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## **Executive Summary**

This “*Best Practices*” summary was developed by leaders of Visit Cook County with assistance from local health care leaders to help guide our local businesses, residents and visitors on how to operate as safely as possible in the midst of an ongoing pandemic. The goal of this project is to consider both the physical health of our small rural community and the economic health of our tourism based economy.

Business operations can and should return to a sustainable level without jeopardizing employees’ or customer safety. Some resorts and businesses may choose to delay opening or not accept visitors if they do not feel comfortable or are not equipped to make the necessary changes to keep their staff and guests safe.

These best practices underscore that commitment to the well being of our residents and guests.

Thank you for being a part of our community.

Linda Jurek

Executive Director, Visit Cook County MN



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## **Best Practices - COVID-19 Reopening Plan**

Disclaimer: The health and safety of our residents and visitors is of the utmost importance. The business community of Cook County looks forward to welcoming new and returning guests back to this area. This document serves as a summary of available information on 4/15/2020. The information changes almost daily which reinforces the fact that many things are still not known or understood about COVID-19. This document is not to be considered the final authority on how to proceed and each business will have to make their own decisions about this. The CDC, MDH and WHO should be considered as the best source for information pertaining to health and safety.

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***Upcoming topics to be added to this guide:*** Workforce Housing & Returning Staff, health care statement,

## **General Health and Safety Precautions**

The following can help prevent the spread of coronaviruses and protect yourself and others from becoming infected:

- **Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol when soap and water are not available**
- **Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands**
- **Avoid close contact with people who are sick**
- **Cover sneezes and cough; wear a cloth face mask in public places to protect yourself and others**
- **Maintain 6'+ distancing while in public**
- **Do not travel if you or a member of your family is experiencing any signs of illness**



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## Visitor Pledge - A Message for our Visitors

Thank you for planning to visit Cook County, MN. Our area has a long history of welcoming visitors to share in the splendors of the North Shore and Gunflint Trail. In fact, the Gunflint Trail Association was among the first tourism associations to be established in the state back in 1936. Over 80% of our local economy is tourism reliant, however, sustainable growth and community well being is our top priority. As you plan your visit, please follow these requests to ensure that you remain protected as well as protect our residents from this pandemic as best as possible.

1. **Stay home if you are sick.** If you are sick or have had contact with someone who is sick, do not go out in public. Contact your local clinic for advice on what to do next and notify any businesses or people you have encountered. [Consult the CDC for the proper safety steps if you are sick.](#)
2. **Be proactive about hygiene.** While traveling and entering businesses, please be extra vigilant to wash your hands, wear cloth face masks and respect the rules and signage posted at the various businesses. Individual businesses have procedures in place to keep patrons and employees safe, please respect those rules and plans they have implemented. Follow the [CDC](#) and [MDH](#) recommendations for handwashing and hygiene efforts.
3. **Have patience.** Businesses are restructuring how they provide services to visitors to keep you and their employees safe. Some communal amenities may not be open for use. As restrictions change, please be patient as they are implemented locally.
4. **Be careful and practice extreme safety.** As a small rural community, we have limited health care resources. In addition, be considerate of the fact that our Emergency Management Services and Fire Departments are all volunteer based. While our emergency services personnel are professionally trained and dedicated to keeping our community safe, taking an unnecessary risk puts these volunteers at increased risk.
5. **Practice physical distancing.** Follow the recommended social distancing guidelines and maintain a 6' distance between yourself and people outside of your group. Stay with your party and do not integrate or push yourself into people outside of your own family unit or traveling group.
6. **Come prepared.** With limited resources available locally, guests are advised to travel with what you'll need during your stay like groceries or cleaning/sanitation supplies. Lodging facilities have increased sanitation procedures, however, it is advised to run your own sanitation protocol on high touch areas (like door knobs, light switches, etc.).
7. **Stay longer.** Why not stay awhile and get to know us better! Extending your stay will not only be beneficial to your mental well-being but it will also allow you to dive a little deeper and [explore the wonders of our area.](#)

## A Message from the Healthcare Sector in Cook County, MN



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April 26, 2020 - In mid-March of 2020, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 (commonly referred to as "coronavirus") to be a pandemic. COVID-19 is a virus that had not been seen in humans before. It is spread primarily through respiratory droplets with symptoms that range from mild to severe, with around 20% of cases requiring hospitalization. A pandemic spreads throughout all corners of the world. This means that even rural, remote communities like Cook County will at some point be impacted by the virus moving through our population.

Recent policy decisions, like Governor Walz's Stay-at-Home Order and, more locally, the county's Travel Advisory, have given us an opportunity to pause by limiting how people move into and out of our community. This pause has given us a chance to prepare ourselves and to adapt to the changing context of living and working alongside this virus. COVID-19 has become a part of life for all of us, our challenge is to manage how the virus spreads to the best of our abilities.

Within the healthcare sector of Cook County, preparedness efforts include building new clinical workflows, increasing our local hospital bed capacity, and building up our ability to test for COVID-19 in people who show symptoms of the virus. From a public health perspective, we are all working toward controlling transmission of the virus, slowing the rate at which it moves through human populations at a regional, state, and global level. We do this by finding people with COVID-19, testing them, isolating them, providing them with medical care as needed, and encouraging their close contacts to also quarantine. Controlling transmission of the virus is a foundational step as we consider how tourism might operate to the safest extent possible in our community.

While we have prepared in the world of health, there are still limitations to our local medical system's capacity. Our local system is designed to provide excellent acute and preventative care, transferring those who need a higher level of care to larger, urban medical hubs. If visitors to our community begin to feel ill, we welcome them to contact Sawtooth Mountain Clinic at 218-387-2330 or go to North Shore Health if they have an emergency. They will likely be advised to return to their home communities in case they do have COVID-19 and their symptoms escalate to the point where they need more intensive medical care than we are able to provide locally.

We applaud efforts by partners in the business sector to thoughtfully plan how they can most safely operate their tourism-based businesses in the era of COVID-19. This guide serves as a useful starting point as businesses think through details related to cleaning, disinfecting, and encouraging social distancing among both staff and guests to their establishments. MDH, CDC, and WHO will continue to serve as the most up-to-date sources of guidance. We recognize that the situation will continue to evolve rapidly and that we all need to be prepared to adjust course accordingly.

Within Cook County we are all committed to the health and safety of our community and recognize the challenges inherent to operating a tourism-based economy during a pandemic. Visitors too will play an important role by taking basic public health precautions to heart as they enjoy time on the North Shore. From a health-based perspective, we appreciate the thoughtful, ongoing conversation with our business partners as we strive to create a dynamic and flexible response to COVID-19.

## Employee Safety | Best Practices During COVID-19

General staff practices and training. More specific protocols under specific job functions.

- Employee Responsibilities
  - Employees should not come to work [if they exhibit any symptoms or feel ill](#). Symptoms may include fever, shortness of breath, loss of taste/smell, exhaustion, etc.
  - Employee breaks should be staggered to limit congregation in one area
  - Employees should wear gloves and cloth masks where practical
  - Staff should be advised to not touch their faces and to practice "social distancing" by standing at least six feet away from guests and other workers
  - Use enhanced signage to remind employees of policies regarding personal hygiene and that promotes disinfection practices and social distancing generally
- Training
  - Implement enhanced protocols and training for staff so they have the tools necessary to improve sanitation practices, limit physical and object interaction, and promote social distancing.
  - Implement a robust [personal hygiene program inclusive of both hand soap and hand sanitizer](#) products for both front-of-house and heart-of-house staff, including a sanitation training program intended to provide comprehensive education to new hires and returning staff. Recommended to wash hands every 30 minutes or so.
- Work station
  - Employees should disinfect office equipment between shifts
  - Encouraged to install plexiglass barriers for the front desk and retail checkout counters;
  - Add hand sanitizer to staff stations and encourage frequent use;
  - Modify practices that require handling of ID's, credit cards etc. Consider "virtual" check-in for lodging facilities where possible
  - Disinfect pens in between guests or give more pens away.
- Customer interaction
  - All employees performing check-in and check-out functions should wear cloth face masks.
  - During payment transactions, place the bill in a sanitized guest check book. Encourage electronic payment and touchless payment when possible.
  - Provide signage at all exterior entries and eventually in pool and fitness areas that remind guests of social distancing guidelines.
- Employee break rooms and staggered scheduling
  - Employee breaks should be staggered to limit congregation in one area
  - Post signage about proper physical distancing and handwashing in all employee lounge areas. Find printable posters: <https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/resources/posters/en/>  
<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/materials/index.html>
  - Arrange seating to allow for 6' distancing between chairs
- Management
  - Recommended pre-shift check in with manager to assess well being.
  - Create an action plan for what happens if/when a staff member becomes ill.
- Staff Housing & Returning Staff -- coming soon

**More details and suggestions:** <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html>  
<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/business/>  
<https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/workplace-safety-and-health/mnosh-compliance-novel-coronavirus-covid-19>  
[Updates related to COVID-19](#)



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# Common Areas & Exteriors - ALL BUSINESSES | Best Practices During COVID-19

## Waiting areas, lobbies and common areas

- Use of “tape” to mark safe distancing for parties in waiting areas, lobbies or other shared spaces that facilitate six-foot distancing from other parties and/or staff where practicable.
- Increase frequency of cleaning between each guest and sanitize hard surfaces as often as possible. Consider removing or taping off lobby furniture to avoid gathering.
- Include use of a disinfectant product for non-food contact surfaces in front-of-house/common areas.
- Post signage in the front desk area, retail space, public restrooms, public elevators, and elsewhere that reminds guests of social distancing guidelines generally, and specifically while waiting in line.
- Set up hand sanitizer stations at entrances, in public bathrooms, computer terminals.
- Consider creating “one way” walking paths to commonly trafficked areas to reduce face-to-face meetings.
- Vending and ice machines should be frequently sanitized, 3x daily.

## Public Restrooms

- Enhance already robust cleaning practices and increase frequency of cleaning, sanitizing and disinfecting these areas.
- Consider sanitizing every two hours.
- Post signage for guests on most effective hand-washing practices.
- Place paper towels and trash receptacles at the exits to use to open the door and discard.

## Exterior & Outside Grounds

- Hourly sanitization of door handles and railings
- Provide signage at all communal locations (fire pit, picnic areas, beaches, etc.) reminding guests of social distancing guidelines and remind them to not move chairs/benches.
- All exterior seating should be arranged to allow for six-foot clearance between chairs. All staff should be trained to identify and put back in place any seating components with less than six-foot clearance.
- Daily cleaning of exterior furniture, increased frequency of highly trafficked areas (picnic tables)
- Playgrounds should remain closed and be marked as such.

**CDC disinfection guidelines:** [Interim Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)

## Lodging Facilities | Best Practices During COVID-19

**Incremental opening** - due to uncertainty of viral spread, it is encouraged that properties consider what incremental opening looks like for their business.

- Reduce number of available rentals until mid-June; or following Governor's recommendations.
- Provide guest with incentives for extending length of stay to reduce number of turnovers

### Front desk area

- Utilize a plastic/glass protector (sneeze guard) at front desks/counters where feasible.
- Develop check-in/check-out (payment) safety procedures that include encouraging electronic payments
- Modify practices that require handling of ID's, credit cards etc. Consider "virtual" check-in for lodging facilities where possible (code to room emailed the day before reservation, no front desk interaction needed).
- Disinfect pens in between guests or give more pens away.
- Maintain availability of hand wipes and/or hand-sanitizer for guests at the counter.
- Put used keys and/or key cards through a sanitation process.
- Provide mask to front desk agents. Hands should be sanitized after each interaction.

### Housekeeping

- **Training**
  - Frequent training and reinforcing the importance of using disinfectants safely and correctly.
  - Housekeeping staff should wear gloves and cloth masks when cleaning, and should wash hands after removing gloves.
  - Review manufacturer's instructions for proper use to get the most virus killing protection. Many cleaning products need to remain on hard surfaces for several minutes in order to work most effectively.
  - Follow the schedule and perform routine cleaning and disinfection of all contact surfaces in public areas, guestrooms, television remote controls, toilet flush handles, door handles, water faucet handles, sinks, railing, countertops and flooring.
- **Sanitation**
  - Enhance disinfection practices for hard surfaces in all rooms and common spaces, as well as all bedding and cloth surface materials, which should be washed at the highest heat practicable with effective disinfectant products.
  - Heightened focus on sanitizing high touch areas (door knobs, light switches, remotes, kitchen appliances, thermostats, windows frames, etc.)
  - Review "Exterior & Common Areas" cleaning procedures and increase frequency of cleaning.
  - Refer to the CDC disinfection guidelines for maximizing sanitation procedures: [Interim Recommendations for US Community Facilities with Suspected/Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019](#)
- **Linens**
  - Some properties are recommending guests bring their own pillow and blankets.
  - If property is providing linens, consider triple sheeting beds and removing bed spreads.
  - Consider upgrading pillows and covering beds with waterproof mattress pad and antimicrobial materials that can be wiped down after each stay.

- Wear a cloth mask and gloves, while stripping linens and collecting towels. Do not fluff linens, roll together to decrease virus spread.
- Place all dirty lines in a disposable bag.
- Linens may become contaminated with the virus, so it is also important to add bleach and disinfectant when washing laundry. Bed scarves and bedspreads should be washed between each guest.
- Shrink wrap linens for transport from the laundry facility to the unit they will be installed.
- Temporarily discontinue guest laundry service where provided.
- **Turnovers & Check-in/out procedures**
  - Consider allowing rooms to remain vacant for a period of time between guests where practicable. Allow a minimum of 72-hours before housekeeping or maintenance enters a previously occupied room/unit.
  - Increase turn time for housekeeping. Consider later check-in time (4pm) to allow an additional hour for HK to complete daily tasks.
  - Request guests start dishwashers prior to departure. Re-run sanitize cycle on dishwashers by housekeeping.
- **Frequency of cleaning**
  - Increase cleaning of daily common areas (lobby, public restrooms, entrances, etc.)
    - Entrances (door handles, railings,) hourly
    - Public restrooms: every two hours
    - Lobby: 3x daily
    - Vending & ice machine: 3x daily
- **Staff interaction**
  - Discontinue daily housekeeping. Instead, put in place a process for replenishing guest amenities per request.
  - Discourage staff from entering a room during a visitors' stay except for necessary maintenance issues. If maintenance issues arise, implement a protocol for limited person-to-person contact with guests and staff.
  - Ensure cloth masks are worn at all times when interacting with guests.
- **Disinfectant and chemical recommendations**
  - Switch to and use disinfectant products that have been pre-approved by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for use against emerging viral pathogens. The most current list can be found here: <https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>
- Sanitizer solutions for hands and cleaning will be stocked on all housekeeping carts/kits.
- Refer to the MN Dept of Health for recommendations on [Lodging Establishment Cleaning Guidance for COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#)

### Reservation & Cancellations

- Consider allowing rooms to remain vacant for a period of time between guests
- Stagger arrivals - allowing 72 hours between guests
- Encourage guests to stay longer. The longer the guest stays, the less frequent housekeeping is needed.
- Encourage temporary elimination of one night stays.
- Prepare a mass cancellation policy in case reservations need to be cancelled by property due to health and safety concerns or government requirements.

### Pools, Saunas, Hot Tubs, Fitness Center, etc.

- Pools and spas: should remain closed until MN Health Department deems appropriate.
  - When it becomes appropriate to open pools and spas, consider limiting capacity by 30% or more to facilitate physical distancing.





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- Utilize higher amounts of chlorine within safety limits. Increase frequency of overnight chlorine “shock” to sanitize the pool area. Pools and Spas should not be over 10ppm Free Chlorine or .5ppm Combined Chlorine when they are occupied.
  - Monitor MDH guidance for enhanced disinfectant practices.
  - For more specific information on best practices for pools: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html?deliveryName=USCDC\\_248\\_DM25447](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html?deliveryName=USCDC_248_DM25447)
- Close fitness centers, workout rooms and recreation areas.
  - When it becomes appropriate to open fitness centers, workout rooms and recreation areas, reduce capacity to promote physical distancing and post signage to explain your policy to guests and staff.
  - Increase frequency of sanitization and disinfection practices.

### **Campgrounds**

- Follow guidelines and recommendations from Governor Walz, Superior National Forest Service and MN DNR. The DNR has a special page devoted to outdoor recreation: [COVID-19 Outdoor Recreation, Facilities and Public Guidelines](#)
- Porta-potties / Outhouses: increase cleaning and provide sanitizer at high traffic locations
- Bath houses: Post social distancing signs and increase cleaning protocols. Clean Every two hours.

## Dining | Best Practices During COVID-19

**Incremental opening** - due to uncertainty of viral spread, it is encouraged that businesses consider what incremental opening looks like for their business.

- Temporarily discontinue table service until mid-June and/or follow the Governor's recommendations.
- Revise menu offerings to promote takeout service. Provide guests with online menus and preorder information.
- Utilize single-use or disposable cups, plates and utensils.

### Counter/Cashier

- Utilize a plastic/glass protector (sneeze guard) at front desks/counters where feasible.
- Provide hand wipes and/or hand-sanitizer and trash receptacle for guests at the counter.
- Recommended POS terminals to be assigned to a single server where possible and sanitized between each user and before and after each shift. If multiple servers are assigned to a POS terminal, servers will sanitize their hands after each use. Avoid touching your face at all times.
- Encourage electronic payment; Discourage cash payments.
- Disinfect ipads/keypads between each guest use for payment.
- During transactions, place the bill in a sanitized guest check book.
- Develop a sanitation process for pens and guest check book to be sanitized between each party.
- All employees performing check-in and check-out functions should wear face masks and gloves during those processes. Gloves should be changed after coming into contact with anything handed them by a guest, Hands should be sanitized between glove changes.
- Employees should be reminded to not touch their face with or without gloves.
- Frequent reminders and signage about proper handwashing technique.

### Service, Ordering & Seating

- Ordering & Menu Offering
  - Provide disposable or sanitizable (laminated) menus for guests
  - Provide online menu options
  - Develop system for call in or delivery orders
  - Prepare more "Grab and Go" style food options
  - Regularly update Visit Cook County with hours of operation and ordering protocols
- Indoor floor spacing and service
  - Eliminate table service entirely, for the time being based on MDH recommendations.
  - To the extent practicable, consider removing tables from the restaurant floor or other measures that provide better separation and physical distancing between dining parties.
  - Sanitize each table between seating, including menus, guest check books, pens and any other common-use items.
  - Servers should wear face masks and gloves for table service.
- Condiments and common-use items
  - Remove salt and pepper shakers, ketchup, and other common use items from the restaurant floor.
  - Provide these items only on-demand and wash/sanitize them between uses.
  - Consider disposal single use condiments for guest use
- Buffets/Continental/Grab n Go
  - Buffets should continue to be closed in both restaurant and lodging settings for the foreseeable future.
  - Breakfast buffets in lodging settings can be replaced by pre-packaged breakfast options and/or room service delivery.

- Create signage next to all grab and go offerings stating “Do Not Touch Unless Prepared to Purchase”
- Outdoor spacing and service
  - Hourly sanitization of door handles and railings
  - Provide signage at all communal locations reminding guests of social distancing guidelines.
  - All exterior seating should be arranged to allow for six-foot clearance between chairs. All staff should be trained to identify and put back in place any seating components with less than six-foot clearance.
  - Thorough cleaning after guest departure and frequent cleaning of exterior furniture to ensure sanitation.
- Food prep
  - Continue to follow MDH food prep safety standards
  - Masks and gloves should be worn when handling or preparing food and when washing dishes.

#### **Waiting areas, lobbies and common areas**

- Use of “tape” to mark safe distancing for parties in waiting areas, lobbies or other shared spaces that facilitate six-foot distancing from other parties and/or staff where practicable.
- Increase frequency of cleaning between each guest and sanitize hard surfaces as often as possible.
- Include use of a disinfectant product for non-food contact surfaces in front-of-house/common areas.

#### **Request of guests**

- Guests should be encouraged to dine in their rooms/rentals.
- Direct guests to box their own leftovers to minimize contact.

#### **Staff practices and training**

- Consider a position of a certified Food Protection Manager.
- Eliminate cloth server towels and provide single-use paper towels for servers;
- Train employees on proper glassware handling procedures; touch only the bottom half of the object (i.e. handle stemware by the stem and other glasses by the lower quadrant where possible). Do not touch a guest’s glass when refilling beverages; using a new glass with each refill.
- Hand washing is required after clearing dishes or glassware, touching money, or other soiled items;
- Hand washing is required immediately before preparing and/or serving food or beverages;
- Increase signage to remind employees of policies regarding hand hygiene (as well as discouraging them from touching their face), and that promotes disinfection practices and social distancing generally.
- Work stations should be set up to practice social distancing of 6’ apart. Remap service floor to avoid crossing paths during service.

## Retail & Shopping | Best Practices During COVID-19

**Incremental opening** - due to uncertainty of viral spread, it is encouraged that businesses consider what incremental opening looks like for their business.

- Consider ways to limit the number of people in your business. 6' waiting areas.
- Provide personal digital or window based shopping experience for patrons.

### Counter/Cashier

- Utilize a plastic/glass protector (sneeze guard) at front desks/counters where feasible.
- Provide hand wipes and/or hand-sanitizer and trash receptacle for guests at counter.
- Encourage electronic payment; Discourage cash payments.
- Disinfect ipads/keypads between each guest use for payment.
- During transactions, place the bill in a sanitized guest check book.
- Develop a sanitation process for pens and guest check book to be sanitized between each party.
- All employees performing check-in and check-out functions should wear face masks and gloves during those processes. Gloves should be changed after coming into contact with anything handed them by a guest, Hands should be sanitized between glove changes.
- Employees should be reminded to not touch their face with or without gloves.
- Frequent reminders and signage about proper handwashing technique.

### Guest Signage & Capacity

- Place "Look with your eyes, not your hands" signage in store.
- Strongly encourage guests to wear masks when entering your business.
- Consider implementing a max capacity limit for your store that allows for proper social distancing. Post capacity on your door.
- Consider methods of showcasing your offerings without allowing people in the store.
- "Walk up" windows or curbside delivery offerings to patrons are recommended.
- Regularly update Visit Cook County with hours of operation and ordering protocols.

### Virtual or Personal Shopping Experience

- Consider implementing a virtual shopping experience.
  - Have an ipad/smartphone available for staff to use to show guests around the store.
  - Connect ipad/smartphone to chosen account platform and create detailed instructions on how to connect to shop remotely for both employees and patrons.
  - Set a time limit for each virtual shopping experience.
  - Set up appointments for virtual shopping, or a "take a number" system.
  - Sanitize device after each use.
- Create thorough written descriptions of items and train staff on how to describe products to customers. Think about all senses, look, feel, smell, weight, etc.
- Set up a separate pick up and shopping order phone line to communicate with your customers.
- Implement a numbering system for pick up orders and pick up procedure.
- Install a monitor/screen in window display to offer virtual tours, videos and specials to customers.
- Post signs in window encouraging guests to follow you on social media.

### Staff practices and training

- Refer to page 4 for more information and staff safety and proper cleaning.
- Hand washing is required after touching money, or other soiled items;
- Increase signage to remind employees of policies regarding hand hygiene (as well as discouraging them from touching their face), and that promotes disinfection practices and social distancing generally.

## Outfitting & Rentals | Best Practices During COVID-19

**Incremental opening** - due to uncertainty of viral spread, it is encouraged that businesses consider what incremental opening looks like for their business.

- Consider what an appropriate sanitation schedule looks like and scale appropriately.
- Prep cancellation plan to be prepared if health and safety concerns rise.

### BWCAW Trip Planning & Permits

- Follow USFS guidelines for permitting and planning.
- Encourage BWCAW guests to print permits from home.
- Encourage guests to only consider trips with people within their home group.
- Increase pre-trip communication with guests
  - Recommend guests to avoid entering a portage when another group is present.
  - Ask guests to run a health assessment before departing for their trip. Remind them that they will not have immediate medical assistance while in the BWCAW.

### Counter/Cashier

- Utilize a plastic/glass protector (sneeze guard) at front desks/counters where feasible.
- Provide hand wipes and/or hand-sanitizer and trash receptacle for guests at the counter.
- Encourage electronic payment; Discourage cash payments.
- Disinfect ipads/keypads between each guest use for payment.
- During transactions, place the bill in a sanitized guest check book.
- Develop a sanitation process for pens and guest check books to be sanitized between each party.
- All employees performing check-in and check-out functions should wear face masks and gloves during those processes. Gloves should be changed after coming into contact with anything handed them by a guest, Hands should be sanitized between glove changes.
- Employees should be reminded to not touch their face with or without gloves.
- Frequent reminders and signage about proper handwashing technique.

### Rentals

- Customer communication
  - Establish and stage pickup times with guests.
  - Stage canoes and gear on beach/landing for outfitter rentals.
- Pick up and drop off
  - Limit person to person contact. Consider standing signage notating your business and customers near gear.
  - Create separate pick up and drop off windows/areas
- Canoe and Outfitting Gear - sanitize after each use
  - Hot steam power wash all canoes, kayaks, paddles and life jackets.
  - Launder all sleeping bags
  - Hot wash and sanitize all cookware.
  - Wipe with disinfectant and increase time between rental to about 72 hours for:
    - Packs
    - Ropes
    - Tarps
    - Sleeping pads
    - flashlights/headlamps
    - Raingear
- Rental Gear - sanitize after each use
  - Water sports: Hot steam power wash all canoes, kayaks, SUPs, paddles and life jackets after each use.



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- Fishing poles: wipe down all hard surfaces with disinfectant. Let rest for 3-5 days before next rental.
- Bicycles: wipe down all hard surfaces with disinfectant. Remove bicycle seat and let rest for 3 days before the next rental.
- Winter sporting equipment rental will be assessed in the fall.
- Food prep
  - Continue to follow MDH food prep safety standards
  - Employees should wear cloth masks and gloves when preparing food.

#### **Shuttle Vehicles**

- Require cloth face covering on driver and passengers
- Minimize groups in shuttle vehicles. Encourage only members of the same group to travel together.
- Wipe down surfaces before and after each trip with spray disinfectant & paper towels (1/3c. Bleach to 1 gallon of water.) This is more thorough and economical than using disinfectant wipes. Wipe all door handles, door edges touched by passengers, seat belt buckles, hard surfaces of van wall surrounding windows where passengers are seated, and dashboard area if a passenger rides in front seat.
- Hand wash station near where passengers load
- Hand sanitizer available to passengers, clean bottle regularly
- Install plexiglass barrier behind driver/front seat.
- Keep windows open

## Outdoor Activities | Best Practices During COVID-19

**Incremental opening** - due to uncertainty of viral spread, it is encouraged that businesses consider what incremental opening looks like for their business.

- Consider what an appropriate sanitation schedule looks like and scale appropriately.

### Lutsen Mountains: Gondola and Alpine Slide

- Customer touch points are:
  - Signing the release form
  - Making payment
  - Loading on the chair lift
  - Riding the sled
  - Carrying the sled
- Areas where we need to address social distancing:
  - Line to purchase tickets
  - Line at the top of the slide
  - Line to board chairlift (different from, adjacent to ticket line).
- Procedures that address all above:
  - Releases will be signed by the customer's phone, if they are willing and able. If not, we will provide a disinfected tablet.
  - Email online orders with link to complete release in advance.
  - Create poster/counter display for area resorts advising guests to complete waiver online in advance.
  - Payment will be made by holding up the credit card against the glass of the ticket office window (glass will need to be installed).
  - Offer same day online purchase to encourage digital orders.
  - Offer pay-by-phone
  - Hand sanitizer dispensers will be located at the bottom and top terminals and at the ticket office.
  - Tickets will be issued with bar codes that will open admission gates automatically without staff contact.
  - Only related parties will be allowed to ride the chair together.
  - A maze will be set up at the top of the slide to allow room for social distancing. A large sign at the entrance will instruct riders to stay 6' away from the next customer. Line will be monitored by staff.
  - Paint 6' queue lines in maze.
  - A similar maze will be established at the ticket office. Line will be monitored by staff.
  - Alpine slide carts are started down the track by the customer, following posted instructions and observing red/yellow/green traffic lights at the top of each track.
  - Control handles on each cart will be disinfected following each use.
- All staff handling alpine slide carts will wear gloves, and will use best efforts to maximize physical distance from customers and from other staff.



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(218) 387-2788 | [www.visitcookcounty.com](http://www.visitcookcounty.com)

## Events & Weddings | Best Practices During COVID-19

Events are an important part of the visitor experience in Cook County. However, by nature, they draw groups of people together. The following is the recommendation of Visit Cook County to event planners and organizers.

### Event considerations

- **Capacity.** All events must follow the capacity guidelines set by Governor Walz or the Federal Government.
- **Cancellation.** Public events or races should be cancelled no less than 60 day prior to the event.
- **Social distancing.** Small events may be allowed if they follow proper social distancing guidelines.
- **Timing.** Recommended that no public events are permitted to occur until June 15th at the earliest. Timeline may be extended depending on virus containment and government recommendations.

### Examples of events that meet the social distancing guidelines:

- Naturalist programming
- Virtual races
- Live stream concerts/performances
- Events with no group gathering, i.e. potentially the Gunflint Trail's Biggest Blueberry Contest (TBD)

Weddings





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## Communication Plan & Resources

### 1. Stay Safe Script for Employees to Visitors

Employees should refer to the “Visitor Pledge” in their conversations and interactions with potential guests. If a potential visitor is experiencing any symptoms of the virus, they should not travel to northeastern MN.

### 2. Media and Public Relations - First Point of Contact - Visit Cook County

In an effort to create and manage cohesive messaging regarding the impact of tourism and COVID-19, Visit Cook County asks that media relation requests regarding tourism (businesses opening) in northeastern MN, should be directed to Visit Cook County. Visit Cook County will suggest appropriate contacts outside of the tourism sector.

Linda Jurek, Executive Director, Visit Cook County [linda@visitcookcounty.com](mailto:linda@visitcookcounty.com)  
Kjersti Vick, Director of PR and Marketing, Visit Cook County  
[kjersti@visitcookcounty.com](mailto:kjersti@visitcookcounty.com)

### 3. Grand Marais and Cook County Contacts

Rena Rogers, Interim County Administrator - [rena.rogers@co.cook.mn.us](mailto:rena.rogers@co.cook.mn.us)  
Mike Roth, City of Grand Marais Administrator - [cityhall@boreal.org](mailto:cityhall@boreal.org)  
Mayor Jay Arrowsmith-DeCoux - [jay.a.decoux@gmail.com](mailto:jay.a.decoux@gmail.com)

## Other Resources:

- Minnesota Covid Landing Page <https://mn.gov/covid19/>
- Cook County CoronaVirus Hub: <https://coronavirus-response-cook-county-minnesota-1-cookcountymn.hub.arcgis.com/>
- Join the [Cook County Hospitality Business Hub - COVID-19](#)
- Centers for Disease Control - [www.cdc.org](http://www.cdc.org)
- Hospitality Minnesota - [www.hospitalityminnesota.com](http://www.hospitalityminnesota.com) - Sign up for daily updates
- National Restaurant Association - [www.restaurant.org](http://www.restaurant.org)
- American Hotel and Lodging Association - [www.ahla.com](http://www.ahla.com)
- National Association of RV Parks and Campgrounds - [www.arvc.org](http://www.arvc.org)
- Explore Minnesota <https://mn.gov/tourism-industry/coronavirus.jsp>
- Minnesota DEED:
  - Businesses: <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/business/>
  - Employees: <https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/covid/safework/>
  - MN Deed Business Reopening Plan:  
[https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID\\_19\\_business\\_plan\\_template.pdf](https://www.dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_business_plan_template.pdf)
- MN Department of Health: [Lodging Establishment Cleaning Guidance for COVID-19 \(PDF\)](#)