



Wilderness Inquiry Policy Statement on COVID-19

Wilderness Inquiry's core values are seeking the exceptional, paddling together, and finding a way. Furthermore, at the heart of all we do our first priority is safety. Given the industry we are in, safety means a number of things ranging from well maintained vehicles and proper loading of trailers to ergonomically correct transfers when working with individuals with mobility issues to proactively watching weather and water conditions. We are also responsible for the physical and emotional safety of our staff and participants. There are limitless risks to our organization and we do all we can in our power to mitigate those risks. With proper policies, standardized procedures, robust training, and ongoing risk management efforts we operate as safely as possible.

With the introduction of COVID-19 in 2020, we have needed to relook at what it means to operate safely as an organization. Similar to how we lean into expertise in other risk areas, we established a Safety and Inclusion Advisors group to help inform and make decisions around safety, with a particular focus around COVID-19. We continue to adapt and adjust our policies and practices as new information, research, and resources become available.

At this time, organizations are faced with decisions at the intersection of staff and participant safety, community health and responsibility, and the bottom line. As an organization that serves people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, we believe it is important that we do everything in our power to achieve our mission while keeping our participants and community at large safe.

We will follow the below practices as we make decisions around COVID-19:

- We will make decisions based on the scientific evidence as presented by the World Health Organization, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Minnesota Department of Health, and other reputable sources of information.
- We will consult with groups of local professionals and community experts and liaisons to reduce negative impacts to overall individual and community health and wellbeing, to the best of our ability.
- We will design policies and practices that keep our most vulnerable community members, including individuals with disabilities, at the forefront--staying true to our founding principles that each individual is a valued and important member of society and deserves access to opportunities.
- We will not proceed with experiences solely based on the bottom line of the organization if there is a disregard to personal or community health and safety.
- We will evaluate each program, at least quarterly, to ensure that the benefits to those being served outweigh the risks involved with participation and facilitation.
- We will do everything in our power to keep our staff, volunteers, and participants safe in environments where we work, serve, and participate.



We want to acknowledge that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant negative financial impact on some of our international partners and operators in particular. While we care deeply about our partners abroad and would like to support them in any way possible, we also will carefully evaluate any safety and health impacts of international travel and will hold true to our above policy that the safety of both the individual and the collective must come before the bottom line.

In closing, Wilderness Inquiry's decisions around safety protocols related to COVID-19 will attempt to provide safe environments for all—including those who are often marginalized or are at higher risks from COVID-19. Safety, including providing safe environments that promote health and wellness, will remain a top priority.

Addendum -- Current Policies

As of August 19, 2021, our current policies which are supported by our medical consultants around masking and vaccines have been determined based on the above policy statement:

MASKS:

- Masks are required for everyone--regardless of vaccination status--in indoor settings connected to a Wilderness Inquiry work or program space.
- Masks are required outdoors for everyone--regardless of vaccination status--in outdoor settings where maintaining six feet of social distancing is not able to be maintained.
- Masks are required outdoors for everyone--regardless of vaccination status--if Wilderness Inquiry is facilitating an event in which 100 or more people are in attendance.
- Masks are required for everyone--regardless of vaccination status--at all times in Wilderness Inquiry vehicles.

VACCINATIONS:

- Wilderness Inquiry staff are required to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19. *Medical and religious accommodations are addressed on a case by case basis.*
- Wilderness Inquiry participants that are joining an extended (includes at least one overnight) trip with "individual sign ups" (meaning groups from different households and COVID bubbles are participating without knowing others in the group) are required to show proof of the COVID-19 vaccine before participating.