Running Event COVID-19 Safety Plan (Last Updated 5/12/21)
Updates for Illinois Phase 4 to Bridge Phase
Chicago Area Runners Association

Overview

CARA is monitoring all guidance from local and state authorities, and the Center for Disease Control regarding COVID-19. The safety and well-being of the community, participants, volunteers, and staff is CARA's top priority.

We are providing updated advice for running event directors based on the continued update of guidance provided to events and businesses.

The State of Illinois and some local municipalities have provided guidance for a number of event and business settings, but none are specific to running events.

CARA considers the settings that most closely resemble a running event to be "Recreation" and "Festival and general admission outdoor spectator events". In our view, recreation resembles the actual specific functions of the run / walk portion of the event (start line to finish), whereas pre-race and post-race activities and gathering often resemble that of a festival.

Consult with your permitting authority or local municipality for how they define your setting. (Resource: https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/bridge-phase).

We have outlined advise for the following:

- Participant Advisements / Expectations
- Event Capacity Guidelines
- General Gathering
- Common Gathering Areas and Flow
- Start Waves
- Start Line / Corral Procedures
- Finishing / Post-Race
- Additional Considerations

Event directors are encouraged to coordinate with their permitting authorities and local municipalities for official guidance and requirements. Our advice contained here is only meant to provide guidance.

Participant Guidelines / Expectations

Participants should be provided clear guidelines and expectations before being allowed to complete registration. These guidelines and expectations should be continuously communicated through the event website, participant guide, email communications, and at the event with signage and through PA announcements.

- Do not participate if you are feeling sick or ill, and or have a fever, or if you have been in contact with someone unrecovered from COVID-19.

- Persons from high-risk groups for COVID-19 complications should consult their physician before participating.
- Do not engage in traditional forms of physical contact (handshakes, high-fives, hugs, partner stretching, etc.).
- Do not engage in close group pictures/selfies.
- Only spit or blow nose into a tissue or handkerchief.
- Do not share personal items, such as hydration, energy gels, towels, etc.
- Wear a mask or face covering anytime while within the event venue, unless eating or drinking while physically distanced. Otherwise, participants may only remove their face cover after the start while running/walking, and must resume wearing a mask or face covering after finishing.
- Comply with any state and local travel orders.
- Participants may be required to exit the event should their actions not meet expectations and or they are creating risk for themselves or others.

Since most events may include unvaccinated persons, these guidelines and expectations apply to both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons. We do not advise events to create different sets of standards for vaccinated and unvaccinated persons.

Event Capacity Guidelines

- The capacity of the event venue at any one time should be equal to or less to that of the festival guidelines, as well as not exceeding the number of start waves that can be managed using the recreation guidelines to guide start wave capacity.
- For outdoor festivals, Phase 4 allows a capacity of 15 persons per 1,000 square feet of event space, and the Bridge Phase allows 30 people per 1,000 square feet. CARA advises event directors to calculate capacity using only the boundaries of the main event gathering space, and only to include the reasonable spaces where participants will be present within the main event site. Do not use the full scope of the race course, or peripheral parts of the venue where participants wouldn't reasonably be spread out to. Only calculate using the area where your event is truly being organized.
- For outdoor recreation, Phase 4 allows maximum group sizes of 50, with multiple groups of 50 permitted within the same event so long as proper group management is in place to keep groups separate, and physical distancing can be maintained within each group's assigned area. For the Bridge Phase, group sizes may be expanded to 100 persons. Indoors, multiple groups are not permitted.
- Events should include all persons at the event site within their calculations. Including participants, volunteers, staff, and spectators.
- Given that spectator attendance at a running event is often unknown, CARA advises events to either not allow spectators within the event venue, or to at least strongly discourage spectators from attending. If spectators are allowed, be sure to have enough space for their attendance.

General Gathering (Pre-Race / Post-Race):

- As persons arrive at the event, CARA advises events to maximize the full scope of their event space and to allow persons to gather throughout the full scope of the venue, so long as the event can provide volunteers or staff to manage safety guidelines, such as masks/face coverings and physical distancing.
- CARA is no longer advising individual group pods due to changes to state guidelines, unless a local permitting authority or municipality defines the full event under recreation guidelines.

- Allowing persons to gather freely over the full scope of the venue allows the most space available for physical distancing.
- During all general gathering, participants should be required to wear a mask or face covering, as per CDC guidelines related to event attendance (vaccinated and unvaccinated persons). During general gathering, masks or face coverings should only be removed while eating or drinking, and when physical distance is maintained.

Common Gathering Areas and Flow:

- Events are advised to avoid the need for participants to gather at or line up for common areas at the event, such as registration, packet pick-up, gear check, results look-up stations, toilets, beer gardens, awards ceremonies, etc. Eliminating as many common areas as possible is encouraged. This may include not providing race day registration or packet pick-up, not having traditional gear check, and moving on-site results look-up to web or mobile based apps. It is advised to avoid awards ceremonies, having awards mailed post-race.
- Post-race celebrations, entertainment, and areas such as beer gardens that promote close contact, prolonged contact, and that keep participants at the event longer than necessary should be avoided and eliminated.
- Where common areas are needed, these areas should be spaced apart, to avoid congestion in any single area of the event venue. As well, at each area, space should be provided for physical distancing.
- Where participants may need to line up (packet pick-up, toilets, etc.), que markers should be implemented to guide persons where to stand to maintain physical distancing. Cones or marked dots are examples of items that can be used for que markers.
- Event directors should ensure that participants can be serviced quickly at any common areas, avoiding the need for any person to remain in line or in close contact with another for any extended period of time. Service time, from arrival in line to exit, should not exceed 10-15 minutes. This may mean things such as additional pick-up stations, or additional toilets above normal need.
- In laying out the event site, event directors should consider how participants will need to move through the venue. A layout that allows for a smooth flow of foot traffic, without congestion or overcrowding in any one area is advised.
- Creating one-way participant flows is recommended if possible to lead participants through the venue.
- Staff or volunteers should be dedicated to guiding participants through the venue, and to maintain safety guidelines (masks/face coverings and physical distancing).
- The flow to and from common areas should be considered. Allow for a clear path to reach que lines, and a clear path to exit common areas without having to come into close contact with others.
- Medical support areas should be visible, and allow for physical distancing while participants are receiving support.

Start Waves:

- Events should organize participants within start waves, with each wave beginning the run/walk separately. The use of start waves allows for an orderly start to the race and to limit the number of participants that begin the race at once. Single mass starts may challenge the ability to physical distance, and may result in congestion on course, especially the early stages of the race.
- The size of each wave should not exceed the recreation guidelines (50 persons during phase 4, and 100 persons during the Bridge Phase).

- For smaller events, with a total participation below the capacity limit of the recreation guideline (50-100), a single start wave could be implemented since participants of varied paces will spread out quickly.
- Where multiple start waves are needed, participants should be assigned waves by estimated pace per mile, or estimated finish time. Event directors can include a custom question within their registration form asking participants for this information. Organizing waves by order of pace/finish time limits the need for on-course passing by participants, as runners have been lined up from the start of the run/walk in an order of how they expect to proceed on course. Participants who wish to run/walk together, should be instructed to register with identical paces/finish times.
- Runners should be organized within their start waves approximately 10-15 minutes before their race start time. Limiting the time runners have to be confined to their start wave is recommended if at any time they will be challenged to maintain physical distance.
- A start wave organizing area can be created using signage and or corrals to have each wave ready to start prior to the start time. This method limits the time between the start of each subsequent wave. Where space or infrastructure is not available to pre-organize each start wave, waves can be called to the start line one at a time. This may cause some delay between wave starts.

Start Line / Corral Procedures:

- Start line procedures should allow for participants to maintain physical distance while in the start corral, and while on course during the run/walk.
- Participants should continue to be required to wear their mask or face covering while at the start line and or within the start corral.
- Within the start line or start corral area, assure there is a large enough area for runners to easily maintain at least three feet of separation, but preferably six feet. Staff or volunteers should oversee guiding participants to maintain physical distancing.
- It is preferred that events implement physical distancing markers at the start line/corral to guide participants where to stand while waiting to start. Markers can be cones, spaced out for physical distancing, or other markers on the ground such as paint or chalk. Keep in mind that temporary markers, such as chalk, may not withstand wet conditions, or heavy foot traffic.
- Participants should not be permitted to line up without guidance, or shoulder to shoulder like a traditional race start.
- As runners start, if all participants within a start wave are permitted to start at once (i.e. mass start), participants should be required to keep their mask or face covering on for several hundred meters into the course until they are able to maintain physical distance.
- In events where the course narrows quickly, and or the pace differential between participants within each wave is small, it is advised to use staggered starts even within each wave. This method limits crowd density on course. This procedure sends off only one to two rows of participants at a time. The advised frequency between staggered starts is 3-5 seconds. Participants should be spaced 3-6 feet apart as they start the run, preferably six feet. This frequency should allow participants to maintain physical distancing relatively well immediately as the race begins. In this case, masks or face coverings can be removed immediately after the start.
- Every 3-5-seconds, the next row of participants will move up, and as each row reaches the start line, they begin the race on command. A starter should give the signal for each row to begin. The start signal should include an audible command, and a physical command (for hearing impaired participants).

Finishing / Post-Race:

- After participants finish the race, they should be required to resume wearing their mask or face covering as soon as possible. The event should supply dry masks for those who need them after the run (or if someone arrives at the event without a mask).
- The finish line set-up should allow for plenty of room for finishing participants to move through the finish line area while maintaining physical distancing.
- It is advised to provide post-race amenities, such as hydration, snacks, or finishers medals, in a self-service method if possible. Where it is not possible, set-up areas in a way that does not cause congestion or a back-up at the finish.
- Staff or volunteers should direct participants to move through the finish area quickly. Avoid allowing participants to gather around the finish line to wait for and great other finishers.
- Participants should only remove their mask or face covering post-race if they are eating or drinking, and can maintain physical distancing.
- Encourage participants to exit the event as soon as reasonably possible after finishing.

Additional Considerations:

Hydration

- Participants should be encouraged to self-carry a personal hydration bottle or pack. Standard bottles provide enough hydration for at least one-hour of exercise.
- Hydration should still be available at reasonable frequencies on-course, and at the finish. Bottled water is the preferred method of providing hydration.
- Volunteers/staff that handle hydration products must sanitize hands, wear masks, and wear food preparation gloves at all times while handling products.
- At Aid Stations on-course, hydration could be provided by either of the following procedures:
  - Procedure A: Bottled water (i.e. 8 oz bottles) may be made available. Participants will have the opportunity to self take bottles from distribution tables. Event directors should keep in mind that volunteers/staff will likely not be willing to directly hand off bottles yet. Signage and or an announcer on bullhorn will alert participants to have masks/face covers properly worn while at aid stations. Bottles will be made available closed, allowing for participants to self-open bottles. Recycling receptacles should be placed and spread out following the aid station for approx. 100 yards past the station. Participants will be instructed to dispose of bottles off the running route, to avoid a slip hazard.
  - Procedure B: Pre-poured cups of water and/or sports drink may be prepared by volunteers/staff. Participants will have the opportunity to self take cups from distribution tables. Event directors should keep in mind that volunteers/staff will likely not be willing to directly hand off cups yet. Signage and or an announcer on bullhorn will alert participants to have masks/face covers properly worn while at aid stations. Receiving areas for cups will be separate from where volunteers/staff prepare cups for distribution. Receptacles should be placed and spread out following the aid station for approx. 100 yards past the station. Participants will be instructed to dispose of cups off the running route, to avoid a slip hazard.
- Aid Stations must be set-up to allow for physical distancing, and to maintain participant flow without congestion. Event directors should increase the size of their stations to avoid close contact while

participants are serviced through hydration stations.

- Event staff should routinely clean and sanitize throughout the event.

On-Course Physical Distancing

- Participants should be reminded to maintain physical distancing while on course. Signage should be placed around the course to keep participants focused on physical distancing.
- Events should avoid pacers and pace groups at their event, as these encourage grouping and close contact.

Hygiene

- Hand sanitizer and or hand-washing stations should be available throughout the event.
- Trash and recycling receptacles should be placed throughout the event, allowing for participants to dispose of garbage without the need to come to a common event area.

Spectators / Non-Participants

- It is advised that events do not allow non-registered persons, friends, and family to enter the event area. Non-registered persons should be encouraged not to attend.

Packet-Pick Up / Registration

- It is advised that on-site event day packet pick-up or registration may be offered during Phase 4 or the Bridge Phase.
- All registrations should occur online prior to event day, to allow for proper planning and capacity management.
- Packet pick-up should be staggered by offering multiple locations over multiple dates and extended time periods to allow for pick-up without any on-site lines or needs.
- An option to have packets mailed (for a fee) to participants is advised.

Gear Check

- Where gear check is offered, it is advised to offer a self-service gear drop area. Participants should manage the placement and retrieval of their own bag to limit contact with others. Event staff will only maintain supervision of the area.
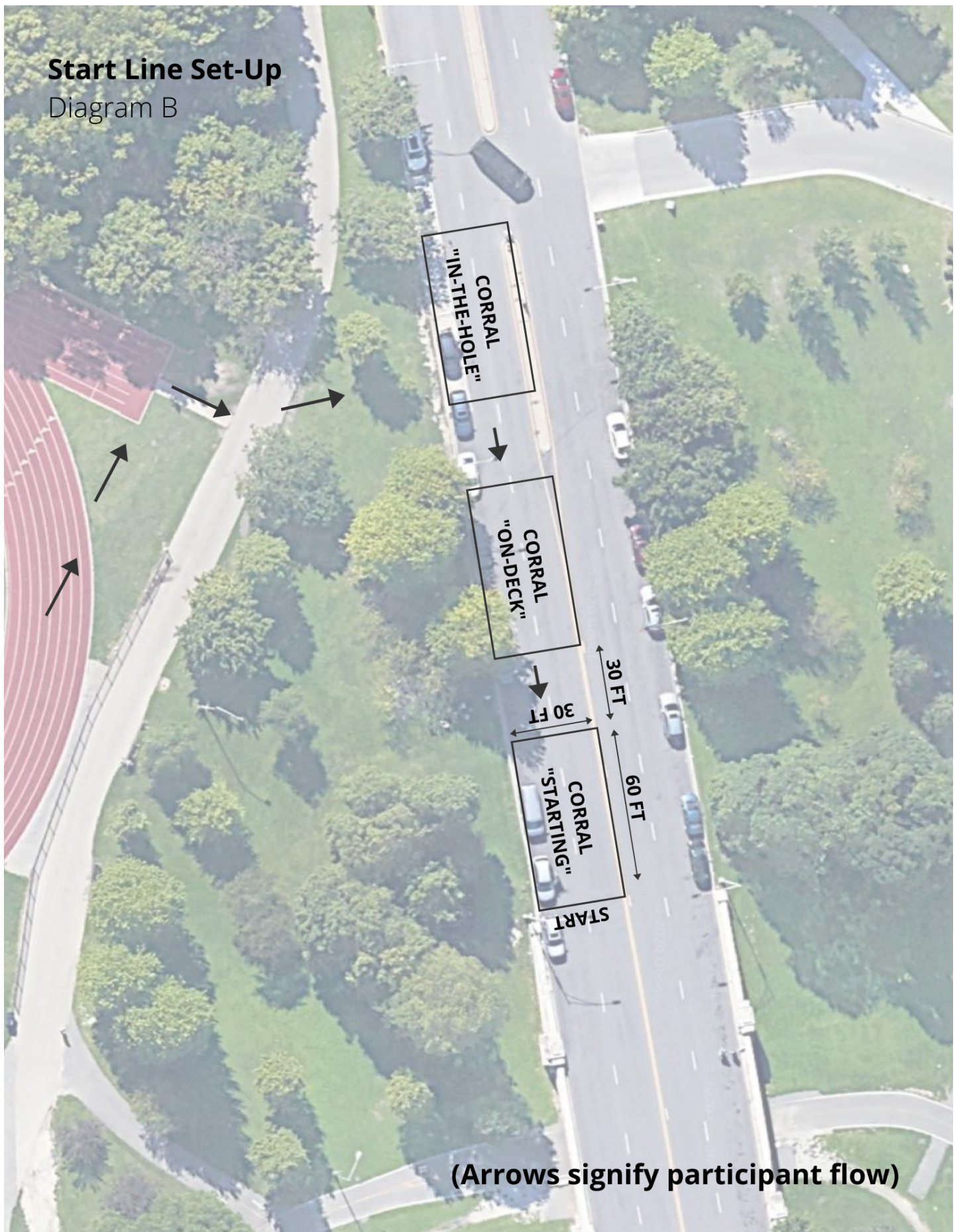
Awards Ceremony

- It is advised to not hold an awards ceremony to avoid congregating or extending the time participants need to remain at the event.
- Awards may be mailed to participants after the event.

Results Posting / Look-Up

- Results should not be posted at the event to avoid congregating at a single area.
- Results should be posted, preferably live, to the event website, allowing for participants to look up their results on mobile devices.
- Results look-up kiosks should be eliminated to avoid congregating at a single area, and to avoid participants contacting shard kiosks and devices.

Start Line Set-Up
Diagram B

CORRAL
"IN-THE-HOLE"

CORRAL
"ON-DECK"

30 FT

30 FT

60 FT

CORRAL
"STARTING"

START

(Arrows signify participant flow)

Start Corral Set-Up (At Start Line)

(Diagram C)

30 FT

60 FT

6 FT

6 FT

START LINE