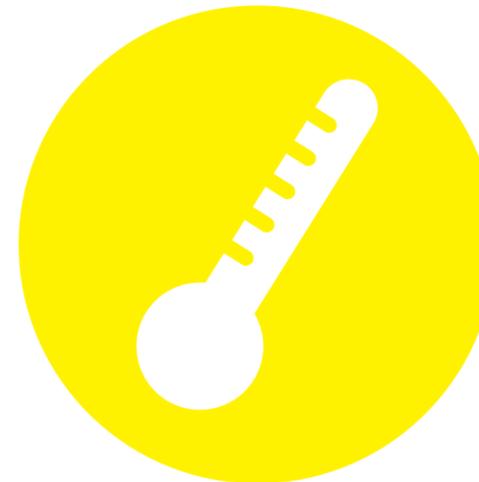
PPE controls the hazard at the crew member level. PPE is required when physical distancing cannot be maintained by administrative and engineering controls.

Where the hazard to crew members cannot be controlled by a single control method, the trail operator should apply a combination of the above controls.

- Trail operators should continue health and safety monitoring to ensure staff and volunteers follow all SWPs that are set out by the trail operator.
- Trail operators should ensure trail leaders understand their responsibility for trail crew compliance with SWPs.
- Trail operators should consider updating volunteer release forms, or creating new ones, to address COVID-19.

4.2 PRIORITIZE TRAIL OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

- Trail operators should review and prioritize all planned trail development and maintenance initiatives, and only pursue the most essential projects and initiatives. To help determine which initiatives are most essential, trail operators should ask themselves:
 - » Will not pursuing the initiative result in an unreasonable public safety risk and potential negligence?
 - » Will not pursuing the initiative result in unacceptable damage to sensitive environmental or historic resource values?
 - » Will not pursuing the initiative result in significant infrastructure damage and significantly higher costs for implementing the project in the future?
 - » Can the initiative be implemented in accordance with public health requirements and COVID-19 guidelines?
- Avoid undertaking projects on the busiest trails or during the peak use periods where possible. If not possible, consider a temporary closure of the trail or the implementation of taped off “work zones” to allow the work to be completed with limited interaction between the trail crew and the public.



4.3 COMMUNICATE & TRAIN STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

- Develop and post SWPs or summary posters in the trail operator’s offices and at on-trail work sites (see [Appendix A.4](#) for an example poster).
- Notify staff and volunteers of the steps that are being taken by the trail operator to prevent the risk of transmission or infection and the role they must play (see [Appendix A.5](#)).
- Ensure all staff and volunteers are oriented to and trained in how to apply the SWPs, including physical distancing practices, sanitation and disinfecting measures, and the proper use of personal protective equipment, where required.
- Review risks and SWPs at all tailgate meetings prior to commencing work each day.

4.4 IMPLEMENT PREVENTION MEASURES

4.4.1 Screening

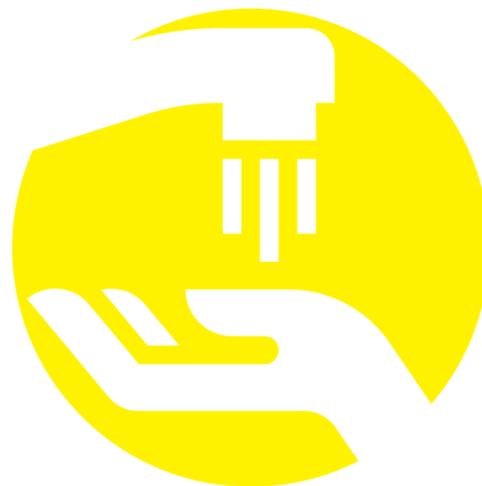
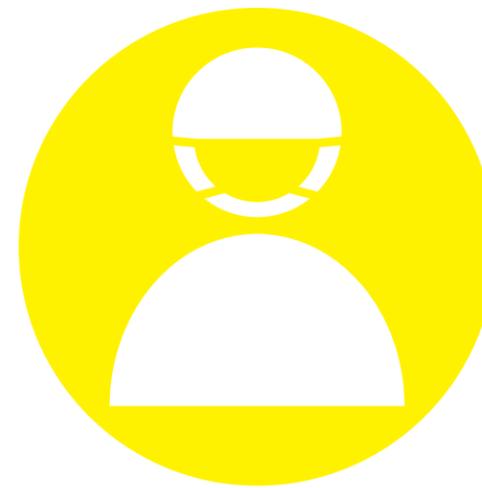
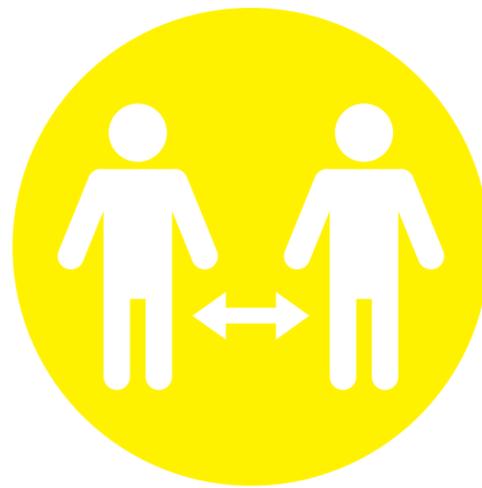
- Require all crew members who are feeling sick or have COVID-19 symptoms to stay home and not report to the work site.
- Screen crew members daily for COVID-19 symptoms during tailgate meetings, consider the use of a daily questionnaire or checklist that all staff and volunteers complete and signoff on prior to beginning work. For an example of a screening questionnaire, visit [Daily Fit for Work Screening Questionnaire](#).
- If a crew member reports to a work site and is sick, or becomes sick while there, isolate the member and work with them to find a safe way to get them home. All other members who have been in close prolonged contact with the person (less than 2m for 15 minutes or more) should also be isolated and safely transported home. All equipment and surfaces that individuals contacted must be disinfected. The names of all crew members the individual contacted at the worksite should be recorded.
- Encourage crew members with symptoms to complete their respective provincial or territorial COVID-19 self-assessment tool and, if possible, to get tested.
- Discourage crew members who are more vulnerable to COVID-19 from participating in trail crew work.

4.4.2 Physical Distancing

- Limit the size of the trail crew to the minimum necessary to complete the assigned work. Be sure to adhere to provincial or territorial orders regarding the size of permitted gatherings.
- Conduct planning meetings and project orientations virtually where possible.
- Require crew members, who are not part of the same household, to remain at least 2m apart at all times.
- Discourage carpooling to / from the worksite – encourage crew members to provide their own transport where feasible. Limit group crew transport to the extent possible.
- Take steps to limit in-person contact with members of the public, land managers and contractors. Maintain a self-contained and self-sufficient work site to the extent feasible. If people outside the work crew are in proximity to the worksite, establish a “work zone” that keeps the public away from the crew members.
- Require staff and volunteers to bring their own meals, drinks and snacks. Avoid group meals, drinks and snacks.
- Discourage staff and volunteers from sharing or borrowing personal items on the worksite.
- If camped at the worksite, ensure accommodation units are kept apart and that common areas (e.g. toilets, wash areas, campfires) enable staff and volunteers to remain at least 2m apart.
- Pre-plan material orders and consider having materials delivered to the worksite by the supplier or ready for curbside pick up. Limit the number of supply trips and the number of crew members that pick up the supplies.

4.4.3 Crew Hygiene

- Provide soap and water and encourage regular hand washing on site. Be sure to consider how and where soapy water will be disposed to avoid adding nutrients to nearby waterways. If a suitable supply of water and soap is not available, provide alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide disposable towels and spray cleaners, or disposable wipes, to the trail crew to clean equipment, tools and high-touch surfaces (ensure all disinfecting solutions meet the requirements for COVID-19 as per public health guidelines).
- Encourage proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with the inside elbow of the arm and away from people.
- If portable toilets are provided on the worksite, arrange for increased disinfecting by the provider or establish a disinfecting plan that the crew will apply following each use.
- Establish clear procedures for trash collection and disposal from the worksite.



4.4.4 Personal Protective Equipment

- The use of COVID-19 specific PPE in a trail worksite setting is likely to be limited. Trail operators should provide PPE to trail crew members when physical distancing and hygiene cannot be maintained through administrative and engineering controls.
- If PPE is required to control the risks, trail operators should give serious consideration to the priority and timing of the intended trail project. Rescheduling should be considered.
- If rescheduling is not an option and PPE is required, trail operators should ensure that crew members are trained on proper use of PPE and ensure all PPE is fitted correctly.
- Trail operators should continue to follow the most up-to-date public health guidelines for face covering recommendations. It is recommended that face coverings be worn in public when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Most public health officials recommend regular hand washing over the use of gloves to prevent transmission of or infection from COVID-19.
- Tool and activity specific reusable PPE (e.g. hard hats, face shield, hearing protection, chaps etc.) should be assigned and used by a single crew member and disinfected, in accordance with the manufacturer’s recommendations, before being used by another crew member.

4.4.5 Equipment / Tool Assignment, Cleaning & Disinfecting

- Establish procedures for the cleaning of high-traffic areas and common areas in offices and workspaces.
- Assign tools and equipment (e.g. hand tools, machines, electronics, tool specific PPE) to one person, or one household, for the day. If tools and equipment must be shared between crew members from different households, they should be thoroughly disinfected before being used by another crew member.
- Require each crew member to appropriately clean and disinfect the tools and equipment they were assigned for the day using a “wipe twice” method (wipe tools with a cleaning agent to remove soil and wipe again with a disinfectant). Consider the use of a “tool / equipment log” to ensure tools are disinfected and documented.
- Ensure vehicles are disinfected regularly including after use and before a new person uses the vehicle. Focus on high-touch surfaces in the vehicles. See Appendix A.7, on steps that can be taken to clean and disinfect trail crew vehicles*.





Appendices – Tool Kit for Trail Operators

Anton Bielousov, flickr.com

For additional resources and support with implementation, please contact Trans Canada Trail at project@tctrail.ca.

A COVID-19 ESSENTIALS FOR TRAIL OPERATORS

Symptoms of COVID-19

Those infected with COVID-19 may exhibit no, mild, or severe symptoms. The most common symptoms include:

- Cough
- Fever
- Chills
- Shortness of breath
- Sore throat
- Stuffy / runny nose
- Loss of smell
- Headache
- Muscle aches
- Fatigue
- Loss of appetite

It is important for trail operators to recognize that some infected individuals can transmit the disease to others even when the infected person is not experiencing any symptoms. This includes people who:

- Have not yet developed symptoms (pre-symptomatic)
- Never develop symptoms (asymptomatic).

There is an increased risk of more severe outcomes for trail visitors:

- Aged 65 or older,
- With compromised immune systems, or
- With underlying medical conditions.

General Practices to Prevent Transmission & Infection

COVID-19 is highly transmissible. Public health officials have outlined a number of preventative measures that should be taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19. These measures include:

- Physical distancing – maintain a 2m distance between individuals who are not part of the same household or cohort family,
- Avoiding direct contact with people who are not part of the same household or cohort family (e.g. fist bumps, handshakes, hugs),
- Limiting contact with people who are more vulnerable to the disease,
- Frequent hand hygiene (handwashing, alcohol-based hand rubs),
- Frequent disinfection of high-touch surfaces,
- Avoid crowded places and gathering in groups (*group size limits vary from province to province, refer to local health guidelines for maximum permitted group sizes*),
- Staying home when sick,
- Practicing proper cough and sneeze etiquette, and
- Going outside to exercise but staying close to home, limiting inter-community travel and limiting risky activities.

As at the time of preparing these guidelines, public health officials in Canada indicate that wearing a non-medical face covering while in public is optional but recommend that face coverings be worn as an added layer of protection when in public places where physical distancing cannot be maintained. When properly worn, a person wearing a non-medical face covering can reduce the spread of that individuals' respiratory droplets but it does not provide complete protection from the virus because of potential loose fit and the materials used. Face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing or good hygiene.

Medical masks should be kept for health care workers. For more information on face coverings, visit [About Non-Medical Masks and Face Coverings](#).

B KEY MESSAGES TO USERS ABOUT HOW TO STAY SAFE ON THE TRAIL

The following messages should be incorporated into all visitor information and education programs and communications.

Before Leaving for the Trail:

- ☑ If you are at higher risk of serious consequences from COVID-19, consider staying home.
- ☑ Plan outdoor activities with people from a shared household or cohort family.
- ☑ Do not go to the trail if you are feeling unwell or are in isolation / quarantine.
- ☑ Know the rules regarding travel within and between communities in your province or territory.
- ☑ Expect closures – confirm that the trail and amenities are open, and research the rules and restrictions or for the trail.
- ☑ Plan your trip to avoid times and places of high use.
- ☑ Choose your trails wisely. Respect local communities that are discouraging visitation and follow all rules regarding travel.
- ☑ Keep the adventure factor low - pick a trail that you deem to be easy to moderate difficulty.
- ☑ Be sure to have an emergency plan should you get sick while on a multi-day trail trip.
- ☑ Be prepared, bring a "Clean Trip Kit" with hand sanitizer, toilet paper and face covering – Don't forget your normal safety gear and appropriate clothing.

When you Arrive at the Trail:

- ☑ Your actions help ensure our trails stay open.
- ☑ If the parking lot is full or trail operators indicate that the trail has reached its capacity find another trail to enjoy, there are plenty of local trail gems.
- ☑ Staying apart starts in the parking lot. Stay in your car until you can keep 2m apart.

While On the Trail:

- ☑ Manage your own risk.
- ☑ Maintain a distance of 2m from all other visitors who are not from your household or cohort family.
- ☑ Travel in single file when approaching others.
- ☑ Be courteous when passing others on the trail:
 - » Announce that you wish to pass if approaching another visitor from behind.
 - » Move to the right edge of the trail to maintain a 2m distance
 - » Where possible, pass others while remaining on the trail surface.
 - » If you must step off the trail to allow safe passing, try to use a durable surface that won't impact vegetation or lead to trail widening or braiding.
- ☑ Minimize contact with high-touch surfaces (handrails, gates, benches). Wash your hands with soap and warm water for 20 seconds or sanitize your hands with an alcohol-based rub after touching surfaces.
- ☑ Practice good respiratory hygiene by covering your mouth and nose with the inside of your arm when you cough or sneeze.
- ☑ Avoid gathering at viewpoints, interpretive signs and other attractions on the trail. When gathering is necessary, line up, maintain 2m distance and wait your turn.
- ☑ Abide by all direction of travel requirements where they exist (e.g. one-way travel).
- ☑ Respect the direction contained within trail signage and the closure of trail amenities.
- ☑ Limit the use of washroom / toilets (where open). If open, sanitize your hands before and after using the facility. If washroom / toilet is not open, dispose of your waste properly in line with Leave No Trace practices (www.leavenotrace.ca).
- ☑ Avoid the sharing of personal equipment, water bottles and food (e.g. packs, GPS, water bottles).
- ☑ Dispose of your waste properly. Pack out your trash if waste receptacles are closed.
- ☑ Avoid higher risk activities on the trail that increase the potential for needing emergency services.
- ☑ Where permitted on the trail, keep all pets on a short leash.
- ☑ Be considerate and kind to other visitors and trail operators.
- ☑ Adopt and apply the 7 Principles of Leave No Trace (www.leavenotrace.ca)

When You Return from the Trail:

- ☑ Share your stories and pictures of how you practiced COVID-19 measures while on the trail. Be sure to use geotagging responsibly.

While visitors are preoccupied with minimizing their exposure to COVID-19, it is essential that trail operators remind visitors that they must also continue efforts to minimize their impacts on environmental and historic resource values and the experience of others.

The seven Leave No Trace principles, skills and ethics should continue to be promoted to visitors:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel & Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Others

- www.leavenotrace.ca

The following infographics can be distributed through the social media channels, websites and installed at trail heads.

THE GREAT TRAIL **STAY SAFE**

Before leaving for the Trail

Plan ahead and be prepared. Choose trails close to home, research the status of the Trail, avoid the busiest times and bring a "Clean Trip Kit" (sanitizer, face covering, toilet paper). Stay home if you are sick.

When you arrive at the Trail

Verify the rules of the Trail. Remember, your actions help ensure our trails stay open. If the Trail is busy, adjust your plan and come back another time.

While you're on the Trail

Manage your own risk. Keep 2m from others and avoid congested areas. Respect public health guidelines by practicing good respiratory etiquette and the environment by adopting **Leave No Trace** principles (www.leavenotrace.ca). Be friendly!

When you return from the Trail

Be an ambassador for the Trail. Share your stories and pictures of how you practiced COVID-19 measures while on the Trail. Be sure to geotag responsibly.



BEFORE YOU GO

Stay home if you are sick



Know the status and the rules of the Trail section



Prepare a Clean Trip Kit
(sanitizer, face covering, toilet paper)



Stay close to home



Avoid the busiest times

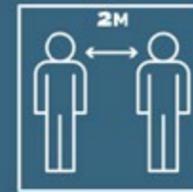


Play it safe and keep the risk low



ON THE TRAIL

Stay 2 metres apart



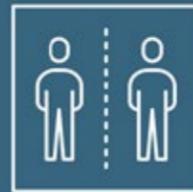
Cover your mouth when you cough or sneeze



Adopt and apply Leave No Trace
(www.leaveonotrace.ca)



Share the Trail, pass others safely



Keep pets on a leash



Keep the risk factor low



Respect closed amenities



Sanitize hands frequently and avoid high-touch surfaces





WHEN YOU RETURN

Wash your hands
with soap and water



Share your stories
and pictures of how you
helped prevent the
spread of COVID-19



Geotag
responsibly



C MESSAGES TO VISITORS ABOUT WHAT THE TRAIL OPERATOR IS DOING TO KEEP VISITORS SAFE

The following is provided as a sample communication for you to tailor to your trail and the steps you are taking to manage COVID-19. You can post this on your website, social media channels and / or directly email to your contacts.



TO OUR VISITORS

Dear Trail Enthusiast,

Insert Trail Name is open, and we invite you to come and enjoy it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been very challenging and we all have a role to play in helping to stop its spread. Like you, we take our role seriously. Though health officials agree that recreating outdoors when physically distanced poses a lower risk for infection or transmission of COVID-19, **Name of Trail Operator**, are taking purposeful steps to help keep you safe while enjoying The Great Trail. In addition to following all provincial or territorial and local orders and regulations, we are: **(select and only include the appropriate bullets. This list contains examples only):**

- Changing our trail to a one-way trail to promote physical distancing,
- Prohibiting certain activities to better support physical distancing and visitor safety,
- Educating visitors about how they can enjoy the trail and amenities safely and responsibly,
- Installing signage throughout the trail reminding visitors about good hygiene and physical distancing,
- Closing high touch amenities on the trail that can not be regularly disinfected,
- Increasing the cleaning frequency of trail amenities,
- Limiting parking capacity to help limit the number of visitors on the trail at one time,
- **(other actions - insert here).**

These steps, along with your commitment to following the guidelines, will help to ensure we collectively do our part to limit the spread of COVID-19 and keep The Great Trail open. We look forward to seeing you on the **Insert Trail Name** when you are comfortable.

Happy Trails.

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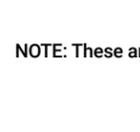
D EXAMPLE OF COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAIL WORK POSTER

To remind trail crew members of the required COVID-19 safety protocols, the following poster can be erected at all locations along the trail where trail crews are working. (Source of the example: [PTBA](#))



COVID-19 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR TRAILWORK

As most professional trail crews are small (typically one to six workers), working outside of normal exposure to the public, trailbuilding is an inherently “socially isolated” industry. We believe that utilizing best practices in maintaining a hygienic and safe work site can minimize the potential of exposure to COVID-19 for crew members and members of the general public.

-  • Maintain physical (social) distancing - 2 metres or more
-  • Use proper respiratory etiquette and follow the most updated guidelines for mask-wearing in your area
-  • Utilize frequent and thorough hand washing
-  • Disinfect any equipment that is shared prior to use AND at the end of each work day
- Maintain a self-contained and self-sufficient work site as is feasible
- If people outside the work crew are in proximity, mandate that those individuals maintain at least 2 metres of distance
- Screen crew daily for coronavirus symptoms (fever, cough, difficulty breathing)

DISTANCE REQUIRED AT THIS TRAILWORK SITE:

MASK REQUIREMENT:

YES NO

NOTE: These are abbreviated recommendations for posting at worksites. SOURCE: www.trailbuilders.org

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E COVID-19 TRAIL VOLUNTEER INFORMATION LETTER

The following COVID-19 Trail Volunteer Information Letter is designed to be distributed to all trail volunteers to help the volunteers understand the safe work practices that will be applied and the expectations of volunteers during volunteer trail initiatives that are undertaken as directed by the trail operator.



TRAIL STEWARDSHIP DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dear Trail Steward,

Dedicating countless hours to trail development, management and maintenance, trail volunteers are the foundation on which quality, safe and sustainable trail networks are built. Though we work to provide quality trail experiences, our number one priority is protecting the safety and well-being of our volunteers and our trail visitors. The COVID-19 pandemic has required us to review the operation and management of our trails, including how we lead and manage our dedicated crew of volunteer stewards, like you.

Though your volunteer contributions are just as important today as they were before the COVID-19 pandemic, the way you volunteer with us for the foreseeable future is going to look a little different. Through a critical review of our existing safe work practices, we have identified a number of additional practices that we need to implement, and we need you to implement, in order to maintain the safety of our volunteers and to limit risks that COVID-19 will be transmitted through our volunteer initiatives. We are taking this opportunity to share these additional practices with you in advance of our next volunteer initiative in hopes that you will understand and feel confident in the measures we are taking maintain your safety.

Volunteer Safe Work Practices

During our volunteer initiatives, we require that all volunteers:

1. Follow all national and provincial or territorial health orders and safe work practices including those directed by your volunteer crew leader.
2. Stay home if you are feeling unwell – we look forward to you joining us when you feel well.
3. Genuinely consider your personal vulnerability to COVID-19 and whether volunteering at this time is in your best interest.
4. Remain at least 2m from all other crew members, who are not from your household, at all times.

5. Bring your own food, water, clothing and personal equipment and avoid sharing yours with others.
6. Clean and disinfect your hands frequently and practice appropriate respiratory etiquette.
7. Wear all Personal Protective Equipment that as is required in our safe work practices.
8. Tools and equipment are likely to be assigned to a single person for the day. Please refrain from sharing tools unless they have been thoroughly cleaned and disinfected. Cleaning and disinfecting of tools and equipment is required at the end of each day.
9. Avoid car pooling to and from the worksite. Please travel in your own vehicle.
10. Have fun – despite our new safety practices, we want all our volunteers to thoroughly enjoy themselves.

Please note that, as required, we may also:

- Limit the number of volunteers that are assigned to each crew and working on a single initiative to remain consistent with public health direction regarding gatherings.
- Conduct planning and preparation meetings virtually.
- Temporarily close the trail or establish work zones to minimize close contact between volunteers and visitors.

We are confident that the above measures will ensure we collectively do our part to minimize the spread of COVID-19 and hope that you feel confident in them as well. We look forward to you joining us on our next trail initiative. Please be sure to contact us should you have any further ideas or concerns.

Happy Trails!

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F THE GREAT TRAIL COVID-19 SIGNAGE

Please contact Trans Canada Trail at project@tctrail.ca to obtain the source files for the signs below or for additional support with signage development



G GUIDELINES FOR CLEANING, DISINFECTING AND FUELING CREW VEHICLES

The following guidelines have been adapted from the USDA National Forest Service's protocol for cleaning and disinfecting vehicles.



GUIDELINES FOR CLEANING & DISINFECTING CREW VEHICLES

Where vehicles are used to transport more than one person from a separate household:

- The number of people in the vehicle should be limited to allow all riders to remain 2m apart.
- Ensure that the same people share the same vehicle to minimize exposure.
- The driver or a passenger must clean and disinfect the vehicle after use. Discretion should be used on whether the vehicle should be cleaned and disinfected before use.

To clean and disinfect the vehicle:

1. Wear all personal protective equipment as recommended by the manufacturer of the cleaning and disinfecting product that is being used.
2. If surfaces are noticeably dirty, clean soiled surfaces with a detergent or soap and water before disinfecting.
3. Use a disinfectant to clean all soft and hard surfaces in the vehicles such as:
 - » Keys
 - » External and interior door handles
 - » Steering wheel
 - » Gear shifter
 - » Internal controls (e.g. radio, window, temperature dials)
 - » Seatbelts
 - » Seats
 - » Arm rests
 - » Dashboard
4. Remove and properly discard of all personal protective equipment.
5. Wash or disinfect your hands.
6. Complete any required cleaning and disinfecting logs.

When fueling the vehicle:

- Consider disinfecting the fuelling nozzles and key pads before use.
- Disinfect your hands after using the fuelling nozzles and key pads before touching your face.

Trail operators should ensure each vehicle contains sufficient cleaning and disinfectant solutions, personal protective equipment and alcohol based hand rubs with 60% alcohol to allow for proper vehicle cleaning.

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REFERENCES

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/assumptions.html#a5>
- [About coronavirus disease \(COVID-19\), Government of Canada \(2020\).](#)
- <https://www.randoquebec.ca/info-covid-19/>
- Minimizing Risk and Liability: Best Practices Guide for Trail Stewards, Operators, Managers and Owners, Government of Alberta, Alberta TrailNet, (2013)
- Exceptional Trails, Government of Alberta (2018).
- [COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) response, City of Kelowna \(2020\).](#)
- [Coronavirus Disease \(COVID-19\) Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Government of Canada \(2020\).](#)
- [Hard-surface disinfectants and hand sanitizers \(COVID-19\), Government of Canada \(2020\).](#)
- [COVID-19 Information Guidance for Outdoor Recreation, Government of Alberta \(2020\).](#)
- [PTBA COVID-19 Recommendations for Trailbuilding, Professional Trailbuilders Association, \(2020\).](#)



