



COLORADO

Department of
Natural Resources

Outdoor Recreation FAQ | COVID-19

Updated 4/20/20

Q: *Is it OK to go outside to exercise or play?*

A: Being outdoors is great for our physical and mental health. Recreate outdoors at times and in places where you can maintain six feet of physical distance between yourself and others. Because maintaining that distance can be difficult on a narrow trail, try something in your own backyard, take a walk or bike ride around the block, or visit a neighborhood park (just leave any playground equipment untouched). Be sure to wear a cloth face-covering when you are out in public.

Q: *Is it OK to gather in groups to socialize outside?*

A: People should not gather in any outdoor space where they cannot maintain 6 feet of physical distance from one another. That includes pavilions, areas that offer shelter, or other outdoor areas that invite people to congregate and groups and do not allow for 6 feet of physical distance.

Q: *Why are we being encouraged to recreate cautiously?*

A: Accidents - especially those that occur in the backcountry - can require significant first responder resources and be a drain on a community's healthcare systems. Rescue responses put first responders at greater personal risk, and many rescue situations do not lend to physical distancing. Asymptomatic people, both individuals and rescuers, can spread COVID-19 before they are aware of symptoms. If either the individual or a rescuer later becomes symptomatic or tests positive, that entire group of rescuers will have to self-isolate for at least 14 days. This leads to fewer and fewer rescue personnel available to respond to emergencies quickly, especially in small communities.

Q: *Can I travel outside of my community to recreate outdoors?*

A: Recreate locally and close to home. Front Range residents should avoid traveling to the high country or mountain communities. The further you have to travel, the more potential you have to spread illness. Do not travel to [communities or areas with closures in place](#).

Many local healthcare systems are overwhelmed. Please do not risk adding to the burden.

Q: *Should I wear a mask when going out for a hike or bike ride?*

A: Yes. The [Center for Disease Control \(CDC\) recommends](#) that "a cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are in a community setting, especially in situations

where you may be near people.” If you visit a local trail, there’s a good chance that keeping a distance of six feet when passing others can be difficult at times.

Please keep in mind that, “cloth face coverings should not be placed on children younger than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.” ([source](#))

Q: *Are there ways to have a virtual park experience from home?*

A: Yes! Colorado Parks and Wildlife have several videos of State Parks on its [YouTube page](#).

The National Park Service also launched a [Find Your “Virtual” Park](#) page where you can view webcams, play online games, participate in a live ranger program, and more!

Q: *What is the status of parks, trails, and visitor centers?*

A: While most parks and trails around the state remain open, a few like Rocky Mountain and Mesa Verde National Parks have closed entirely. State parks remain open for walking, biking, etc. Most visitor centers around the state are closed to public access.

You can find up-to-date closures of parks, trails, and visitor centers in Colorado’s Official Trails App, [COTREX](#). A team is monitoring closures and updating them on a daily basis.

Q: *The Governor has announced that all playgrounds, picnic areas, other similar areas conducive to public gathering, and attended areas shelled be closed. What are attended areas?*

A: An “attended area” is an area where people tend to gather, such as playgrounds, picnic areas, areas that have equipment for individuals to use, and areas with shelters to provide shade. These areas do not adhere to social distancing requirements, as they further expose individuals to multi-touch surfaces where disease transmission could occur. Local jurisdictions can determine whether parks within their jurisdiction can remain open. Restrooms that remain open in these areas must be cleaned on a daily basis.

Q: *May I ski, snowshoe, or hike in the backcountry?*

A: These activities are considered higher risk due to the potential for avalanches, exposure, accidents and adverse weather conditions and are strongly discouraged at this time due the potential drain on Search and Rescue teams that include law enforcement and medical personnel. [Uphill skiing](#) is prohibited at most Colorado ski areas. Also, traveling to the mountains to recreate goes against current guidance to recreate locally and close to home.

To get a glimpse into what an emergency rescue entails and the added risks to first responders, [read about a recent avalanche response](#) near Telluride, Colorado.

Q: *Where can I find other recreation resources about COVID-19 responses?*

A: The Department of Natural Resources has created an [Outdoor Recreation Resources](#) guide with information about closures and links to information from federal, tribal, state, and local agencies across Colorado.

Q: *Where can I find the latest about COVID-19 in Colorado and the state's response?*

A: The state has created a new website to learn the latest about COVID-19 guidance, the number of cases in the state, resources to help you stay home, etc. View it at covid.colorado.gov.

General Do's & Don'ts:

DO	DON'T
Recreate outside locally and close to home	Travel long distances in your car to recreate
Maintain a 6-foot distance from others if you go outside	Engage in risky recreational activities
Try a new virtual workout class on the internet	Recreate in groups with others not in your household
Walk or bike to a local park or trail near your home	Travel to recreate in counties with travel restrictions
Virtually visit a national park or museum	
Participate in the global City Nature Challenge	