



Interim COVID-19 Prevention Guidance for Rafting Industry for El Dorado County

6/14/2020



The California Department of Public Health has not yet issued guidance for gatherings of people except gatherings that consist of single household units. Therefore, with some limited exceptions noted in specific industry guidelines (such as for religious worship/cultural ceremonies and protests), gatherings of any size, except among single household units, are not currently allowed. With respect to COVID-19 transmission, any gathering of people outside a single household group poses some degree of risk.

Please follow the applicable sections of the following California COVID-19 guidelines, which align most closely with the rafting industry. The remainder of this document is intended to supplement them and is specific to the rafting industry.

- COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Campgrounds, RV Parks, and Outdoor Recreation (<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-campgrounds.pdf>)
- COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Public Transit and Intercity Passenger Rail (<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-transit-rail.pdf>)

People on boats or rafts from single households are the safest groups (because only the river guide would be from a different household). Individuals who don't know one another and are combined in the same raft are at the greatest risk. Abiding by 6-foot distancing and other guidelines for safe personal behavior helps reduce risk. If someone with an active COVID-19 infection participates in a rafting trip, other attendees may become infected even if they take precautions, but that is less likely. While the letter of the law (guidelines posted on one of the State's websites) is not entirely clear for whitewater rafting and similar operations, the following guidelines have been designed for the rafting operators in El Dorado County to meet the spirit of the State's guidelines – the intent of which is to reduce people's risk of being infected.

Policy

- It is strongly recommended that operators limit parties in boats to those who arrive together and/or reside together. Mixed individuals in a raft who do not arrive together and/or reside together are at the greatest risk. More than one household technically goes against the current intention of the State to keep unrelated persons from gathering. Precautions to reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission should be followed even if only a single household group is in each boat.

This document is intended to supplement, not replace, official guidelines issued by the State of California. As soon as guidelines specific to this industry are issued by the State, this guideline shall expire and the industry should follow the State's. This guidance was adapted from the State of Colorado's publication, <https://covid19.colorado.gov/safer-at-home/safer-at-home-outdoor-recreation>

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- At a future time, when gatherings of large unrelated parties are once again allowed, it may be even more important for customers and employees to meticulously follow all recommended guidelines for prevention of COVID-19 transmission, including wearing face coverings when they must be closer than 6 feet to people outside their household member group (such as when riding the shuttle) and not participating in the rafting trip if they have symptoms or have been in close contact to someone known to have COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
- It is strongly recommended that operators implement a flexible cancellation or rescheduling policy and encourage customers to postpone their trips if any members of their party are actively symptomatic or have been close contacts to people known to have COVID-19 within the 14 days prior to their reservations.

Operators

- Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet from customers and fellow employees, except in cases where it is unsafe to maintain that distance.
- Wear face coverings when conducting staging operations, such as customer check-ins and end-of-trip operations. Staging areas should be outdoors with groups of different households spaced at least 6 feet apart from one another. [Note: Operators should always follow the most current State and County guidelines. As of the date of this document, the use of face coverings in El Dorado County is strongly recommended by both the State and the County but may become a requirement at a future date.]
- If your customers enter any enclosed facilities, limit the number of people inside to no more than 10 at one time, with a maximum of 50% occupancy, whichever is less. Ask household member groups to stick together and maintain at least 6 feet between them. Follow retail or restaurant guidance if applicable.
- Post signs for employees and customers outlining good hygiene and safety measures being taken. Signs should include easy-to-interpret graphics and be in languages customers will understand. (Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html> for examples.)
- Encourage hand washing. Direct customers to places where they can wash their hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer.
- Face coverings are required during shuttle operations when more than one person is in the vehicle.

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- Vehicle windows should be kept open at all times when transporting patrons during shuttle/van/bus transportation of customers. The air conditioner and heater will not be used in recirculating mode, if inclement weather necessitates closure of windows.
- Shuttles/Van/Buses including seats will be disinfected between uses (per [CDC guidance](#))
- Implement symptom monitoring protocols (including workplace temperature monitoring and symptom screening questions) as directed in [California's outdoor recreation guidelines](#) where possible.
- Employees who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms must not come to work and should promptly get tested.
- Employees who develop COVID-19 symptoms while at work should immediately notify their supervisors and be separated from others, sent home, and referred to state or company support services. They should get tested promptly.
- Employees who have had close contact with a person who has COVID-19 symptoms should not come to work for 14 days after exposure and should get tested when recommended by El Dorado County Public Health. If they have not already been contacted directly by Public Health through a contact investigation of a person who tested positive for the infection, they should call 530-621-6320 and report that they think they have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Encourage reservations or, preferably, require reservations, if feasible. Collect contact information for each customer. E-mail addresses are acceptable. This will aid in notification efforts in case there is an exposure to COVID-19.
- It is strongly recommended to limit raft passengers to single household units, not including guides. (A household unit is a family or group that lives together.) That meets the state's guidelines of recreating only with one's household members. At the later time when State guidelines allow it, more than one family unit may share a raft if a distance of 6 feet can be ensured between household groups.
- Disinfect all personal equipment used by participants between trips (including paddles, helmets, P.F.D.s) (per [CDC guidance](#)).
- Curtail ancillary services, such as food preparation, or adjust practices to limit human-to-human contact and contact with shared items.

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Participants

- When possible, limit your stops along the way to and from your rafting trip to avoid having contact with people outside your home community. This helps reduce the chance of unintentionally seeding new infections in new places. For example, avoid using grocery stores, gas stations etc. in the communities you visit to prevent the spread of COVID-19 across communities. Obtain all food, water, gas, and any other needed supplies in your home community before you travel to your rafting trip.
- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet from members of other households, except in cases where it is unsafe to maintain that distance.
- Wear face coverings during check-in, staging, and transportation to and from the rafting activity if you travel in a shared vehicle such as a van or bus, as well as during end-of-trip disembarking activities when you are around other people outside your household group. [Note: Participants should follow the most current State and County guidelines. As of the date of this document, the use of face coverings in El Dorado County is strongly recommended by both the State and the County but may become a requirement at a future date.]
- Follow company guidelines on when to use face coverings during trips. Check local regulations before travel. At a minimum, wearing face coverings is strongly recommended when 6-foot distancing cannot be maintained.
- Bring your own hand sanitizers for times when it may not be readily available.
- If you or anyone in your party is sick, stay home and rebook. For COVID-19, understand how long you need to quarantine (if exposed) or isolate (if ill) before you rebook. Consult with El Dorado County Public Health for guidance: email questions to edccovid-19@edcgov.us or call 530-621-6100 during business hours.

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