



Outward Bound Canada COVID 19 Field Procedures

Reviewed and approved by National Safety Committee July 22 2020

Reviewed and approved by National Medical Advisor Dr. David Wong July 30 2020

OVERVIEW:

In creating this document Outward Bound Canada has relied on information provided by the sources listed below:

- World Health Organization
- Canadian Federal Government
- Provincial Health Offices of Alberta, BC and Ontario
- Center for Disease Control - Canada

A Global Pandemic

Coronaviruses have been identified as human pathogens since the 1960s. In late 2019, a novel coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, was identified. The virus is highly infectious. There is no known vaccine, cure nor immunity. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of international concern on 30 January 2020. As of May 2020, 288 countries have confirmed COVID-19 cases, infecting nearly 5.5 million worldwide. Over 85,000 cases have been documented in Canada. In Canada and globally, challenges in virus tracing and testing suggest the actual prevalence is likely higher.

Viral Transmission

As information regarding COVID-19 continues to evolve, field protocols and guidelines must be sufficiently robust and nimble to do the same. Given the ongoing flux of the situation and the variability of environments in which we operate, a basic understanding of viral transmission is essential to ensure all members of OBC's team can make independent and appropriate judgment calls whilst adhering to organizational, provincial and federal guidelines.



Current evidence-based knowledge

- Exposure to viral droplets results in infection. Air, direct contact or fomites (i.e. contact with a virus occurs via secondary surface or fecal/oral, followed by touching one's eyes, nose or mouth) are all vectors for transmission.
- The minimal density of viral particles and amount of exposure time resulting in infection remains unknown. Infections have occurred across a spectrum of scenarios including: minimal exposure with direct contact; short exposure with high-density concentration, long exposure with minimal density concentration.
- The most effective control method is physical distancing.
- Other effect control methods: hand washing, avoiding touching face/mucosal membranes, use of protective gear.
- Symptoms vary greatly among individuals and include low fever, cough, fatigue, GI upset.
- Individuals infected with COVID-19 may transmit the virus ***without showing symptoms***
- Period of infectious communicability is considered to be about 2 days prior to onset of symptoms up to 10 days after onset of symptoms.
- Enclosed spaces with recirculating air drastically increases the probability of transmission.
- The virus can remain active on surfaces for up to 2 days. For more information, please refer to this link:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/how-long-does-coronavirus-last-on-surfaces>

Evolving National Response and its Impact on OBC

The management of COVID-19 in Canada has been a joint federal/provincial effort. Each province has independent guidelines and regulations. With provinces easing restrictions through a series of identified gradual phases, there is little clarity on what will advance (or drop) a province from one phase to the next. This is particularly concerning given the near-certainty of a "second wave". As a highly mobile national operation, OBC will need to ensure alignment not only with the evolving industry practices but all national, provincial and regional requirements for both the organization and individual team members.

Best Practices

Due to the novel emergence of this virus, no standardized industry best practices as-yet exist for COVID-19. OBC's protocols reflect current (and evolving) evidence, provincial/federal regulations and the variable easing of restrictions across all regions of operation. Given how much remains unknown, erring on the side of caution is prudent.



Pre-course Screening and Admissions

At Outward Bound Canada participant and staff safety has always been paramount. During these times of COVID- 19 safety has taken on a new level of importance.

To that end, here is an outline of what OBC is doing to ensure a safe workplace environment.

We are contacting all staff and participants prior to the course to ask:

- If they have travelled outside the country/ province of operation in the past 21 days
- If they have had any flu-like symptoms in the past 14 days [List of COVID-19 symptoms](#)
- If they have been in contact with anyone diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days

These questions are designed to assess what potential risk level presents to bringing COVID- 19 to the program. Major concerns will be addressed on an individual basis.

Those who present too great a risk will be deemed ineligible to participate or be employed at that time.

Staff and participants have also been instructed to limit socialising, practice physical distancing, use PPE when appropriate and to maintain vigilance with hand washing as per Federal and Provincial Health guidelines to limit the opportunity to contract COVID- 19 prior to their course. These will remain the baseline practices through all facets of the program.

If widespread COVID- 19 testing is available, it is strongly encouraged prior to program for staff and participants alike.



Hygiene:

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 good hygiene, specifically hand washing has been touted as the best defense against the spread and contraction of Co- vid 19. This is not a new consideration for us in our industry. With the outbreak it does put added pressure on us as leaders to ensure that this is understood, monitored and adhered too stringently by all participants and staff.

Outward Bound continues to follow the direction of International, Federal and Provincial Health Authorities that strongly emphasise the importance of frequent and effective hand washing and the use of personal masks when physical distancing is not an option.

Please find below some information and links to both of these important measures:

Non-medical face masks or face coverings should:

- allow for easy breathing
- fit securely to the head with ties or ear loops
- maintain their shape after washing and drying
- be changed as soon as possible if damp or dirty
- be comfortable and not require frequent adjustment
- be made of at least 2 layers of tightly woven material fabric (such as cotton or linen)
- be large enough to completely and comfortably cover the nose and mouth without gaping

Some masks also include a pocket to accommodate a paper towel or disposable coffee filter, for increased benefit.

[Appropriate - Medical Face Mask Construction](#)

Here is a video that describes appropriate hand washing technique:

https://youtu.be/nEzJ_QKjT14

Hand sanitizer and wet wipes should be considered a secondary means of prevention on program and support a more frequent and robust routine of hand washing. Opportunities to increase group hand washing should be explored throughout the program.

**** Hand sanitizers should be at least 60% alcohol based and wet wipes should consist of a federally approved base such as hydrogen peroxide or quaternary ammonium compounds***



2-Base Cleanliness:

A high degree of cleanliness should be a focal point for all activities within the program. A thorough cleaning of the base and all facilities should be performed by the program team prior to the first day of prep and the first day of course at the very least. The program team will continually monitor for cleanliness and clean accordingly. Cleaning supplies should be readily available. Additional signage in line with provincial health regulations should be prominently displayed where appropriate. Soap, hand sanitizer, wet wipes, paper towel should be readily available with replenishments available. Amounts should be frequently checked in kitchens and bathrooms to ensure all stations have ample supply. Program vehicles that are responsible for transporting staff and participants should be cleaned frequently and thoroughly.

Please find a list of approved cleaners here:

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

3-Program Design:

During program planning an extended stay (24-48 hours) in base camp should be considered to establish solid routines and to monitor participant health.

Logistically, the program team should consider routes that have easier access and egress and have ample opportunity to access water to ensure a higher level of hygiene and cleanliness is maintained for the group. Program days, by design, should be shorter (ie: distance travelled, curriculum) to accommodate the establishment of new routines within the group in regards to COVID-19.

Routes that require less chances of breaking physical distancing- ie: creek crossings during hiking, routes that are easily accessible to larger parts of the population, small campsites etc. should be avoided.



4-Course Prep:

**** if possible do pre- program briefing/ work outdoors***

Upon arrival to prep instructors will submit to a temperature check (***a temperature of 38C will be considered a fever***) performed by the CD/ PM / course support. CD/PM/course support will take their temperature and record it for the instructors to see upon arrival. Instructors will familiarize themselves with the thermometers by taking each other's temperature. CD's will reiterate initial screening questions with both instructors to confirm compliance. Instructors will continue to limit social interactions during program prep. Any unnecessary interactions should be avoided. i.e.: trips to the grocery store, gym, friends/ family meetings etc.

5- Participant and Program Gear:

Extra care should be taken pre-program to ensure that as much appropriate personal gear is brought to the course start by the participant. This will minimise the amount of loaned gear necessary for program.

****consider group ZOOM calls to ensure understanding of gear requirements if practical***

PFD's, paddles and backpacks will be considered individual gear and as such should only be handled by that participant. PFDs, paddles and backpacks should be easily identifiable by that individual as theirs.

OBC will provide each individual participant and staff (if necessary) a personal sleeping shelter. Shelters will vary between regions. Shelters should be set up as far apart as realistic from a safety and campsite perspective with an ideal distance between shelters being at least 2m when possible.

Outward Bound Canada will provide these additional items to the program First Aid Kit:

- Disposable medical masks- enough for patient and rescuer(s) to change out every 8-12 hours – approximately 6-10 masks
- CPR mask
- Hand sanitizer

Course Support will continue with the practice of pulling gear and setting it aside for program use to limit the handling of gear in general stores. This should include paperwork. Access to general stores should be limited to the CD. Gloves should be worn by the CD when handling gear in general stores.



Post program gear cleanliness should be of high priority and monitored closely. If possible, isolate gear for 3 days post program before returning to the field or general stores. Participants that are involved in cleaning should wear masks while doing so.

****Any gear that was pulled for the program and found inadequate or not needed should be set aside and either cleaned thoroughly or isolated for 3 days before being returned to general stores.***

6-Program Food:

Proper hand washing and masks should be used when packing food to go into the field and when involved in preparing meals in the field. All program food once onsite should be cleaned as appropriate. Food packaging should be wiped off with a mild detergent/water solution. Vegetables should be rinsed in warm water **or** a solution of 1 part white vinegar to 4 parts water 1 tbsp. lemon juice can be used as a veggie wash.

Water should be treated with hard tablets such as Aqua Tabs **or** participants should be issued a personal supply of liquid water treatment for the duration of program such as Pristine to avoid contamination during treatment.

Outward Bound Canada has adjusted to meal cooking styles that

- emphasizes the importance of hygiene pre and post meal
- limits personnel in the kitchen and
- reduces touch points on commonly used group items during meal times utensils/condiments etc...

****Consider pre making lunch on trail during breakfast to limit the need to unpack and handle food multiple times***



7-Transportation:

Participants will be instructed to wear non- medical face masks during all group transportation events.

Transportation for your particular program should be discussed as per normal during prep. During this discussion these points should be considered and outlined to the transportation provider if applicable:

- Outward Bound will work with transportation providers to operate at 50% vehicle capacity to ensure physical distancing is practiced during transit.
- Outward Bound will work with transportation providers to refrain from using recirculated air during transportation of participants
- Outward Bound will work with transportation providers to provide more frequent breaks during transportation to and from due to excessive mask use in the vehicle.
- Outward Bound will work with Transportation Providers to provide a high level of cleanliness to all vehicles required for group transportation
- All Outward Bound vehicles should be cleaned frequently and thoroughly with an approved disinfectant cleaner. Please find a list of approved cleaners here:
<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>
- The group should remain self contained and avoid unnecessary interaction with the public
- Consider using remote or low travel stops to limit exposure from external factors.

[Federal Regulations for Commercial Passenger carriers](#)

[Best Practices for Commercial Passenger Carriers in BC](#)

On the first day of program the OBC Instructional Team with PPE (gloves and non medical masks) will meet individuals/ groups with 2 infrared thermometers at the prescribed pick up points or the course start location.



OUTWARD BOUND CANADA

Instructors will take a temperature check of every participant upon meeting them. A participant whose temperature is not within an acceptable range (***a temperature of 38C or higher will be considered a fever***) will be diverted from the group and their temperature will be re- taken in 30 minutes.

If their temperature exceeds the allowable range on the second temperature check their permanent removal from the program will be discussed at that time with the PM/ RD.

Medical Screening Questions will be clearly stated upon arrival by the OBC team on an individual basis confidentially. Any concerning answers will be addressed with the PM/ RD and an assessment of the participants suitability to engage in the program will be discussed immediately. Until this is determined the participant in question should be isolated from the group. The OBC team will have on hand a cleaning station of consisting of wet wipes and hand sanitizer. Hand sanitizer and wet wipes will be of an alcohol based solution.

Hand sanitizers should be at least 60% alcohol based and wet wipes should be at least 40%

Students that are cleared through temperature check will be required to wash hands thoroughly with hand sanitizer under supervision of the instructors then passed a wet wipe for wiping down handles seat belts etc.

Potential Transportation Scenarios:

Participant Self-Drive

Participants that are able to will be encouraged to arrive at the course start location in their own vehicle. The participant will then undergo the above health check prior to being admitted into the course.

Family Drop off

Families of participants will be encouraged to drive their son/ daughter to the course start location. In the event of this, the same health check protocol outlined above will take place. Parents/ Drivers will be instructed to adhere to physical distancing having only the participant enter a 2m radius with the OBC team.

Established Group Arrival

In the case of a group arriving together- (ie: CWF)- temperature checks and hand washing will take place in a controlled individual way upon their arrival to the course start location as outlined above. The remainder of the group will remain a safe distance away from the OBC team until such time that all participants are medically cleared to participate by OBC.



8-Participants Arrival on site/ CD Talk

CO-MANAGEMENT OF COVID 19 RISK

The responsibility for co-managing the spread of COVID-19 should be shared with all course participants. All protocols are to be clearly communicated and demonstrated to course participants. Everyone should understand their personal roles and responsibilities in reducing the potential spread of the virus. Additionally, all participants must also understand that continued delivery of courses is contingent on following all established protocols.

CD's will emphasize that frequent hand washing, physical distancing and appropriate precautions such as sneezing into the elbow, covering your mouth when coughing are considered effective management techniques. CD's will bring to the participant's attention signage that encourages hand washing- locations of hand washing stations etc. CD's will address the necessity to alert instructors if there is a change in their personal health Co- Vid 19 related or not. CD's will emphasize the use of PPE during times in the program where physical distancing is not achievable and that there will be times on program that PPE will be mandatory. (i.e. transportation)



9-Duffle Shuffle

Instructors should be coached to be hands off during duffle shuffle. They should front load with participants that this is an individual activity and as much as possible avoid helping. If help in packing is needed instructors will assist after washing their hands thoroughly and with face masks in place.

Participants will be instructed by Admissions to bring their own cup, bowl, spoon and water bottle for their personal use during program intake. These items should be easily identifiable by the participant to limit confusion and unnecessary handling and have a mesh bag or stuff sack to place them in when not in use.

Participants will be need at minimum 2-3 personal masks for use on program. OBC will provide an appropriate means to carry these masks that keeps them clean, dry and accessible.

Participants will be instructed to bring personal bottles of sunscreen, insect repellent, toothpaste, hand sanitizer and liquid soap to alleviate sharing. OBC will be prepared to provide these to participants if they do not have them. In addition to the above items OBC will provide toilet paper, a pair of medical gloves and a stuff sack to participants to keep these items individualised and organised.

Extra stuff sacks should either be brought by the participants or provided by OBC to assist in keeping personal items as separate as possible.



10- On Trail Considerations

Instructors will always look for opportunities in programs where the use of physical distancing can be employed as an effective means of preventing the transmission of COVID-19. This includes traditional Outward Bound routines such as “circling up” before meals.

Having a group hike 2 meters apart from each other or “raft up” at an acceptable distance from other boats on the water should become common practice when safe and prudent.

During times that it is not possible staff and participants will have personal masks ready and available to use. Instructors should be prepared to give direction to the group as to the appropriate time for the use of masks and ensure that participants have their masks ready to be used. They should also be prepared to enforce the use of masks.

The delineation of mandatory PPE zones in the field will be utilized to encourage safe socialization when physical distancing is not possible. These PPE mandatory zones should include, but are not limited to:

- the kitchen area during food prep and clean up
- group socialization “around the fire”

All programs will bring a spray bottle of cleaner with rags and brushes to facilitate cleaning of these items when realistic. A wet wipe can be used when a spray bottle and rag is not realistic. (i.e. hiking trips)

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.html>

Instructors will document personal and group health notes of all staff and participants in the Program Log Book. **Temperature checks will be taken and recorded twice daily** - once in the morning and once in the evening.



11-Evacuation Protocols:

OBC will in general have a lower threshold for evacuation for those that present COVID-19 like symptoms during their course. [List of COVID-19 symptoms](#)

In the event that a participant presents with COVID-19 like symptoms that participant will be isolated from the group and instructors will call program support immediately to discuss the situation.

In conjunction with OBC's medical adviser a determination of the suitability of that participant to continue will be determined.

If a participant evacuation is necessary all efforts will be made to internally facilitate that evacuation with as little external resources as possible.