



May 5, 2021

Council Covid-19 (Coronavirus) Plan

The Voyageurs Area Council has been monitoring developments regarding Covid-19 since the start of the pandemic in March 2020. Letters, memos, and protocol updates have been issued at least 20 times since Covid-19 was proclaimed a world-wide health emergency and pandemic. We want to provide you with the latest guidance based on currently available information from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and State and County Health Departments. This information is fluid and continues to change as more people are vaccinated, and other public situations change. We recommend that every Scout, Scouter, family, and Scouting partner continue to stay up to date on all public announcements and changes in regulations in order to provide for the safety and welfare of all involved.

As a Council, we are moving toward a more active and inclusive program year and making plans for the safety and welfare of all of our Scouts. Many of the activities, events, and programs that had to be cancelled in 2020 are back on the Council calendar, are being staffed by quality volunteers, and are anticipated to be successfully completed this year.

Note: Should public health authorities or government officials recommend additional preventative measures, we will act accordingly. Please refer to the Council website for updates on postponement or cancellation of upcoming events, activities, or meetings in your local area.

Our Council's Response: A Scout is Clean

We encourage everyone attending our properties and programs to follow health authorities recommendations to prevent the spread of all respiratory viruses:

- Stay home when you feel sick.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. Use the 6 ft. buffer rule if at all possible.
- Wear a mask or face covering.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, mouth, and face, and wash your hands before and after doing so.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash. If you don't have a tissue, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve/elbow, not your hands.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Do not share personal items such as cups, water bottles, eating utensils, etc.
- Avoid shaking hands.



- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing. If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

If you have a fever, cough, or other symptoms associated with Covid-19, or if you believe you may have been exposed to Covid-19, you should not attend a Scouting activity, meeting, or event. People who think they may have been exposed to Covid-19 should contact their healthcare provider immediately.

Attending Scouting Programs

The Council has tools to help ensure that all participants at Scouting activities and events are healthy and unlikely to participate in the spread of the virus. Programs that are run by the Council or one of its Districts will follow strict protocol including:

- Temperature checks for all who are attending. (An electronic thermometer for this use can be checked out from Council headquarters.)
- All participants will be asked to respond to a questionnaire regarding illness, contact, and other safety measures employed personally or by the family.
- Appropriate clothing and protective devices, such as masks, disposable gloves, etc. will be used.
- Sanitation will be strictly adhered to. Participants will be requested to use hand sanitizer and wash their hands regularly. Disinfectant wipes or spray will be used to clean surfaces. Disposable items that can be one-time use will be available when necessary.
- Scouts and others who appear to be ill will be sent home.
- Protocols for any outside venue will be thoroughly checked to ensure the safety of our Scouts.

Unit Meetings (depending on Charter Organization approval)

In our protocol letter dated February 5, 2021 we stated the following which was confirmed by a health department official for the State of Minnesota: “Within the program, create consistent groupings of the same staff, volunteers, and participants. The maximum number of participants is 15 people per group or room for indoor and outdoor activities.” While this guideline for indoor activities remains in place, the standard for outdoor activities is now up to 50 people in a group. (This is based on the Governor of Minnesota’s order 21-11.)

While we recognize that different states have different statutes, we believe that these regulations can all be satisfied by adhering to the policy as stated in the preceding paragraph. We ask that all Voyageurs Area Council units abide by these standards until otherwise notified.

Note: rules have been set forth for any unit believing they need the Council to consider an exception to any of these regulations.

Transportation

Transportation to and from Scouting programs is one area where the spread of the virus could be of greater concern. Parents and guardians should be certain that their child is healthy and free from communicable diseases before permitting them to participate in Scouting events and meetings.

- Scouts may travel to and from programs with a close family member.

- Scouts may also travel with a known friend or extended family member upon the approval of the legal parent or guardian, so long as the friend is comfortable with providing transportation.
- Scouts that are traveling to a certified camp or camping facility, whether with a family member, a known friend, or extended family member must adhere to the policies of the camp or camping facility whether they are aligned with VAC policies or not.
- Scouts may travel in group transportation such as minivans, vans, or buses if the transportation meets all applicable BSA regulations and is allowed by the camp or camping facility they are traveling to. (Units expecting to use such transportation to go to one of the VAC properties must notify the Council that they intend to do so and follow all other rules outlined above.)

Camping/Overnight Programs

Overnight programs are another source of concern regarding the spread of respiratory illnesses. In general, we are in favor of BSA camping programs and camping facilities as they have to go through a rigorous certification process. Overnight programs at other venues are more of a concern.

- VAC properties are open to outdoor camping and use following established protocols already in place.
- VAC properties with indoor accommodations are open to overnight use following established protocols already in place.
- Scouting units planning overnight or camping programs at venues outside of Scouting properties should go over the accommodations and safety protocols of that venue with all participating families and Scouts in advance of scheduling the venue.
- Parents and guardians should express concerns to unit leadership if they are uncomfortable with the accommodations or rules. Council leadership can help with any questions that may arise.

It is difficult to anticipate all possible circumstances that may arise from Covid-19 or any other health concern. We are anxious that all of our Scouts and other participants be safe and healthy so that they can enjoy our great Scouting programs. Council leadership is available to answer questions, help with review of a policy or venue, or respond to any concerns any unit leader, Scout, or family member may have. We can be reached by calling the **Council Service Center at 218-729-5811**.

We are all responsible for the prevention of communicable diseases, and your proactive steps are a critical component. Thank you for doing your part. Keep in mind Scouting's guiding principles regarding communicable diseases include:

- The responsibility for management of a medical condition lies with the individual or the individual's parent or guardian.
- Local Scouting units and charter organizations determine their own membership and participation.

Best Regards,

Michael Jenkins,
Scout Executive

Resources

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>
- Coronavirus Disease 2019 (Covid-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>
- Preventing the Flu: Good Health Habits Can Help Stop Germs <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/index.htm>

Boy Scouts of America

- Communicable Disease Prevention Safety Moment <https://www.scouting.org/health-and-safety/safety-moments/communicable-disease-prevention/>
- Membership Guidelines Regarding Communicable Diseases https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/communicable_diseases.pdf
- Recommendations for Unit and Council Event Leaders [https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103\(18\)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf](https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-103(18)_Prev_of_CommunicableDiseases.pdf)
- Pre-Event Medical Screening Checklist https://filestore.scouting.org/filestore/HealthSafety/pdf/680-102_PreEventChklist.pdf