

## GUIDELINES FOR THE PUBLIC

Time spent outside provides many benefits. We encourage outdoor recreation as a good way to stay healthy, reduce stress, and enjoy time with friends and family. However, it is essential to follow the guidelines from the Minnesota Department of Health (see [Protecting Yourself and Your Family](#) and [Strategies to Slow the Spread](#)) and the Centers for Disease Control (see [Visiting Parks and Recreational Facilities](#)) and observe the following practices while recreating outdoors to protect yourself and others and slow the spread of COVID-19:



### General Considerations

1. Consistent with state and federal guidance to limit the spread of COVID-19 and protect our neighbors, EO 20-63 discourages Minnesotans from unnecessary travel. If travel is necessary to engage in authorized outdoor recreation, the following will help you minimize potential points of virus transmission:
  - Travel as directly to your destination as possible and minimize stops along the way.
  - Attempt to bring all needed supplies with you.
  - If you do need to stop for gas or supplies, wear a manufactured or homemade cloth face covering.
  - Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer after touching common surfaces (gas pumps, door handles, shared bathrooms, etc.).
  - Do not travel if sick.
2. Explore the range of nearby public lands available to you. If you arrive at a park, water access site, or other public recreation land and see that it is busy, choose a different option. This will allow you to maintain social distancing and reduce impacts on staff and resources. Also, consider visiting at off-peak times, such as mid-week, or early or late in the day on a weekend.
3. If you rent recreational equipment – such as a canoe or bicycle – consider bringing your own protective gear like lifejackets and helmets.
4. Exercise caution regarding contact with shared amenities like playground equipment, picnic tables, and benches. Assume such equipment has not been sanitized. Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer if you do come into contact with shared amenities.
5. Respect signs limiting access or providing temporary direction regarding trail or site usage.
6. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not readily available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Cover all surfaces of your hands and rub them together until they feel dry. Do not touch your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
7. Anyone with symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (including fever, cough, or difficulty breathing) should stay home and not engage in outdoor activities. For more information see [CDC’s What to Do If You Are Sick](#) and the [State of Minnesota’s Self-Screening Tool](#).
8. Wear a manufactured or homemade cloth face covering when you leave your home and travel to any public setting where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, and follow face covering guidelines issued by MDH ([MDH Guidance on When to Wear a Mask](#)) and the CDC. Note that cloth face coverings may help protect others from your respiratory droplets but are NOT a replacement for social distancing. Social distancing must be observed even if face coverings are in use.
9. Know the latest information about what facilities are open. For DNR-managed parks and lands, consult the [DNR website](#) or call the DNR information center (651-296-6157 or 888-MINNDNR (888-646-6367)).
10. Please note that while outdoor activities consistent with EO 20-63 and these guidelines are allowed, EO 20-63 does not require associated outdoor recreation facilities to open, nor does it restrict the ability for local authorities to limit activities or close facilities within their purview. Before visiting an outdoor recreational facility, be sure to check with the owner/operator to confirm it is open and your intended activity is allowed.

## Social Distancing while Recreating Outdoors

1. Practice social distancing (stay at least 6 feet from people from other households). This isn't just for parks and trails – it is also essential at boat launches, fishing piers, and hunting lands, and anytime you leave your home.
2. “Household” means all the people living in the same home or residence, including a shared rental unit or other similar living space.
3. If it is not possible to maintain social distancing throughout an activity – such as while playing recreational/pick-up basketball or volleyball where participants are often in close proximity – then you should only participate in that activity with members of your household. Please note that organized youth and adult sports/athletics are not addressed in these guidelines.
4. Keep in mind that even activities and sports that are typically thought of as non-contact – such as doubles tennis or pickleball – may require modification to follow social distancing practices.
5. Do not carpool to outdoor recreational activities with people other than those in your household. Similarly, only use equipment that is sanitized between uses and maintain social distancing when around people from outside of your household.
6. Avoid congregating in common areas like trailheads, parking areas, overlooks, fishing piers, boat launches or fueling stations.

## Events and Gatherings

1. Only engage in tournaments, leagues, competitions or practices that:
  - Allow participants to maintain social distancing throughout the event,
  - Do not involve gathering of groups of more than 25 people,
  - Use either a staggered start or multiple points of departure and return so that participants do not congregate before, during, or after the event, and
  - Do not include spectators.

The following examples are provided for illustrative purposes only. This is not an exhaustive list and activities may be subject to local restrictions and/or facility availability:

- A fishing league with individual (or paired, with social distancing) anglers but no single point of lake access, in-person group rules meeting, weigh-in or awards ceremony.
  - A golf tournament with staggered tee times, single-household cart use, and a virtual (rather than in-person) awards ceremony.
  - A bicycle race with staggered start times (so competitors remain socially distanced on the course), no group hydration stations, and no spectators.
  - Staggered practice sessions on a racetrack that ensure social distancing and avoid participants congregating before or after their session.
2. Do not host or attend gatherings of more than 10 people unless they are members of your household. This includes gatherings like outdoor cookouts or barbecues, because those types of gatherings could spread COVID-19.

## Boating

1. When enjoying recreational boating:
  - Consider boating only with those in your household.
  - If you boat with people not from your household, limit passengers to one or two to maintain a minimum six-foot distance between people from different households, recognizing that vessel size and design affects capacity.
  - Maintain a minimum of six-foot separation between boats. Beaching or rafting with other boats is not allowed.
  - When launching/loading your boat, give those ahead of you plenty of time and space to finish launching or loading before you approach.
  - Be aware that conditions at water access sites may differ from those encountered in previous years. While DNR-managed accesses are open, some public and private access sites may not be.



## Camping

2. All private and public developed campgrounds may be open for recreational camping if they develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan consistent with [Guidance for Safely Reopening Campgrounds](#). Camping is also allowed at dispersed or remote camping sites with members of your household.
    - A dispersed campsite is a single campsite, not in a developed campground, used for overnight camping.
    - A remote campsite is a designated backpack or watercraft campsite, not in a developed campground, used for overnight camping.
  3. While campgrounds and camping sites are allowed to be open, they might not actually be open due to staffing limitations or other considerations. Be sure to check if a specific facility is actually open before heading there to camp.
  4. To help ensure a safe and enjoyable camping experience for you and others:
    - Plan ahead. When you are able, make reservations and purchase permits, firewood, ice and other items online or by phone before you arrive on site.
    - Be self-sufficient. For example, arrive prepared with your own soap, surface disinfectant supplies, hand sanitizer, paper towels/hand towels and toilet paper, in case these necessities are not available onsite.
    - Maintain social distancing. Set up your campsite—sleeping, campfire and eating areas—to maximize distance from adjacent campsites that host people from different households.
    - Recreate with your household.
- Know before you go. Some bathrooms or shower buildings may not be open; the same goes for shared amenities like large picnic shelters, amphitheatres and playgrounds. Check online resources or call ahead so you know what to expect when you arrive.
  - Follow the rules. Follow all campground rules and instructions, whether given in writing or verbally.

## Summary

We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and fellow Minnesotans from the COVID-19 health threat. By following EO 20-63 and these guidelines, we can enjoy the many benefits of the outdoors while providing for public health, slowing the spread of COVID-19, and decreasing the potential for added strain on local communities and health care systems in Minnesota.

## For More Information

**Do you have questions about the information provided here?** [Email us](#). Please see [Minnesota's Stay Safe Plan](#) for information about reopening various business and social settings not addressed here.