



Requirements to Perform Field Work and Educational Workshops During Maryland's COVID-19 Pandemic

Updated Policy

March 17, 2022

These policy guidelines are presented to ensure adherence to the Gunpowder Valley Conservancy (GVC)'s Core Values and to allow our important field work (tree planting, tree maintenance, stream clean-ups, garden installations) and educational workshops to continue in a safe manner.

Baltimore County has the same employee requirements as issued October, 2021. Masks are mandatory in all county office buildings. The public is advised to follow CDC guidelines. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/your-health/about-covid-19.html> Updated [January 24](#), 2022. (Accessed February 10, 2022).

GVC will follow the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines updated July 14, 2021 (accessed March 17, 2022) as shown below:

Protect Yourself and Others

Anyone infected with COVID-19 can spread it, even if they do **NOT** have symptoms.

Important Ways to Slow the Spread of COVID-19

- Get [vaccinated](#) and stay [up to date](#) on your COVID-19 vaccines. [Find a vaccine](#).
- Wear [a well-fitted mask](#) to help protect yourself and others.
- Avoid crowds and poorly ventilated indoor spaces.
- [Test](#) to prevent spread to others.
- [Stay 6 feet apart from others](#) who don't live with you.
- [Wash your hands often](#) with soap and water. Use hand sanitizer if soap and water aren't available.

What You Need to Know

Wear a mask with the best fit, protection, and comfort for you.

- If you are not [up to date](#) with your vaccines and are ages 2 years or older, you should wear a well-fitting mask indoors in public.
- In general, people do not need to wear masks when outdoors. In areas of [substantial or high transmission](#), people might choose to wear a mask outdoors when in sustained [close contact](#) with other people, particularly if
 - They or someone they live with has a [weakened immune system](#) or is at [increased risk for severe disease](#).
 - They are not [up to date](#) on COVID-19 vaccines or live with someone who is not up to date on COVID-19 vaccines.

GVC is committed to gathering feedback, listening to suggestions, and adjusting where needed and where possible as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves. These are subject to change as COVID-19 guidelines are revised and as health and safety best practices are developed.

Above all, GVC's top priority is, and remains, the health and safety of each of our members, staff, volunteers, and clients, regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status. (By policy, GVC does not require anyone to reveal their vaccination status.)

COVID-19 Policy Requirements for GVC Staff and Volunteer Leaders:

The following is applicable to all GVC staff and volunteers who have agreed to perform field work such as tree planting and tree maintenance, stream cleanup, and water quality monitoring, or BMP workshops/installation:

The GVC Education and Restoration Program Director is responsible for conducting this program and updating it, in consultation with the Executive Committee, to reflect current guidance from the CDC and Maryland Governor's Office.

Outdoor Activity policy:

- Masks are no longer required at GVC's outdoor activities **(NEW)** – as of 3/17/22)
- **We still encourage maintain 6 feet physical distancing as an extra precaution.**
- Volunteers will still be **required to complete the Volunteer/COVID-19 questionnaire**, either in an email to registered participants the day prior the event, or in person at the beginning of a GVC activity, at the sign in table. Ask people not to attend if they feel sick.
- When at GVC workshops, set up chairs 6 feet apart.
- The limit to Tree Planting volunteer participation is increased to 10 per Crew Chief and up to 70 volunteers (meant for large planting events) including staff/crew chief leaders.
- For Tree Maintenance events, work group size is limited to 10 volunteers per team leader/staff, with a maximum of 33 volunteers (with 3 leaders) per event.

- For all other GVC workshops, group size may be up to 20 people, including staff.
- GVC staff to provide hand sanitizer at all activities.

Indoor Activity policy:

- All participants **must wear masks** that cover the nose and mouth. Physically distance 6 feet apart to the extent possible.
- Indoor meetings should only be scheduled in places with sufficient space to allow 6-foot distancing and have good ventilation.
- Seating should be set up at least 6 feet apart and avoid crowding when inside. Apply this policy to any indoor activity involving GVC partners.
- Limit of # of people depends on ability to maintain 6-foot distancing, not to exceed 20 for meetings or small workshops.
- Larger Event #, for now, will need approval from Policy team (Don, Lou) or GVC Executive Committee.

Participation of Minors:

GVC values the contributions of volunteers of all ages. However, for safety reasons we have decided to implement additional requirement for volunteers under the age of 18.

- **Volunteers aged 8 – 11** must be accompanied by a parent/legal guardian throughout the volunteer activity. There can be 1 adult overseeing up to 4 of their own children.
- **Volunteers aged 12 – 17** are encouraged to have a parent/legal guardian in attendance. If that is not possible, a parent may sign a GVC permission form giving parental authority to an adult chaperone. The chaperone can oversee up to 4 children.

Additional:

Staff or Volunteer leaders are authorized to stop operations at any time they observe unsafe work practices, including lack of physical distancing. General volunteers who do not feel comfortable working in the field or have concerns about their risk will be free to leave at their request.

- All volunteers/staff/leaders must be asked to do their best to maintain 6 feet physical distancing to the extent possible.
- Workers will be asked to bring their own work gloves to the work site but, if not available, GVC will provide them.
- Ensure that a washing station is set up at each event to include a table with hand sanitizer. (Note: Good hand washing practices will help prevent transmission of viruses other than COVID-19.)

- Each volunteer is required to answer the Initial Survey Questionnaire statements and sign the waiver indicating that they have understood and agree to follow the GVC protocols.
- Anyone who answers yes to any of the questions on the questionnaire will NOT be able to conduct field work and should leave the work site IMMEDIATELY.

For everyone in attendance:

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow.
- Perform regular hand hygiene – wash your hands often. When washing your hands, scrub with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol. [GVC will need to provide hand washing and hand sanitizing supplies on site. GVC will set up a hand hygiene station on site. This will consist of a water source marked for hand washing only with hand soap and paper towels available for removing soil and dirt. Hand sanitizer will always be available.]
- Avoid/minimize interactions with other members of the public not directly involved in the work activity.

Worker Acknowledgement of COVID-19 Policy

Staff/Volunteer leaders shall ensure that all volunteer workers are aware of all work instructions and protocols, either by providing paper copies or by reading from a paper copy. Each worker must sign an acknowledgement that they have received and understand the instructions and agree to follow the instructions/protocols. This can take the form of a hard copy of a form or a roster stating acknowledgement of verbal instructions.

General Guidance:

FAQs on Face Covering (Maryland Department of Commerce Guidance as of May 19,2021)
<https://commerce.maryland.gov/Documents/BusinessResource/Mask-FAQ-COVID-19-Best-Practices.pdf> Accessed 9/9/21.

“There is no longer a mandatory statewide masking order in effect, this is in line with the latest guidance coming from the CDC. In alignment with this CDC guidance, face coverings will still be required on public transportation, in schools, and childcare and health care settings. ***The Maryland Department of Health has issued a public health advisory strongly recommending that all non-vaccinated individuals over the age of 2 years continue to wear face coverings in all indoor settings and in outdoor settings where physical distancing cannot be maintained.***”

Private businesses and workplaces can implement policies requiring face coverings to be worn on their premises. The business has the sole responsibility to uphold those policies. Local jurisdictions can also use their own emergency powers under existing authority to require face coverings.”

For all workers, regardless of specific exposure risks, it is always a good practice to:

- Wear a *mask covering the nose and mouth* and maintain 6 feet physical distance when indoors in public places, or in outdoor spaces when less than 6 feet distancing is possible, regardless of vaccination status.
- Wash hands frequently. When washing your hands, scrub them with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds. When soap and running water are unavailable, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 70% alcohol. Always wash hands that are visibly soiled.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Practice good respiratory etiquette, including covering coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Stay home if sick.
- Recognize personal risk factors. According to CDC, certain people, including older adults and those with underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk for developing more serious complications from COVID-19. Data from the Delta variant surge has confirmed that unvaccinated persons, regardless of other risk factors, are very likely to experience severe illness requiring hospitalization or to die from a COVID-19 breakthrough infection.

Disposal of PPE and Other Disposable Waste

Protection of all workers and the environment requires the proper and safe disposal of PPE. All used work gloves and masks, and disinfecting and cleaning materials must be bagged and tied and disposed according to Maryland and the [Baltimore County Bureau of Solid Waste Management](#) requirements. DO NOT dispose of any used PPE or disinfecting and cleaning materials, which are loose items, into open air waste/garbage or recycle type containers.

References:

- Baltimore County updated August 28, 2021-State of Emergency in effect .
<https://www.baltimorecountymd.gov/covid-19/> Accessed 9/9/21.
- CDC, for COVID-19 <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance.html>
- Maryland COVID-19 Pandemic: Orders and Guidance
<https://governor.maryland.gov/covid-19-pandemic-orders-and-guidance/>

Definitions

Cleaning refers to the removal of germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces. It does not kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.

[Source: [CDC Interim Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Accessed 5/9/20.]

Disinfecting refers to using chemicals, for example, EPA-registered disinfectants, to kill germs on surfaces. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

[Source: [CDC Interim Recommendations for U.S. Households with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). Accessed 5/9/20.]

Disinfectants are household cleaners and [EPA-registered disinfectants](#) included on EPA List N: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2.

Volunteer Leader: Any volunteer designated to lead a work team, such as a Crew Chief.

Work gloves: Each worker is encouraged to bring personal work or garden gloves from home. For those who do not bring gloves, GVC will provide gloves with rubberized palms for use on the day of the event. GVC-provided gloves will either be new or will be machine washed after previous use. Provision will be made to safely collect used gloves at the end of the event for laundering (if GVC staff or volunteer leader is comfortable cleaning used gloves), or to dispose of.

Work team: One leader and an assigned group of volunteers on a work site.

Worker: Anyone, GVC staff or volunteer, who has agreed to and signed a Volunteer /COVID-19 Agreement Waiver to perform outdoor tasks related to watershed protection or restoration. For purposes of work on private property, any property owner present on the work site is considered to be on the work team.

Initial Survey Questionnaire

[If not provided in print, script must be read aloud by the designated screener.]

IMPORTANT: THE SCREENER SHOULD IMMEDIATELY STOP THE SURVEY AND DENY PARTICIPATION IN FIELD ACTIVITIES TO ANY INDIVIDUAL WHO ANSWERS YES TO ANY SURVEY QUESTION.

For infection control purposes, I need to ask you a few questions:

In the last seven days, have you had a fever or signs of a fever such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shivering, shaking, and chills • Aching muscles and joints or other body aches • Headache • Intermittent sweats or excessive sweating • Rapid heart rate and/or palpitations • Skin flushing or hot skin • Feeling faint, dizzy, or lightheaded 	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
In the last seven days, have you had a cough (either new, or different than your usual cough), sore throat, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing or loss of smell or taste?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you been in close contact with someone who has a fever or feels sick?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
In the past 14 days, have you been in close (less than 6 feet), prolonged contact (more than 2-3 minutes) with someone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Have you traveled outside the country within the last 14 days?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Has anyone in your household awaiting COVID test results? If yes, we ask that you not attend our activity today, and volunteer at another event after all in your household have tested negative for COVID-19.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No

Individuals who answer YES to ANY question on the Initial Survey Questionnaire OR have a temperature of 100.4°F [38°C] OR refuse to participate in the survey process must be denied participation in any field activities.

Name of Individual Seeking Access _____ (please print)

Access Determination: _____ Approved _____ Denied

Name of staff completing form _____ Date: _____ Time: _____