



Covid-19 Re-Opening Plan Step 3 Implementation (phase 1)

Dear Scouts and Scouters,

With respect to all and with an abundance of caution, we are prepared to begin the process of having Scouting units begin meeting again “in-person”. This is an important time for the movement and for the Voyageurs Area Council. It is important for the emotional, psychological, and spiritual health of our members to give them opportunities to gather and experience the adventure of Scouting. With all of that being said, we cannot ignore the physical health of our members.

There is still much uncertainty about Covid-19, and we don’t want to get ahead of ourselves. We have monitored the ongoing reports by government and health agencies, the updates to the science, and the adjustments to policies and regulations. This is a challenging process as we have federal agencies and the relative groups from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan to follow.

The Risk Management Committee of the VAC, headed by Chairperson – Stacey Dennee, has met and reviewed all of the information available to us. Following are the policies, regulations, and recommendations associated with this first phase of re-opening. A note: policies and regulations are absolutes and cannot be broken; recommendations are the best advice we can give at this time and should be followed if at all possible.

Policies:

- Local units are chartered to the BSA and must adhere to BSA policies, rules, and regulations.
- Local units are chartered through the local council, the Voyageurs Area Council, and must adhere to VAC policies, rules, and regulations.
- As citizens of the United States and, in particular, the state we reside in, we are subject to official standards as set by those government officials who have authority to set policy. This may be applicable to county and local governments as well.
- Additionally, local units are chartered to local organizations. Units are also subject to restrictions placed on them by their Chartering Organization.
- The responsibility for managing the health and appropriateness of a Scout, Scouter, or family member in allowing participation in meetings and activities lies with the leadership of the unit – with primary responsibility for each child resting with the parent or guardian.
- Safety is first before all other considerations.

Regulations:

- Scouts BSA Troops, Sea Scout Ships, and Venturing Crews may begin meetings in-person again on June 1, 2020. Cub Scout Packs or Dens are not to begin meeting in-person until June 15 to give us more time to review the situation.
- Meetings and activities are all to be on the outside of buildings or in the out of doors until further notice.



- Gatherings are limited to “pods” of 10 people or less. 10 people includes both Scouts and adults.
- There may be multiple pods in one activity or meeting but they are to remain completely separate from each other. Pods may not intermingle during the meeting or activity. If check-in is required, there must be staggered arrival times for pods.
- Within pods, Scouts and Scouters are to maintain social distancing rules of six feet apart.
- Units must still follow the buddy system, though buddies must remain six feet apart.
- Equipment and materials are not to be shared. If a piece of equipment must be used by multiple people it must be sanitized after each use.
- The unit is to provide an adequate amount of hand sanitizer or hand washing space and require all participants to use them. The unit is also to provide disinfectant for surfaces.
- There are to be no “pot luck” meals for the time being. Scouts and Scouters must provide their own food. If community food is provided it must come from a single source (Pizza comes to mind) and be handled by someone that is wearing disposable gloves. If cooking is part of the program, the participant must handle their own food after it is cooked.
- Overnight camping is not approved at this time. We are working toward a potential start date of July 1.

Recommendations:

- Post signs at the location you use that encourage frequent hand washing, use of sanitizer, and other good hygiene methods. Remind participants that the signs are reminders only and that they do not take the place of policies or regulations.
- Have a check-in procedure that allows for screening of participants. Ask generic health related questions and use your best judgement when someone seems under the weather. (Note: be careful to not be invasive into the personal life of the participant.) Appropriate questions include:
 - Have you done any travelling where you might have come into contact with anyone that has a communicable disease, including Covid-19?
 - Have you had any prolonged close contact (within 6 feet) with anyone that could be infectious?
 - Have you been ill, or do you feel in any way under the weather now?
 - Have you been advised to self isolate at any point since mid-March?
 - Do you feel like you pose no risk to anyone else here or anyone they might be in contact with at home?
- Use part of your first meeting together to openly discuss the pandemic and how it has affected your Scouts.
- At all times remember and practice the Scout Oath and Law. Regardless of how an individual feels about what is going on in the world around us they must feel safe and welcome. Personal protection practices, though they may differ, must not become a source of contention or bullying.
- The wearing of masks and face coverings is recommended, though not required. It is best that each person have one in case the group agrees that it is needed. Some may not wish to participate without them or if others are not wearing them. Be sensitive to each other.

Example 1: The troop decides to have instruction on the cooking merit badge.

- Meeting and program is done outside.
- All program and instruction done within a pod of 10 or fewer.
- Troop supplies like fuel, etc. would be handled by one person or sanitized after each use.
- Each Scout would provide their own food for preparation.
- Each Scout would provide their own cooking utensils and dishes.
- Scouts may have to take turns in order to promote social distancing.
- Samples or shared food available with disposable utensils.

Example 2: The troop has a court of honor.

- Meeting and program is done outside.
- Awards are presented in pods of 10 or fewer.
- All award materials are handled by one person, or if by multiple persons, they use disposable gloves.
- Traditions that are not in keeping with Covid-19 rules are suspended.
- Singing, shouts, and cheers are not recommended.
- Person making the presentations should wear a mask when presenting badges, etc. to Scouts. Scouts should also wear a mask when receiving badges.
- One Scout at a time to maintain social distancing rules. Parents or guardians may accompany their Scout if they live in the same household and are wearing a mask.

Use the included flow chart for general questions about whether you should do the activities you have planned.

We wish you all the best in getting your units back together and pursuing the fun and adventure of Scouting. Please contact us at the Council Service Center if you need any assistance. 218-729-5811.

Sincerely,

Michael Jenkins,
Scout Executive

Stacey Dennee,
Council Risk Management Chair