



To: OEC Instructors, OEC Instructor Trainers, Region OEC Administrators, OEC Division Supervisors, Asst. OEC National Program Director, Julie Stone

From: OEC National Program Director

Date: September 17, 2021

RE: OEC Training and COVID precautions

This memorandum reviews the recommendations for conducting OEC courses during the second year of COVID-19, considering the variants that are present in the current environment.

The recommendations are based on Centers for Disease Control guidelines and reflect the general guidance established on the date of the memo. In addition to this guidance the NSP National Medical Committee has additional recommendations for patrols to consider.

*The National Ski Patrol with the strong recommendation of the National Medical Committee continue to encourage that all members of the National Ski Patrol get **vaccinated for COVID-19** using one of the approved vaccines or emergency use approved vaccines.*

**The following recommendations are for all OEC training and meeting events:**

- During all indoor events the recommendation is to wear a well-fitting face mask/covering.
- Whenever possible try to maintain social distance except for activities such as hands-on training.
- When outdoors and social distancing cannot be maintained, such as during hands-on skills training, the recommendation is to wear a face covering/mask.

**When performing hands-on training include the following precautions:**

- Use manikins when possible.
- Disinfect and sanitize all equipment between stations.
- Make hand sanitizer or washing facilities available between stations.
- Wear face coverings during all these activities.

As always, instructors must set up the training environment to maintain safety and meet all local state, community and tribal regulations and guidelines.

**OEC Instructor of Record and Instructor Trainer Responsibilities:**

- Find a safe location to hold the refresher where area management agrees and follow their guidelines if more stringent.
- Consider holding additional refresher training with smaller groups of vaccinated and unvaccinated people.
- Ensure you have a cadre of vaccinated OEC Instructors to participate during a training event.
- Encourage everyone that wants to attend training to be fully vaccinated before attending the OEC training.
- Encourage everyone to have proof of vaccination status for verification only. Upon arrival, or first entry, verify status of vaccination but do not record the status; instead issue different color cards depending on status for group set up.
- Ensure that groups or pods of people are documented so that if there is COVID-19 exposure, close contact information is available and the entire group of attendees does not need to be considered close contacts.
- Inform everyone in advance that if they don't feel good, they cannot attend the training.

**Develop a checklist of questions to use to ensure the following:**

- Attendees are vaccinated.
- Attendees declare they feel well the day of training.

- Attendees declare they have no other reason for not attending training.

The following link is an example that the CDC uses for people entering a CDC facility. <https://www.cdc.gov/screening/index.html>.

### **Additional precautions to consider:**

- Encourage anyone attending the training (including support staff) to bring one or more face coverings for use during the day.
- Ask anyone that is not vaccinated to keep distance from others, always wear a face covering at the training facility when indoors or outdoors where social distancing is not possible.
- Encourage all attendees to bring their own food and drink for the event and if food is supplied it is individually served and controlled for cross contamination.
- Encourage social distancing while eating and in lines.
- Use the enrollment form and National Release forms to ensure you have logistics planned out to be able to document and trace close contacts.
- The CDC does not currently state training and gatherings cannot be held; however local guidelines may be established that do limit the size of gatherings.

### **Specifics for the OEC Cycle B Refresher or make up refreshers:**

- Cycle B is required to have a hands-on portion for the skills objectives.
- All suggestions listed above apply to refresher training.
- If everyone is vaccinated, hands-on skills training can be like past training for set up and logistics. The major difference is wearing face covering/mask during indoor activities or outdoor activities where social distancing is not possible.
- Instructors who are not vaccinated should not participate in repeated hands-on skills stations. They should be assigned to task where social distance can be maintained and limited exposure.

- Unvaccinated participants that are going to complete training should first consider getting vaccinated. If they cannot, the first recommendation is to put off training until they are fully vaccinated. If training must be completed, unvaccinated individuals must wear coverings, stay as socially distant as possible and take all other precautions.

**If unvaccinated participants need to work on other volunteers:**

- Everyone should wear face coverings or masks whether indoors or outdoors.
- Only vaccinated instructors, helpers and injured actors should be used.

***In addition to these recommendations, follow all local, state or tribal requirements that may be required at the time of the refresher training.***

Reference materials

The following guidelines of from the CDC:

- Those that are fully vaccinated can move toward normal activities with other vaccinated people in the outdoor environment.
- If you are not fully vaccinated and aged 2 or older, you should wear a mask in indoor public places.
- In general, you do not need to wear a mask in outdoor settings.
- There is a strong recommendation by the CDC that In areas with [high numbers of COVID-19 cases](#), consider wearing a mask in crowded outdoor settings and for activities with [close contact](#) with others who are not fully vaccinated.
- People who have a condition or are taking medications that weaken their immune system may not be fully protected even if they are fully vaccinated. They should continue to take [all precautions recommended for unvaccinated people, including wearing a well-fitted mask](#), until advised otherwise by their healthcare provider.
- If you are fully vaccinated, to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask

indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).