

Region 7 Soaring Contest COVID-19 Mitigation Plan - 3.14.21

This COVID-19 Mitigation Plan is a work in progress because the CDC and the State of Minnesota may change their guidance through this spring. I will make every attempt to keep this document current, so note the applicable date in the title.

At the time of this writing, the pandemic appears to have plateaued with increasing vaccinations, however that may change based upon a resurgence or new wave of infections or worse. Contest staff is concerned about any adverse trend of infections, and thus may change plans, affecting the viability of this year's Region 7 Soaring Contest. For sure, we don't want our friends or ourselves to get sick or worse.

During the next several weeks, many of us will become fully vaccinated, minimizing our risk of severe symptoms from COVID-19. The CDC and the State of Minnesota recognizes that by approving limited household contact or other changes to gatherings, but they did not change their guidance on unnecessary travel.

I would guess that we all behave alike: showing care outside in a breeze, and avoiding public contact when indoors. Let's all remember that the following guidances are meant to lessen not only your risk of infection, but also the risk of infection to others. If we practice these measures, then our soaring community can be safer.

Before You Consider Traveling by the CDC - 2.16.21

Travel increases your chances of getting and spreading COVID-19. CDC recommends that you do not travel at this time. Delay travel and stay home to protect yourself and others from COVID-19.

- Are you, someone in your household, or someone you will be visiting at [increased risk](#) for getting very sick from COVID-19?
- If you get infected you can spread the virus to loved ones during travel and when you return, even if you don't have symptoms. If your household includes one or more individuals at increased risk for severe illness, all family members should act as if they, themselves are at increased risk. Learn how to [protect yourself and others](#).
- Are hospitals in your community or your destination overwhelmed with patients who have COVID-19? To find out, check [state, territorial, and local](#) department websites.
- Does your home or destination have requirements or restrictions for travelers? Check [state, territorial, and local requirements](#) before you travel.
- During the 14 days before your travel, have you or those you are visiting had close contact with people they don't live with?
- The following activities can put you at higher risk for COVID-19:
 1. Going to a large social gathering like a wedding, funeral, or party.
 2. Attending a mass gathering like a sporting event, concert, or parade.
 3. Being in crowds like in restaurants, bars, fitness centers, or movie theaters.
 4. Taking public transportation like planes, trains, or buses, or being in transportation hubs like airports.
 5. Traveling on a cruise ship or riverboat.
- Do your plans include traveling by bus, train, or air, which might make staying 6 feet apart difficult?
- Are you traveling with people who don't live with you?

If the answer to any of these questions is “yes,” you should delay your travel.

If You Must Travel by the CDC - 2.16.21

If you **must** travel, learn which travel activities are safer and take the following steps to protect yourself and others from COVID-19. Keep in mind that getting from one place to another is just one piece of the travel risk. Your activities and who you interact with before, during, and after travel may increase your risk.

- If you are eligible, get fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Wait 2 weeks after getting your second vaccine dose to travel—it takes time for your body to build protection after any vaccination.
- Get tested with a viral test 1-3 days before you travel. Keep a copy of your test results with you during travel in case you are asked for them. Do NOT travel if you test positive.
- Check travel restrictions before you go.
- Wear a mask over your nose and mouth when in public settings. **Masks are required** on planes, buses, trains, and other forms of public transportation traveling into, within, or out of the United States and in U.S. transportation hubs such as airports and stations.
- Avoid crowds and stay at least 6 feet/2 meters (about 2 arm lengths) from anyone who did not travel with you. It’s important to do this everywhere — both indoors and outdoors.
- Wash your hands often or use hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol).
- Bring extra supplies, such as masks and hand sanitizer.
- Avoid contact with anyone who is sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Be alert for symptoms including but not limited to: cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea.
- Check your temperature if symptoms develop and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

CDC Interim Public Health Recommendations for Fully Vaccinated People - 3.8.21

The following recommendations apply to non-healthcare settings.

Fully vaccinated people can:

- Visit with other fully vaccinated people indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
- Visit with unvaccinated people from a single household who are at low risk for severe COVID-19 disease indoors without wearing masks or physical distancing.
- Refrain from quarantine and testing following a known exposure if asymptomatic.
- For now, fully vaccinated people should continue to:
 1. Take precautions in public like wearing a well-fitted mask and physical distancing.
 2. Wear masks, practice physical distancing, and adhere to other prevention measures when visiting with unvaccinated people who are at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease or who have an unvaccinated household member who is at increased risk for severe COVID-19 disease.
 3. Avoid medium- and large-sized in-person gatherings.
 4. Get tested if experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
 5. Follow guidance issued by individual employers.

6. Follow CDC and health department travel requirements and recommendations.

Minnesota's Stay Safe Plan regarding COVID-19 - 3.12.21

I suspect that *Minnesota's Stay Safe Plan* is intentionally general enough to cover our soaring contest, so I will attempt to summarize parts of the plan that may govern most of the time while we are at Albert Lea.

But first, let's briefly summarize the safety practices: facial coverings are required according to the Governors' Executive Order 20-81. Six feet is the minimum separation from others, and get tested if you have any doubts. With that in mind, take time to understand the following settings and related guidance.

- **Social Settings:** Indoor social gatherings are limited to 15 people; outdoor gatherings to 50 people. Social distancing between households must be maintained. Fully vaccinated people can gather indoors with smaller groups of fully vaccinated people without wearing a mask. Avoid larger gatherings. You can gather indoors with unvaccinated people from one other household without masks, unless any of those people or anyone they live with has an increased risk for severe illness from Covid 19.
- **Restaurants and Bars:** Restaurants and bars are open. Indoor and outdoor dining at 75% capacity, 250 people max. Parties of no more than six people must remain six feet from other parties; bar seating is open to parties of four; establishments must close for on-site dining between 11 pm and 4 am. All patrons must be seated.
- **Outdoor Events and Entertainment:** Open at 50% capacity, no more than 250 people. Social distancing is required. No food or beverage service or consumption between 11 pm and 4 am. Masks required.
- **Reception Spaces for Celebrations or Private Parties:** Reception spaces for celebrations or private parties with sufficient normal occupant capacity may exceed 250 people per applicable percentage limits and guidance for the venue. Table size is limited to six and guests must be seated while eating and drinking. These events may not occur between 11 pm and 4 am.

Knowing the CDC and the Minnesota Department of Health guidances, let's introduce the Covid mitigation measures planned for this contest.

Travel to the contest

If you, your crew, family member, friend or volunteer have knowingly been exposed to an active case of COVID-19 within the two weeks before the contest, or if you are not completely vaccinated with the appropriate post-waiting period, then we ask that you get a COVID-19 test within 1-3 days before arriving at the contest.

During the Contest

The airport is our common area and fortunately it is outside, so we ask you to keep a mask on hand and with your glider, maintain social distances, and respect those who choose to exercise safe practices beyond what you are used to.

- **Registration.** Send your registration by mail before the contest including the contest fee and payment for four tows. This will help me plan tow capacity and visits to the bank lobby. As always, registration fee and tow refunds are guided by contest rules. As in past years at R7, I make every effort to refund unused tows. If this request isn't possible, find my office when you arrive and leave your registration papers and check as directed by signage. For sure, complete the registration with the THREE required signatures.

- Meetings. None. Read the pilot's kit from the website; this serves as the mandatory pilot's meeting. There will be no morning pilot's meetings. Based upon your registration, I will compile a list of non-crew pilots for distribution at my office when you arrive.
- Communication. Staff will use the app, **Signal**, to communicate briefing notes. If you did not send me your mobile/cell phone number with your registration, then please do so. I will send an invitation to you to install Signal. Or, you can install this app on your phone and tablet, and then test it by sending a note to me at 612-590-7157. We will use your email address to send files, including the grid sheet and task sheet as a picture file or as CU allows, and we will also print the task and make it available for your convenience. We will try not to have grid meetings. If any changes to the task or launch occur, an individual will go down the line and pass the word and maintain a roll call sheet. If a pilot is missed, the CD will call them on the radio with the information. If a grid meeting is called, use more than social distancing, and a mask to mitigate the risk if the winds are light.
- Land Outs. They happen, but if you can do so at an airport, gain the 25 point airport bonus, and call for an aero-retrieve if you are comfortable launching without a wing runner. If an aero-retrieve is not possible, ensure that your crew exercises CDC guidelines for the retrieve. Take a mask while flying in case you encounter help other than a retrieve crew. Again, exercise the CDC guidelines.
- Retrieve Office. Besides contest rules for notifying the retrieve desk, pilots without crews who need a retrieve may have to become creative with other contest pilots. Open windows, masks, distant seating, fully vaccinated volunteers, and multiple vehicles with one having a team/family unit driving both vehicles are all part of the mix.
- Meals. I will complete this in time for our last Covid-19 plan update before the contest, because guidances will change as well as our host's ability to meet those guidances.

Medical Care and Testing

If you feel ill during the contest, please let us know and we will assist you in finding appropriate medical assistance.

The State of Minnesota lists temporary Covid testing locations and dates on their Department of Health website www.my.gov/covid19/get-tested/testing-locations/community-testing.msp.

The Mayo Clinic Health System offers testing by appointment from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm on weekdays and weekends. Their website offers a screening tool and recommendation based on your symptoms at www.mayoclinichealthsystem.org/covid19 . You can reach their nurse at 507-293-9525.

Sincerely,

Leon Zeug
R7 Contest Manager