



## Updated USA Climbing COVID-19 Countermeasures January 18, 2023

All USA Climbing sanctioned events shall adhere to local, state, and federal guidelines/regulations regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures and other public health requirements.

This document is published as an update, revision, and consolidation of USA Climbing's Return to Sport Plan and COVID Countermeasures Document and is based on current COVID-19 guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and input from the USA Climbing Medical Committee.

USA Climbing will continue to monitor the CDC's COVID-19 guidance and will stay in regular communication with the USA Climbing Medical Committee.

**USA Climbing's COVID-19 mitigation strategies, including masking requirements, may be changed at ANY time should pandemic circumstances warrant.**

Information described in this document is intended for USA Climbing events. International events held in the US will adhere to the COVID-19 mitigation strategies imposed by the International Federation for Sport Climbing.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). SARS-CoV-2 is highly contagious. Spread occurs through inhalation of virus-containing respiratory droplets and aerosol particles as well as mucous membrane contact with virus-containing particles. Transmission can occur from infected individuals as well as those who are not exhibiting symptoms or "asymptomatic" persons.

COVID-19 infection may include, but is not limited to, the following signs and symptoms: fever (100.4 F or higher), chills, sore throat, headache, NEW cough (for anyone with chronic allergies/asthma, a change from your baseline), shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, NEW onset headache (for anyone with migraines or other chronic headache syndrome, a change from your baseline), NEW fatigue, muscle or body aches (associated with any other symptoms on this list), congestion and/or runny nose (for anyone with chronic allergies, a change from your baseline), diarrhea, nausea or vomiting, NEW loss of taste or smell.

The primary method of COVID-19 prevention is through widely available vaccinations and booster shots, which are strongly encouraged. Behavioral modifications including, but not limited to, the following are encouraged to decrease the spread of COVID-19:

- physical distancing.
- routine and thorough handwashing or hand sanitizing.
- practicing personal hygiene measures when coughing and sneezing.
- wearing an appropriate mask covering one's nose, and mouth.
- avoiding the of sharing of equipment, food, or drink.
- thorough cleaning procedures of shared or common use surfaces.
- appropriate isolation of infected individuals per CDC guidelines.

All participants of USA Climbing events acknowledge, accept, and agree that the sport of climbing and related fitness activities of USA Climbing events involve inherent risks, and understand that no amount of care, caution, instruction, or expertise can eliminate the inherent dangers, including infectious disease transmission, associated with these and other activities within a USA Climbing event.

Exposure to SARS-CoV-2 is a risk in any public place where people gather. USA Climbing cannot prevent event attendees from becoming exposed to, contracting, or spreading COVID-19 while participating in its events. The information provided in this document does not and is not intended to constitute legal or medical advice. USA Climbing requires all attendees to be familiar with the COVID-19 mitigation protocol(s) while in the Host City and in the Host Facility.

## 2. GENERAL INFORMATION

### Event Planning & Preparation

All USA Climbing sanctioned events shall adhere to local, state, and federal guidance/regulations regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures and other public health requirements. If local, state, or federal guidance / regulations should be in conflict around an aspect of COVID-19 mitigation, USA Climbing events should comply with the most stringent or restrictive of the guidance. For each event, a localized evaluation of the COVID-19 situation will be conducted and discussed by USA Climbing and the Host Facility throughout the preparation and execution of the event.

### Emergency Preparedness

USA Climbing will verify appropriate on-site medical team(s) and first-aid station(s) for the event to the standard of local governing authorities. All ancillary services (e.g., physical therapist, massage therapist, team trainer) need to be cleared with USA Climbing and the Host Facility.

Each attendee shall acknowledge that he/she/they is fully informed of the event's rules and protocols with special consideration given to COVID-19 mitigation plans. This acknowledgement may occur in a digital/electronic format via USA Climbing event registration attestations.

Host Facility health screening attestations, temperature screenings, vaccine requirements and masking may be required by the Host Facility in addition to the COVID-19 Countermeasures attestation required by USA Climbing.

### COVID Symptoms, Confirmed Cases, and Exposed Cases

All event attendees who intend to participate in a USA climbing event (athletes, USA Climbing event staff, volunteers, and spectators) must truthfully disclose:

- If you have tested positive for COVID-19 OR have had close contact to a known COVID-19 case within the 5 days preceding the start of an event.
- USA Climbing will require appropriate isolation measures per CDC and local health department guidelines and will follow whichever set of guidelines is most stringent.
- Disclosure should be made to USA Climbing at [medicalquestions@usacimbing.org](mailto:medicalquestions@usacimbing.org)

IF YOU HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19: (Applies to EVERYONE, regardless of vaccination status):

If you test positive for COVID-19 and are asymptomatic

- Isolate for 5 days from your positive test (Day 0).
- If you continue to be asymptomatic after 5 days, isolation can be discontinued, and you can attend the event as soon as day 6.
- Once isolation is discontinued, you must wear a mask for a minimum of 5 additional days in all public indoor settings.

If you test positive for COVID-19 and you have symptoms

- Isolate for 5 days from symptom onset (Day 0).
- Isolation can be discontinued after 5 days, and you can attend the event as soon as day 6 IF you have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication and your other symptoms are resolving.
- Once isolation is discontinued, you must wear a mask for a minimum of 5 additional days in all public indoor settings.

IF YOU HAVE CLOSE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE WITH COVID-19: (Applies to EVERYONE, regardless of vaccination status):

- The date of last contact is considered Day 0.
- Wear a mask in all public indoor settings for a minimum of 10 days.
- Test on day 5, if possible (strongly encouraged).
- If you develop symptoms, get tested and stay home.

## Suspected COVID-19 Cases During an Event

In the case that an individual attending a USA climbing exhibits symptoms suggestive of COVID-19 infection during an event, the individual may be evaluated by the Designated Licensed Medical Professional, and when appropriate, may be removed from the Host Facility. If this occurs, event suspension, postponement or cancellation are all possibilities. The appropriate event outcome will be determined by personnel that may include but is not limited to: Designated Licensed Medical Professional, event Jury President, USA Climbing CEO, USA Climbing VP of Sport, Host Facility, and the local health department.

## Protective Equipment & Supplies

**Masks:** USA Climbing is not requiring masks to be worn during events. USA Climbing will allow each competition host venue to determine the COVID-19 mitigation procedures, including masking regulations, for their individual event. Host venues are strongly encouraged to follow all local health department and CDC COVID-19 mitigation guidelines.

Wearing a mask in crowded areas of the competition venue (during red point rounds, while in isolation or warm-up areas or in spectator areas for example) is strongly encouraged.

If you are a competitor or competition participant that may be at higher risk for severe COVID-19 illness, USA Climbing recommends that you seek the advice of your healthcare provider regarding additional COVID-19 precautions, such as the avoidance of crowded indoor spaces and/or the continued use of a mask or respirator while in public indoor settings.

All athletes and competition participants who wish to wear a mask for additional COVID-19 protection should do so. Climbing and competing in a mask is allowed.

Belayers and rope handlers are encouraged to wear Face Shields and/or Full Coverage Eye Goggles as well as belay gloves. If belay gloves are not used, belayers are encouraged to sanitize hands immediately before and after each climber.

At national events, USA Climbing will confirm contactless thermometers are available for temperature checks in the event of a medical condition involving event personnel, competitors, or attendees.

## General Event Details

As much as feasible, virtual management will be provided for logistical and operational components of the event including and not limited to:

- An event information document containing details related to the specific virus transmission mitigation protocol organized for the event, as well as general event details such as format, rules, etc.
- A virtual technical meeting.
- Starting lists / running orders.
- Results: contactless scoring and verification by competitors.

- Qualification route demonstrations.

### 3. COVID-19 MITIGATION CONSIDERATIONS & PROCEDURES

#### General:

USA Climbing will allow each competition host venues to determine the COVID-19 mitigation procedures, including masking regulations, for their individual event. Host venues are strongly encouraged to follow all local health department and CDC COVID-19 mitigation guidelines.

Any attendee experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 immediately before or during an event is encouraged to leave the venue or not attend the event. All attendees are strongly recommended to physically distance themselves and disinfect with hand sanitizer or wash hands with soap and water.

#### Competitors:

Competitors will be required to complete Host Facility waiver(s) prior to entry to the competition in addition to agreeing to the USA Climbing Waiver and USA Climbing Code of Ethics

<https://usaclimbing.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/USA-Climbing-Waiver.pdf> and [https://usaclimbing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/USA-Climbing-Code-of-Ethics-Conflicts-of-Interest-Policy\\_Updated-3.23.2022-1.pdf](https://usaclimbing.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/USA-Climbing-Code-of-Ethics-Conflicts-of-Interest-Policy_Updated-3.23.2022-1.pdf)

Competitors are required to bring all their personal belongings with them through each transition of the competition (including but not limited to bags, shoes, chalk). Personal belongings cannot be left behind in the Isolation or Warm-up areas.

#### Lead Climbing:

The Host Facility may supply official competition ropes for a USAC lead climbing event. However, a personal or shared “team” rope will be allowed if the rope has been inspected and approved by the appropriate event organizer and/or the Host Facility prior to the competition.

#### Volunteers:

If lead-climbing supportive equipment is not supplied by Host Facility or USA Climbing, volunteers shall have their own personal lead-climbing supportive equipment available (including but not limited to belay devices, personal harness, and full-coverage belay gloves), subject to approval by the Host Facility and/or USA Climbing.