



25 Years in 2020

NENSA COVID-19 XC Ski Event Host Guide

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NENSA COVID-19 XC Ski Event Host Guide

I. Introduction

NENSA is committed to assisting all members, clubs, volunteers, and competition organizers in navigating the upcoming 2020-21 season. The goal of this Guide is to provide direction and guidance for hosting cross country ski events during the COVID-19 pandemic, and to help minimize the risk and spread of COVID-19 infection at cross country ski events in the East.

NENSA members and event participants are expected to follow all local, state and federal public health mandates, guidelines, and recommendations. Participants of NENSA organized events are also required to agree to the [New England Cross Country Promise](#). Everyone's compliance and diligence is essential to minimize risk during the 2020-21 cross country ski season. Compliance with mandates and diligence in safely hosting events gives everyone the best opportunity to stay safe and to avoid cancellations.

The NENSA COVID-19 XC Ski Event Host Guide is informed by the [U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Domestic Competitions Guidance](#), [U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Cross Country Ski Domestic Competitions Guidance](#), and portions of specific content from the [U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee \(USOPC\)](#) and the [U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). This Guide operates under the assumption that all hosts and organizers will follow state and local guidelines which differ throughout the East. Additional, more sport-specific, considerations and recommendations are set forth in this document. The more restrictive portions of each regulation (whether set forth by public health authorities or this Guide) should be the guidance that is followed. These recommendations do not prevent associations, local clubs, and competition organizers from adopting even more strict or more conservative approaches than those mandated by local public health authorities or recommended by this Guide.

This NENSA COVID-19 XC Ski Event Host Guide should be considered a “living document.” This document’s criteria and recommendations are based on known factors at the time of writing (October 20, 2020). As more information becomes available concerning cross country ski competition and COVID-19, this Guide will be updated appropriately.

Please be aware that this Guide is designed to reduce potential exposure and to mitigate risk of viral transmission. However, it is not all encompassing and while it provides guidance for a wide range of scenarios, it does not account for every variable. Until a vaccine or other therapeutics are widely available, there will be an underlying, inherent risk of COVID-19 exposure and contraction when leaving the confines of one’s home. Preventative measures cannot eradicate the possibility of COVID-19 infection.

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II. General

Per [CDC considerations](#), the risk of COVID-19 spread increases in sports settings as follows:

- **Lowest Risk:** Performing skill-building drills or conditioning at home, alone or with family
- **Increasing Risk:** Team-based practice
- **More Risk:** Within-team competition
- **Even More Risk:** Full competition between teams from the same local geographic area
- **Highest Risk:** Full competition between teams from different geographic areas

Per the USOPC's [Return to Event Considerations](#), skiing is an outdoor sport and, in many circumstances, can account for physical distancing and proper sanitization procedures, and therefore can be planned according to public health mandates.

Definitions

Close contact: any individual who was within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from 2 days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, 2 days prior to positive specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.

Physical distancing: minimum 6 feet at rest and minimum 10 feet while exercising.

Participant: all competitors, coaches, support staff, officials, volunteers, competition organizers and venue staff.

III. Organizer / Venue Considerations

1) COVID-19 Coordinator

- a) A COVID-19 Coordinator is required for all US Ski and Snowboard sanctioned events and NENSA strongly recommends all event organizers assign a designated COVID-19 Coordinator as part of the Organizing Committee (OC). Medical background preferred.
- b) Duties can include, but are not limited to:
 - i) Works with local health authority on specific rules and regulations around COVID-19, including but not limited to gathering limits, out-of-state quarantine rules (if applicable), and emergency protocols.
 - ii) Works with venue host to create specific COVID-19 policies and procedures (including emergency protocols).
 - iii) Acts as the central contact point for all COVID-19 questions and concerns.
 - iv) Collaborates with local health authority and ski area management, in conjunction with the OC, to determine appropriate field size for the event.

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- v) Works with the OC to communicate physical distancing rules for any facilities use.
- vi) Works with the OC to recommend older individuals and/or people of any age with underlying health conditions, or those living with or that have consistent contact with those populations, consider limiting their participation or not participating.
- vii) Verifies that all participants complete the pre-event health screen ([example here](#)).
- viii) Vetts and turns away potential participants who do not pass the pre-event health screen. Block attendance if participant:
 - (1) Has a current pending COVID-19 test prompted by symptoms.
 - (2) Has received a positive COVID-19 test result within the past 14 days.
 - (3) Has not followed the required quarantine and testing procedure if coming to a location from a location that necessitates following such a procedure.
 - (4) Has been on a plane or other form of public transportation in the past 14 days.
 - (5) Was in [close contact](#) with a person with confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
 - (6) Has any one of the following symptoms:
 - (a) Fever or feeling feverish
 - (b) Sore throat
 - (c) Cough (not related to chronic condition)
 - (d) Nasal congestion or runny nose (not related to seasonal allergies)
 - (e) Muscle or body aches (not related to training or racing)
 - (f) Loss of taste or sense of smell
 - (g) Shortness of breath (not related to chronic condition)
 - (7) Has any two of the following symptoms:
 - (a) Headache
 - (b) Nausea and/or vomiting
 - (c) Diarrhea
 - (d) Fatigue
- ix) Compiles a list of cleared individuals and not cleared individuals (who need to be turned away if they arrive at the venue).
- x) Conducts verbal day-of check-ins or full day-of health screens ([example here](#)) by vehicle upon arrival at the venue.
 - (1) Checks that participants are on the cleared list (turns away those that are not).
 - (2) Ensures everyone has a mask.
 - (3) Asks if anyone has developed symptoms since filling out the pre-event health screen.

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- xi) Maintains a record of contact information for all participants in attendance at the competition for notification and health authority [contact tracing](#) purposes.
- xii) Conducts virtual training for coaches, volunteers, and staff on all safety protocols.
- xiii) Communicates, in collaboration with the relevant club, if a participant becomes symptomatic during, or within 48 hours after, the event. Any participant who tests positive for COVID-19 or has had [close contact](#) with a positive COVID-19 case must not attend an event until they have quarantined for 14 days since their test AND are symptom free OR they test negative.
- xiv) Makes available (electronically or otherwise) the COVID-19 mitigation strategies that the event is utilizing.

2) Attendance and Planning Considerations

- a) As per the [CDC Considerations for Youth Sport](#) risk stratification model, full competitions between teams from different geographical areas is considered “highest risk”. Therefore, local competition with participants from the same geographical locations should be prioritized so that the need for overnight stays and/or significant travel is minimized or eliminated.
- b) Explore new competition formats to keep competition interesting and local.
- c) Consider hosting events during the week.

3) Assessing COVID-19 Risk

- a) Assess current levels of COVID-19 within your community (and communities where participants are traveling from).
- b) Competition organizers and all participants should be made familiar with the risks of COVID-19, symptoms of COVID-19, and known COVID-19 transmission routes and mitigation strategies.
- c) In the event of high levels of community spread (defined as more than 20 new reported cases per day per a population of 100,000 over a seven day rolling average), it is recommended to not hold the event or travel outside of your community.
- d) You can refer to [this resource](#) to make the above determination and refer to local county public health departments for further local information.

4) Event Size Considerations

- a) Limit competition size and format to maintain proper physical distancing and to meet gathering size limitation requirements in your state or region.
- b) Limit any nonessential visitors, volunteers, and activities. Consider prohibiting spectators.
- c) Media activity should be limited and conducted in a manner to allow for physical distancing.

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- d) Consider spacing out of age categories and/or genders during the competition day to limit competitive field sizes at the venue.

5) Screenings

- a) All event participants must complete a pre-event health screen ([example here](#)) before the start of the event.
- b) All event participants must check-in and/or complete a verbal day-of health screen ([example here](#)) upon arrival at the venue and prior to exiting their vehicle. Consider traffic flow and create a vehicle checkpoint.
- c) COVID-19 Coordinator must confirm all event participants have completed the pre-event health screen and are on the cleared-to-attend list upon arrival.
- d) Event participants who do not complete the pre-event health screen will be turned away and not be allowed to participate

6) Face Coverings

- a) Require all participants to wear face coverings (over their nose and mouth) at all times except when exercising (training, warming up, wax testing, or racing) 10 feet or further from another individual.
- b) Face coverings may be removed on the start line, but must be put back on immediately after crossing the finish line.
- c) Face coverings must be on everyone's person at all times even when racing.
- d) COVID-19 Coordinator can bring violators to the attention of the jury.

7) Physical Distancing Considerations

- a) Prohibit [close contact](#) between all participants, particularly participants from different clubs and organizations (for example, assign porta potties by region).
- b) All participants maintain a physical distance of 6 feet (10 feet while exercising). Applies to all athletes/coaches/techs during course inspection, warmup, and cool down.
- c) Expand start areas to allow for physical distancing.
- d) Virtual awards ceremonies or ceremony set-up to adhere to physical distancing guidelines.

8) Race Formats

- a) Interval starts:
 - i) Encourage interval start distance races.
 - ii) All NENSA organized events will be interval start this season.
 - iii) Encourage interval start seeding that limits congregation on course. Examples include: start order by ranking OR at least 30 second interval starts - A & C alternating seeding.
- b) Sprints:
 - i) Encourage sprint qualification only.
 - ii) There will be no NENSA organized sprint heats this season.

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- c) Mass and pursuit starts: Consider not using these formats.

9) Event Registration

- a) Use online entry and registration payment.
- b) Coaches must register for the event as well (for free).
- c) Eliminate day-of registration.
- d) Minimize point of contact for race packet pick-up. Suggested examples include:
 - i) Conduct outdoors
 - ii) One-way drive-up bib and packet pick-up
 - iii) OR one-way passage for walk-ups to a service window
 - iv) Include timing chip in the athlete's bib pick-up packet, if applicable.
 - v) Suggest athletes apply and remove the chip device themselves. All timing chips must be cleaned and disinfected before reuse.
- e) All bibs must be cleaned and disinfected before and after the competition (if using cloth or lycra bibs). Consider using disposable paper bibs.

10) Team Captains / Pre-event Meetings

- a) Consider virtual meetings and deliver all race documents electronically.
- b) Venues with no wifi or cell service will use alternative plans for distribution of race documents that adhere to physical distancing rules.

11) Protest Period

- a) Consider protests made electronically, in accordance with the protest period deadlines.
- b) Protest hearings should be done in person with face coverings on and in observation of physical distancing rules.
- c) The jury can extend, up to 24 hours, the period in which a protest against the timekeeping is accepted in a circumstance where results are not posted on-site and live timing is not available.
- d) Consider holding all jury meetings outdoors.

12) Results

- a) Consider unofficial results to be posted on live timing websites and publicly announced at the venue.
- b) Distribute all official results electronically instead of posting on-site on results boards that encourage congregation.

13) Indoor Spaces

- a) Consider limiting or eliminating participant access to indoor facilities, and minimize downtime for athletes during the day.
- b) For venues with parking lots nearby, personal vehicles can be used to keep participants warm.

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- c) Consider short stays at the venue by the competing athletes (for example, arriving 45 minutes before start, race their respective competition, short cool down, and immediately depart).
- d) Consider methods to minimize congregation in wax cabins/rooms
 - i) Consider no indoor on-site waxing facilities
 - ii) Consider limiting access to indoor waxing facilities to only wax staff and coaches (i.e. no athletes)
 - iii) Consider assigning one team per wax cabin/room

If symptoms develop during the event or a post-event positive test occurs:

- Require any participant who tests positive for COVID-19 within 48 hours after the conclusion of the event to notify the host and contact the event's COVID Coordinator.
- Immediately isolate anyone who has COVID-19 [symptoms](#). The local healthcare facility should be notified and arrangements should be made to transport the individual home or to the facility as directed.
- Individuals who have had [close contact](#) with a person who has [symptoms](#), or who has tested positive, should be isolated and then should quarantine where they are according to state/regional guidelines, or at home if they are able to travel alone (i.e. in a car by themselves).
- In accordance with state and local privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations, and while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the [Americans with Disabilities Act \(ADA\)](#) and other applicable laws and regulations, notify [local health officials](#), staff, participants, and families immediately of any case of COVID-19.
- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until they are [cleaned and disinfected](#) (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaning and disinfection products](#), including storing them securely away from children. Always use proper personal protection equipment with any cleaning and disinfecting steps.

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IV. State Travel and Gathering Guideline Resources

Travel:

[National CDC](#)

[CT](#)

[MA](#)

[ME](#)

[NH](#)

[NJ](#)

[NY](#)

[RI](#)

[VT](#)

Gathering size requirements by state [here](#).

V. Contributing Sources

[U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#)

[U.S. Olympic and Paralympic Committee \(USOPC\)](#)

[U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Cross Country Ski Domestic Competitions Guidance](#)

[U.S. Ski & Snowboard COVID-19 Domestic Competitions Guidance](#)