



Return to Competition Planning (7 May 2020)

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Disclaimer

The information in this document is not a substitute for professional medical or legal advice. What we know about COVID-19 is changing rapidly, and US Sailing can make no representation as to the completeness, effectiveness, or accuracy of the information included here. It is provided without warranty, and US Sailing can assume no responsibility for its use. You should seek advice from medical and legal professionals and/or public health officials if you have specific questions about your return to operations. Of course, follow all applicable public health guidelines and requirements.

Introduction

This document is intended to provide guidance for sailing organizations as they adapt to changing circumstances and consider how to reopen their programs. There are general guidelines that apply to all sailing programs and specific guidelines that pertain to specific racing disciplines. We encourage organizations to remain flexible and seek creative solutions as opportunities present themselves, while also giving the highest priority to the safety and health of all participants. Most important, this document is intended to encourage regatta organizers to consider all aspects of competition as they decide whether they are able to proceed with planned events.

US Sailing recognizes that the COVID-19 crisis has affected different parts of the country with varying severity and timing. We believe it will be possible to resume sailing in some areas before others.

This document includes contributions from sailing leaders representing organizations from across the country. It is our intention to continue revising and developing new guidelines and resources based on feedback and new information. Please contact the US Sailing staff with questions and ideas.

Acknowledgements

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- Mark Townsend – International Race Officer, Judge and Umpire; Alamitos Bay YC
- Nathan Titcomb – US Sailing Offshore Director
- Matthew Hill – US Sailing Race Administration Director

References

- White House [Opening Up America Again](#)
- CDC [How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)





- CDC [Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)
- CDC [Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)
- CDC [Social Distancing](#)
- World Sailing [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Guidance for Event Organizers for the Protection of the Health of Sailing Communities](#)
- Proposed Policy for Sailing Events in Response To Threat Of Infectious Disease - Paul Zupan, International Judge, St. Francis YC.
- COVID-19 Regatta Precautionary Measures – Sail Newport
- US Sailing Race Management Handbook



Overview

This section is intended to provide general guidance that applies to all racing and sailing programs. Specific guidance is included regarding club sailing, regional, national, continental and international regattas. Guidance for junior programs and camps is provided in separate document.

Protecting Regatta Attendees

As we resume sailing and racing activities a primary concern as we move forward is protect the regatta attendees, which include:

- Competitors
- Support Persons
- Volunteers
- Spectators
- Employees

This will require organizations to inform and educate regatta attendees regarding policies that should be followed so that we can host regattas while minimizing the risk of spreading the COVID-19 infection. Regatta organizers should follow the most current protocols from federal, state and local health agencies for personal hygiene, cleaning surfaces, masks and social distancing. CDC guidance includes:

[How to Protect Yourself & Others](#)

[Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities](#)

[Use of Cloth Face Coverings to Help Slow the Spread of COVID-19](#)

[Social Distancing](#)

Recommended Sanitizing and Social Distancing Procedures

- These recommendations are considered best practices at the time of writing. Your organization may need to adjust them to align with evolving state and local regulations and guidance.
- Allow for social distancing. Increase space between boats and equipment to allow for 6+ feet of separation. Use tape to mark 6-foot buffer zones.
- Conduct health checks upon arrival, including temperature screening.
- All participants should wear face coverings over the nose and mouth.
- All participants should wash their hands upon arrival and frequently throughout the day.
- Organizations should set up additional hand washing stations that are convenient to participants and provide hand sanitizer for use between hand washings.
- Boats and equipment should be washed thoroughly before and after each use.
- Common areas such as equipment storage, changing areas and restrooms should be cleaned and sanitized frequently.
- Post signage at the facility reminding participants of sanitizing and social distancing practices.



- Require participants and parents to sign off on these procedures prior to participating.
- Assign staff or volunteers to serve as “safety officers” to help oversee and enforce distancing and sanitizing procedures.
- Remind participants and staff not to attend if they have a fever, are feeling sick, or have been in contact with someone who may have COVID-19 within the last 14 days.
- Remind participants not to share water bottles, food, sunscreen or other item.

Social Distancing

The requirement to provide adequate space for social distancing will limit the number of attendees and will be one of the most critical considerations in determining the size of the event. Regattas for small dinghies with 1-2 people per boat that launch from beaches and ramps will have different issues from regattas for large keelboat with crews of 10 or more that sail out of marinas. Formats that require boat swapping, such as team and match racing, will require heightened infection control measures and may need to be postponed longer than fleet racing events.

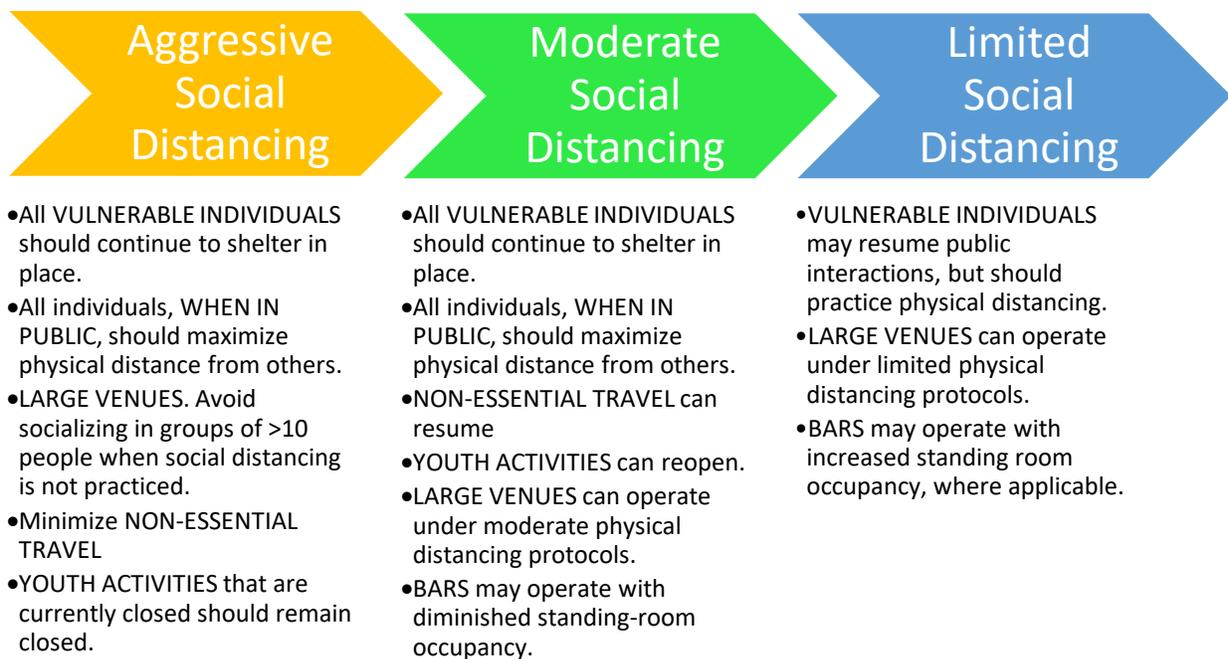
Gatherings such as competitor briefings, post-race social gatherings and prize-giving will need to be reviewed and adjusted according to local conditions. Consider replacing these gatherings with virtual meetings and celebrations while aggressive social distancing is required.



Timeline for Reopening

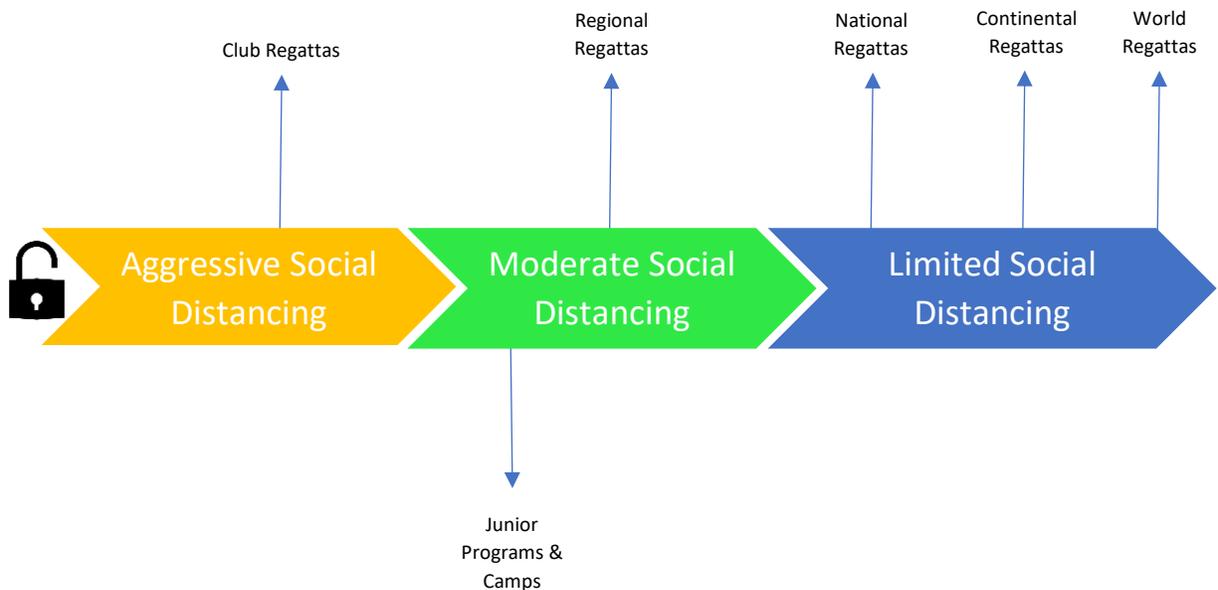
In the federal “[Opening Up America Again](#)” guidelines, a three-phase approach is proposed. As states and counties report a downward trajectory of COVID-like syndromic cases for one or more 14-day period, governments may ease restrictions allowing some activities to resume, while continuing to limit others. Individual states are releasing more specific state-wide guidelines, with specific timelines for phased implementation. Be sure to consider local guidance and regulations for your area.

The chart below shows the three Federal phases listing the key gating criteria that relate to racing and sailing programs. The second chart aligns the types of events that may be considered in each phase.





The diagram below provides some guidance as to when to expect different types of events to be possible. Initially smaller local club events will be possible, with larger, more complex events becoming possible as restrictions are relaxed at the event venue and in locales competitors to come from.



Club Sailing

When local shelter-in-place orders are lifted but domestic travel restrictions still apply, club sailing can be considered. Social distancing will still be required and modifications to achieve it will need to be implemented. Club houses may remain fully or partially closed. Consider launching boats off the beach and racing around fixed marks. Fleets may have to sail at staggered times through the day to limit the number of people at the venue.

Regional Regattas

As local travel restrictions are eased and limits on the size of gatherings are lifted, regional events can be considered. However, competitors, volunteers, race officials and employees should be able to sleep in their own homes or hotel rooms at night.

National Regattas

Once travel restrictions within the US have been lifted, national regattas can be considered. While travel restrictions remain anywhere in the country, consideration needs to be given to the fairness of conducting a national-level event when some competitors are unable to participate.



Continental Regattas

Once travel restrictions across North America have been lifted, which includes Canada, Central America and the Caribbean, continental regattas can be considered.

World Regattas

International regattas and world championships will be the last to resume. International air travel restrictions will need to be lifted and national quarantine restrictions eased across the globe. Currently we do not have enough information to understand when that will occur.

Considerations When Deciding to Host an Event

Regattas come in many sizes and types. The weekend get-together for a few classes may be extremely informal, limited to a race committee to conduct the races and, sometimes, a simple prize-giving ceremony. At the other end of the spectrum are events that are complex in their organization (for example, a national, continental, or world championship) or infinitely intricate (the Olympics or the America's Cup). Regardless of size or complexity, the basic organizational guidelines are the same for all.

For any event, organizers must consider the following questions when deciding whether to proceed:

Number of Attendees

How many people do you need to accommodate? Be sure to count competitors, volunteers, race officials, employees, spectators, vendors and sponsors. Do you have enough space to accommodate the expected number of people while maintaining the required social distancing? Does everyone need to be at the venue at the same time? Could some classes sail in the morning and others in the afternoon?

Boat Storage/Moorage

Do you have enough space in the boat park for the required social distancing? This will reduce the number of boats you can accommodate, potentially limiting the number of entries you can accept. You will need two to three times as much space as normal for each boat to accommodate the increased space, reducing your boat storage capacity by as much as 70%.

Race Official Housing

Will club members be willing to provide housing to race officials they have never met before and who have traveled to the event? Can the regatta budget afford to put all the race officials up in hotels?

Competitor Housing

Will club members be willing to provide housing to competitors they have never met before and who have travelled to the event? Can the regatta budget afford to put all the competitors up in hotels? For a junior event will the organizing authority need to provide chaperones. If so, how many?



Planning for Postponement or Cancellation of the Event

Consider the impact of having to postpone or cancel within a week of the event due to a spike in COVID-19. What is your financial exposure? Do you refund the competitors' money? Can competitors easily cancel their travel arrangements? If you are bringing in race officials from out of town, who is responsible for their travel costs if they are not refundable?

Sponsorship

Make sure you understand the terms of any sponsorship. What happens if you cancel instead of postponing the event? Are your sponsors comfortable proceeding with the event in the prevailing COVID-19 conditions?

Go/No Go Decision Timeframe

When do you need to make a go/no go decision? When must the club make financial commitments that they cannot undo, such as deposits, trophies, shirts and the like? When must competitors make travel arrangement, book hotels and flights, and ship their boats to the event? Local fleet racing can be cancelled the day of the event with little financial impact or inconvenience to the participants. World championships where competitors must making travel arrangements and ship boats require the go/no go decision to be made months in advance.

Considerations When Organizing the Event

Having decided to host a regatta, whether a weekend get-together for a few classes or a major championship, there are additional considerations as you put together your regatta plan:

Emergency Response Plan

Develop or update emergency operation plans that include, in addition to the usual provisions, infection prevention strategy, your response strategy if an infected person attends the event, and contact tracing protocols.

Match Racing and Team Racing Events

Provided boat team racing and match racing events usually have a boat rotation schedule between races, after a several races or at the end of the day. Consider how boats and equipment will be cleaned so that one crew does not infect the next. This may require that boats are swapped only at the end of the day, sprayed with disinfectant during the crew change, or some other approach.



Exclusion of Competitors

What is your process for excluding competitors who are identified as presenting a risk or being at risk? What is your procedure when a competitor has a fever when trying to enter the venue? What do you do if they develop a fever while sailing and come alongside the safety boat?

Does your organization assume risk by allowing competitors to participate? If you exclude the competitor, what are the criteria and do they comply with the Ted Stevens Act? Do you make different provisions for local competitors and competitors who have travelled from another part of the country or from another country? What is your policy if a participant refuses to wear a face covering? Do you exclude them from the venue but allow them to continue sailing, or do you exclude them from the event?

Health Testing to Enter the Venue

What testing will you require for participants to enter the venue? Common measures include a temperature check, questions regarding symptoms and identifying recent contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19. Who will conduct these health checks?

Restrooms

How will you keep restrooms as sanitized as possible? What other common areas will have increased cleaning requirements?

Isolating Individuals Who Become Symptomatic

If an individual develops symptoms, what provisions will you make to isolate him or her and who will you contact? How will you communicate this information to others at the event?

At-Risk Staff and Volunteers

What is your plan for protecting at-risk employees and volunteers?

Notice of Race and Sailing Instructions

Do your race documents make provisions for cancellations due to circumstances beyond your control? Do you include a force majeure clause? What is your refund policy? Will you ask participants to sign a waiver of liability? (Remember to review RRS 82 for information on waivers and indemnification agreements.)

Refund Policy for Sick Competitors

If someone is ill, do you refund their entry fee? If so, when? Consider creating a refund policy that promotes desired behavior – can competitors withdraw from an event for medical reasons without assuming a heavy financial burden?

Race Management Considerations Ashore

The Race Office

The race office is often a focal point of a regatta where competitors pick up the NoR and SIs and ask questions. How can you provide those services remotely without need for personal contact?



Notice Board

Competitors gathering at a physical notice board will find it difficult to maintain social distance. Consider creating an online official notice board to replace the physical notice board at the venue.

Signals Made Ashore

With limited presence at the regatta venue, how will competitors know when a signal has been displayed ashore? Consider using email and/or texts to inform competitors what signal has been displayed and when.

Results

Posting results online has become a common practice in recent years. Consider posting results and race committee actions (such as OCS calls and starting penalties like BFD) on an online notice board and alerting competitors with email or texts.

Competitor Meetings

Competitor meetings are not mandatory. Consider providing alternative methods for responding to competitors' and support persons' questions about the NoR and SIs and disseminating information about local safety rules, club rules and local regulations.

Protest Committee

Consider asking the protest chair to hold virtual protest hearings. Traditional hearings bring multiple people into close contact. Many judges are in the at-risk group and running virtual protest hearings will reduce or eliminate social contact.

Protest Desk

Consider allowing filing of protests electronically, via email or through a protest management system.

Protest Notices

Competitors must be informed that they are being protested and the time of the hearing. Consider using a protest management system to manage and distribute protest notices and informing parties of the hearing schedule as required by RRS 63.2.

Prize-Giving

Can you manage social contact safely in a prize-giving ceremony? Consider postponing or replacing with a virtual awards ceremony.

Race Management Considerations Afloat

On the Water Rule 42/Appendix P

Rule 42 is normally enforced by two judges in a boat calling rule breaches. Are your judges comfortable being in a small boat with another judge all day? Ask the judges to wear face coverings and/or have one judge in each boat. Consider not enforcing Rule 42 on the water.



Umpired Events

Match race and team race umpiring requires two umpires per boat. Are the umpires comfortable being in a small boat with another umpire all day? Ask umpires to wear face coverings. Consider not holding match racing and team racing events until limited social distancing is in place.

Race Committee Boat Staffing

Reduce the number of people on the race committee boat. Use an automated starting system and consider replacing the standard RRS 26 (five-minute) sequence with the Appendix U Audible-Signal Racing System (three-minute dinghy starts). Consider starting races from a fixed location on shore, such as between the end of a pier and a mark.

Mark-Set Boat Staffing

For safety reasons mark-set boats should have a minimum of two people aboard. They should wear face coverings and consider whether they can maintain social distance. Consider racing to fixed marks (either government marks or permanent race marks installed for the season).

Safety Boats

How will you assist competitors who need to be retrieved from the water? What are the infection-control considerations for the safety team and for the sailor? Consider providing boarding ladders or other measures to enable persons in the water to self-rescue.

Questions, Comments and Future Revisions

US Sailing will update this document as the situation evolves and as new information becomes available. Organizers must keep in mind that conditions and timelines will vary by locale, both in the US and internationally. When planning, consider the prevailing conditions not only at your venue, but in the areas that you expect to draw competitors and volunteers from.

For more information and resources, visit the US Sailing website at <https://ussailing.org>. If you have questions or suggestions, please email the US Sailing Race Administration office at raceadmin@ussailing.org or call (401) 342-7948.