

# COVID-19 Safe Return to Running Race Guidelines

Updated: May 2021

All Nova Scotians need to follow the Health Protection Act Order and public health directives to limit the spread of COVID-19. You can read the full Health Protection Act Order [here](#).

It is important that we all understand the current restrictions and public health advice currently in place and check frequently for up to date information at [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) - Government of Nova Scotia, Canada](#)

This document is designed for businesses and organizations that conduct road races/runs, triathlons, and cycling events.

This document will guide you through building a plan that will help our province limit the spread of COVID-19.

*For the purposes of this document the term waves is used in place of cohorts or zones. Waves represent a group of participants and is the universal term in the running community.*

## Steps to Hosting an Event

1. In order to use this guide and execute an outdoor event, you must be a recognized business or organization.
2. In your plan, you must demonstrate your experience in organizing and executing events of similar in size and scope.
3. Once the plan is complete, you must notify [nseconomy@novascotia.ca](mailto:nseconomy@novascotia.ca) a minimum of 30 days in advance of the event to allow for proper review and must include a copy of your plan, demonstrating that you are adhering to the guidelines within this document.
4. Staff at Communities, Culture and Heritage will be notified and will log the event for future inspection by compliance officers.
5. You must notify your local municipality and local law enforcement of the event details and provide a copy of your plan if requested.

*Approval is not required, but the venue or organizer is responsible for communicating and adhering to the plan. Keep copies of the plan on site. Compliance officers may visit unannounced, and the organizer must be able to produce its plan and demonstrate how staff/volunteers are working within the guidelines.*

## **Gathering Limits**

Gathering limits apply to social events, faith gatherings, sports and physical activity, weddings, funerals and arts and culture events like theatre performances, dance recitals, festivals, and concerts. Gathering limits also apply to businesses and organizations that run social events, faith gatherings, weddings, funerals, arts and culture events or sports events.

This plan outlines how running events can operate using the wave model, ensuring physical distancing between participants, and using a timed wave method to ensure gathering limits are adhered to.

If you plan to host an event consisting of multiple physically separate waves, each of which must be less than the current gathering limit, you must build a plan following the guidelines within this document.

## **Pre-Race**

### **Registration:**

All participants are required to register for the event via an online registration platform. Information about the participant such as phone number, address, age, gender, running pace (time/ km) and emergency contact info is collected during the registration process. This information collected easily allows for contact tracing in the event of a possible COVID-19 exposure. You'll need to keep contact information of all participants, volunteers, attendees, and event officials. It is recommended race organizers keep these records for a minimum of 30 days after the event or activity has taken place.

- During registration, participants will be required to:
  - Select their wave. Wave size will be less than or equal to the Public Health outdoor gathering limit
  - Sign an event waiver and COVID-19 waiver
- Volunteers are also required to sign-up for volunteer shifts via an online registration platform. Information about the volunteer such as phone number, address and emergency contact info is collected during the registration process. Volunteer contact

information should be kept for a minimum of 30 days after the event or activities have taken place.

- Track where volunteers are helping – will reduce contact tracing if necessary. Limit shuffling of volunteers from place to place at the start will maintain 6 feet from participants. Race officials, volunteers and suppliers will wear a mask at the start of each wave. Individuals, including volunteers count towards the mass gathering number in the start/finish areas.

## Communications

- Participants and volunteers will receive communications leading up to race weekend which will include the following:
  - A questionnaire with questions from the NS COVID-19 Daily Checklist (<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Daily-COVID-checklist-en.pdf>)  
To learn more please visit: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/>
- Communications leading up to the event should also include information about the following as it pertains to COVID-19:
  - Time to arrive at start. Participants will be instructed to arrive no more than 15 minutes prior to the start of their event.
  - Parking &/ or drop off locations
  - Physical distancing while at the race
  - When & where masks are required and how to store when not using masks. List areas required Starting line, spectators, support/hydration areas, while indoors, when unable to consistently maintain 6ft./2m from others.
  - What the participant should do if they develop COVID-19 symptoms during their race
  - Hydration & nutrition provided; on course and finish line. How participants are to collect food and hydration
  - Collecting medals at the finish line
  - Where spectators are allowed or not allowed. If event permits spectators, they will need to hire security and have a plan with protocols for spectators.
  - Avoid lingering pre and post race.

- Participants and volunteers will receive a stand-alone e-communications 48-72 hours prior to the race prompting them to complete a self-screening. This e-communication will also include the following link: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/symptoms-and-testing/>
- A section on the event website &/ or registration page will be dedicated to COVID-19 protocols for the race.
- Communication leading up to the event must include messaging regarding spectators. If the event is going to permit spectators, this must be included in the overall gathering limit. Suggest not allowing spectators and communicating this prior to and leading up to the event.
- Consider multiple forms of communications leading up to the event such as e-communications and social media channels for participants and volunteers.

## Kit Pick Up

- The event will have staff or volunteer(s) on hand to ensure participants are maintaining distance while lined up.
- Participants will be required to pick up their race day kit in advance of race day.
- Kit pick-up hours and days will be scheduled in advance of the race. Suggest event have system of booking times to pick up race kit to avoid congestion and have it distributed outside if possible.
- Participants will be required to maintain 6 feet of distance when both lining up and collecting their kit race. Markers will be placed at kit pick up locations to indicate 6 foot spacing.
- Event staff, volunteers and participants will be required to wear a mask at kit pick up. Includes inside and outside.
- Hand sanitizers will be available for participants, volunteers, and staff.
- Curbside pick up will be offered as an alternate to those participants who are not comfortable coming indoors.

## Race Day

### Event Site:

- Spectators will not be permitted at the start or finish area. This will be communicated to participants in event communications.
- The event will have staff or volunteers ensure spectators are not permitted access to the event site. A map demonstrating the event site will be required as part of the plan.
- The event will have signage displayed at the event site the reinforces the following:
  - Physical distancing
  - Masks required areas
  - COVID-19 statements:  
*If you have experienced any of the following:*
    - have or may have COVID-19
    - have symptoms of COVID-19
    - have or may have been exposed to COVID-19
    - have returned from travel outside Nova Scotia in the past 14 days  
*Please do not attend the <insert event name>*
- The event will develop a parking plan along with drop off and collection points identified. Plan will create a one-way flow of traffic in and out of venue. This will be shared with participants as part of the pre-race communications.
- When using portable washrooms, these will be placed 6 feet apart.
- Consider the following with portable washrooms:
  - assigning portable washrooms to designated wave or having dedicated resources to clean portable washrooms between waves.
  - placing hand sanitizers outside the portable washrooms as well.
  - Wear mask when in portable washroom

## Start line

- Announcements at the beginning of the race should include the following as it pertains to COVID-19:
  - Physical distancing while at the race
  - When & where masks are required. List areas required Starting line, spectators, support/hydration areas, while indoors, when unable to consistently maintain 6ft./2m from others.
  - What the participant should do if they develop COVID-19 symptoms during their race
  - Hydration & nutrition provided; on course and finish line. How participants are to collect.
  - Collecting hydration, nutrition and medals at the finish line
  - Crowd management reminders even if there are no spectators inside start/finish area as a reminder.
- Any race officials, volunteers and any suppliers; for example, timing company fencing are required to wear masks and maintain physical distancing at the start area.
- Note: Race officials, volunteers and Individuals, including volunteers count towards the mass gathering number in the start/finish areas.
- All events will be chip timed. Chip timing while it has been used in races for the past 20 years. It provides further information that is beneficial for COVID-19 protocols. It tells the event the following:
  - Exactly who started in their assigned wave; while participants are assigned waves, some may not show up for a multitude of reasons. Chip timing verifies who started each wave.
  - Exactly when the participant crosses the finish line. It also identifies the proximity one participant had to another based on their running pace. In the event of a possible COVID-19 exposure this information allows the event along with Public Health to further narrow the possible exposure.
- Participants will be required to maintain 6 feet from each other at the start line.
- Participants will be required to wear a mask at the start line. As the participants cross the start line and further spread out, they can remove their mask, but they must maintain six-feet apart at all times.

- Participants will be assigned their placement in the wave based on information provided in their registration (running pace-time/km). Fastest will be at the start of the wave followed by slowest. This will ensure participants of a similar are pace are together while distanced on the course. Additionally it alleviates participants passing each other.
- The event will have multiple “waves” and participants will be assigned their designated wave based on their running pace (time/ km). Assigning based on pace will ensure there is no congestion on the route along with minimal passing of participants.
- Each wave size will align with the Public Health Order outdoor gathering limit.
- Each wave will not start until the former wave has enough time elapsed to prevent the head of the second wave catching the tail of the first wave.

For example:

Wave 1 will start at 8:00 AM Wave 2 will start 8:30 AM

**Wave 1:** the participants assigned to this wave  
all run at a pace 4:00/ KM or faster.

**Wave 2:** the participants assigned to this wave  
all run at a pace between 4:00/ KM to 5:00/ KM.

The participants of wave 2 cannot catch wave 1 based on their pace and the elapsed time between two starts.

- At the start of each wave participants will be instructed to maintain 6 feet at all times while on course. Participants will also be instructed in the event they need to “fall back” due to health or injury to maintain 6 feet from other participants.
- Each wave must be treated in isolation from other waves. There can be no crossover between waves and planning must reflect that.
- In the event, a participant misses their wave start, they have the following options after consulting with the event organizer.
  - Start late** in their wave provided they can finish their race in the time allotted.
  - Start with the next wave** if there is space in that wave as per the gathering limit.
- The event will place markers at the start to indicate where participants are to line.

## On Course

- Any stations on course such as hydration on course will be self-serve.
- Consider using bottled water on course instead of paper cups as this eliminates multiple touch points between the participant and volunteer.
- Any spectators along course will be instructed to maintain 6 feet from participants. This will be communicated to participants in e-communications leading up to the race.
- Volunteers will be on hand to replenish supplies only. Volunteers will be instructed to maintain 6 feet from each other unless they are from the same household or bubble. There will be no points of contact between the volunteer and participants.
- Volunteers will be provided with masks, gloves, and hand sanitizers at the self-serve stations.

## Finish Line

- Announcements at the end of the race should include the following as it pertains to COVID-19:
  - Physical distancing while at the race
  - When & where masks are required
  - What the participant should do if they develop COVID-19 symptoms
  - Collecting hydration, nutrition and medals at the finish line
  - Crowd management reminders (i.e. No spectators in the finish line area)
  - Any race officials, volunteers and suppliers required at the finish line will wear a mask and maintain 6 feet from participants.
  - Participants will be required to put their mask on once they cross the finish line once they have caught their breathe.
  - Participants will not be permitted to gather at the finish line and post race area. At no point shall the gathering at the finish area exceed the Public Health Order outdoor gathering limit.
- Participants must collect their items (medal, food and water) and leave the area as soon as possible.



- Stations at the finish area will be self-serve, hydration, medals and post race nutrition.
- Event to consider offering prepacked bags or prepacked food such as granola bars. Avoid any self serve items e.g. bagels and peanut butter. Follow event guidelines for food handling. (<https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>) Hand sanitizers to be placed at self serve stations.
- As well consider use of bottled water versus water that must be poured into cups. Hand sanitizers available at hydration station.
- Volunteers will be on hand to replenish supplies only. There will be no points of contact between the volunteer and participants.
- Volunteers will be instructed to maintain 6 feet from each other unless they are from the same household or bubble.
- Volunteers will be provided with masks. As well hand sanitizers will be placed where volunteers are hosting self serve stations.
- Review Event/Venue Food Service sector of COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues
- Hand sanitizers (minimum 60% alcohol-based hand sanitizer) will be available at high touch point locations for both participants and volunteers (food and medal collection, hydration station)
- Where practicable, cleaning of high touch points between waves will take place. Health Canada approved products that have are listed to be effective against COVID-19 will be used.

## On site Vendors

- Consider having a different site for vendors to display items for sale – not at beginning or end.
- If vendor(s) is providing food or beverage. Review Event/Venue Food Service sector of COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/docs/Events-theatres-and-venues-COVID-19-prevention-guidelines.pdf>

- Avoid having things like massage on site.
- Product sampling, including food and alcohol, is currently prohibited at special events, markets, or trade shows.

## **Post race**

- Finish time results will be available online for participants upon completion of their race. Event to avoid on-site screen displays with results in order to discourage any post race gathering.
- In the instance of a possible COVID-19 exposure, the event will work with Public Health to notify those at risk.

## **Spectators**

- As indicated above, to ensure adherence to the gathering limit, spectators are prohibited. In addition, the event should utilize signage to further reiterate no spectators permitted.
- Organizers should ensure they have budget to communicate to participants about the necessary protocols in place.