

Principles of a Covid-Secure Event

Prepared by Alberta Ultra Racing Association in conjunction with representatives from Run Calgary, 5-Peaks, TransRockies, TransSelkirks, and Sinister Sports Inc.

These principles are meant as a guide to allow outdoor endurance sports events to return while acknowledging the need for measures in preventing the spread of Covid-19. Each event is different in size, scope, location, and duration, so event directors must follow these principles in order to create an individualized plan for each event they produce.

This document is designed for events in the Province of Alberta, but the principles apply to events anywhere. To find more endurance sports industry resources, visit www.albertaultra.com.

1. Know Your Capacity

- a. The amount of space available at a venue while using the 2m distancing rule will dictate the number of people who can be in any given location.
 - i. Take accurate measurements of your space
 - ii. Always account for 50% more space than required for the number of competitors to allow for movement around the area.
- b. “Wave starts” are a method of controlling the number of competitors in one area at a time. Smaller groups of competitors begin the event at defined intervals. No other competitors are allowed into the start line area until their wave is called. This allows the organizer to separate competitors both by proximity and time while increasing attendance by decreasing the number of people present at any given time.
- c. Discourage spectators from attending while having an area set aside for those who may choose to watch. Note that outdoor venues are commonly public spaces so it is not always possible to completely restrict public access.
- d. If indoor facilities are utilized, event directors must follow the indoor function guidelines in place at the time of the event.

2. Before the Event

- a. Communicate with competitors that they must agree to not attend if they*:
 - i. Have a fever of 38°C or higher on race day.
 - ii. Show any signs or symptoms of Covid-19 in the 14 days leading up to race day (ex: New continuous cough, fever, change/loss of taste/smell).
 - iii. Have been in contact with anyone who is sick (symptomatic) in the 14 days leading up to race day.
 - iv. Have travelled outside of Canada in the 14 days leading up to race day.
*Any supporters or family that competitors intend to bring are also subject to these criteria.
- b. Have competitors, race crew, and volunteers sign a COVID-19 declaration prior to the start of the event, confirming the points in 2.(a) above.
- c. Only have a live pre-event briefing if it is possible to do so within your available capacity.

- i. If not, a video briefing should be used and posted on the event website/social media outlets, and emailed to competitors and volunteers.
 - ii. Group text and email should be used for distributing any last-minute updates/changes.
- d. If possible, implement rapid testing the day prior to the event in order to give a greater degree of certainty that competitors, crew, and volunteers are free from Covid-19 prior to attending. This will be contingent on the availability of rapid testing from Health Canada and the Province of Alberta.
- e. Have touchless thermometers available and use them to test the temperatures of competitors prior to the event.
- f. Have an updated refund/deferral policy for those who have to withdraw from the event due to Covid-19 exposure. This will discourage people from attending the event if they are concerned about losing their entry fee.

3. Competitor Check-in

- a. Check-in must be staged in a manner that follows the provincial regulations for indoor gatherings;
 - i. Maintain 2m distancing.
 - ii. Have sanitizer stations available.
 - iii. Directional traffic flow.
 - iv. Mandatory mask use.
- b. Event crew and volunteers must be separated from incoming competitors by screens, face shields, or other appropriate measures.
- c. Only registered racers or one proxy of the individual may enter the bag pick-up area
- d. For relay events, teams should designate one team member or proxy to collect race bags for the entire team.
- e. Consider outdoor check-in when possible to avoid any time indoors.

4. PPE and Safety Instructions

- a. Sanitizer stations must be available at all areas of common contact with equipment or food.
- b. Aid stations should have foods that are individual servings and liquids must either be bottled or delivered in a way that minimizes contact.
 - i. Minimize the chance for a competitor's equipment to contact food/liquid handling equipment.
- c. All stations or areas of common contact must have adequate cleaning supplies.
- d. Designate individuals responsible for cleaning and ensure they have both the proper supplies, equipment, and disposal for used cleaning products.
- e. Smaller/ shorter races may elect to be self-supported and not provide food or water.

5. Crowd Control and On-site Measures

- a. Event directors must adopt race rules that highlight the need for PPE and physical distancing, up to and including removal from the event should participants not follow the race rules.
- b. Designate marshals to ensure that physical distancing measures are enforced.

- c. Masks should be worn in all gathering areas including the start, aid stations (if lingering for any length of time), and the finish.
- d. Start Area
 - i. Racers should not arrive on-site more than 20 minutes prior to their designated start time.
 - ii. Support crew/spectators are not permitted in the start area at any time.
 - iii. Racers must wear a mask when assembling in the start area. Masks may be removed once you exit the Start Area.
 - iv. Racers must maintain a 2m distance from each other and volunteers.
- e. Aid stations (for food and hydration)
 - i. Events should adopt a policy of no lingering/loitering at aid stations. If lingering is anticipated due to the nature of the event, have race marshals usher competitors to a large area away from the aid station where they have room to physically distance.
 - ii. Eliminate any touchpoints at aid stations; foods must be accessible to competitors without having to touch containers, spoons, or tongs.
 - iii. Organizers should have volunteers/race clean touchpoints with a sani-wipe after each competitor
- f. On the course:
 - i. Competitors should maintain a 2m distance from other competitors, volunteers, and race crew at all times.
 - ii. When passing, announce from behind (eg: Passing on the left), and wait until it is possible to pass with at least a 2-meter distance side-by-side.
 - iii. The use of pacers (individuals who run at a specific pace as a guide for other competitors) should be included in the overall capacity of the event. Pacers must follow the same guidelines as competitors.
- g. Have a response plan for dealing with individuals that develop Covid-19 symptoms during the event:
 - i. Plan to remove them from the area temporarily so that they have an opportunity for their symptoms to clear.
 - ii. If symptoms persist, plan to have them isolate away from other competitors and contact Alberta 811 for instructions.
 - iii. Have one individual or group that is designated to attend to potential Covid-19 cases. These monitors must have the proper PPE to attend the scene and should work with the general event crew, volunteers, or competitors without first changing out of the provided PPE.
- h. Post-race awards and food service must be conducted within the normal gathering guidelines at the time of the event
 - i. If food is offered, it should be to-go unless social gathering restrictions allow for people to congregate at the venue.

Background Information, Case Studies, and Research

1. **Canadian Endurance Sports Alliance Presentation**

An overview of the Endurance Sports Industry in Canada, and the impending collapse of event organizations due to the pandemic.

- <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Zsu6jseGdlYash-V4iWoy5t55umtk1Me/view?usp=sharing>

2. **Japan Association of Athletic Federations Study on Covid-19 Transmission**

621,718 athletes and 110,355 officials and staff took part in 854 races with only one documented case of Covid-19 transmission. This was due, in part, to protocols similar to what our group is proposing.

- https://www.jaaf.or.jp/files/upload/202011/09_175620.pdf (original Japanese document)
- https://www.sinistersports.ca/reopening/09_175620_Translated.pdf (Translated)

3. **Province of Alberta Guidance for Farmers' Markets and Public Markets**

This document shows that outdoor events are possible as long as the participants adhere to basic principles of physical distancing and hygiene.

- <https://www.alberta.ca/assets/documents/covid-19-relaunch-guidance-farmers-markets-and-public-markets.pdf>

4. **Outdoor Transmission of SARS-CoV-2 and Other Respiratory Viruses: A Systematic Review**

Published by the Journal of Infectious Diseases. This review includes five studies highlighting that outdoor transmission is uncommon, however, the report acknowledges that further research is needed. The report also included people gathering in outdoor social settings (it is not exclusive to sports). The review further shows that even in the cases of outdoor transmission, it was people working or socializing close proximity that caused the transmission.

- <https://academic.oup.com/jid/advance-article/doi/10.1093/infdis/jiaa742/6009483>

5. **COVID-19 and outdoor safety: Considerations for use of outdoor recreational spaces**

Published by the National Collaborating Centre for Environmental Health, this report highlights the need for outdoor recreation during Covid-19 in order to maintain mental and physical health. The report highlights the absence of outdoor recreation pushes people to other, potentially riskier activities, such as socializing indoors.

- <https://nccch.ca/documents/guide/covid-19-and-outdoor-safety-considerations-use-outdoor-recreational-spaces>

6. **Exploring the Positive Ripple effects for communities that engage in Mass Participation Sporting Events**

This case study shows the positive economic and social impact of endurance events on communities, and the importance to resume these activities, even during the pandemic.

- https://www.sinistersports.ca/reopening/Ripple_Effects_of_Mass_Participation_Events.pdf

7. **Marathon Dynamic**

By Marcel Altenburg, Senior Lecturer - Crowd Science – Manchester Metropolitan University.
This video shows the movement of crowds during endurance events and the way that competitors naturally distance themselves during endurance competitions.

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMIdr3RUHO4&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=Marcel Altenburg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IMIdr3RUHO4&feature=emb_logo&ab_channel=MarcelAltenburg)

8. **Dash of Doom Race Case Study**

A live race held in Calgary on October 31, 2020.

- <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5eb5623da4f35b472649355c/t/5fb48bb0870d86070fd119ba/1605667764944/Dash+of+Doom+Case+Study.pdf>

9. **Valley Harvest Marathon 2020 Case Study**

A live race held in Wolfville, Nova Scotia on the weekend of October 9-11, 2020.

- https://www.sinistersports.ca/reopening/Valley_Harvest_Marathon_Case_Study.pdf

10. **World Health Organization – Coronavirus disease (COVID-19): How is it transmitted?**

Information reinforcing the message of the Alberta government, stressing that the primary source of transmission is close contact.

- <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/question-and-answers-hub/q-a-detail/q-a-how-is-covid-19-transmitted>

11. **Centre for Addiction and Mental Health – Mental Health in Canada: Covid-19 and Beyond**

This document from CAMH reinforces that Covid-19 is a significant contributor in the decline of mental health in Canada, and that substance abuse is also on the rise. Albertans need to return to normal activity in order to preserve their mental health.

- <https://www.camh.ca/-/media/files/pdfs---public-policy-submissions/covid-and-mh-policy-paper-pdf.pdf>

Understanding Crowd Movement at Endurance Events

As described in the **Principles of a Covid-Secure Event** section of this document, there are three distinct components to an endurance event:

1. Pre and post-race activity
2. Aid station and staging area activity
3. On-course activity

There is a heavy emphasis on points #1 and #2 to discourage gathering. From the start of a race, competitors begin to naturally distance themselves. Research from the department of Crowd Science at Manchester Metropolitan University¹ shows two important observations. First, the use of wave starts described above and in the Start Right Flow Analysis below, greatly reduces competitor interaction on the course. Secondly, the longer a competitor is on the course, the more they will naturally distance.

start right Flow Analysis

Start in 2019



Finish in 2019



Start in 2021



Finish in 2021



See <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/metmagazine/story/index.php?id=10245> for further information on flow analysis at endurance events.

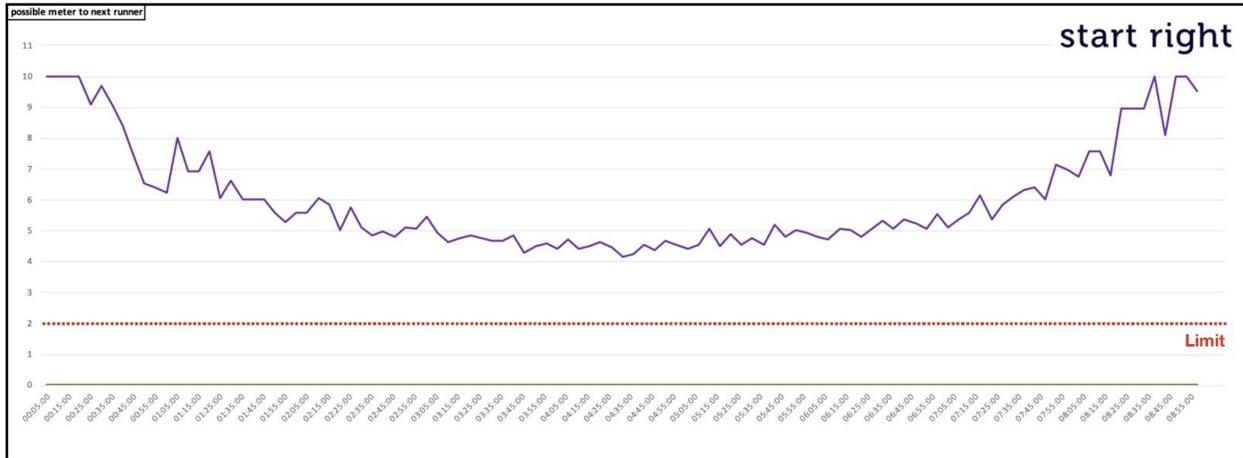
¹ Marcel Altenburg MSc MA
Senior Lecturer - Crowd Science - Manchester Metropolitan University
["Crowd Safety and Risk Analysis"](#)

Understanding Crowd Movement at Endurance Events (continued)

Flow Analysis

This **example** shows how the available space between runners develops at 6km.
The available distance reduces 0:20h into the race
but it never goes below 4 meter (360 degrees around runners).
And it always stays well above the 2 meter limit.

Flow at 6km



Best Practices

In preparing this document, we reviewed global best practices in sport. Our plan takes advantage of these protocols while allowing event organizers to adapt to their particular requirements.

British Triathlon

<https://www.britishtriathlon.org/return-to-play/event-participants>

International Trail Running Association

<https://itra.run/documents/ITRA%20COVID-19%20GUIDELINES%20-%20EN.pdf>

Own the Podium (Canada)

<https://www.ownthepodium.org/getattachment/Resources/COVID-19-Resources/Canada-COVID-19-Return-to-HP-Sport-Framework-May-2020.pdf.aspx>

Race Director Alliance

<https://racedirectoralliance.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Guidelines-for-Trail-Running-Events-in-the-COVID-19-Era-3.pdf>

Run Calgary

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VDAc_tIISw&t=15s&ab_channel=CalgaryMarathon

Running USA

<https://www.runningusa.org/RUSA/News/2020/Resuming-Races-Resources.aspx>

Swimming Canada

<https://www.swimming.ca/content/uploads/2020/11/COVID-19-Return-to-Swimming-Resource-Documents-V3.pdf>

Ultrarunning Magazine: Back to Racing Safely

<https://ultrarunning.com/featured/back-to-racing-safely/>

USA Track and Field

<https://www.usatf.org/covid19/logistical-information-and-guidance-for-event-directors-and-local-organizing-committees>

World Athletics; Outbreak Management Tool and Guidelines

<https://idom.worldathletics.org/>

World Triathlon

https://www.triathlon.org/uploads/docs/20200430_Covid19_Guidelines.pdf