

COVID-19 Operating Procedures

Date Approved: July 30, 2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic has progressed, the FTA board, staff, and our U.S. Forest Service partners have been closely monitoring conditions in Florida, and working together to provide operating procedures that keep our members, staff, volunteers, partners and the public safe. The FTA board has voted to approve the following until further notice, and rescind the previous May 14 procedure:

FTA Functions and Activities:

FTA functions and activities at the state or chapter levels can resume, as long as they are conducted in accordance with this procedure, as well as applicable local, state and federal requirements and guidelines. The overall goal is to minimize all participants' possible exposure to the virus. By signing the FTA Assumption of Risk form, you will be acknowledging that you have reviewed the COVID-19 Operating Procedures and you will comply with them, and that you will follow the instructions of the persons in charge (Activity Leader, Trail Crew Leader, etc.).

Note that it is always acceptable for an individual to decide that they do not wish to participate, after reviewing the potential risks for severe illness associated with the COVID-19 virus (see the CDC and FL Dept. of Health reference links provided below) against their personal and family situation.

FTA Trail Construction and Maintenance Activities on the FNST

- All work associated with trail maintenance is to be accomplished in accordance with the USFS Job Hazard Analysis (JHA), Work Project/Activity COVID-19, most current version, FTA Trail Manual, as well as all other applicable FTA and USFS trail maintenance procedures.
- The trail sections to be worked must be open and accessible for maintenance activities per the appropriate land management agency.
- Forest Service liability coverage for trail maintainers now resumes as long as all work is in accordance with the requirements defined in the USFS JHA's.
- If you have any questions or needs, please contact your Chapter Trail Coordinator or our FTA Regional Trail Managers:
 - Jenna Taylor (Central and South Florida): jennat@floridatrail.org
 - Jeff Glenn (North Florida): jeffg@floridatrail.org
 - Adam Fryska (Panhandle): adamf@floridatrail.org

FTA Functions and Activities, other than FNST trail work (office, outdoor, outreach, meetings, FTS trail work, etc.)

Participation:

- The venue for holding the function or activity must be open with their rules and regulations in support of conducting the event. The activity must also be conducted in compliance with the

- venue's rules and regulations even if they are more stringent than the FTA Operating Procedure.
- The local and state governments are providing re-opening guidance concerning avoiding groups larger than a certain size, to minimize the potential for close contact and violating the social distancing requirement. The participation number at the present time is established per the state guidelines for opening up Florida, Phase 2, which states that all persons in Florida are encouraged to avoid congregating in groups larger than 50, however there are currently local exceptions in Miami-Dade, Broward, and Palm Beach counties where the group size is limited to 10. The phase and numbers can change, the leader needs to review the local and state agencies to ensure that compliance with guidance is maintained.
 - The venue where the function or activity is being conducted greatly influences the ability to ensure that close contact can be avoided.
 - The leader(s) conducting each specific event must evaluate all aspects to ensure that the procedure and guidelines can be complied with in a safe manner, and may determine that the participation numbers must be less than the above values. The leader(s) also may determine alternative ways of conducting the activity to reduce the risks of violating social distancing; an example of this would be breaking a hike with 20 participants (if allowable in the specific locality) into two separate 10 participant hikes with a staggered start.
 - Do not attend or participate in any in-person FTA functions or activities, if you meet any of the following conditions:
 - You have tested positive for COVID-19 virus, and have not been cleared by your physician to re-join these types of public activities.
 - You knowingly have been exposed to a person infected with the COVID-19 virus.
 - You have or have had any of the potential COVID-19 virus symptoms listed below in the 14 days prior to the in-person function or activity.
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Chills
 - Repeated shaking or chills
 - Muscle or body aches
 - Headache
 - Sore Throat
 - New loss of taste or smell
 - Congestion or runny nose
 - Nausea or vomiting
 - Diarrhea
 - You have evaluated the current situation associated with the COVID-19 virus in your locality, have evaluated your risk profile for severe illness based on known information (see the CDC and the FL Dept. of Health links provided below), and have determined that you would rather defer on the function or activity until the COVID-19 virus situation improves.

CRITICAL – IF YOU TEST POSITIVE TO COVID-19 OR ARE HAVING ANY OF THE ABOVE SYMPTOMS AFTER HAVING PARTICIPATED IN ANY RECENT FUNCTION, ACTIVITY, OR HAVE BEEN IN CONTACT WITH FTA PERSONNEL,

EQUIPMENT OR MATERIALS, NOTIFY THE APPROPRIATE CONTACT PERSONS (FTA or CHAPTER LEADERSHIP) IMMEDIATELY AND INFORM THEM OF THE SITUATION SO THAT THEY CAN EVALUATE AND DETERMINE IF OTHER INDIVIDUALS MAY BE AT RISK.

Safety Precautions and Measures to Reduce / Mitigate Risk during the Functions or Activities:

- Practice social distancing to the maximum extent practicable (a minimum of a six feet distance between each individual) throughout the function or activity.
- Avoid close contact with non-household members, those who show any symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, including those people who you encounter or interface with during the function or activity, either outdoors or indoors, as much as practicable.
- Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, after having been in a public place, blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing, having handled equipment owned by others, etc. If soap and water are not available, disinfect your hands using hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol).
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing using the inside of your elbow or a tissue. Dispose of the tissues properly and promptly in the trash.
- Avoid using / sharing / contacting other person's equipment or materials to the extent practical. If it is necessary, the user should clean and disinfect the item prior to and after use, as well as their own hands.
- Avoid sharing drinks or food with others.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wear a disposable mask or other cloth face covering for source control during the function or activity whenever there is a significant possibility that the social distancing cannot be maintained. Typical examples during an activity would be during the pre-activity sign-in and group briefing. Each participant is expected to bring their own mask or face covering. For additional information on masks and the proper method of use, go to the listed references. (Note that CDC does not recommend use of face shields for normal everyday activities or as a substitute for cloth face coverings for source control.)
- Wear protective gloves while handling other people's gear unless you wipe down the surfaces prior to being touched with a disinfectant.
- When cleaning or disinfecting item or equipment surfaces, ensure adequate ventilation and comply with all product safety instructions. Also depending on the cleaning agent and methodology being used, personal protective equipment such as eye protection, protective gloves and clothing may be required.
- Utilize video conferencing and group calls whenever practicable to reduce the personal interactions.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE):

- Cloth Face Coverings / Disposable Masks – Recommendations for these face coverings:
 - Fit snugly but comfortably against the side of the face.
 - Be secured with ties or ear loops.
 - Include multiple layers of fabric.
 - Allow breathing without restriction.
 - Able to be laundered and machine dried without damage or change of shape.
- Hand Sanitizer – Must contain at least 60% alcohol.

- Safety Glasses / Plastic Face Shields – In addition to normal eye protection function, they can protect against potential airborne virus as well as splatter during cleaning operations.
- Protective Gloves and Clothing –
 - Nitrile gloves
 - After removing gloves, wash hands.
 - Exercise care when removing to ensure against contamination of user and area.
 - Note that if someone is injured on the activity and you need to administer first aid, you should wear gloves while contacting patient.
- Disinfectant Cleaner Products – Most cleaning products will be effective in disinfecting against the virus, for additional information go to the CDC or Florida Health Department links.
- First Aid Kit – Ensure that the group first aid kit contains at least two sets of nitrile protective gloves and face masks/face coverings, and hand sanitizer to address emergency issues that may arise during the activity.

Food, Snacks and Beverages Preparation, Handling and Serving:

- The safest method for minimizing transfer risks is to only consume drinks and food that you personally bring to the event.
- If there is to be any type of group preparation or distribution of drinks and food during the event, the following should be employed to minimize the risks:
 - All persons involved in the food preparation, cooking and serving must wash their hands properly by either soap and water or if not available hand sanitizer, prior to any involvement and then frequently during.
 - Ensure that all surfaces and equipment used in food preparation, cooking and serving are cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
 - Minimize the number of persons preparing, cooking, serving, or in close contact with food and equipment as much as practicable, and these persons should be employing the appropriate PPE.
 - Do not employ self-service or buffet style food distribution, have a dedicated person wearing gloves to plate food, as well as other appropriate PPE.
 - Do not employ a common cooler where participants take their drinks, have a dedicated person wearing gloves to provide drinks.
- At the headquarters, the kitchen will only be used for individual person food and drink preparation, and that person is responsible for washing dishes and cleaning up afterwards. Note that only single use towels will be utilized.

Traveling to and from Function or Activity:

- Avoid close contact with non-household members, those who show any symptoms or have tested positive for COVID-19, including those people who you encounter or interface with during travel to the function or activity, as much as practicable.
- Reduce carpooling or ride sharing as a means of practicing social distancing.
- When sharing vehicles with non-household members, maximize separation as much as possible, open windows to allow fresh air flow and circulation, and each person should wear a mask/facial covering.
- Clean and disinfect frequently-touched surfaces of the vehicle after use.

Office Work:

- Wear a disposable mask or other face covering during the function or activity whenever there is a significant risk of violating social distancing requirements.
- Do not share workspace.
- Utilize video conferencing and group calls if practicable to reduce the personal interactions.
- Avoid crowded offices and workspaces to extent practicable.
- Ensure adequate ventilation based on the cleaners and disinfectants being used.
- Wash and disinfect work surfaces and frequently touched surfaces.

References and Additional Information:

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) at: www.cdc.gov
- The World Health Organization (WHO) at:
<http://www.who.int/influenza/preparedness/pandemic/en>.
- The Florida Trail Association website: www.floridatrail.org
- The Florida Department of Health: <https://floridahealthcovid19.gov/>