

## Protocols for Clients Regarding Training during COVID-19

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory illness caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. SARS-CoV-2 was first identified during an investigation into an outbreak in Wuhan, China. The disease is primarily spread between people who are in close (approx. 6 feet) contact, through respiratory droplets when an infected person coughs or sneezes. It also may be possible, although much less likely, that a person can contract COVID-19 by touching a surface or object contaminated with SARS-CoV-2 and then touching their own mouth, nose, or possibly their eyes (fomite transmission). The [CDC COVID-19 Information Homepage](#) is an important source of the latest information.

Vestals Gap Ventures has been paying close attention to the Coronavirus pandemic to keep you, our valued clients, as up to date as possible on how to operate during this unprecedented time. We have consulted with industry professionals, equipment manufacturers, the ACCT, and other knowledgeable sources. Much has changed since the pandemic began, and will continue to change as more information about the virus becomes known. Throughout 2020, we published numerous documents covering our recommendations on a variety of operational topics. While much of that information is still applicable, we think there is some basic information that applies to virtually all courses.

1. **SOCIAL DISTANCING-** EVERYONE should practice social distancing whenever possible. This means staying at least 6 feet away from other people. Closer distances can aid in the ability for respiratory droplet transmission between individuals.
2. **MASKS-** Cloth face coverings should be worn whenever a six-foot distance cannot be maintained. These must completely cover the nose and mouth to be effective. They are also recommended when indoors with other people, even if social distancing can be achieved.
3. **RESPIRATORY ETIQUETTE-** This includes covering coughs and sneezes with tissues. Tissues should be disposed of promptly. If no tissues are available, people should cough or sneeze into their elbow or shoulder.
4. **HAND WASHING-** EVERYONE should wash their hands frequently. This includes before and after participating in **each** activity; before and after breaks; before and after meals and snacks; before touching eyes, nose, or mouth; after coughing/sneezing/blowing your nose; after handling garbage; after touching objects handled by other people; and after using the bathroom. If soap and water is not available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol should be used. Hand sanitizer is not as effective as proper hand washing with soap and water.
5. **LOCATION-** As much as possible, interactions with others should take place outdoors. The virus is much less transmissible outdoors. If any interaction will take place indoors, increase ventilation by opening windows, doors, and turning on fans (if available). Consider relocating indoor check in, sales, and other customer service interactions outside if possible. For indoor facilities, reduce your capacity to allow for proper distancing.
6. **COVID SCREENING-** This is an important step to reduce the likelihood of exposure to SARS-CoV-2. Proper screening can help protect your staff, participants, and anyone else around. Note that COVID screening is in addition to the normal participant screening that should take place for all challenge course participants. Depending on your operation, screening may have to take place a few days prior to the arrival of participants in addition to upon arrival. Engage the client to help with screening as much as possible. For instance, requiring the client to do temperature checks before arrival can save a lot of time. More detail about screening is provided below.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES

### Screening Staff for COVID-19

Your staff should undergo screening prior to the training, and each day if it is a multi-day training. They should stay at home if not feeling well or be sent home if they are sick. Implementing additional screening will reduce the possibility of disease transmission. Screening can include verbal or written questions, visual observation of cold or flu-like symptoms, and/or temperature taking. Be advised that these can change frequently as new information becomes known. If any staff member tests positive for SARS-CoV-2/ COVID-19 within 14 days of the training, they should let you know

and follow care procedures laid out by the CDC and their health care provider. Follow the [CDC What to Do if you are Sick](#) recommendations. The following questions and symptom lists are based on the [CDC Symptoms of Coronavirus](#) page and are accurate as of the date this document was updated.

### **Questions to Ask**

- Are you feeling healthy and well today?
- Have you tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Have you been in close contact with a person known to have tested positive for COVID-19 within the last 14 days?
- Have you recently traveled or been in known contact with anyone who recently traveled to: Brazil, China, Iran, Most European countries, United Kingdom, or Ireland? In the United States, check the [CDC COVID-19 Data Tracker](#) for the latest information on hot spots.
- Have you recently experienced any of the following symptoms of COVID-19? NOTE: This list is not all possible symptoms. It is also possible to experience no symptoms at all (asymptomatic cases).
  - Cough
  - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
  - Fever of **100.4°F/38.0°C or above**
  - Chills
  - Fatigue
  - Muscle or body aches
  - Headache
  - New loss of taste or smell
  - Sore throat
  - Congestion or runny nose
  - Nausea or vomiting
  - Diarrhea
- Have you recently experienced any of the following Emergency Warning Signs? **If yes, call 911 or your local emergency facility, and notify the operator that you are seeking care for someone who has or may have COVID-19.**
  - Trouble breathing
  - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
  - New confusion
  - Inability to wake or stay awake
  - Bluish face or lips

### **POLICIES AND PROTOCOLS**

We encourage our clients to come up with their own Emergency Action Procedures for COVID-19. The CDC has published [Guidance for Employers](#). Prior to the start of training, your staff should be familiar with these procedures for COVID-19. They should have time to go over preventative practices such as hand washing, covering coughs/sneezes, and where to go if they feel sick or display symptoms. In addition to cloth face coverings, the use of other personal protective equipment (PPE) may be prudent in certain situations. PPE can include gloves, eye protection, and other items. You should create policies regarding the use (or non-use) of PPE based on your current state and/or local guidance.

### **BEFORE THE TRAINING**

You will have to determine if parts of your facility should be cleaned. Staff will need adequate time to accomplish this if any cleaning is to take place. Reference the CDC [cleaning and disinfection guidelines](#). High-contact areas can include, and are not limited to:

- Greeting/check-in areas, retail spaces, Point-of-Sale (POS) Systems
- Briefing, gear-up, and orientation areas
- Shared items like tables, chairs, doorknobs, light switches, pens, devices, railings, etc.
- Accommodations, conference rooms, and classrooms
- Food preparation and service areas
- Bathroom facilities
- Vehicle interior, switches, knobs, door handles, etc.
- Challenge course components like staples, handlines, climbing holds, etc.

Keep in mind that it is better to have enough materials for each person to avoid sharing items, if possible. If any challenge course equipment should be cleaned for the training, use the VGV [COVID 19 EAP VGV Cleaning Life Safety Equipment](#) for guidance on how to do so. The items you decide to clean, and the frequency the cleaning takes place, can be affected by many factors. Location (indoor vs. outdoor), amount of time since last use, and participant volume will play a large role in determining cleaning decisions.

## THROUGHOUT THE TRAINING

Please have hand washing facilities, hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, tissues, trash bags, gloves, masks, and other materials available. A hand washing facility includes running water and hand soap. We realize that it may not be possible to have a hand washing facility close to your course. If soap and water is not available hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol should be available. **Assume that the virus is on your hands all the time and adjust your behavior accordingly.** Hand sanitizer is not a replacement for proper hand washing with soap and water. Depending on the layout of your site, it may help to put up signs, barriers for foot traffic, flagging tape, or other indicators to make sure that the training area is closed off to any person not directly involved in the training.

Please be aware that some skills and elements might be simulated or not physically trained in order to limit exposure. The trainer will have to design the training based on the specific procedures taken at your site.

## AT THE END OF THE TRAINING

Please contact our office as soon as possible if a trainee or other staff person tests positive for SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 after the training. Determine if any areas of the facility or equipment should be cleaned as discussed above.

These preventative procedures should be adhered to until the spread of COVID-19 is contained, whether you are open to the public or not. These are good steps to follow to reduce the risk of infection but they are not a solution! Please check in frequently with local and national public health authorities, the CDC website, and reputable news sources for updates and procedural changes.

## IMPORTANT DEFINITIONS

**Cleaning** removes visible dirt, debris, and germs from surfaces. You can use soap and water to clean surfaces. Cleaning doesn't kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of infection. It is suggested to clean surfaces before disinfecting them. According to the CDC, "Normal routine cleaning with soap and water will decrease how much of the virus is on surfaces and objects, which reduces the risk of exposure."

**Disinfecting** kills microscopic organisms (germs) on surfaces. Disinfectant chemicals are stronger than soap, although they do not necessarily clean visibly dirty surfaces or remove germs. Killing germs after cleaning a surface can lower the risk of infection. To properly disinfect, products need to remain on a surface for a specific amount of time, usually 3-5 minutes.

**Sanitizing** reduces the number of bacteria on a surface. It does not affect viruses or fungi, and does not remove dirt or debris. Sanitizing a surface is more effective than cleaning, and less effective than disinfecting.

**Germs-** disease-causing organisms that includes viruses and bacteria (microscopic, single-cell organisms)

**Viruses-** infectious particles that can only replicate within a host organism.

## LIST OF RESOURCES

[See our separate COVID Resources Document](#)