

## **DRAFT Guidance for Junior Sailing Programs During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

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### **Introduction:**

This document is intended to provide guidance for junior sailing programs at US Sailing member organizations as they adapt to changing circumstances and get kids back on the water. We encourage organizations to remain flexible for as long as possible and to seek creative and opportunistic solutions, while also giving the highest priority to the safety and health of all participants and staff.

US Sailing recognizes that the COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting different parts of the country in different ways and with different timing. We believe it will be possible for junior sailing programs to resume sailing in some areas before others.

This document includes contributions from leaders representing sailing organizations from across the country. It is our intention to continue developing new resources based on feedback, new information and official guidance. Please contact the US Sailing staff at [youth@ussailing.org](mailto:youth@ussailing.org) with questions and suggestions.

### **Section One: Timeline for Reopening**

In the federal “[Opening Up America Again](#)” guidelines, a three-phase approach to reopening the nation is proposed. Under this guidance, youth activities, like school, daycare and camp that are currently closed, are suggested to remain closed until Phase 2, which is defined as a specific locality meeting certain criteria for two consecutive 14-day periods. Individual states are now releasing more specific state-wide guidelines, with specific timelines for phased reopening.

Sailing organizations and camps must consult their state and local authorities to determine when it is allowable and appropriate to resume operations, and to what extent. Be sure to identify which local authorities are relevant to your organization (Governor’s Office, State Department of Health and local health departments, City & County officials, Parks Department, etc) and review their guidance and communicate with them frequently.

It is essential to know where to find the state and local information that is relevant to your organization, so that you will have access to the most up-to-date information on an ongoing basis. US Sailing encourages neighboring junior sailing programs to work together to share updates on state and local timelines and guidance.

## **Section Two: Junior Sailing Program Modifications**

Junior sailing programs will need to modify their structure and operations to adapt to state and local guidelines. The extent of the modifications may change throughout the summer, so it is recommended that organizations plan to be as flexible as possible. The goal is to scale programming up or down during the season, based on new conditions and guidelines.

Develop policies and procedures for how your program will ensure, to the extent possible, a safe and sanitary environment. At a minimum, every organization should implement the CDC's and local health departments' social distancing and sanitization recommendations. This may include:

- Health screening (questionnaires, temperature checks, etc)
- Social distancing
- Personal protective equipment (face masks, etc)
- Cleaning and sanitization

Participants and staff should not attend if they have a fever, are feeling sick, have been in contact with someone who may have COVID-19, or have displayed any illness symptoms within the last 14 days. Remind participants not to share water bottles, food, gear, equipment, sunscreen or other items with others.

### Sample Program Modifications:

The three levels of modifications outlined below include ideas that could be implemented to satisfy state and local requirements. Your program should determine which level is appropriate at any given time based on your organization's structure and the restrictions set by your governing authorities.

|                            | <b>Significant Modifications</b>   |
|----------------------------|--|
| Lesson structure           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer private lessons to individuals or family groups.</li><li>• Offer "open sailing" sessions for certified sailors to use the boats in a safe, supervised environment.</li><li>• Offer online Instruction. Instructors teach knowledge skills and give "chalk talks" remotely (ie via Zoom).</li></ul>   |
| Logistics                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stagger private lesson times and locations.</li><li>• Avoid use of shared meeting or changing areas. Sailor(s) and instructors arrive ready to go on the water.</li><li>• Sailor(s) and instructor meet at the boat or on the water to begin instruction.</li><li>• Post signage around your facility reminding participants of sanitization and social distancing practices specific to your venue.</li></ul> |
| Boats and Equipment        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer only single-handed or family sailing.</li><li>• Clean and sanitize boats, gear, equipment, and storage areas.</li></ul>  |
| Alternative racing formats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Offer informal racing that does not require a Race Committee. Use rabbit starts and fixed marks, etc.</li></ul>  |

|                            | <b>Moderate Modifications</b>   |
|----------------------------|---|
| Lesson structure           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce class sizes significantly to meet state and local guidelines, including offering private and semi-private lessons.</li> <li>• Assign instructors to only one class per session (on a part time basis, if necessary).</li> <li>• Keep family members together if possible.</li> </ul>  |
| Logistics                  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagger student arrival and departure times.</li> <li>• Create separate meeting areas for each class and meet outside whenever possible.</li> <li>• Increase space between boats and equipment, to allow for 6+ feet of space between participants whenever possible. Mark 6 foot buffer zones, for reference.</li> <li>• Have clear plans and schedules to reduce traffic around your facility.</li> <li>• Do not allow classes to mix.</li> <li>• Post signage around your facility reminding participants of sanitization and social distancing practices specific to your venue.</li> </ul>  |
| Boats and Equipment        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on single-handed boats.</li> <li>• If using multi-person boats, maintain the same team of sailors on board each day.</li> <li>• Clean and sanitize boats, gear, equipment, and storage areas.</li> </ul>   |
| Alternative racing formats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Eliminate travel, and race exclusively at the local level.</li> <li>• Conduct competitors meetings and awards remotely (ie via Zoom).</li> <li>• Provide digital NOR and SIs and online check in where applicable.</li> <li>• Stagger launch times or use different launch sites to minimize crowding in the launch area.</li> <li>• Minimize the number of officials on Race Committee boats. Certain locations may allow for the Race Committee to run races from shore or a dock.</li> <li>• Focus on single-handed boats, or boats sailed by members of the same family unit.</li> <li>• Use the Portsmouth Yardstick handicapping system to allow a variety of boat types at your location to race against each other, providing a larger pool of local competition.</li> </ul> |

|                  | <b>Minimal Modifications</b>  |
|------------------|---|
| Lesson structure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce class sizes to meet state and local guidelines.</li> <li>• Assign the same instructors to each class.</li> <li>• Keep family members together if possible.</li> </ul> |
| Logistics        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stagger student arrival and departure times.</li> <li>• Create separate meeting areas for each class and meet outside whenever possible.</li> </ul>                          |

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
|                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have clear plans and schedules to reduce traffic around your facility.</li> <li>• Do not allow classes to mix.</li> <li>• Post signage around your facility reminding participants of sanitization and social distancing practices specific to your venue.</li> </ul>   |
| Boats and Equipment        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If using multi-person boats, maintain the same team of sailors on-board each day.</li> <li>• Assign sailors to a specific boat, and label all equipment (rudder, etc).</li> <li>• Clean and sanitize boats, gear, equipment, and storage areas.</li> </ul>  |
| Alternative racing formats | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Minimize travel by racing in local regattas.</li> <li>• Conduct competitors meetings and awards remotely (ie via Zoom).</li> <li>• Provide digital NOR and SIs and online check in where applicable.</li> <li>• Stagger launch times to minimize crowding in the launch area.</li> <li>• Minimize the number of officials on Race Committee boats.</li> </ul> |

Important Safety Reminders:

- Be sure to provide adequate supervision by certified instructors at all times. US Sailing recommends two instructors per safety boat. While 6+ feet of social distancing is recommended, instructors may need to be closer for short periods while operating a safety boat in certain conditions and situations.
- Common sailing safety procedures, such as capsize recovery, man overboard, equipment breakdowns, etc, may require instructors to come in close contact with sailors for short periods of time. While 6+ feet of social distancing is recommended, instructors and students may need to be closer for short periods during safety procedures. Consider modifying equipment and adding weather restrictions (e.g. adding mast head floats and adding wind/sea state restrictions) to reduce the likelihood that safety procedures will be required.
- Have a plan for foul weather (rain dates, thunderstorm warnings, etc). For many programs this might mean classes are canceled and/or shifted to online learning and homework. Communicate this earlier enough for families to make alternative arrangements.

Additional Considerations

- Potential Exposures  
Develop a plan for what to do if someone at your facility either: (i) exhibits COVID-19 or influenza like symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, and/or (ii) has close contact with someone who displays COVID-19 or influenza like symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19, including removing the person from contact with the rest of your students and staff and isolating them within a separate area, calling parent/guardian to pick up the student as soon as possible and/or sending staff home. If an exposure occurs consider implementing additional deep cleaning of the facility and equipment. Decide under what circumstances the person may return (e.g., no fever or symptoms for a certain period of

time). Determine how to handle individuals who were in close contact with the symptomatic individual and/or was in close contact with someone who displays COVID-19 or influenza like symptoms.

- **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for Staff and Students**  
Depending upon your state or local requirements, staff and students may be required to wear masks when out in public. Consider purchasing some masks for staff use and/or in case a student forgets to bring/loses their mask. (NOTE: N95 masks should not be purchased. These are needed by healthcare professionals).
- **Insurance and Legal Considerations**  
Consider contacting your insurance company to understand your liability coverage – most likely your insurance policy will not cover you for COVID-19 related injury, illness or damages, however, your insurer may have additional recommendations for risk mitigation. Similarly, consider consulting with your legal counsel who may also have recommendations.

### **Section Three: Staff Management and Training**

Scaling programming up or down during the season will require flexibility from instructors and other staff and volunteers. This may include reducing hours, or reassigning staff to new tasks. We recommend proactively preparing staff to adapt to schedule changes and new responsibilities throughout the season. For example, an instructor who is teaching a half-day class might be reassigned to cleaning and maintenance during the other half of the day. Programs should also prepare backup plans in case staff members become sick or are self-quarantined.

Consider creating part-time internships for instructors who are adapting to reduced hours, to allow them to contribute to other areas of your operations. For example, internships in marketing, social media, accounting, education, boat repair, etc. will allow instructors to redirect energy to support your organization in different areas, while simultaneously bolstering their professional resumes.

Keep in mind that staff members who must be furloughed or laid off may be eligible for unemployment benefits, depending on state requirements.

### **Section Four: Registration and Refund Options**

As part of your registration documents consider requiring participants to affirmatively agree, in writing, to comply with your organization's social distancing and other COVID-19 safety protocols, including an acknowledgement that failure to comply could result in suspension or termination from the program.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created financial hardships across all sectors of the economy and has had a particular impact on the sports and recreation industry. Many families are also facing financial challenges that will make it particularly challenging to afford camp fees this year.

When it comes to registration and refunds, each organization will have unique needs and policies. Some common approaches include:

- Offer \$0 pre-registration fee, with full registration fees due when lessons begin.
- Seek to provide more scholarships for families with financial challenges.
- Offer a complete refund, or partial refund, for canceled lessons.
- Offer credit(s) for future lessons in place of canceled lessons.
- Offer the option to donate registration fees from canceled lessons to the organization.

### **Recommended Resources:**

- US Sailing coronavirus resources:  
<https://www.ussailing.org/membership/organizations/resources/>
- American Camp Association coronavirus resources:  
<https://www.acacamps.org/resource-library/coronavirus-information-camps>
- Center for Disease Control guidance for schools and communities:  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>
- Gowrie Insurance COVID-19 Updates:  
<https://www.gowrie.com/About-US/NewsInsights.aspx?view=2>