

# Pacific Crest Trail Association

## Covid-19 Safety Protocols for Volunteer Programs

The Covid-19 pandemic has affected 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 the PCTA's members and volunteers. As case rates in the United States decrease, vaccine availability and rates increase, and life starts to resemble something closer to the pre-pandemic "normal," our protocols now directly refer to state, local, and agency guidance.

We understand everyone has different levels of comfort and acceptable risk. **If you are not yet comfortable returning to volunteering, we support you in returning when you are ready!** For those who are ready to return to volunteering, our protocols are:

- Volunteer activities will follow all applicable state, local and agency guidance. This may result in regional variation, so leaders will continue to work directly with the local Regional Representative or Volunteer Programs staff to coordinate and execute activities.
- PCTA will continue to make all PPE available.
- Any volunteer experiencing symptoms or who has been in close proximity to sick individuals must stay home and quarantine [according to CDC guidance](#). A volunteer who contracts Covid-19 and suspects it to be from volunteering with PCTA should contact PCTA staff.
- Online sign-in sheets, waivers, JHAs, etc. have been adopted as permanent features of PCTA's volunteer programs and must be completed before each outing.
- [In accordance with CDC guidance](#), fully vaccinated individuals (at least 2 weeks past your final dose) are no longer required to wear masks outdoors or practice physical distancing.
- Those who are not fully vaccinated must continue to follow [CDC guidance to protect yourself and others](#), including physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart from those outside your household) and wearing a mask outdoors when you can't avoid being within 6 feet.
- PCTA and the Forest Service are not checking or recording vaccination status of individuals in order to determine masking and physical distancing requirements. Individuals are responsible for self-determination of safe and responsible behavior as it relates to personal vaccination status.
- All volunteer activities will be planned to accommodate and provide opportunity for all individuals regardless of vaccination status. No one may ask an individual about their vaccination status as it relates to volunteering with PCTA. Individuals may choose to voluntarily disclose their vaccination status.
- It is everyone's responsibility to create a safe and enjoyable space during PCTA activities. PCTA's [Crew Leadership Course \(304\)](#) includes a section on "Recognizing Differences," which reminds us "no group of volunteers will be entirely uniform. However, a comfortable atmosphere is important for all volunteers and it is the crew leader's responsibility to ensure that needs are being met and that all members of the group are comfortable both physically and emotionally." This is critical to remember as we move forward.

PCTA will continue to monitor Covid-19 guidance and adapt these protocols as necessary. PCTA is maintaining an additional [Covid-19 FAQ document](#) related to these protocols.

If you have additional questions, please email them to [volunteer@pcta.org](mailto:volunteer@pcta.org) or your local PCTA Regional Representative