

December 11, 2020

Hello Scouts, Scouters and Families, the Virginia Headwaters Council staff and Executive Board want to wish you and your families the happiest of holidays.

The health and wellbeing of Scouts, Scouters and staff remain top priorities of the Virginia Headwaters Council, and we are monitoring and assessing the latest developments of COVID-19 across Virginia. With increased positive testing for Covid-19 our council the COVID-19 Emergency Response Team has updated guidelines and best practices for Scouting activities to align with the latest update from the Governor (December 10, 2020) and the CDC. These are outlined below and will remain in effect until further notice. The pandemic continues evolving and we must be aware that modifications in state mandates can and may occur. Units are advised to follow their local guidelines related to meeting and activity locations and attendance.

1. Units are encouraged to develop creative and unique ways to Scout On outdoors! We support safe outdoor activities that promote Scouting's aims and mission, while meeting the state mandates. The current maximum for group activities is 10 unless directed otherwise by local government officials.
2. All youth and adults must wear masks at all times as well as social distancing of 6 feet within that 10 person group. See our Covid-19 Response at <https://www.vahcbsa.org/> or <https://www.campshenandoah.org/> for additional guidance.
3. Face to face unit meetings must not exceed 10 people, indoors or outdoors. If a unit of 30 people wishes to go on an outdoor activity they can do so, but they must be in 3 separate distinct groups of no more than 10, separated as such where they not congregate as one group or be considered a gathering.
4. Accommodations must be available for frequent handwashing or hand sanitizing.
5. Ridesharing is not recommended unless within same family.
6. We encourage getting outdoors in ways that comply with current Virginia protocols! As necessitated, units can continue to meet virtually while finding innovative ways to deliver the promise of Scouting.
7. Camp Shenandoah is closed for the holidays and will reopen for overnight camping on January 8, 2021. Reservations may be requested with this form: [www.campshenandoah.org/files/18014/Camp-Use-Form](http://www.campshenandoah.org/files/18014/Camp-Use-Form) Ranger Bill can be reached at [bill.hunter@scouting.org](mailto:bill.hunter@scouting.org) and he will discuss the current camp health and safety protocols.
8. The policy of one person per tent is still in effect for youth and adults. Siblings and parents from the same home can share a tent.
9. The Waynesboro Scout Service Center and Scout Shop is open Monday through Friday from 9:00AM to 5:00PM. All visitors are required to wear a mask or face covering in the building and we ask all guests to only use the front entrance to the Scout Shop.
10. Also, it is our civic responsibility to lead by example. Follow and promote the rules for a safer community.

Current trends remind us that COVID-19 remains with us and will so at least into the near future. We have remarked: we are chasing the virus while the virus is chasing us! As school resumes in varying fashions and we reimagine Cub Scout recruiting, we recognize there remains some level of risk. However, Scouts, for the past 110 years have lived by our motto: Be Prepared. We are proud to be Scouts at this time: who better than we to be the leaders of safety, preparation, innovation, self-reliance and self-improvement? Be Prepared, Be Safe and Scout On.

Yours in Scouting,

James Battaglia,  
Scout executive/CEO  
Virginia Headwaters Council, BSA



## VIRGINIA HEADWATERS COUNCIL, BOY SCOUTS OF AMERICA CAMPING AND OUTDOOR PROGRAMS

**Safe Scouting During the Pandemic for Unit Meetings, Hikes and Camping  
December 11, 2020**

### **Overview**

On Thursday, December 10, the Governor issued new guidelines and restrictions in the ongoing effort to slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus in Virginia. These restrictions are in response to the rise of cases and hospitalizations in the state. The Virginia Headwaters Council is revising our policies and practices in this update. It is appropriate for units to share this communication with their membership.

### **Safety and Risks with Scouting Activities**

Health and safety are always our first priority in Scouting here in the Virginia Headwaters Council. With the limited resumption of activities, we are taking all necessary steps to ensure the safety of all participants in Scouting programs.

### **Universal mask requirement**

Anyone over the age of 5 in Virginia is required to wear a face covering when in indoor settings shared with others and when outdoors within six feet of another person. This order expands the current statewide mask mandate, which has been in place since May 29.

### **Reduction in social gatherings**

Being safe is not the same as risk free in the context of Scout unit activities. All public and private in-person gatherings of more than 10 individuals who do not live in the same residence are prohibited. A “gathering” includes, but is not limited to, parties, celebrations, or other social events, whether they occur indoors or outdoors. The presence of more than 10 individuals performing functions of their employment or assembled in an educational instructional setting is not a “gathering.” The presence of more than 10 individuals in a particular location, such as a park, or retail business is not a “gathering” as long as individuals do not congregate.

Units may conduct outdoor meetings only after careful, diligent planning. Groups of 10 or less (patrols, dens) may meet outdoors, wearing a mask and maintaining a minimum of six feet physical distance. Masks may be removed if activity includes exercise or strenuous physical movement: in this case, ten feet of separation should be maintained.

If more than ten people participate, groups must not congregate together. A minimum separation of at least 50 feet should be sustained between groups of 10, with no congregating of groups.

### **Tenting**

We are encouraging all participants to either tent with a member of their household or by themselves. Tents should have at least 10 feet of separation. If more space is available, it should be utilized.

## **Traveling to and from Events/Activities**

The Virginia Headwaters Council strongly recommends when traveling to a Scouting activity, to do so individually in vehicles. This means one family, one vehicle. Ride sharing or carpooling is to be avoided. Wash or sanitize hands before getting into the vehicle and immediately afterward leaving vehicle. If you stop for food, restroom etc., again keep mask on, wash or sanitize hands after leaving vehicle and before entering vehicle.

## **Hiking**

Being outdoors does help lower risk of infections and that is a positive, but as noted above, there is always some risk. To mitigate the risk as much as possible the following must be followed:

1. Attestation of pre-activity health conditions signed by parent or guardian.
2. Acknowledgement of recognition of risk associated with the activity signed by parent or guardian. Page 3 of this document.
3. On-site re-check of health conditions.
4. All records are kept by leader for a minimum of four weeks after the event.
5. Physical distancing of a minimum of 10 feet outdoors without masks.
6. Masks must be worn when less than 10 feet except when eating or drinking.
7. Wash or sanitize hands at beginning of event, before and after every meal, and at the end of the event.
8. Report to adult leadership if at any time someone in the group is feeling ill.

## **Safety During Instructional Activities and Merit Badges**

In addition to the above elements for activities, for instructional sessions you must follow state guidelines to minimize exposure (distancing, hygiene, masks). On arrival to the class you must wash or sanitize your hands as well as when you leave the class. For activities in the water, you will not have a mask on. In aquatic activities, the risk of exposure is greater given the lack of a mask and thus 10 feet distancing is particularly critical. All shared equipment must be sanitized before use and immediately after use. During instruction it may be necessary for you to have physical contact with the instructor or another swimmer. Avoid breathing in each other's face and limit the time of contact to a minimum.

## **Camping.**

To mitigate the risk as much as possible the following must be followed:

1. Attestation and acknowledgement of pre-activity health conditions signed by parent or guardian.
2. On-site re-check of health conditions.
3. All records are kept by leader for a minimum of four weeks after the event.
4. Physical distancing of a minimum of 10 feet outdoors without masks.
5. Masks must be worn when less than 10 feet except when eating or drinking.
6. Wash or sanitize hands at beginning of event, before and after every meal, when you wake up and prior to going to bed and at the end of the event.
7. Sleep in a hammock or alone in a tent to reduce contact.
8. Extra precautions must be taken during food preparation, dining and clean up. Regular and repeated hand washing or sanitizing during all of the activity must occur. Strict distancing during preparation and clean up must be enforced. Wearing masks during these activities are recommended. Strict distancing during dining when masks cannot be worn must be enforced.

## Virginia Headwaters COVID-19 Activity Waiver and Attestation

**This form is to be completed, submitted and retained by leadership for any Scouting activity, or if visiting camp, by Camp Shenandoah personnel.**

I \_\_\_\_\_ acknowledge the risk of exposure to infection of Covid-19 during the attendance of this Scout activity and I accept the risk.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### **VAHC Risk Acknowledgement for Unit Activities December 2020**

I hereby attest that on the date listed below I do not have any of the following signs and symptoms nor have I been in contact with anyone known to have Covid-19 or Covid-19 signs or symptoms.

\* I am not experiencing any symptom of illness such as cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, chills, repeated shaking with chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or new loss of taste or smell.

\* I have not traveled internationally within the last 14 days.

\* I have not traveled to a highly impacted area within the United States of America in the last 14 days.

\* I do not believe I have been exposed to someone with a suspected and/or confirmed case of the Coronavirus/COVID-19.

\* I have not been diagnosed with Coronavirus/Covid-19 and not yet cleared as non-contagious by state or local public health authorities.

\* I am following all CDC recommended guidelines as much as possible and limiting my exposure to the Coronavirus/COVID-19.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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