

TRR Protocols for Paddling Events with respect to Covid

As vaccine usage increases across the country and more activities open up we are looking forward to more paddling. We are trying to “get to yes” and to get on the water and offer increased paddling opportunities for our veterans. There are many opinions on how to do this. TRRN staff and board members have opinions as well, however we are not experts, and are endeavoring to follow those with more knowledge, primarily the CDC. The CDC updates periodically and we attempt to follow suit.

Within any organization - business, government or nonprofit, there are conforming standards we may not agree with but they must exist to prevent chaos and should be followed. We ask that our regional and chapter coordinators as well as trip leaders follow as best possible the below protocols. Hopefully this document will give guidance and alleviate confusion on how best to conduct TRR events.

The most recent CDC guidance states (in brief) that vaccinated individuals do not need to wear a mask outside, or inside, with other vaccinated individuals.

TRR activities will follow the next guidelines:

- If a volunteer or veteran is vaccinated, they do not need to wear a mask at a TRR paddling session
- Any volunteer or veteran who has not had a vaccination must wear a mask until on the water and safely distant
- For TRR overnight programs; all participants will be required to either have a vaccination or a negative test. No exceptions to this requirement.

Please carefully read the following as we attempt to structure a safe paddling environment for all.

Assumptions and Statements

1. TRR protocols are in place to protect our veteran participants and volunteers.
2. TRR protocols can not cover all situations and guarantee the safety for participants and volunteers. Waivers acknowledging this should be signed and for the interim for each event separately. This will serve as a reminder that we are not out of the woods.
3. Participating with TRR is an opportunity for fun and growth. It is a privilege to participate, not a right. If individuals feel the protocols intrude on their beliefs, they have the right to not participate.

4. TRR paddling events may be planned and held, in accordance with local ordinances at this date (15May2021) but TRRN reserves the right at any time to stop any local, regional, national TRR event. Any event still held when asked not to, or not under the TRR protocols, can result in the chapter and participants being removed from the organization.
5. TRR chapters should recognize that unsafe activities could negatively impact the organization as a whole and our ability to help many veterans.
6. The CDC currently states that vaccinated individuals should have a high probability of protection from covid symptoms but there have been cases of individuals vaccinated who have fallen sick post vaccination. It is also unclear 100%, if vaccinated individuals can or cannot transmit the disease. **All participants and volunteers should assume some personal responsibility in determining the safety of attending TRR events.**
7. Chapter coordinators and event leaders will attempt to screen all attending individuals for covid infections, and by having attendees acknowledge that they do not have symptoms or have not knowingly been around covid infected individuals. This is a two way process where both the event leader and the participant arrive at the conclusion that the individual is well. If a disagreement unfolds about the health of an attendee, the event leader has the right and backing of TRRN to ask that individual to not participate that day. Healthcare workers are exempt from this assuming that they utilized personal protective equipment in the performance of their employment.
8. TRR event leaders are allowed to ask individuals if they have been vaccinated with the sole purpose of identifying individuals for activities, lodging and transportation.
9. TRR event leaders and attendees should refrain from sharing personal thoughts, beliefs on the use of vaccinations, and mask use just as we do refrain from sharing personal views of politics, religion, race issue or sex. All questioning during screening should be conducted in a respectful and non threatening manner.
10. **Attendees(at this point) are not required to have vaccines but are highly encouraged. Trip leaders may not mandate the requirement to have a vaccine to participate.**
11. Regional, national and multi day trip events leaders will be provided a covid test from TRR national and participants not vaccinated will be required to take the test. Those that test positive will not be allowed to participate. Those individuals that will not state whether they have had the vaccine or will not agree to having the test, should not be allowed to participate.

12. Regional, national, multi day trip leaders and local outings may as part of the screening utilize a thermometer but if one is not available, that is not a mandatory requirement to hold the event.
13. Spacing, and sanitation are always encouraged. **Masks are required only for those participants who are not vaccinated.**
14. Teaching in close instruction such as rolling and or games such as kayak football can be assumed safe if all individuals are vaccinated or a negative covid test has been completed.
15. Group activities within a pool are allowed but should assume a higher risk due to air being less circulated. Chapter coordinators are encouraged at this date, with warming weather to hold most activities outdoors but if pool activities are held, consideration should be given to limiting participant participation to size adequate to ensure some spacing in pools.
16. Setting shuttle and handing out equipment may offer the highest potential to transition of any communicable disease, so safe guards should be considered such as having individuals not vaccinated ride separate from others, and not be the ones issuing equipment, handing out food or doing any in close instruction.
17. TRR will make all efforts to lodge vaccinated individuals together. Individuals who have not been vaccinated may be lodged separately to both protect them and others.

We greatly appreciate all our volunteers for their work and efforts to keep this program alive during this difficult time. Thank you. Our work is not done and we need to continue to evolve our protocols to “getting to yes” as this disease hopefully decreases in activity. But like the flu, it may linger and we will have to be on guard to take safe measures, while still offering paddling opportunities to those who have served and still serving.

We are fortunate to have a healthy outdoor activity we can all share, paddling. There are many adaptive programs who are still not doing direct programming. The Veterans Administration is NOT holding in person multi day programs this year. We want to ensure the health of our entire program, and the potential of falling back to the restrictions of 2020 is something we hope will not occur...so...make good decisions for all of the TRR national family