

Pacific Crest Trail Association

Covid-19 Trail Ambassador Safety Protocols

The Covid-19 pandemic affects every aspect of the Pacific Crest Trail community, from the feasibility of long-distance hikes and horseback rides on the PCT, to the health and safety of PCTA's 2,000 volunteers and countless trail users. We empathize with all those impacted by this public health crisis, and PCTA has taken steps throughout the pandemic to reduce the risk of spreading the virus to the trail community. On March 13, 2020, all in-person PCTA-related events were canceled or postponed, and the restriction was extended to June 1, 2020. As California, Oregon and Washington state governments lift stay-at-home orders and progress through phased re-openings, so too are in-person PCTA-related activities, with safety remaining the top priority.

The Trail Ambassador program is one of PCTA's in-person activities that with mitigation, can resume. Trail Ambassadors focus on public engagement and information sharing, typically in-person at public events and on the trail. During the pandemic, additional safety protocols must be followed to prevent close contact (as defined by the CDC) with members of other households to reduce the spread of Covid-19.

PCTA's volunteer activities are **optional** and **non-essential**. Volunteers' health and safety is our top priority, and **any participation is at the ambassador's discretion**.

PCTA will monitor the Covid-19 pandemic and adapt these guidelines as necessary, including canceling events at our discretion.

- Any events that can be attended virtually, should be
- All in-person events, indoor or outdoor, will follow all enhanced Covid-19 safety protocols outlined in this document. If stricter local regulations apply, they must be followed.
- Practice physical distancing by keeping six feet or more away from others—best practice being ten to 15 feet apart

Basic Prevention:

- If the ambassador or any other volunteer is experiencing symptoms, they must stay home in isolation or quarantine as per CDC recommendations: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine-isolation.html>
- The ambassador must wear a mask to reduce the spread of aerosol droplets. Masks must be worn when within 10 feet of others
- Practice physical distancing by keeping six feet or more away from others
- Encourage proper respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with the inside elbow of the arm, or in a tissue to be immediately discarded, and avoid touching the face. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf>
- Utilize frequent and thorough hand washing, especially before and after meals, touching your face, and after sneezing or coughing. If soap and running water are not immediately available, alcohol-based hand rubs containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl

alcohol should be used, or biodegradable hand soap used away from water sources and the trail. <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/pdf/hand-sanitizer-factsheet.pdf>

Volunteer Screening:

- All pre-season or pre-event communication will be done through email, phone or video calls
- When applicable, advanced registration is required for all Ambassador shifts. Registration will typically be facilitated through PCTA's website or by contacting PCTA staff
- Ambassadors are required to sign a Covid-19 waiver that they:
 - Have read the [CDC guidelines](#) regarding underlying conditions that would put them at high risk of severe illness to determine if participation in an activity will not unduly jeopardize their safety
 - Complete a Covid-19 self-evaluation before attending an event or starting their season: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
 - Acknowledge and are willing to abide by PCTA's Covid-19 policies and procedures
- Exposure to, or a diagnosis of, a confirmed or suspected Covid-19 case will pause any volunteer activities until CDC quarantine guidelines have been met

Event Location/Space:

- If possible, set up tables and stations in an outdoor location to allow for airflow and physical distancing
- Set up tables to allow for physical distancing. Ensure there is space for people to stand at least six feet apart and allow a limited number of people to approach the table at a time
- To ensure adequate physical distancing, limit the number of ambassador units at the PCTA table. (Example: no more than 2 ambassador households at a 6' table.) Signs will be posted encouraging people to maintain physical distance and wear masks
- Ambassadors are encouraged to keep conversations to less than 15 minutes

Event Supplies:

- All PPE, including masks, handwashing stations and sanitizer will be made available to volunteers who are attending events or out on the trail for the season
- Ambassadors should sanitize high-touch items like tables, chairs, pens, trail logbooks, and clipboards frequently
- Event attendees will have access to sanitizer and/or sanitized supplies, like pens, to sign trail logbooks, email sheets, etc.
- PCTA will provide face shields to those volunteers who are interested. A face shield is primarily used to protect the eyes of the person wearing it. It is not a substitute for a mask. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>

Evacuation and Exposure Plan:

- Isolate, quarantine and evacuate a sick volunteer as quickly as possible from other volunteers and members of the public
- Notify PCTA per local communication protocols
- Monitor yourself and other volunteers for signs of infection
- Volunteers who test positive for Covid-19 will be directed to self-quarantine according to current CDC guidance. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> PCTA staff will communicate periodically with any sick volunteers
- Volunteers who have come into close contact with an individual who has tested positive for Covid-19 (co-volunteer or otherwise) will be directed to self-quarantine according to current CDC guidance: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/if-you-are-sick/quarantine.html> Close contact is defined as six feet for a prolonged period. If the PCTA learns that a volunteer has tested positive, the PCTA will:
 - Conduct an investigation to determine co-volunteers who may have had close contact with the confirmed positive volunteer in the prior 14 days;
 - Direct those individuals who have had close contact with the confirmed-positive volunteer to self-quarantine according to CDC guidance;
 - If applicable, notify any staff, vendors/suppliers or visitors who may have had close contact with the confirmed-positive volunteer.
- A volunteer who becomes sick with Covid-19 and suspects it to be from volunteering on a PCTA-sponsored activity should work with PCTA staff to contact the Forest Service to submit a claim
- Except for circumstances in which PCTA is legally required to report workplace occurrences of communicable disease, the confidentiality of all medical conditions will be maintained in accordance with applicable law and to the extent practical under the circumstances. When it is required, the number of persons who will be informed that an unnamed volunteer has tested positive will be kept to the minimum needed to comply with reporting requirements and to limit the potential for transmission to others. The PCTA reserves the right to inform other volunteers that an unnamed co-volunteer has been diagnosed with Covid-19 if the other volunteers might have been exposed to the disease so the volunteers may take measures to protect their own health. The PCTA also reserves the right to inform staff, vendors/suppliers or visitors that an unnamed volunteer has been diagnosed with Covid-19 if they might have been exposed to the virus so those individuals may take measures to protect their own health

If you have additional questions, please contact volunteer@pcta.org or at (916) 285-1838.
