

**PROPOSED POLICY FOR SAILING EVENTS
IN RESPONSE TO THREAT OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE**

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Introduction:

A communicable respiratory disease with severe adverse consequences requires consideration of how we gather and conduct events. Sailing as a pastime provides the illusion of seclusion, with interactions seemingly limited to members of the same crew, but the context of a racing event increases the potential for interaction and spreading disease. It is important for organizers and participants to contemplate their roles in limiting transmission and take advantage of both organizational and individual opportunities to limit interactions and decrease contagion. It is also important to communicate mitigation strategies widely, so that organizers and participants can evaluate the extent to which risk remains and the extent to which the changes to the "way of doing things" impacts the both the tangible and intangible benefits derived from participation.

Purpose:

The purpose of this proposed policy is to provide guidance for a coordinated sailing event when there are potential consequences of an infectious disease outbreak. The proposed policy describes the coordination of decision making, operations, and communication for managing an event when infectious disease is a significant consideration. Specifically, the purpose of the plan is to:

1. Discuss criteria relevant to whether or not to conduct an event.
2. Describe the decision making structure to be used to safeguard the health of staff, volunteers and participants, and coordination of emergency response actions and priorities for an event.
3. Describe procedures for creating or updating policies for conducting an event.
4. Define roles and responsibilities for healthcare, emergency management, community state and federal agencies for an event in light of the threat of an infectious disease.
5. Describe procedures for communications and coordination among public healthcare agencies, staff, volunteers and participants during an event.

Assumptions:

This document contains general policy elements that are intentionally broad. It is customizable depending on the specific demographics, location, and current disease threats. It is not comprehensive and does not constitute medical or legal advice.

Every disease is different. The local, state, and federal health authorities will be the source of the latest information and most up to date guidance on prevention, case definition, surveillance, treatment, and response related to a specific disease threat.

This document contains recommendations that may not be applicable to all types of sailing events or organizations. Modifications should be made based upon the regulatory requirements and the structure and staffing for the specific event.

Considerations When Deciding to Conduct an Event:

1. **The overall number of attendees:** Larger gatherings offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk.
2. **The fairness of inviting competitors when some may not be able to travel to the event:** For international or even continental events one of the concerns is that competitors may not be able to get to the event (flights, quarantine prescriptions etc). It may not be fair to run an event if travel is limited for some and not others.

3. **Excluding some competitors:** Some competitors may be at a higher risk than others. Consideration of excluding high risk participants reduces risk of the consequences of an outbreak of infection, but it raises the risk of treating some participants unfairly.
4. **The number of people attending at greater risk if infected:** Children, older adults or people with pre-existing health conditions if thought to be at increased risk pose a greater risk for the event.
5. **The density of attendees within a confined area:** Infection is generally spread from person-to-person most frequently where they are in close proximity to each other. The less likely people will be physically near each other, the lower the risk.
6. **The potential economic impact to participants, staff and the community:** To the extent the activity contributes to the necessary livelihood of the staff and community the more the risk may be mitigated.
7. **The level of transmission in the community and the level of transmission in the areas from where participants will travel:** To the extent the event includes participants from outside the locality or includes participants traveling from locations where the organizer may be less aware of health issues, the greater the risk.
8. **The number of persons ancillary to the event:** To the extent the event attracts other people who may not be within the control or take direction from the event organizers, the greater the risk.
9. **Publicity.** The event may draw negative publicity should it be perceived as a privileged activity. The potential negative public-image impact on the organizing authority and the sport-of-sailing from the “optics” of the event should be considered when establishing situational-thresholds.

Considerations in Preparation for an Event:

1. **Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team at your venues:** Discuss the emergency operations plans and determine how they may impact aspects of your events, such as personnel, security, services and activities, functions, and resources. Work with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team to prepare for the key prevention strategies outlined in this guidance. Develop a contingency plan that addresses various scenarios described below which you may encounter because of the disease.
2. **Establish relationships with key community partners and stakeholders:** Form the key relationships for your event; include relevant partners such as the local public health department, community leaders, vendors, suppliers, hospitals, hotels, airlines, transportation companies, and law enforcement. Collaborate and coordinate with them on broader planning efforts. Clearly identify each partner’s role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. Contact your local public health department for a copy of their outbreak response and mitigation plan for your community. Participate in community-wide emergency preparedness activities.
3. **Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions:** Use health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as your local public health department to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants to engage in everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of infection. These include:
 - a. Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
 - b. Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.

- c. Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- d. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- e. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.
- f. Handshakes and “high-fives” are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which infection can be transmitted from person-to-person. As a way of decreasing the social pressure to engage in these common behaviors, consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the gathering.

Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

4. **Provide infection prevention supplies to event staff and participants.:** Ensure that your events have supplies for event staff and participants, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, disposable facemasks, and cleaners and disinfectants. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with detergent and water prior to disinfection, especially surfaces that are visibly dirty.
 - a. Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
 - b. For disinfection most common household disinfectants should be effective but research the list of products that are approved for use against the threat. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - c. Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer’s instructions for application and proper ventilation. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - i. 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or
 - ii. 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water
 - d. Additional information on cleaning and disinfection of facilities should be researched depending on the threat.
 - e. Disposable face masks should be kept on-site and used if required by local regulation or if someone (worker or attendee) becomes sick at your event. Those who become sick should be immediately isolated from staff and participants who are not sick and given a clean disposable facemask to wear.

Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

5. **Plan for staff and volunteer absences:** Develop and implement flexible attendance and sick-leave policies. Event staff and volunteers need to stay home when they are sick, or they may need to stay home to care for a sick household member or care for their children. Identify critical job functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff and volunteers.
6. **Consider alternatives for event staff and volunteers who are at increased risk for complications from the infection.** Currently, older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions are considered to be at increased risk for severe illness and

complications from COVID-19. Event organizers can consider reassigning duties for higher-risk staff and volunteers to have minimal contact with other persons. People in higher-risk groups should consult with their healthcare provider about attending events. Consider providing refunds to event participants who are unable to attend because they are at high risk and/or provide information on alternative options.

7. **Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending:** This could include electronic messages sent to participants prior to travel to the event as well as messages requesting that people leave events if they begin to have symptoms, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Attendees should be encouraged to seek medical advice to get guidance.

Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

8. **Identify a space that can be used to isolate staff, volunteers or participants who become ill at the event:** Designate a space for staff, volunteers and participants who may become sick and cannot leave the event immediately. Work with partners, such as local hospitals, to create a plan for treating volunteers and participants who do not live nearby. Include a plan for separating and caring for vulnerable populations. If any staff member, volunteer or participant becomes sick at your event, separate them from others as soon as possible. Establish procedures to help sick staff, volunteers or participants leave the event as soon as possible. Provide them with clean, disposable face masks to wear, if available. Work with the local public health authorities and nearby hospitals to care for those who become sick. If needed, contact emergency services for those who need emergency care. Public transportation, shared rides, and taxis should be avoided for sick persons, and disposable face masks should be worn by persons who are sick at all times when in a vehicle.

Note: Providing a sick staff member, volunteer or event participant with a disposable facemask to wear does not replace the need for that person to leave as soon as possible, stay home, and seek medical advice. Wearing a disposable facemask in the workplace or while participating in a large event is not a sufficient infection control measure.

9. **Plan ways to limit in-person contact for staff and volunteers supporting your event:** Several ways to do this include requiring participants to communicate via telephone, using email, and conducting meetings by phone or video conferencing. Reduce the number of staff and volunteers needed such as staggering shifts for staff and volunteers who support essential functions and services during events.
10. **Develop flexible refund policies for participants:** Create refund policies that promote the flexibility for participants to stay home when they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or are at high risk for complications.
11. **Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel the event:** Work closely with local public health officials to assess local capacities in the area. Resource limitations among local healthcare systems and/or law enforcement can influence the decision to postpone or cancel your event. If possible, plan alternative ways for participants to enjoy the event by further limiting how the event will be conducted.

Considerations in Communications for an Event:

1. **Stay informed about the local situation.** Get up-to-date information about local activity from public health officials. Be aware of local rules and regulations in your area.
2. **Update and distribute timely and accurate emergency information:** Identify everyone in your chain of communication (for example, event staff, volunteers participants, suppliers, vendors, and key community partners and stakeholders) and establish systems for sharing information with them. Maintain up-to-date contact information for everyone in the chain of communication. Identify platforms, such as a hotline, automated text messaging, and a website to help disseminate information. Update key community partners and stakeholders regularly (daily). Share information about how you and the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for the venues are preparing for the event.
3. **Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers:** Information you share should be easily understood by everyone attending the events. Be conscious of the differences when communicating with people of diverse languages and cultures.
4. **Distribute information widely:** Use various channels of communication to reach all staff, volunteers and participants. Consider not using notice boards or displays where large groups will congregate.

Event Best Practices

1. **Nature of the Regatta:** The nature of the regatta will define the necessary mitigation. The following list summarily identifies some of the issues. It is cumulative as you move down the list.
 - a. Fleet Keelboat Regatta – Single fleet, all members of a local fleet. Fixed Marks. Minimal rescue safety boats.
 - b. Fleet Dinghy Regatta – Single fleet, all members of a local fleet. Fixed Marks. Rescue safety boats.
 - c. Junior Racing – parental releases, medical release.
 - d. Team/Match Racing – Umpires, housing race officials, supplied boats,
 - e. Club Regattas – Multiple fleets, all members of a local fleet.
 - f. Local Regattas – Multiple fleets, multiple clubs from local area.
 - i. Using their own transportation
 - ii. Sleeping in their own bed.
 - g. Regional Regattas – Multiple fleets, officials and competitors from outside local area. Boats at guest dock.
 - h. National Regattas – Airline travel, extended officiating, housing, borrowed/charter boats.
 - i. International Regattas - Team coaches, International Jury
 - j. Offshore Racing – Destination may be different than start.
 - i. Quarantine on arrival, on return.
 - k. Blue Water – Tahiti race, Transpac
 - i. Change of circumstances/regulations while offshore.
2. **Notice of Race:**
 - a. **Identify excluded participants:** If the decision is to limit who is invited, clearly identify the criteria by which others are excluded (which complies with local/national laws such as the Ted Stevens Act).

- i. Local vs. competitors traveling to event
 - ii. Competitors identified as high risk
 - iii. Participants refusing to use PPE
 - iv. Participants not meeting health requirements (eg: temperature survey at check in).
- b. **Identify how an event may be postponed/canceled.** It is important to identify what discernible/intelligible criteria will be used for postponing or canceling prior to the event starting. That way, officials and participants are less likely to feel pressure to rationalize holding an event when the pressure is on. Also, the potential for an accusation of bias in the decision is less likely when it is made relative to predetermined criteria.
- c. Non-Spinnaker racing is encouraged to minimize the number of crew.
- d. Sailing Instructions should be modified to allow the use of hand signals for important hails as facemasks may impair the ability to hail.
- e. Race Organizers should consider designating a flag to indicate "Penalty Accepted" or some other method of accepting penalties to avoid a protest hearing.
- f. **Registration/Refunds**
 - i. Refunds should be allowed even after the start of the event to encourage participants to not attend if they develop symptoms.
- g. **Boat Storage/Moorage**
 - i. Participants should wear facemask/face coverings while in the boat storage area or being transported to moorage.
- h. **Use of Club Facilities**
 - i. Use of club facilities should not be allowed with the exception of toilet facilities. Use of any facilities requires facemask/face covering. Any facilities used during the event should be regularly sanitized.

3. Race Committee:

- a. All race committee members should be required to monitor their temperature during the regatta.
- b. Anyone with an elevated temperature or other symptoms should not participate.
- c. Facemasks/face coverings must be worn when within 6 feet of another person.
- d. Common surfaces must be wiped down with disinfectant wipes. These include items such as radios, rails, pens/pencils, clipboards, etc.

4. Participants:

- a. Participants should take their temperature the morning of a race. Anyone with an elevated temperature or other symptoms should not participate.
- b. Participants should wipe down common surfaces with disinfectant wipes.
- c. Participants should maintain a Contact Logbook tracking who is on the boat for each race.
- d. Skippers should try to race single handed or double handed whenever possible, or with their family who they have been sheltered in place with at the same residence.
- e. Non-Spinnaker racing is encouraged to minimize the number of crew needed.
- f. In the case of crews who have not been sheltering in place at the same residence, participants should bring their own food and water
- g. Facemasks/face coverings must be worn when within 6 feet of another person.

- h. VHF Radios should be monitored at all times during the race. Be sure to check sailing instructions for the VHF Channel assigned to the race. Course to be sailed and Starting Sequences will be announced over the radio.
- i. Social Distancing protocols should be followed at all times when at marinas or boatyards.

5. Event Meetings:

Gatherings of any kind may be limited by local regulations. Understand and communicate that limitation with staff, volunteers and participants. If there is a limitation on the number of persons allowed to gather in one place, it will obviously affect how meetings are conducted. If physical distancing is required, it will affect where the meetings are conducted. If face masks are required, you may need to arrange for those to be available.

- a. **Organizing Authority:** To the extent possible, organizational meetings should be run remotely via video or teleconference.
- b. **Volunteers:** Volunteers at the venue for purposes of the race committee should meet in a space large enough to allow for physical distancing and complying with local regulations.
- c. **Participants:** Unless there is a small number of participants, meetings of all participants should be discouraged. For purposes of a skipper's meeting, the officials of the event should communicate that only one person from each boat should attend. The meeting should be held in a place where physical distancing can be maintained. The officials for the event should consider conducting such a meeting via a teleconference, perhaps as a group on the boats the morning of the event, or allow time for questions via text messaging.
- d. **Protest Hearings:**
 - i. Protest hearings should be handled via Zoom or some other remote platform
 - ii. Hearings can be held in the evening after a race, or later in the week of the race.
- e. **Awards**

After race events should be dock-side only, if held at all, and participants should maintain safe social distancing protocols (6') at all times and wear facemasks/face coverings.
- f. **Socializing:** Groups of people gathered for purely social purposes should be discouraged. Unless the group is limited to persons from one boat or are otherwise likely to be at the venue as a group, the officials of the event should communicate that it is inappropriate.

6. Committee Boat

- a. Races should be run with the bare minimum # of personnel needed.
 - i. PRO
 - ii. Someone to spot the line
 - iii. Someone to handle sound signals
- b. Race Committees are encouraged to only use sound signals and omit flags to minimize the number of people needed to start a race. Course numbers and starting sequences should be announced over VHF.
- c. Make sure Race Committee volunteers have assigned roles and avoid swapping roles.

- d. Race Committees should bring their own food and water.
- e. Race Organizers are encouraged to lengthen starting lines to allow for greater space between starters and minimize the chances of crowding the line.
- f.

7. Mark Set Boats

- a. Race Organizers should try to use fixed marks for race courses as often as possible to avoid the need for more than one committee boat. Races run from the shore are ideal.

8. Judge/Umpire Boats

- a. Race Organizers should avoid on-the-water judging.
- b. Umpired events should require umpires wear facemasks/face coverings.
- c. Umpires should monitor their temperature and if elevated, or any other symptoms appear, not participate.
- d. As an alternative, use one umpire per umpire boat.