



## **Outdoor & Indoor Event Activity COVID-19 Safety Process and Approval Guide**

*Issued: July 7, 2021;*

*Updated: August 2, 2021 (indoor mask mandate)*

*In place through (expiration date): September 30, 2021*

IMPORTANT: This guide is for pandemic safety purposes only. Any approval processes within your chapter, department and/or programs still apply. Safety guidance below should be woven into your planning and approval process. This guidance does NOT apply to Outings. To view [Outings Guidance, click here](#). Updated guidance will be issued prior to the expiration date above. Air and overnight travel remains paused--any activities requiring travel should cross reference the [Travel Guidance](#) found here.

**Please note: These revised guidelines and protocols are subject to change (with notice) as necessary to adapt to evolving pandemic circumstances**

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## Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to support a functional process to run prioritized in-person, outdoor--and in a limited capacity indoor--events as we begin to slowly resume optional activities following the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. Like many features of operating during a novel pandemic, this process is new and may change and evolve as we respond to conditions as well as feedback from users. As always, safety is paramount and exception approvals will be limited to rigorously prioritize equitable and safer event activities. It is possible that individual, regional, or all events nationwide may be canceled at any time due to fluid pandemic pressures and conditions.

## When to Use this Guide

If you are considering planning Sierra Club initiated, in-person activities for 2021 this guide will direct how you do this. If you are wondering if what you are planning to do is “safer” during the pandemic, or how to make it safer, this guide and its resources are your first step. **All in-person national, chapter, group, staff and/or volunteer activities and events related to activities in the midst of COVID will need to apply their operations through this process.** This guide should also be used to inform Sierra Club participation in partner events and event sponsorships as well. **Note: ALL activities remain subject to existing approval protocols with national and chapter teams!**

## How to Use this Guide

This guide outlines types and characteristics of events/activities that are possible in the context of current COVID-19 information, in what tier of approval they are designated, and a description of the application, review, and approval process, where it is required. This guide intends to provide Staff & Volunteers with agency to create plans for the remaining summer months and attempts to cover many situations and requests; yet, it reasonably will not cover all scenarios, iterations, and questions. Your manager/chapter chair and Safety Staff (which support both national and chapters) can field questions about process, details, changes, and approvals at any time. If an activity idea is not listed, please reach out to [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org) and we'll help advise on which category the activity falls under.

## Event & Activity Participation

Each individual (staff or volunteer) organizing an activity can and should determine their comfort level with participating in in-person activities with the public at this time. No one, for the duration of this guidance, will be asked to participate in an in-person public activity that they are not personally comfortable with. Staff & Volunteers wishing not to participate in in-person public activities should continue to organize virtually until they determine it is safer for them to return to in person events and/or when Sierra Club's pandemic guidance sunsets.

## **SAFETY ELEMENTS FOR ALL EVENTS & ACTIVITIES**

- **Local Ordinance and Restrictions:** ALL local public gathering, group size, travel distance, and other COVID public health ordinances will be recognized as a baseline for all events and activities. Activity organizers must review local ordinances and ensure your event complies prior to planning the activity. Sierra Club group size and other

operating/safety limits may be added on to these baseline restrictions. *If a local ordinance is more restrictive, the local guidance will supersede Sierra Club's guidance. Likewise, if Sierra Club's guidance is more restrictive, then Sierra Club's guidance supersedes the local ordinance.*

- **Location:** The location should be chosen keeping the number of participants and the desired physical distancing in mind. Both indoor and outdoor activities are okay, as described below, depending on the organizer's comfort level. Keeping events outdoors for the time being is highly encouraged! Plan accordingly for outdoor weather conditions.
- **Personal Protective Equipment/Facemasks:** Staff and volunteers must wear a mask at all Indoor Events & Activities. In addition, everyone must utilize masks as local or national public health guidance directs (ie: on public transportation). Activity planners should have a small amount of disposable (or clean, reusable) facemasks available for distribution if an attendee arrives without and requests a mask. These can be purchased locally or through our [internal masks portal](#). Organizers who wish to utilize face shields and/or gloves in addition to face masks may do so at their discretion. Sierra Club strongly encourages the continued use of masks in outdoor spaces where vaccination status is unknown, mixed, and/or in crowded spaces. Any employee that is not vaccinated is required to wear a mask at all indoor and outdoor Sierra Club events and activities.
- **Distance** - Activity Organizers and participants should put social/physical distancing minimums in place based on their comfort level, location (ie: indoor/outdoor), and attendance needs. Sierra Club recommends maintaining social distancing of 3-6 feet at indoor events without masks.
- **Communication to participants:** Depending on the activity being planned, recruitment materials must include information regarding masks, if required for the event. All indoor event communications must include the mask mandate. Consider including a link to Sierra Club's [safety tips](#) when recruiting.
- **Manager/Chapter Chair Approval** - Based on the Tiers below, events and activities will be reviewed and approved by your national manager or your Chapter Chair (or their designee) prior to the start of the event. Managers/Chapter Chairs will need to help develop planning, compliance, safety management plans, and approval of timelines and operational capacity. Some events (described in Tier 2 below) must be additionally reviewed and approved by Safety staff.
- **Group Size Limit** - Activity attendance should be scaled based on the location being used, while ensuring social/physical distancing requirements can be met or exceeded. Sierra Club IS operating with event capacity restrictions at this time.
- **Funding Compliance** - All events must undergo compliance review via regular channels ([compliance.review@sierraclub.org](mailto:compliance.review@sierraclub.org)).
- **Safety Management Planning (SMP)** - All events and activities in Tier 1 or higher will include a completed [Safety Management Plan](#) that needs to be approved by your manager or Chapter Chair in every case, and by Safety staff in cases that require additional approval. A completed [Safety Management Plan](#) must be included with every Event Application.

- **Vaccination status:** The vaccination status of participating individuals does not change any of the above criteria at this time. Staff and Volunteers should assume some participants are NOT vaccinated. Sierra Club will not ask or verify event participant vaccine status at this time.

**OUTDOOR EVENT ACTIVITY TIERS**

There are four tiers for OUTDOOR activity planning as described below. If the type of activity you wish to plan is not listed, and you are not able to determine the Tier level based on the guidance provided below, please reach out to [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org) for assistance in assigning your plans to the appropriate Tier.

**Tier 0: Activities That Can Resume at Staff/Volunteer Discretion**

The activities in this Tier can resume based on the individual’s comfort level and require no additional approvals

Outdoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Materials Distribution--No Interpersonal Interaction	Outdoor Mail/Literature Drops (ie: door hangers, leaving flyers on doorsteps, etc.) without any verbal contact.
1 on 1 Meetings	Organizer/Staff/Volunteer meets with another Organizer/Staff/Volunteer, partner, donor or local leader outdoors (Keeping meetings outdoors for the time-being is highly encouraged!)
Staff/Volunteer Event Attendance at Partner Event/Activity	Organizer/Staff/Volunteer attends an outdoor event hosted by a partner/other organization while on Sierra Club paid time/for SC business purposes. (Standard manager approval may apply.)

**Tier 1: Activities Needing Manager/Chapter Chair Approval (only)**

The activities in this section can move forward with national manager or Chapter Chair approval, if all Safety Elements above are met. Organizers should still prepare Safety Plans to manage the event successfully.

Outdoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
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Materials Distribution-With Interpersonal Interaction	Outdoor Mail/Literature Drops (ie: door hangers, leaving flyers on doorsteps, etc.) that are likely to include interpersonal interaction--handing off of materials or engaging in conversations.
Tabling Activities & Hand-to-Hand material distribution	Information table at fair, rally, farmer's market or other third-party event that is designed to encourage physically close interpersonal interaction.
In-person Press Conferences	A press conference outdoors where a Sierra Club representative is requested to attend or speak (ensure disinfection of mic/shared audio equipment between users) and/or that Sierra Club is hosting for members of the media to hear about a Sierra Club issue.
Guest Speaker Engagements	A chapter director, volunteer, organizer, campaign rep or other spokesperson delivers a talk at an outdoor event (ensure disinfection of mic/shared audio equipment between users)
Lobby Visits	Attendance by SC staff or volunteers at outdoor lobbying meetings with decision-makers. If an outdoor lobbying activity organized/hosted by Sierra Club, a maximum of 25 participants.
Sponsorship or promotion of partner events that have strong COVID-19 safety plans.	If a chapter or national wants to sponsor or promote a partner activity, this is acceptable, if a strong COVID safety plan that meets or exceeds local and Sierra Club guidance is in place. Promotion should include reference to pandemic safety as warranted by current conditions. Approval by national/chapter leadership still required under your existing processes.

Small, optional, in-person meetings (less than 25 people) that do NOT require air or overnight travel	Meeting with donors, board member, Chapter or Group ExComm meeting, coalition group/partner or a staff team (ie: an optional team meeting outside during work hours).
Community Organizing intended to drive interpersonal interaction between the staffer/volunteer and the public	Neighborhood canvassing, knocking on doors, in-person petition signing/comment collection, letter writing, etc. Sierra Club organized community events up to 25 participants.

**Tier 2: Activities needing Manager/Chapter Chair AND Safety Review/Approval**

The activities in this section require manager approval AND review & approval by Safety staff. All safety elements above must be met.

Outdoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Sierra Club initiated and hosted, or co-sponsored Public Rallies/Protests	Outdoor rallies of any kind, with a participant size between 25-250 people. (Local jurisdictions may have restrictions on these events, hence the need for additional consideration/consultation with safety staff.)
Lobby Visits	Attendance by SC staff or volunteers at outdoor lobbying meetings with decision-makers with a group size of 25-250. If an outdoor lobbying activity organized/hosted by Sierra Club, a maximum of 250 participants.
Group fundraising activities, events, or other gatherings <b>that include</b> hiking, kayaking, birding, etc. (ie: Events with “Outings” components)	Safety team can evaluate if the activities are an event or an Outing and provide guidance. Please email <a href="mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org">program.safety@sierraclub.org</a>
Any activity not listed above or below	Safety staff can evaluate an event concept at the start of your planning process to help determine the Tier that applies.

**Tier 3: Prohibited Events/Activities**

The activities in this section are not allowed to take place or begin planning at this time. This list includes examples and is not exhaustive of all events that may be prohibited.

Outdoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Any SC sponsored or co-sponsored event/activity with planned attendance greater than 250	Climate March, in-person rallies, protests or meetings.
All air travel and overnight trips for staff/volunteers	Sierra Club is continuing to postpone resuming broad air travel and overnight travel. An update on Travel will be issued by July 31, 2021 to include pathways for acceptable travel and approvals of certain travel by senior managers & department heads. Thank you for your continued patience as we work to slowly and more safely resume operations during the pandemic.

### **INDOOR EVENT ACTIVITY TIERS**

There are four tiers for INDOOR activity planning as described below. If the type of activity you wish to plan is not listed, and you are not able to determine the Tier level based on the guidance provided below, please reach out to [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org) for assistance in assigning your plans to the appropriate Tier. **Staff & Volunteers are required to continue mask usage indoors.**

#### **Tier 0: Activities That Can Resume at Staff/Volunteer Discretion**

The activities in this Tier can move forward based on the individual's comfort level.

Indoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Materials Distribution--No Interpersonal Interaction	Indoor Mail/Literature Drops (ie: door hangers, leaving flyers on doorsteps, etc.) without any visual or verbal contact.
1 on 1 Meetings	Organizer/Staff/Volunteer meets with another Organizer/Staff/Volunteer, partner, donor or local leader inside a well-ventilated space (meeting room, restaurant, coffee shop, etc). (Keeping meetings outdoors for the time-being is highly encouraged!)

**Tier 1: Activities Needing Manager/Chapter Chair Approval (only)**

The activities in this section can move forward with national manager or Chapter Chair approval, if all safety elements above are met. Organizers should still prepare Safety Plans to manage the event successfully.

Indoor Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
In-person Press Conferences	A press conference indoors where a Sierra Club representative is requested to attend or speak (ensure disinfection of mic/shared audio equipment between users) and/or that Sierra Club is hosting for up to 25 members of the media to hear about a Sierra Club issue.
Guest Speaker Engagements	A chapter director, volunteer, organizer, campaign rep or other spokesperson delivers a talk at an indoor event (ensure disinfection of mic/shared audio equipment between users)
Lobby Visits	Lobby meetings with decision-makers, with 25 or less participants in attendance. All government building policies followed regarding masks, social distancing, etc.
Small, optional, in-person meetings (less than 25 people) that do NOT require air or overnight travel	Meeting with donors, board members, Chapter or Group ExComm meeting, coalition group/partner or a staff team.
Community Organizing intended to drive interpersonal interaction between the staffer/volunteer and the public	Indoor neighborhood canvassing, knocking on doors, in-person petition signing/comment collection, letter writing, etc.

**Tier 2: Activities needing Manager/Chapter Chair AND Safety Review/Approval**

The activities in this section require manager approval AND review & approval by Safety staff. All safety elements above must be met.

Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Any Indoor Event of 25 people or more, but less than 200, that includes staff/volunteer interaction with each other or the general public	Email program.safety@sierraclub.org prior to beginning your planning to consider an exemption or to help determine the Tier that applies.
Any indoor event not listed above or below, including indoor: Tabling Activities, Rallies, Fundraising events, etc.	Email program.safety@sierraclub.org prior to beginning your planning to consider an exemption or to help determine the Tier that applies.

### Tier 3: Prohibited Events/Activities

The activities in this section are not allowed to take place or begin planning at this time.

Event/Activity Type	Event/Activity Example
Indoor Activities of more than 200 people (other than in-office work resuming)	Any indoor activity of 200 or more organized by Sierra Club remains prohibited at this time.
All air travel and overnight trips for staff/volunteers	Sierra Club is continuing to postpone resuming broad air travel and overnight travel. An update on Travel will be issued by August 25, 2021 to include pathways for acceptable travel and approvals of certain travel by senior managers & department heads. Thank you for your continued patience as we work to slowly and more safely resume operations during the pandemic.

## **SAFETY PLANNING PROCESS**

### **Process Timeline**

For Tier 2 events, how long this application, review, and approval process takes depends on you and your plans. For some smaller activities simply follow the guidance and Tier charts above and with manager approval, you will be ready to plan and execute your event. Some activities will remain prohibited at this time. Others will demand planning and more detailed review and specific approval of safety plans depending on the inherent risks and complexities involved. If the guide does not answer this immediately then reach out to your manager and safety staff and we can help get you started. Please incorporate additional time into your activity

planning schedule to meet additional COVID-19 safety needs and seek approval (when necessary). Once applications, safety management plans, and manager/chapter chair approvals are completed and *submitted*, safety staff will review and offer a final determination within a week's turnaround. (Safety staff will expedite event reviews as best we can.) Activity organizers will then be able to implement plans, secure permits and/or outside logistics, and fulfill partner arrangements and all other considerations.

**Process:**

Once you have reviewed the above and wish to move forward with event, follow these steps:

- 1) Determine which Tier your event is in. If you need help, contact [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org)
- 2) Complete your Safety Management Plan
- 3) If a Tier 0 or 1 event, complete [safety management plan](#) and you can move forward with your manager/chapter chair review and approval.  
If Tier 2, send an [application](#), [safety management plan](#), and other materials, along with manager/Chapter Chair approval (in the plan doc) to [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org). We'll reply within 2-3 business days.
- 4) Secure the necessary safety supplies to hold the activity.
- 5) Safety Staff will respond in an email with approvals, conditions, and operational considerations that guide and structure the scope of the event and included activities.
- 6) Have a GREAT event!

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS AT ANYTIME, PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO [program.safety@sierraclub.org](mailto:program.safety@sierraclub.org).