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## ***Return to Racing Recommendations for Athletes***

August 19, 2020

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## ***Return to Racing Recommendations for Athletes***

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The Return to Racing Recommendations for Athletes are for athletes interested in beginning to train and compete again once racing resumes. These have been developed by experienced athletes, race directors and medical experts relying on expert resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and sport-specific guidelines developed by the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) and the International Triathlon Union (ITU).

The recommendations provided in this document are broadly focused to allow for clear, flexible, and scalable application across all sizes and scopes of endurance events. Importantly, athletes and event organizers must adhere to any rules or regulations issued by their federal, state, and local authorities; these recommendations are designed to be applied based on those local directives. While event organizers will be taking adequate measures to promote physical distancing and proper hygiene, athletes are also expected to do their part to ensure the health and safety of themselves and fellow competitors.

A separate document, [Return to Racing Recommendations](#) for Race Directors, has been published for race directors to implement specific adjustments at their events.

## Section I: Phased Approach to Return to Racing<sup>1</sup>

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The Return to Racing Recommendations for Athletes have been developed to align with the [USA Triathlon Safe Return to Multisport Guidelines](#) and the three-phased approach for resuming normal business and lifestyle operations as provided by the Federal Government. Please note, these recommendations apply to the location of the athlete's event, and do not address issues related to athlete travel from areas of risk different than the event location.

- **Phase I Overview:** No events are permitted by state or local authorities. Virtual racing only and training with strict limitations while maintaining adherence to mass gathering thresholds, consistent with federal, state and local authorities, and aligned with local circumstances.
- **Phase II Overview:** In-person racing is permitted with local event size restrictions and strict limitations. Training is permitted with moderate limitations while continuing to adhere to mass gathering thresholds, physical distancing and sanitization protocols. All athlete and event decisions should continue to be consistent with federal, state and local authorities, and aligned with local circumstances.
- **Phase III Overview:** In-person racing is permitted with no local event size restrictions and moderate limitations. Training is permitted with appropriate modifications, while continuing to adhere to physical distancing and sanitization protocols. All athlete and event decisions should continue to be consistent with federal, state and local authorities, and aligned with local circumstances.

There are several resources available for determining what phase your state and local jurisdictions are currently operating under. Refer to your local and state health department websites for this information. You can also reference many sources that have compiled information nationwide like the New York Times [Coronavirus Reopen Map](#) and NPR's [State-by-State Guide for Reopening](#).



## Section II: Personal Health and Safety when Preparing to Train and Compete Again

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The following provides guidance for athletes training for, and participating in, events in Phases 2 and 3, and constitutes a collection of recommendations from OSHA, WHO, CDC, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, ITU, USOPC and leaders in the endurance community.

### 1. EVALUATE YOUR HEALTH<sup>2,3</sup>

Self-monitoring for symptoms is critical when training for, and participating in, an event. All athletes should self-monitor for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 daily. If athletes develop any symptoms, as outlined below, they should self-isolate and contact a healthcare professional.

If athletes have tested positive for COVID-19, have had any symptoms or are questioning their health at all prior to an event, they should get clearance from their medical provider to train and compete. If athletes have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, they should have quarantined themselves for 14 days prior to an event. Moreover, athletes should not compete unless three days (72 hours) have passed since recovery. Recovery is defined as resolution of fever without use of fever-reducing medications and improvement in respiratory symptoms, e.g. cough, shortness of breath, etc. **See Section IV: Resources for additional screening questions.**

### 2. SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS<sup>4</sup>

COVID-19 is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. Since it is a new virus, people are susceptible to infection. Furthermore, there is not currently a vaccine or anti-viral treatment for COVID-19. This increases the risk of infection and potential complications associated with this illness. Therefore, it is imperative to prevent the spread of COVID-19 by rapidly identifying those with COVID-19, having them self-isolate and receive medical treatment. Athletes should be familiar with [signs and symptoms of COVID-19](#). COVID-19 symptoms range from mild, cold-like symptoms, to respiratory failure.

The three most common symptoms include:

- Fever (>100-degree F)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

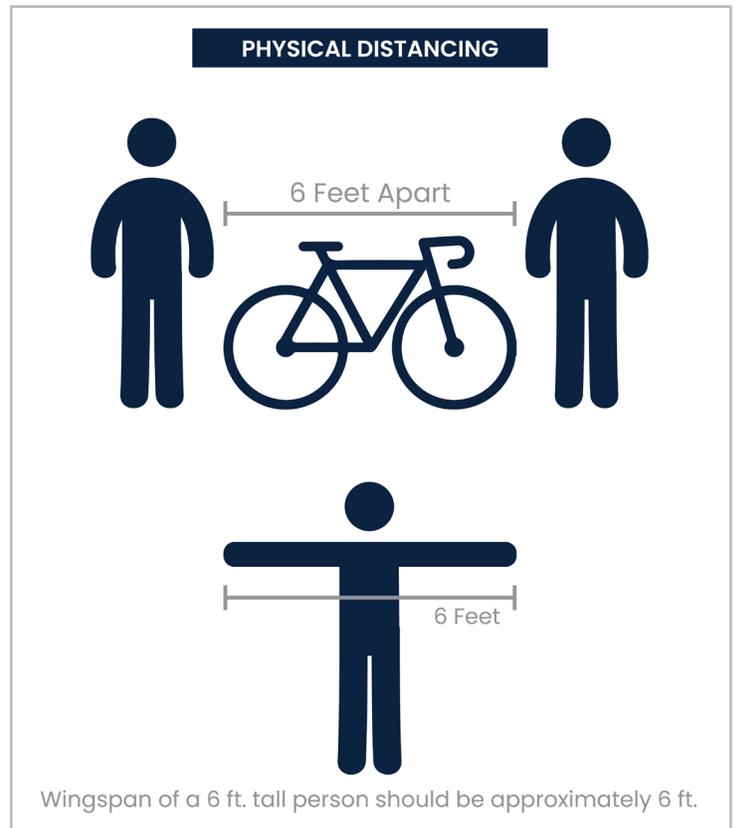
Less common symptoms include:

- Chills
- Sore throat
- Headache
- Muscle & joint pain
- Chills
- Congestion
- Loss of sense of smell
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea

### 3. PREVENTING THE SPREAD<sup>5</sup>

Face coverings can be an important tool to prevent the spread of communicable diseases. Athletes should follow the guidance of their state and local authorities regarding face coverings. In addition, athletes can prevent the spread of COVID-19 by adhering to the following:

- Staying more than 6 feet away from others
- Avoiding touching their face
- Frequently washing their hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or using alcohol-based hand sanitizer with a minimum of 60% alcohol if their hands are not soiled
- Covering their mouth and nose with a bent elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing, disposing of the tissue in the trash, and washing their hands or using hand sanitizer if their hands are not soiled
- Frequently cleaning commonly touched surfaces with antiseptic cleanser
- Cover their mouth and nose with a cloth face cover when around others



### 4. RETURNING TO TRAINING

[Athletes should consider partnering with their local USA Triathlon certified coaches](#) to provide in-person and virtual coaching sessions that can be geared more individually to the athlete needs and geographical constraints. Additional resources for athletes will be released later in the month — including a Return to Racing Training Program, which provides best practices for athletes to personally resume safe training and racing, and Return to Racing Athlete Checklist. The guidelines, articles, videos, drills and plans included in the Return to Racing Training Program have been put together by more than 30 USA Triathlon-certified coaches.

- Notably, it is important to train for potentially new race policies and procedures such as carrying fluids during a race. There may be fewer or no aid stations at events to help mitigate spreading the virus. Athletes should be prepared to carry their own fluids and energy replacement during the race. Hydration packs and reservoirs are permitted in the USA Triathlon Competitive rules.
- Consider training with a face covering while biking and running if the local jurisdiction of the event requires them to be worn.
- If athletes wish to train with a group, they should continue to follow guidance from federal, state and local authorities<sup>6</sup>. If meeting people who are not part of an athlete's household, it is recommended to avoid all physical contact and maintain physical distancing. Avoiding meeting in busy areas is also recommended. See [USA Triathlon Safe Return to Multisport Guidelines](#) for a phased approach to outdoor camps/clinics, swimming, biking and running related to training.

## Section III: Navigating Race Week

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Coronavirus will undoubtedly have a long-lasting and significant impact on multisport events, training, and racing. New requirements may vary by jurisdiction and race logistics will likely be more cumbersome and time consuming. Athletes should be patient, prepared and flexible.

Athletes are expected to come to events prepared for changes as compared to past years. Race organizers have been working diligently to develop adjustments that encourage a safe and fair event while promoting physical distancing in every aspect of the event. Athletes should abide by the directives of the race directors and local authorities.

### 1. FOLLOW INFECTION PREVENTION MEASURES

It is each individual member of the multisport community's personal responsibility to keep themselves and others safe while in a public setting. The race director will be implementing enhanced safety measures, but it is up to athletes to follow their directions as well as the guidance of state and local authorities. Enhanced safety measures may mean more restrictive logistics, longer wait times, and increased flexibility and cooperation required of athletes.

Basic infection prevention measures include, but are not limited to:

- **Physical Distancing:** When in line for restrooms, packet pick-up, food, race start or other high-traffic areas, physical distancing is encouraged by standing at least 6 feet apart from other people
- **Toilets:** With a higher frequency of cleanings expected, athletes may have to wait longer to use the toilet
- **Hand Hygiene:** Utilize hand washing and sanitizing stations around the event venue. Athletes are also encouraged to bring their own hand sanitizer.
- **Respiratory Hygiene:** The CDC recommends wearing face coverings in public settings where other physical distancing measures are difficult to maintain.<sup>7</sup> Follow the direction of your local authority regarding face coverings.
- Cover your mouth and nose with your bent elbow or tissue when you cough or sneeze, and then dispose of the used tissue immediately and wash your hands
- Be aware of your surroundings when spitting or nose blowing, and use an abundance of caution when spitting/nose blowing on the course or at the venue

### 2. TRAVEL / LODGING<sup>8</sup>

If you travel to a race, consider the risk associated with the following modes of travel:

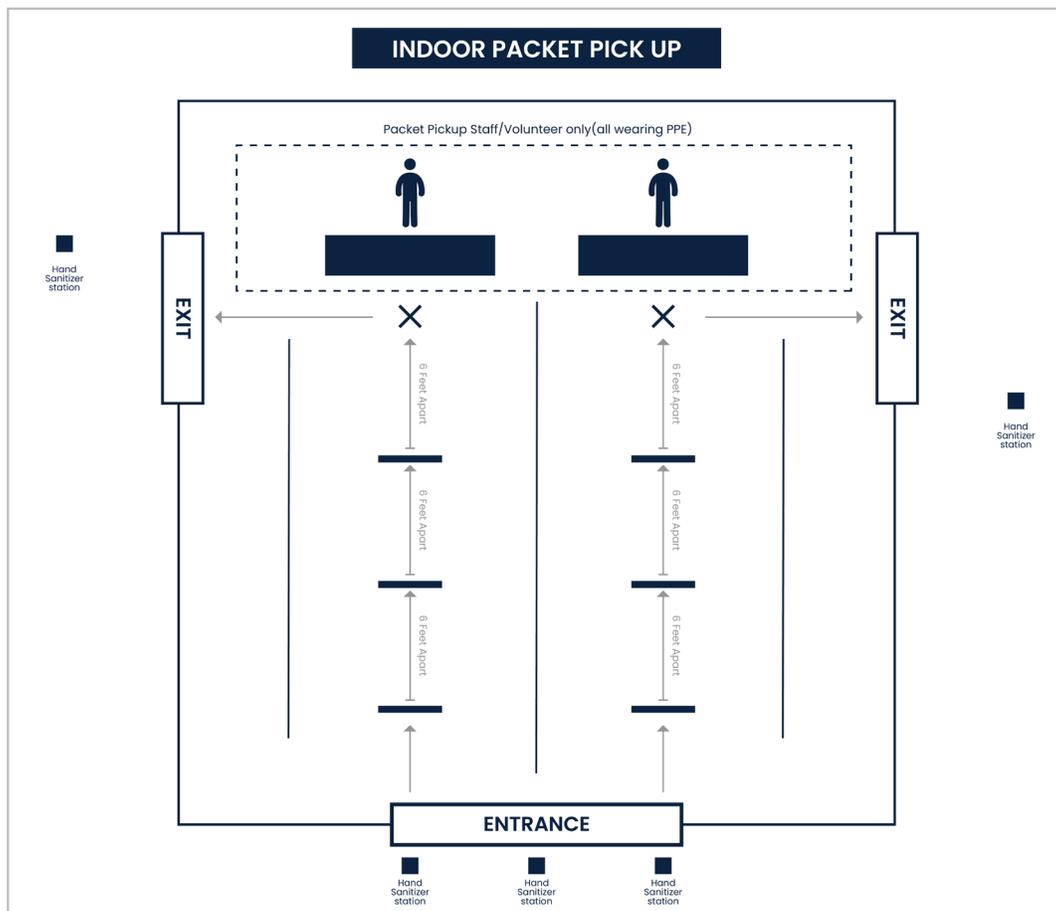
- **Airplane:** Most viruses and other germs do not spread easily on flights because of how air is circulated and filtered, but sitting within 6 feet of someone who has the virus for a prolonged period of time can put you at risk of getting or spreading COVID-19
- **Bus or Train:** Consider standing or sitting at least 6 feet from other passengers
- **Car:** Exercise caution when making stops in public places to limit close contact with someone who could be infected. Consider preparing food and packing ample supplies to minimize stops along the trip.

- **RV Parks and Campgrounds:** While helping to minimize the number of stops athletes may need to make along the way, exercise caution when staying at RV parks and campgrounds, especially those that are heavily occupied
- If you stay overnight outside of your home, consider the associated risk:
  - Treat the hotel, motel or rental property as a public place and avoid close contact with others and wash your hands often
  - Athletes should reference the hotel's cleaning procedures or clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces, such as tables, doorknobs, light switches, countertops, handles, desks, remote controls, toilets, and sink faucets
  - Wash any non-pre-wrapped plastic plates, cups or silverware before using

### 3. REGISTRATION / PACKET PICK-UP

**Registration:** The race organizer may require all registrations to be completed online before arrival at the venue. On-site registration may not be available.

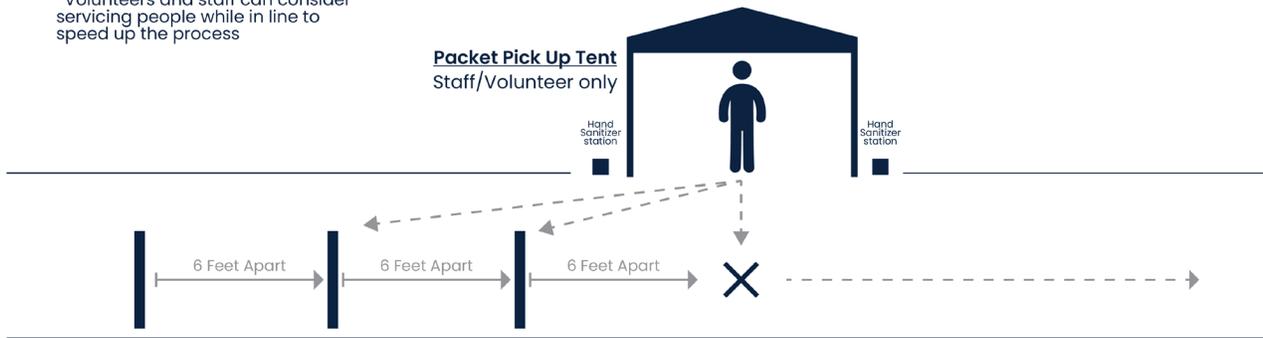
**Packet Pick-Up:** The race organizer may require certain age groups or other groups of athletes to arrive at different times to mitigate the amount of people present at the venue at one time. Additionally, many race organizers have been given the option to allow athletes to retrieve packets on behalf of their participating friends or family members. Contact your event for further details on their specific process.



## OUTDOOR PACKET PICK UP

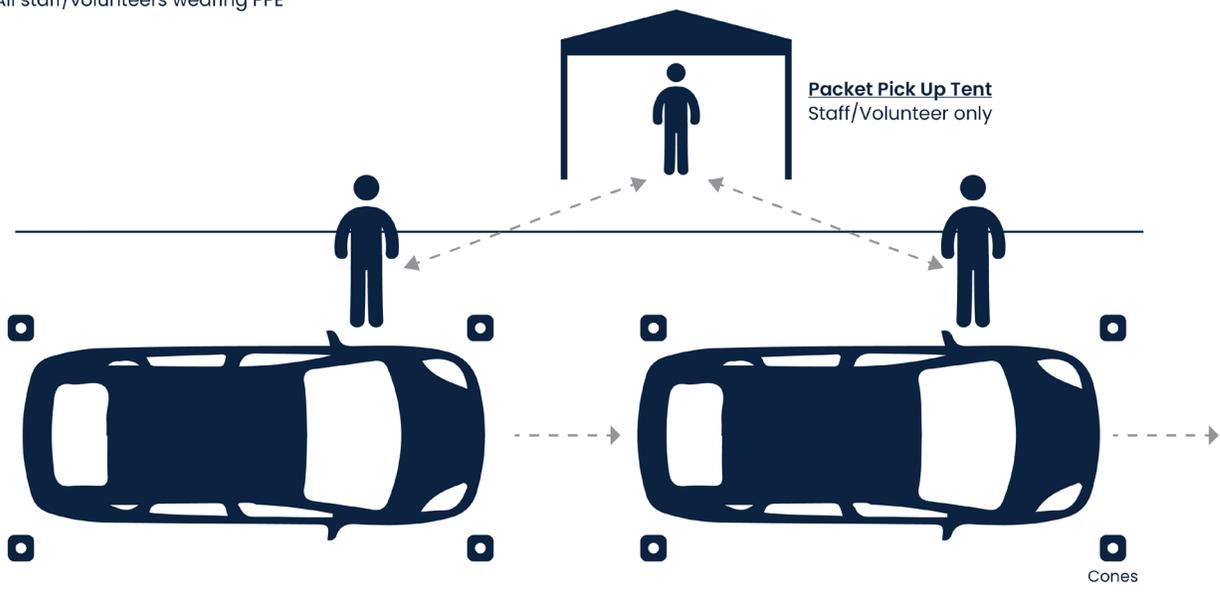
All staff/volunteers wearing PPE

\*Volunteers and staff can consider servicing people while in line to speed up the process



## VEHICULAR PACKET PICK UP

All staff/volunteers wearing PPE



#### 4. COURSE FAMILIARIZATIONS / RACE BRIEFINGS / SWIM WARM-UP

Anticipate virtual race briefings and course overviews. Consider reviewing the course yourself in advance on a computer mapping program like Google Maps. If a swim familiarization or warm-up will not be available before your event, consider options to do on your own if the swim area allows and is permitted by the race director. If this is not an option, consider visiting an open public body of water to begin the acclimation process of being in the open water. It is incumbent upon the athletes to be prepared for all event changes and read through provided race information prior to arrival at the event.

#### 5. EXPO

The Expo may be altered or eliminated to promote physical distancing and mitigate person-to-person contact. Athletes should bring spare parts, nutrition, and other race essentials with them to the event.

#### 6. BAG DROP / GEAR CHECK

Athletes should anticipate that an event may not have a bag drop and/or gear check location. Confirm baggage policies with the event organizer directly. Consider bringing only the essentials needed to race and leaving other items in your car, at your hotel or at home.

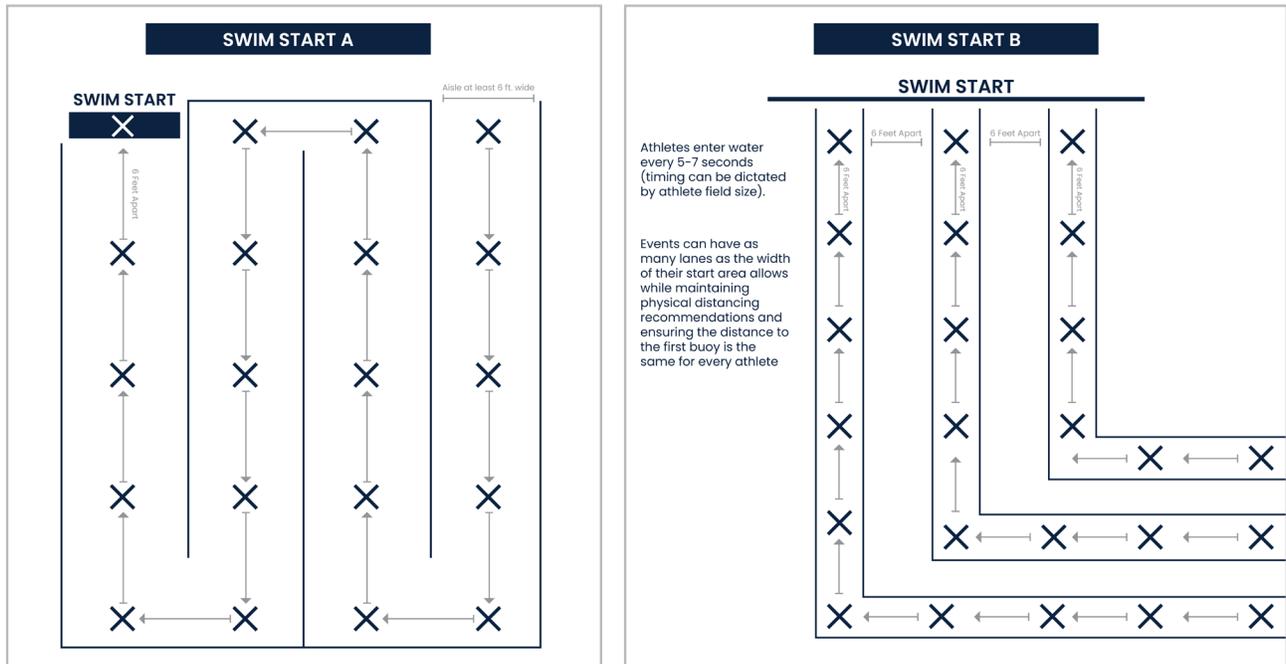
#### 7. BODY MARKING

Athletes should consider body marking themselves prior to arriving at the race to minimize contact with volunteers who would typically assist. Per USA Triathlon Competitive Rules, athletes should have visible body markings that display their race number and that will not be covered up by any type of race kit, compression sock, or arm band. If self-body-marking, numbers should be drawn prior to application of sunscreen or lotions. Athletes should also consider asking the race director if tattoos are available.

Race numbers should be placed in the following locations on your body: one vertically on each bicep in between the shoulder and elbow, one on each calf in between the knee and ankle. If only two numbers are possible, arm markings are prioritized over the leg markings since the arm markings will provide a better level of visibility on the swim versus the legs. Ensure markings are still visible if a wetsuit or other coverings are worn.







**Pool Swims:** Athletes should anticipate a time-trial format. Athletes may be asked to self-seed themselves from fastest to slowest to mitigate passing in the water. They may be prohibited from swimming in the same lane towards each other.

**Bike Course:** Athletes should exercise an abundance of caution at pinch points on the course where they are forced to ride close to each other because of road conditions or other obstacles. Bike position rules should be followed, which discourages cyclists riding in close proximity to each other (except in draft-legal events). See [rule 5.10 in the USA Triathlon Competitive Rulebook](#). Athletes should allow ample safe distance when passing and ensure the passed athlete falls back after fully completing the pass. Make sure bikes are in proper working condition upon arrival since mechanics may be limited on the course. Be prepared to fix your own flats and carry your own small tool kit to make minor repairs without support.

**Run Course:** Athletes are recommended to maintain at least 6 feet of distance from other participants. They should exercise an abundance of caution at pinch points on the course where athletes are forced to naturally run closer to each other.

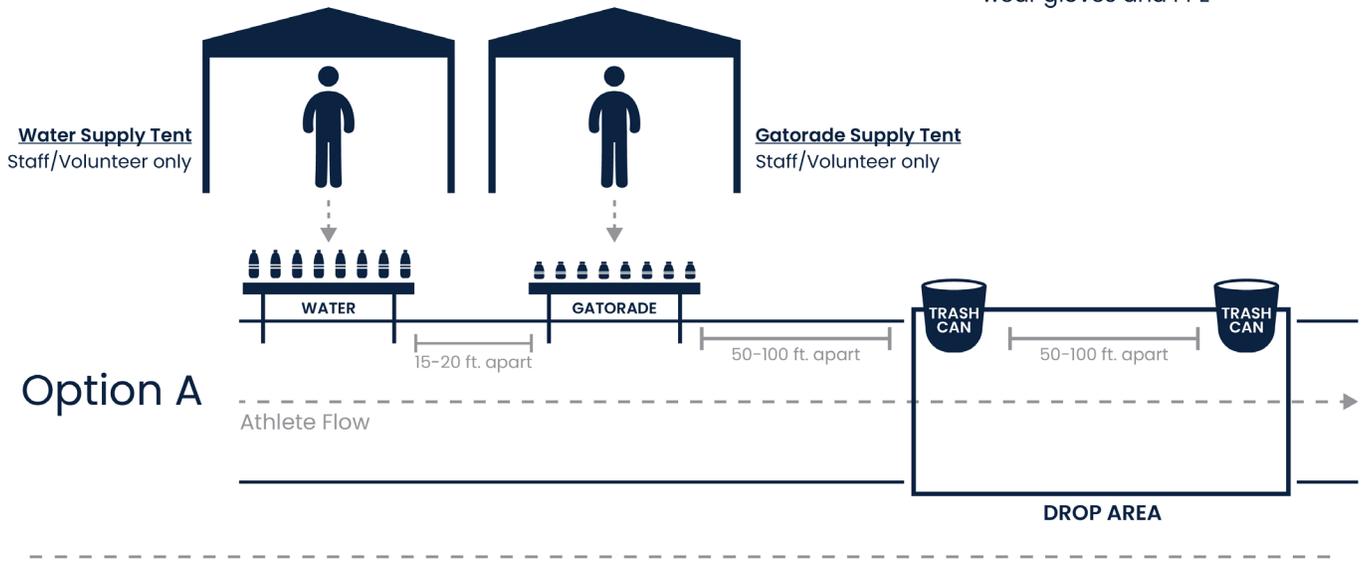
**Relay Exchange Zone:** Athletes should expect changes to relays, including physical distancing in the relay transition zone, handoffs including separate timing chips and other means of tagging the next athlete in their relay and potential elimination of relays altogether.

**Aid Stations:** Athletes should consider carrying their own fluids during a race, including hydration belt, hydration backpack, collapsible cups, or hand-held water bottle. Many aid stations will operate with no or minimal volunteers, or may be self-service. Athletes should take extra precautions to put trash in appropriate receptacles, which will help reduce disease transmission for other athletes and volunteers. Bike aid stations may be eliminated or operate with few volunteers. All athletes should consider bringing an ample amount of their own fluids to reduce or eliminate the use of aid stations on the bike course as well.

# AID STATIONS

Athletes will grab a sealed 6 oz. bottle off the table themselves, volunteers/staff are not to pass out bottles.

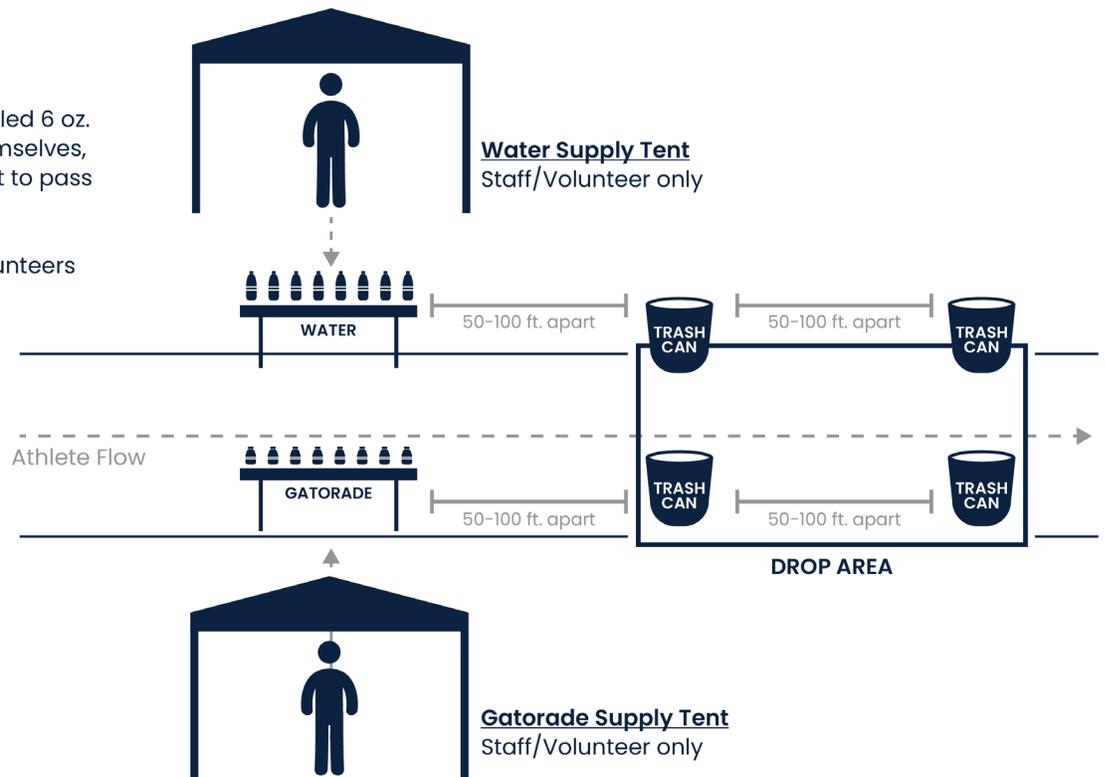
All aid station staff/volunteers wear gloves and PPE



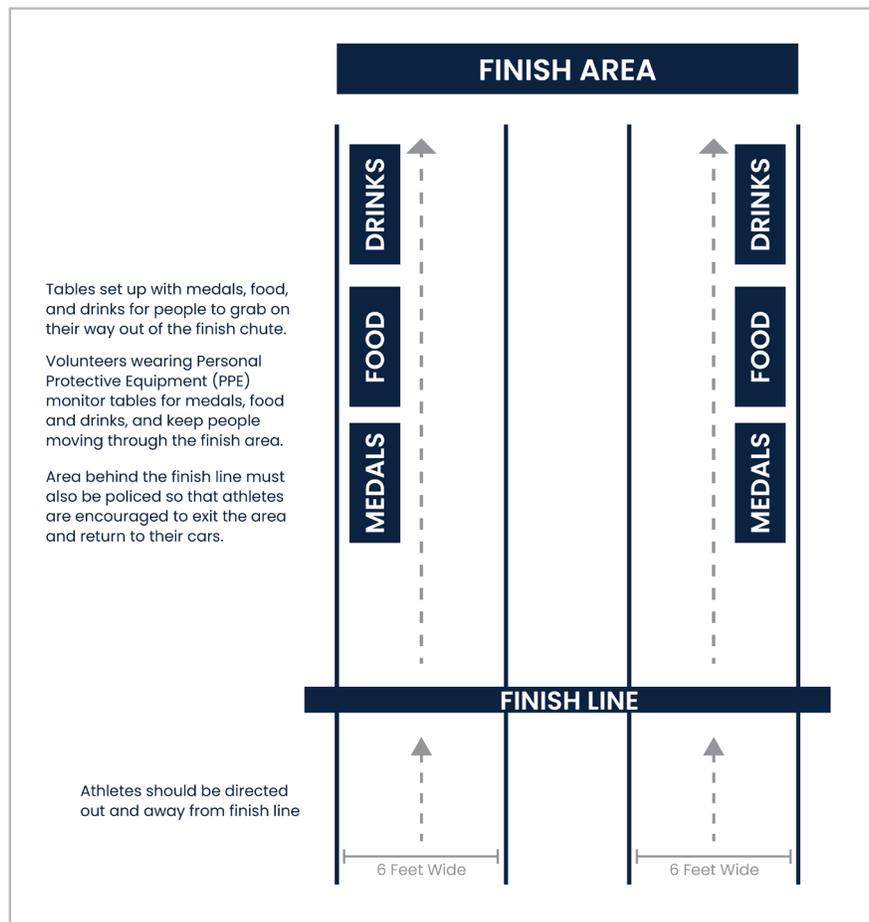
## Option B

Athletes will grab a sealed 6 oz. bottle off the table themselves, volunteers/staff are not to pass out bottles.

All aid station staff/volunteers wear gloves and PPE



**Finish Line:** Nobody should congregate at the finish line. Finished athletes should exit the finish area quickly to allow other athletes space to finish. Volunteers are discouraged from putting finisher medals on athletes. Follow the race organizers direction for obtaining fluids and other energy replacement. Find a place away from the finish line to remove timing chips yourself and place them in a collection bin. If using disposable timing chips, athletes should keep them on until they are at a safe distance from others to remove them.



**Spectators:** Athletes should expect that spectators and other support personnel may be limited or possibly prohibited from race venues pending any restrictions on mass gatherings

**Post-Race Food:** Athletes should expect physical distancing in food lines and less food on-site at events. Many races will be providing post-race food in to-go containers or reduced food for athletes altogether. Athletes should take their meal to their vehicle or to an area that is a safe distance from the event, fellow athletes, and spectators. Consider bringing your own nutrition in case an event is unable to provide ample post-race food.

**Awards Ceremonies:** Many race organizers may cancel or conduct altered awards ceremonies to mitigate concerns with mass gatherings

## Section IV: Travel Recommendations

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**Athlete Personal Responsibility Statement:** The health and safety of athletes is a top priority for the multisport community. As an athlete, you understand that event producers are doing everything within their power to ensure safety at their events. It is the athlete's responsibility to stay safe leading up to the event, regardless of the distance traveled for the event.

The purpose of this document is to provide athletes with recommendations when traveling to and from an event, as well as during the event outside of competition. These recommendations have been developed by medical experts in partnership with USA Triathlon, relying on resources such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, World Health Organization, United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee and World Triathlon. Athletes are encouraged to research the trends and case prevalence in all areas they intend to travel to and through: <https://globalepidemics.org/key-metrics-for-covid-suppression/>. Review travel related resources from the [CDC](#) and [WHO](#) prior to the trip.

### **INFECTION PREVENTION MEASURES:**

- Wear a facial covering when in public
- Physically distance > six feet at rest and during normal activities, and > 12 feet when exercising
- Avoid shaking hands and other unnecessary physical contact
- Avoid sharing of equipment
- If sick, do not travel
- Schedule a COVID-19 test to be completed upon return
- Use hand sanitizer or wash your hands after touching any surface
- Limit use of public restrooms, locker rooms, etc.
- Clean and disinfect everything
- Minimize community activities outside your home in advance of any travel

### **AIR TRAVEL:**

- When possible, choose direct flights or those with minimal layover time
- Adhere to facial covering policies
- Consider wearing eyeglasses/eye shields
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth
- Wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds with soap
- Use and carry hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol
- Avoid touching other travelers' belongings
- Wipe down arm rests, tray tables, video monitors and seat belts with antiseptic cleanser while wearing gloves
- Bring your own food and water on the flight
- Adhere to > six feet of physical distancing, including through security and at gate areas
- Avoid airport buses and trams, and if unavoidable, wear a facial covering and maintain as much physical distance as possible

## **AIR TRAVEL CHECKLIST OF ITEMS TO BRING:**

- Facial coverings
- Eyeglasses/shields
- Hand sanitizer
- Antiseptic wipes
- Additional cleaning supplies for the hotel
- Disposable gloves
- Food and water
- Any necessary medications
- Thermometer to self-check

## **CARS/VANS/GROUND TRANSPORTATION:**

- Public transportation should be used sparingly, including other shared ride services such as Uber and Lyft
- Drive alone in your own car
- If you need to carpool:
  - Keep the number of people as small as possible, don't exceed 50% of the normal capacity of the car, and maintain as much physical distancing as possible (> six feet is ideal)
  - Make every attempt to ensure your carpool group is always the same
  - Only carpool with roommates, training partners, or those within your household
  - Ensure that all individuals wear fitted facial coverings with multiple layers of fabric while in the car – bandanas and gaiters do not offer the same level of protection and are not recommended
  - Keep the windows rolled down enough to allow air to circulate in and out of the car

## **ACCOMMODATIONS:**

- Recommendation is single occupancy rooms or staying with those within your household
- Wear a mask anytime you are outside of your room
- Use stairwells instead of elevators if possible. If you must take the elevator, try to ride alone.
- Stay > 6 feet away from other people in all public areas
- Request contactless delivery for room service orders
- Be aware of high touch areas such as television remote, phone, and any glassware
- Avoid congregation in rooms
- Make reservations, check-in and check-out online
- Request mobile room key and contactless payment methods
- Stay at hotels that implement the following infection prevention measures:
  - Require staff to wear masks
  - Plexiglass barriers at check-in counters
  - Physical distancing requirements throughout hotel, including elevator
  - Rigorous cleaning and disinfecting procedures for frequently touched surfaces
  - Hand sanitizer dispensers located throughout the hotel facility
- Follow guidelines set forth by establishment
- Clean your hotel room with [EPA approved products](#) for COVID-19 using the [CDC's cleaning guidelines](#). Simple recommendations include:
  - Cleaning the room with gloves and then throwing them away

- Wiping down doorknobs, light switches, counters, faucets and remote controls with antiseptic wipes
- Laying plastic down on carpets, if possible
- Using your own bed linens and pillows
- Using a portable air purifier or open windows if possible
- Cleaning your own room regularly rather than allowing housecleaning to clean your room

Additional recommendations regarding overnight travel can be found here on the [CDC website](#).

### **FOOD/MEALS:**

- Order food for take-out, curbside pick-up, or drive-through service when possible
- Wipe down tables, seats and armrest with disposable cleaning wipes
- Only remove facial covering when eating
- Limit your in-restaurant dining to outdoor locations with at least six feet distance between tables
  - If physical distancing of at least six feet cannot be maintained at the table, only have one person at each table, or only seat those who live or room together at the same table
- Avoid sharing a meal with others in indoor environments or when seated less than 6 feet apart
- If possible, outdoor meals should be prioritized when in the presence of others
- Avoid buffet-style eating when possible
  - If avoiding buffet-style eating is not possible:
    - Wash your hands immediately before and after going through the buffet line
    - Wear a fitted facial covering while in the buffet line
    - Maintain at least six feet of physical distancing while in buffet line
- If you choose to make your own meals:
  - Attempt to use a grocery delivery service or arrange for a curbside pick-up

## Section V: Resources

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[CDC Situation Analysis](#)

[CDC Mass Gathering Guidelines](#)

[CDC How to Wear a Face Cover](#)

[List of Tests Approved in United States](#)

[OSHA Guidelines for Hazard Prevention](#)

[OSHA COVID-19 Control & Prevention](#)

[EPA-Approved Products to Use](#)

[International Triathlon Union Medical Resources](#)

[WHO COVID-19 Main Website](#)

[FAQs on Mass Gatherings and COVID-19 including Sporting Events FAQs](#)

[Key planning recommendations for Mass Gatherings during COVID-19](#)

[WHO Generic Risk Assessment and Mitigation Checklist](#)

[WHO interim guidance on how to use risk assessment and mitigation checklist](#)

[Decision tree flowchart for mass gatherings in context of COVID-19](#)

[International Traveling Health Guidelines](#)

[Advice on use of face coverings](#)

[WHO interim guidance – “Considerations in adjusting public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19”](#)

[Return to Running: Runner Attitude Survey Results](#)

[See How All 50 States Are Reopening \(and Closing Again\)](#)

[U.S. road races are not safe from COVID-19 danger says leader of cycling task force.](#)

DISCLAIMER: While the advice given in these recommendations has been developed using the best information available, it is intended simply as guidance to be relied upon at the user's own risk. USA Triathlon does not take responsibility for the accuracy of any information or advice given or omitted herein nor does any person, organization or corporation connected with providing this guidance. The foregoing parties are not liable for any consequences whatsoever resulting directly or indirectly from compliance with or adoption of this guidance.

These recommendations will be updated according to the latest information from the WHO, CDC and other health authorities, as well as the USOPC, ITU and other resources released on this topic.

## Pre-Participation COVID-19 Information and Screening Questionnaire to Athletes

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1. Has the athlete been diagnosed with and/or treated for coronavirus disease (COVID-19)?
  - a. If YES, has it been within the last 14 days?
    - i. If YES, no participation in the event
  - b. If YES and it has been 14 days or more, has follow-up testing been performed?
    - i. To participate, athlete must have two negative PCR (polymerase chain reaction)\* tests performed 24 hours or more apart as well as no fever and no other symptoms
2. Has the athlete or their support person been exposed to or been in contact with someone with known coronavirus disease (COVID-19) within the last 14 days?
  - a. If yes, no participation in event unless two documented negative PCR tests performed 24 hours or more apart
  - b. If no and athlete has no symptoms, athlete may participate
3. Has the athlete or their support person experienced any of the following in the last three days:
  - a. Fever, cough, runny or stuffy nose, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle pain, or joint pain?
    - i. If yes, further on-site assessment, in a designated area, by qualified medical personnel and possible testing is required before participating
    - ii. If no and athlete has no symptoms, athlete may participate
4. Has the athlete, their support person, or anyone in the household traveled to known COVID-19 risk areas, also known as hotspots?
  - a. If yes, further on-site assessment, in a designated area, by qualified medical personnel and possible testing is required before participating
  - b. If no and athlete has no symptoms, athlete may participate

\*PCR test is the standard to determine if an individual is actively COVID-19 infected. Per the CDC, two options exist based on return to work for health care providers assuming no testing is available.

## Endnotes

1. "Opening Up America Again." *The White House*, The United States Government, [www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/](http://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/). Accessed 24 April 2020.
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