



**COVID-19**

**RISK MANAGEMENT**

**PROTOCOLS**

**FIELD MITIGATION STRATEGIES**

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### **Managing Risk: We're all in this together**

MCC is aware that even with our best planning, and strict adherence to state public health directives and CDC guidelines there will be significant challenges to this season. We will need to be continually responsive to the actions/planning of project partners, state and national directives, the health of our crews and staff, current medical information/resources, and financial resources. We believe the success of crews this summer will be based on our ability to maintain focus on the health of members, our partners, and the communities in which we serve.

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## 2020 MCC Field Operations

### COVID-19 Mitigation Strategies

Montana Conservation Corps (MCC) is closely monitoring the spread of COVID-19 throughout the country. As an organization we believe it is critical to protect and support our communities at a local, state, and national level while simultaneously ensuring the safety and well-being of our participants. This document is intended to provide an overview of protocols and policies currently in place to mitigate exposure to and the spread of COVID-19. This document does not include all measures that may be taken by MCC and will be updated and/or revised as associated data for COVID-19 changes. These protocols are specific to MCC's program design, structure and mission. **This version is based on information available as of January 19, 2021.**

**Following the CDC guidance for responding to COVID-19, we base our program protocols on the following mitigation strategies:**

- Limit the number of people gathering in one space to 25 or less where social distancing isn't possible.
- Prioritize physical distancing of 6 ft. whenever possible
- Implement pre arrival and exit assessments of exposure and risk
- Daily health and symptom check
- Assess projects for alignment with COVID-19 safety in mind
- Remain in same "family units" or crews (4-6 people) throughout term of service
- Stagger and regulate number of people in one space (regional offices, basecamps)
- Remote training whenever possible or appropriate
- Limit all non-essential travel and conduct only essential activities in public space
- Ensure staff and members perform personal protective measures (handwashing, masks, behaviors)
- Use KN95 masks in vehicles, surgical masks or cloth masks in the office. Buffs and bandanas are not adequate face coverings.
- Routine disinfecting of all gear, vehicles, and work spaces
- Plan for possible outbreaks and provide COVID-19 emergency evacuation procedures for every hitch.
- Plan for isolation/quarantine spaces for members
- Minimize or "distance" interactions with people outside your immediate crew "family."



## **Individual Member - COVID-19 Mitigation Tasks**

- Avoid touching your face.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom, touching surfaces in public spaces, before eating, and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains a minimum 60% alcohol.
- Sneeze or cough into your elbow.
- Members will perform daily symptoms checks at the start of each day and prior to returning to work from days off.
- Use masks when in public, when in close quarters, or in the presence of another person who is presenting symptoms. (Specific mask information found in Appendix A at the end of this document)
- Each member will have a personal tent for the entire season
- Physical distancing of at least 6 ft. whenever possible wherever you are
- When not on hitch with your crew, shelter in place in your home or in basecamp, avoiding all public spaces as much as possible except for essential service needs.

## **Training**

- All leaders will receive a specific training lesson to identify and prevent exposure. Training will highlight signs/symptoms and field observation/monitoring of COVID-19, thresholds for communication, and standards for seeking organizational assistance.
- Training groups will not exceed CDC-recommended group sizes of 25 individuals.
- Members will remain in their crew or “family unit” (4-6 people) during training sessions.
- Discussion spaces will be held outdoors when possible, when not, we will provide adequate space between individuals and proper ventilation/air flow..
- Wear masks if a specific training activity requires brief close proximity (ex. Chainsaw training)

## **MCC Members on Trails and in Public Spaces**

- Crews hiking in on public trails will step aside and allow the other hikers to come through while maintaining the 6 ft. distancing as much as possible. Where it's feasible, MCC crew members should move 6+feet when possible from the trail corridor when user traffic is approaching.
- If it's not safe to maintain 6-10 feet of separation — due to terrain or conditions:
  - Walk up or down trail to find a suitable location to ensure proper social distancing
  - If you are working on a trail that has long stretches that are unsafe to step off from, crew members should carry personal facemasks (in a sealed bag, in a pocket on their person) on the trail, and put them on when they see user traffic approaching
- If you are working on a trail with consistently heavy traffic, wear facemasks.



- MCC crews will observe physical distancing of 6 ft. apart, and use masks when entering any public building.
- MCC crew members should be prepared with masks if and when using a public restroom. Always wash hands when leaving a public space, if handwashing isn't available, hand sanitize before getting back into the rigs.

### **MCC Vehicle Use Overview**

#### **All MCC Vehicles will contain the following cleaning materials:**

- A spray bleach bottle (4 teaspoons of bleach per 1 quart of water) or other approved disinfecting product (Lysol, etc.), disposable gloves, roll of paper towels, hand sanitizer, paper bags for masks, dromedary/liquid soap for handwashing.
- The Bleach solution will be made at a minimum, once a week, on hitch and in the region.

**The following protocols are specifically designed to mitigate the risks of COVID-19 transmission while being in an enclosed space (vehicle) for regular or prolonged periods of time (travel to project site), with more than one person in the vehicle (crew).**

- Reduce the number of people in the vehicle whenever possible
- Crack windows while driving to improve airflow and ventilation
- Use two vehicles when possible (2-3 people in a rig, separated with air circulating)
- Members may request an accommodation to use a personal vehicle
- Routine cleaning/disinfecting of vehicles as needed and at the end of every hitch
- After fueling, use a hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds when you get home or somewhere with soap and water.
- Limiting travel outside of the project or resupply
- No sleeping overnight in vehicles
- Keep vehicles assigned to the same crew throughout the season.

#### **Before any member or staff rides in an MCC vehicle, do a symptom check:**

In the last few days (coming back onto hitch from days off) , have you, someone living in your household, or someone with you have been in close or frequent contact with, anyone exhibiting symptoms any cold or flu symptoms, including a fever greater than 100.4, shortness of breath, body aches and coughing?

*Any person who has been in close contact may need to stay back and isolate for 7 days.*

Do **you** currently have, or have you had within the last 24 hours, any cold or flu symptoms, including a fever greater than 100.4, shortness of breath, body aches and coughing?

*Any person who has had these symptoms or any sign of illness will need to remain in place and move to quarantine while leaders initiate COVID-19 procedures for response.*



### **Required Steps for Entering a MCC Vehicle and Vehicle Facemask Use:**

1. Assign seating when possible.
2. Each member will wear a KN95 while in the vehicle. (1 mask/hitch/member)
3. Finish loading the vehicle completely.
4. Wash hands or sanitize hands BEFORE entering vehicle\*\*\*
5. Come up with a way to store rig masks

*Follow the same sequence every time you enter the MCC vehicle (beginning of a hitch, end of the work day, travel to campsite or other location). WASHING HANDS is critical and how we physically put on and off the facemasks.*

### **Vehicle Facemask Duration of Use and Reuse:**

MCC will provide KN95 masks for use in vehicles. These masks are disposable and originally designed for limited use. Keeping KN95 masks **dry and well ventilated** is the key to limited reuse. Do not store these masks in plastic.

**Timeframes for Medical/Surgical Mask Use and ReUse:** Following the guidance of the CDC and guidance from the Nebraska Medicine Universal Mask Policy(5/52020), masks that are dry, clean and undamaged can be reused for several hours to several days.

- Wear a facemask on the first travel day and replace the mask after approximately 10 hours or three days of use.
- Replace mask if wet, soiled or damaged.

### **When Traveling in a Vehicle:**

- Limit the number of people as much as possible
- Increase ventilation by opening windows or adjusting air conditioning, keep windows open when possible. Keep windows open when not using the vehicles when possible to maintain maximum ventilation.
- Wash hands frequently while traveling, after fill-ups or other public contacts, and keep hand sanitizer available for use.
- Sit staggered and as far apart as possible in the vehicle when driving
  - Wear masks. Wash hands or sanitize before re-entering the MCC vehicle.



### **To clean a vehicle:**

- If surfaces are visibly dirty, clean soiled surfaces with a detergent or soap and water before you disinfect them.
- Use a disinfectant to clean all soft and hard surfaces:
  - Vehicle keys
  - External door handles
  - Steering wheel
  - Gear shifter
  - Radio and temperature controls
  - Seatbelts
  - Inside of the doors (handles and window controls)
  - Seats used by the driver and passenger(s)
  - Dashboard
- Remove and throw away used gloves in the trash.(see Appendix B Taking off Gloves)

### **Pre Hitch Safety Tasks (Regional Staff)**

- Identify what clinics and hospitals do and do not serve patients with COVID-19 symptoms in all project site locations. List closest non serving COVID-19 medical facility and closest facility taking COVID-19 patients on the PIS.
- Prior to departure, identify any significant challenges to compliance with MCC COVID-19 Field Protocols while traveling to a project or on project location.
- Ensure every vehicle and crew cache has the necessary disinfecting supplies for the entire hitch. Include printed copies of CDC cleaning and disinfecting guidance.
- Ensure each crew has COVID Evacuation PPE kit.
- Check with project partners and local state health departments before departure for any COVID-19 related updates, state directives (MT, ID, WY, ND, SD), or updated guidance.

### **Food Shopping**

Send the minimum number of people needed to shop. No more than two at a time.

- Stay at least 6 feet away from others while shopping and in lines.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when you have to go out in public.
- Try and shop during hours when fewer people will be present at the store (for example, early morning or late night).
- Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- After leaving the store, use hand sanitizer. When you have access to running water, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



### **Hitch/Camp Safety Procedures**

- Make a Bleach solution (4 teaspoons of bleach to 1 quart water) at the end of the hitch, for cleaning tools, gear, and any shared surfaces.
- All dishes must be soaked for 30 seconds in bleach solution (1 oz. /5 gallons, or 4 teaspoons to 1 quart water) and allowed to air dry.
  
- Label all personal dishes and eating utensils and keep in separate locations.
- Spouts of group water jugs should be disinfected at the end of hitch, or other means of water distribution should be determined. Avoid allowing your water bottle to touch the nozzle of the water filter or cubies.
- Crews should refrain from optional activities and exercise that put them in direct physical contact with one another.
- No sharing of personal food, water bottles, or utensils
- Camp locations should be chosen with discretion.

### **Responding to Illness or COVID-19 Symptoms in the Field**

- All members must disclose any illness or COVID-19 symptoms prior to starting a hitch and during your hitch.
- People with these symptoms or combinations of symptoms may have COVID-19:
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

*Or at least two of these symptoms:*

- Fever
  - Chills
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Muscle pain
  - Headache
  - Sore throat
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Fatigue
  - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
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- Any member exhibiting signs of any illness while on hitch, should alert leaders and immediately self-quarantine in place while symptoms are monitored.





- Self-Isolate the member exhibiting symptoms of fever, cough, and trouble breathing and begin monitoring symptoms for severity. **Notify regional staff immediately.**
  - **If symptoms worsen over a 24 hour period, immediately activate evacuation procedures.**
  - **If any of these emergency warning signs for COVID-19 present immediately activate 911 and emergency evacuation procedures:**
    - Trouble breathing
    - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
    - New confusion or inability to arouse/awake
    - Bluish lips or face
- Regional staff will coordinate with local health officials on recommended next steps.
- If symptoms are mild, the member can remain in the field but self-isolated for at least 7 days.
- The affected member should wear a mask at the onset of symptoms and anyone coming into close contact.
- Follow CDC guidelines for disinfecting the home, basecamp facilities, vehicle used by a person symptomatic with COVID-19 or has tested positive for COVID-19.

### **Evacuation Procedures for COVID-19 symptoms**

- Call/Contact MCC staff immediately to initiate emergency response plan
- Regional staff will work with local health officials to coordinate the response.
- Notify the project partner and keep them informed of the situation.
- If driving out is possible and appropriate, put the person in the far back of the vehicle, with some air ventilation, wearing a mask. Driver must wear a mask and gloves with windows ajar for air ventilation. (see Appendix C, PPE for Evacuation with COVID-19 Symptoms)
- Staff should provide support for remaining crew members.
- Work with local health officials to determine next steps for other crew members such as: should they return home, can remain in basecamp, proceed to testing, etc.

### **Returning to the Field After Illness or COVID-19**

Members who think or know they had COVID-19:

Can be with others after:

- 24 hours with no fever **and**
- Symptoms improved **and**
- 10 days since symptoms first appeared.

If you tested positive for COVID-19 but had **no** symptoms:

- you can be with others after 10 days have passed since test and you remain healthy

If you have been around a person with COVID-19:



What counts as [close contact](#)?

- You were within 6 feet of someone who has COVID-19 for a total of 15 minutes or more
- You provided care at home to someone who is sick with COVID-19
- You had direct physical contact with the person (hugged or kissed them)
- You shared eating or drinking utensils
- They sneezed, coughed, or somehow got respiratory droplets on you

What steps do you take?

Stay home and monitor your health

- Stay home for 14 days after your last contact with a person who has COVID-19.
- Watch for fever (100.4°F), cough, shortness of breath, or [other symptoms](#) of COVID-19
- If possible, stay away from others, especially people who are at [higher risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19

\*\*People who have tested positive for COVID-19 within the past 3 months and recovered do not have to quarantine or get tested again as long as they do not develop new symptoms. People who develop symptoms again within 3 months of their first bout of COVID-19 may need to be tested again if there is no other cause identified for their symptoms.

### Options to reduce quarantine

**Your local public health authorities make the final decisions about how long quarantine should last, based on local conditions and needs.** Follow the recommendations of your local public health department if you need to quarantine. Options they will consider include stopping quarantine

- After day 10 without testing
- After day 7 after receiving a negative test result (test must occur on day 5 or later)

After stopping quarantine, you should

- Watch for symptoms until 14 days after exposure.
- If you have symptoms, immediately self-isolate and contact your local public health authority or healthcare provider.
- Wear a mask, stay at least 6 feet from others, wash your hands, avoid crowds, and take other steps to [prevent the spread of COVID-19](#).

CDC continues to endorse quarantine for 14 days and recognizes that any quarantine shorter than 14 days balances reduced burden against a small possibility of spreading the virus.

(<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html>)



### **Guidance for Interactions with Partners, Visiting Staff, and Outfitters**

- This guidance pertains to any person that is not a crew member, coming into contact with an MCC crew during the 2020 field season, on a project site or at a camp location.
- People will be expected to adhere to strict social distancing requirements when interacting with an MCC crew. No physical contact.
- If people are eating food with a crew, they need to be self-contained: they must have their own food, the means to prepare it, and an appropriate amount of water to be self-sufficient.

### **Guidance for Basecamp residents**

- Crews may be utilizing “Basecamp” locations throughout our area of operations. Basecamps are defined as any place in which crews are taking days off. They may include campgrounds, agency administrative facilities, bunkhouses, or guard stations.
- Basecamps may serve as the crew’s “home residence” for extended periods of time during the season.
- Basecamps are secure locations in which the general public cannot access.
- Basecamp facilities are to be utilized by MCC members only unless there is an emergency or a maintenance issue that requires agency partners or MCC staff to access the facility.
- MCC members will perform routine and/or end of off-hitch disinfecting of the facility which includes: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, toilets, sinks, etc.
- MCC members will clean surfaces with bleach wipes, diluted bleach solutions, EPA-registered disinfectants, or 60% alcohol solutions.

### **Guidance for Crew Members on Days Off**

- MCC crew members will be expected to follow the guidelines established in the MCC Community Well-Being agreement during their time off.
- This includes limiting activities to essential functions such as grocery shopping, essential health care, and financial matters when home and avoid unnecessary travel.
- If for some reason personal travel is necessary you must notify your supervisor and discuss your plans, **prior** to travel.
- Members should maintain the same safety protocols at home such as disinfecting all surfaces, social distancing protocols, frequent hand washing and limiting exposure to others. Adherence to these practices will help keep both your crew and members of your home community healthy.
- Prior to returning to work, members will complete a Covid-19 Health Questionnaire form. Based on the responses to this form, members may be asked to modify their plans to go out on hitch.



## **Regional Office Maintenance**

- Routine disinfecting of work space which includes: tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, phones, keyboards, toilets, sinks, etc.
- Clean surfaces with bleach wipes, diluted bleach solutions, EPA-registered disinfectants, or 60% alcohol solutions.
- Cache - tools wiped down and disinfected before putting away, cache must be wiped down before each crew leaves in preparation for another crew: kitchen area, work tables, any tools that were used (sharpening, rehandling tools), door handles.
- Crew should limit the amount of time in office space
- No food preparation in office space.
- Attempts will be made to stagger crews and staff to minimize interaction during de-rigging and hitch prep.
- Staff work remotely when possible.
- Monitor supply levels for COVID PPE regular and resupply
- Maintain fully stocked COVID-19 PPE Evacuation Kit in regional office

## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Face Masks Information**

MCC crews will be provided with KN95 face masks for riding vehicles whenever possible. If there is a shortage, members will wear their personal cloth mask until surgical/medical face masks become available.

Members will always have a personal face mask on hand to use, whether it is a cloth, or a surgical mask. This mask will be used when in the field: such as entering public spaces, or when potentially in close proximity with another person.

*(The following section is guidance for the use and re-use of medical/surgical masks adapted from [Nebraska Medicine Guidance](#))*

#### **A brown paper bag may be used to store a face mask for use over several days**



### Additional Use Guidelines

- Never apply a facemask to a first-aid patient who is struggling to breathe
- Never apply a facemask to a first-aid patient who is unconscious
- Do not touch the interior surface of the mask (which contacts your face) and do not allow other surfaces (even the exterior surface of the mask) to make contact with the interior surface if you intend to extend use
- Avoid touching the mask while using it; if you do, clean and sanitize your hands
- Do not wear a facemask below your nose (with your nose uncovered)
- Do not “store” a facemask below your chin between uses
- Do not attempt to wear a facemask while eating or drinking (by pulling the mask aside in between bites/sips)
- Do not remove the mask until you are prepared to clean and sanitize your hands immediately afterward

### **Appendix B** *(Adopted from PNTA Field Safety Manual)*

#### **COVID-19 PPE Evacuation Kit**

Each crew will be equipped with a supplemental COVID-19 first-aid kit for attending to suspected cases of COVID-19 infection.

COVID-kit items will be in a separate sealed bag and should only be used in case a patient needs to be assessed or treated for a suspected infection.

Each MCC vehicle will be equipped with a COVID Evacuation Kit. These items will be in a separate sealed bag and should only be used in case a patient with a suspected infection is being evacuated.

#### **COVID-19 First-aid Kit**

- (1) 1-fl oz. bottle hand sanitizer
- (2) Cloth/ surgical facemasks (to be worn by patient and first-aid provider)
- (1) Goggles for first-aid provider (eye protection with full coverage and ideally has a seal around the eyes)
- (2) Pairs (LG and MED) nitrile gloves
- SOAP Note worksheet and pen/pencil (for recording and tracking patient’s symptoms)



(1) Digital thermometer, with disposable covers

(1) Travel-pack of Tylenol/ Acetaminophen

#### COVID-19 Evacuation Kit

(1) Large (30–50 gal) trash bag/s (for containing patient’s belongings)

(1) 1-fl oz. bottle hand sanitizer

(1) N95 (or other filtering) facemask to be worn by driver (Cloth/surgical mask at the least)

(1) Clear, anti-fog goggles for driver (eye protection with full coverage and ideally has a seal around the eyes)

(2) Pairs (LG and MED) nitrile gloves

#### **Appendix C**

##### **Adherence to Multi State Directives**

MCC regional staff will monitor and follow the most current directives in the states where MCC crews will serve. Be aware local health departments may have stricter requirements than the state directives.

[National Governor's Association](#)

<https://rebound.idaho.gov/stages-of-reopening/>

<https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>

<https://health.wyo.gov/publichealth/infectious-disease-epidemiology-unit/disease/novel-coronavirus/covid-19-orders-and-guidance/>

[ND Dept of Public Health Orders](#)

[South Dakota Dept of Health](#)