



## America Outdoors Guidance During the Coronavirus Pandemic

1. Office Policies- As a leader in your business, one of the most important things you can do right now is be diligent about safety precautions in the workplace. Set the standard you want your employees to follow so your guests can be reassured.
  - a. Encourage sick employees to stay home- Even if your employees feel well enough to work, now is not the time to chance it. If an employee has respiratory illness symptoms (cough and shortness of breath), they should stay home until they have had no fever for at least 72 hours, all symptoms have improved, and at least 7 days have passed since symptoms first appeared.
    - i. If your employee is home and not working, they may elect to use available sick leave or paid-time-off. Stay abreast of payroll and paid leave requirements at [americaoutdoors.org](http://americaoutdoors.org) or check the Department of Labor's website (see below).
    - ii. You may ask that employees check their own temperature, but you cannot take their temperature.
    - iii. If an employee becomes sick, you should let the other staff know but you should not mention the sick employee by name.
  - b. Make hand sanitizer (with 60% alcohol content) available to guests and employees. Check in on employees to remind them to use it regularly.
  - c. Clean all surfaces routinely- Especially focus on surfaces that are frequently touched by visitors and employees, such as doorknobs, workstations, all bathroom surfaces, and light switches. For an approved list of products please see the guidance document from the American Chemical Council in the sources section of this document.
  - d. Provide disinfectant wipes to your employees so they may do additional cleaning in their personal workspace, such as keyboards and desks.
2. Cancellation Policies- We recommend being flexible with your cancellation policies. With accommodation providers and airlines being lenient during this time, we believe it is not only the right thing to do, but also what the consumer has come to expect. Take this opportunity to build relationships and create customer loyalty.
  - a. One policy that is having some success for outfitters is the use of credits. Rather than returning money to the customer, you can offer them gift cards or credits to be redeemed

at their convenience. We recommend allowing customers to use the credits anytime this year or next to allow for flexibility.

### 3. Trip Policies

- a. Disinfect all equipment thoroughly after each use. America Outdoors recommends to reach out directly to your equipment manufacturers for their recommended guidelines for proper sanitation practices.
  - b. Be diligent about guests not sharing any equipment by assigning each item to a specific guest.
  - c. If a guest or employee become sick during the trip, that individual will need to be separated from the group (6+ feet apart) until they can be evacuated. It may be wise to stop the trip early as others may be at risk due to exposure.
    - i. Other individuals on the trip should be aware of the potential for them to be quarantined for an indefinite period of time should another individual on their trip become ill.
    - ii. Contact medical care in the area to speak with them about symptoms and routinely check in to see if it is advisable to end the trip early to seek medical attention. The warning signs of the virus are:
      1. Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
      2. Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
      3. New confusion or inability to arouse
      4. Bluish lips or face
    - iii. If the sick individual is a guest, provide them with a facemask to wear. If the individual requires caretaking, ensure that just one employee is tending to them and that the employee has a facemask and gloves and observes appropriate precautions.
4. Travel Insurance- The Coronavirus has been a “known event” since January 22, 2020. This means that many travel insurance plans purchased after that date will not cover cancellations related to the virus. For insurance purchased before that date, whether it will be covered or not depends on the policy. “Cancel for Any Reason” (CFAR) insurance is the best avenue, though it may be too late for your guests as there is typically a window of time they can purchase. It is also important to note that even CFAR insurance does have limitations with cancellation, so you need to review that closely. As you communicate with your guests, make sure they understand the distinctions, especially if you provided a travel insurance option through your website at the time of booking. Consider offering credit (see 2a above) to provide clients with flexibility when travel insurance won’t cover their potential cancellation.
5. Partial and Total closures – Operators who cannot sustain a profitable business or do not feel they can meet health and safety standards should consider a partial or complete seasonal shutdown following local guidance. OSHA requires that businesses comply with safety and health guidelines. We understand that closing your doors may feel discouraging to you and your staff, but it may be the right thing to do for the greater good. Outfitters who have already closed have done so temporarily, listing an end date 2-4 weeks in the future or unless further notice is given. Follow the communication protocols below if you are shutting down some or all of your operation.
6. Communication- Many of you have already communicated with your guests or prospective guests, but as the situation evolves, we recommend keeping your clients in the loop if any of your policies change.

- a. We don't recommend to gloss over or ignore the current pandemic. It is on the mind of your customers, so you need to address it in your social media, emails and phone conversations. Each of these mediums will have different tones.
  - i. On social media, we recommend staying positive and share fun photos or videos that remind your audience that when this is over, you hope they will be ready for an outdoor adventure. Be mindful to not make light of the situation (as some are losing loved ones). If you are remaining open, let them know often and take every opportunity to address your health and safety practices in accordance with guidelines above. This is a great time to build brand awareness while so many are on social media.
  - ii. On your website, feature your coronavirus messaging prominently. We recommend to include a sentence that indicates that your policies may change as new information comes from the CDC, state and federal government.
  - iii. In your emails, you should be honest and straight-forward. Get to the facts. Are you open? What is your cancellation policy? How should your guests get their questions answered? Treat this as an opportunity to answer questions before they come and to assure your guests that their health and safety (and that of your employees) is important to you.

## Sources

### Section 1. Office Policies

[Coronavirus Symptoms From the CDC](#)

[Steps When Sick From the CDC](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfecting From the CDC](#)

[COVID-19 Fighting Products from the American Chemistry Council](#)

[Employee Management Policies From the Department of Labor](#)

[Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 From OSHA](#)

[Employment Law from the Van Winkle Law Firm Via Grassroots Outdoor Alliance](#)

### Section 4. Travel Insurance

[Coverage during the Coronavirus from Allianz Travel](#)

[Travel Insurance Guidance from Scotts Cheap Flights](#)

### Section 5. Closures

[Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19 From OSHA](#)