



**ADVENTURE TRAVEL**  
TRADE ASSOCIATION

# **SMALL VESSELS CRUISING AMID COVID-19: RECOMMENDATIONS**

# **ADVENTURE TRAVEL COVID-19 HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES**

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# INTRODUCTION



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Adventure Travel Trade Association

Health and Safety has always been important in responsible adventure travel. The Covid-19 pandemic adds a layer of risk of a transmissible disease both in daily life and in travel experiences. These guidelines provide a path to an organized and safer reopening for the adventure industry by providing a common set of actions that can be used by a diverse range of travel businesses and suppliers across the industry supply chain.

We created the guidelines in collaboration with Cleveland Clinic, a leading provider of specialized medical care, focused on providing clinical excellence and superior patient outcomes. Cleveland Clinic is a multispecialty academic medical center that integrates clinical and hospital care with research and education. The health system offers 140 medical specialties and subspecialties that draw thousands of patients from around the world. *U.S. News & World Report* consistently names Cleveland Clinic as one of the nation's best hospitals in its annual "America's Best Hospitals" survey, and in 2020, Cleveland Clinic was ranked one of the best hospitals in the world by *Newsweek* magazine.

More information about the ATTA can be found at [adventuretravel.biz](https://adventuretravel.biz)

More information about Cleveland Clinic can be found at [clevelandclinic.org](https://clevelandclinic.org)

# WE'RE ON A TEAM

The COVID-19 pandemic has entered a new phase, travel is restarting, and travelers want to travel and companies want to operate while minimizing COVID-19 contamination risk. ATTA Activity Guidelines for Adventure Travel have been developed jointly by ATTA, Cleveland Clinic and a cohort of operators.

The **Small Vessel Cruising amid COVID-19: Guidelines** were designed to be used together with [Adventure Travel COVID-19 Health & Safety Guidelines](#)

While the current knowledge (June 2020) indicates that the risk of the coronavirus being passed on to others outdoors is reduced when people maintain social distancing, operating under these Guidelines should only be undertaken after thorough risk and safety assessment and compliance with existing destination government guidance.

# WE'RE ON A TEAM

These guidelines are intended to be a flexible framework for ATC's (adventure travel companies) to use in reopening. Companies should tailor their actual policies and practices based on their unique operations, applicable laws, regulations, and health standards in their locales, and consult with their own legal, safety, and financial advisors to develop a reopening guide for their situation.

These guidelines are not intended to be an exhaustive list of possible actions nor are they meant to encourage ATC's to resume operations before they are ready to do so. These guidelines are designed to be used as a supplement to ATC's current risk and crisis management plans, operating procedures and protocols, legal documents (e.g., terms and conditions and liability waiver), and customer trip materials – not as a substitute.

# NOTE & DISCLAIMER

**Note:** This is a living document. As international and national restrictions and Public Health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new advice and changes to guidelines when they emerge. Guidelines have been developed in line with the most recent information coming from international and national sources related to health, tourism and outdoors activities. We welcome your feedback any time: [covid19guidelinesreview@adventure.travel](mailto:covid19guidelinesreview@adventure.travel)

**Disclaimer:** The information contained within these operational guidelines may change from time to time due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic. It must not by itself be relied upon in determining obligations or other decisions. Users of this document must independently verify any information on which they wish to rely. It is expected that all business owners and management will have familiarized themselves with governmental, health authority, and regulatory guidance prior to re-opening and implementing all relevant requirements. Adventure Travel Trade Association does not assume, and expressly disclaims, any legal or other liability for any inaccuracy, mistake, misstatement, or any other error of whatsoever nature contained herein. The information accessible in this document has been compiled from many sources that are not controlled by Adventure Travel Trade Association. While reasonable care has been taken in the compilation and publication of the contents of this document, Adventure Travel Trade Association makes no representations or warranties, whether express or implied, as to the accuracy or suitability of the information or materials contained in this document. Adventure Travel Trade Association shall not be liable, directly, or indirectly, to the user or any other third party for any damage resulting from the use of the information contained or implied in this document. By proceeding to use this Adventure Travel Trade Association document you are accepting this disclaimer.

# SMALL VESSEL CRUISING

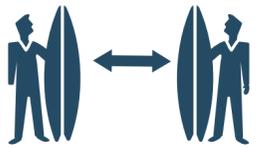
Small vessel cruising can provide intimate tours in small groups, close to nature and far away from higher risk COVID-19 areas. On the other hand, they usually involve sharing limited spaces, high traffic areas and in some cases food and lodging, all of which have specific risk factors.

From a regulatory point of view, the US Coast Guard (USCG) and the UK Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) define small vessels as ships less than 100 tonnage. The CDC has established “no-sail” Guidance for ships over 250 passengers. When considering COVID-19 risks, it is important to keep in mind that distancing is directly related to group sizes and ability to disperse.



## I. Group Management:

- In small vessels, social distancing can be achieved by limiting to small groups, FIT, or household units. In vessels where it is not practical to have small or contained groups, strive to keep trip participant numbers as low as reasonably possible and consider other ways to promote distancing, such as not filling the boat to capacity.
- Physical distancing does not need to apply to household units.
- Physical distancing should be practiced as much as possible if the group involves more than one household unit. How each individual moves about throughout the experience will greatly influence your group's distancing practices - operators should promote the shared responsibility for distancing.
  - The distribution of passengers and activities in a vessel should also be adapted as much as possible to promote distancing. For example, providing 'household unit' accommodations, staggered scheduling of meal times or events, and offering on-board activities at reduced and spaced capacity to promote distancing are all viable adaptations.
- Consider offering the possibility of private trips or private boats for people who prefer not to intermingle with other guests.
- Use face coverings when in situations of higher risk of virus transmission. Examples include: group activities, wildlife sightings, on-board briefings, or other times that involve close proximity or movement on the vessel.
  - As of current knowledge, face shields do not provide the same level of protection as face coverings; face shields should be used as an additional layer of protection to face coverings or used when face coverings are not recommended (e.g high exertion aerobic activities or water activities).
- Special attention should be given to the crew, their level of exposure, sanitation, and distancing. In many cases, crews are the link between clients that are consistently practicing distancing, for example, when serving food, cleaning common areas, operating dinghies, assisting with boarding, or leading side activities.
  - Consider decreasing crew circulation, assigning crews for specific stations, and the living quarters for crew when not at work.
  - Consider whether or not frontline crew or crew in areas of higher risk should have coverings at all times.
  - Consult ATTA's other activity guidelines for more information on specific activities.



## II. Pre-Arrival and embarkation:

- Have screening procedures in place. Before joining an activity or experience ask guests to self-assess their physical condition and self-screen their risk profile. Inform guests that if they have symptoms, however mild, or are in a household where someone has symptoms, they are advised to stay at home.
- For longer trips, consider additional pre-trip recommendations and screening, such as suggesting steps to limit exposure to COVID-19, using screening questionnaires, or testing.
- Perform daily screening and monitoring measures, such as asking about symptoms or checking temperatures.
- Screening and monitoring measures should be extensive for staff members.
- Set clear standards and boundaries for COVID-19 health and safety measures and guest participation. Make available relevant information about the activity, such as the risks involved and the measures you are taking to manage COVID-19 risks. Ensure guests understand the risks and what is expected of them to participate.
- Provide ample access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer. Ask that guests sanitize hands when entering any building, kitchen, or dining facility, before starting an activity, and as often as needed throughout the activity.
- Consider adding specific embarkation guidelines to promote distancing and avoiding contact, such as boarding logistics (one by one, in small groups), luggage handling, and assistance to clients at time of embarkation
- Events and briefings should accommodate for social or physical distancing. Adapt the spaces and briefings to avoid the need to get close to guests and to increase guests' understanding and compliance with the necessary additional COVID-19 measures. Consider holding briefings and gatherings outside whenever possible.
- When closer contact is required consider the use of face coverings.



## III. Transport:

- The use of vehicles to transport clients before, after or during boat tours includes a higher degree of COVID-19 transmission risk. Measures to mitigate risk should be used whenever possible; Open vehicle windows, provide space in between passengers, and have passengers wear face coverings. Consider the use of face shields or the use of private vehicles for transportation as additional measures.



#### IV. On board:

- At areas of high traffic and potential concentration strive to organize social and physical distancing to minimize exposure. For example:
  - By creating 'one way' lanes in corridors and passageways, and by serving meals in well ventilated areas and with staggered timing.
  - Providing small group activities and staggered embarkation, landing, and activity times.
- Consider the use of face coverings when in high circulation areas such as corridors or gangways, and anytime closer contact is required.
- Provide ample access to hand washing facilities and sanitizer. Ask that guests sanitize hands when entering public spaces, before starting any activity, and as often as needed throughout the day.
- Encourage guests to be responsible for proactively exercising distancing and using face coverings when needed, for example, by avoiding areas with others, spreading out, and spacing as widely as possible.
- Consider closing off - or decreasing capacity and increasing sanitation - of areas that may promote higher risk, such as indoor lounges, recreational equipment, public restrooms, or gyms.
- It is important to promote air quality by having ample ventilation in the common areas, using natural airflow, or the use of particulate air filters. Ventilation systems should not re-circulate air between cabins or within the vessel.
- Medical considerations
  - Evaluate the need for defining additional COVID-19 evacuations protocols. Consider what would be necessary should isolation be required. Some tours will have access to prompt evacuation while some will be remote and require keeping symptomatic persons on board until evacuation can be arranged.
  - Consider what onboard and onshore medical resources (equipment and expertise) will be necessary to ensure mitigation practices are met.
  - When administering first aid, some distancing methods need to be adapted or cannot be used. Use Personal Protective Equipment - PPE such as face coverings and gloves.



## V. Dining

- Distancing: consider alternatives to provide spacing, such as ample guest seating and spaced tables, offering private or outdoors eating locations, and scheduled meal times.
- Prevent surface contact where necessary, for example:
  - Identify high-use areas and touchpoints, such as; workstations, tables, menus, doors, utensils, condiments.
  - Clean high-use areas and touchpoints often with a rigorous enhanced sanitation regimen.
  - Prevent contact in high-use areas when possible.
- Food and beverages should be served by staff members trained and observant of precautions.
- Consider serving individually served meals rather than buffet or self-service.
- Consider how meals are transported, covered, and consumed. Attempt to individually pack food items and cover meals with a reusable lid. For food samples, consider how the customer will handle and consume safely.
- Ensure food safety and restaurant cleaning is in line with local official guidance.
- For further information on food handling see Culinary Experiences amid COVID-19 Guidelines.
- For further information on food preparation in the field see Camping amid COVID-19 Guidelines.



## VI. Lodging:

- FIT or household groups should be favoured to promote distancing. Avoid allowing members of separately booked groups or groups from more than one household unit to share bedrooms.
- Attention should be paid to increasing levels of sanitization and disinfection in guest and crew cabins.
- Distancing and screening measures should be implemented in line with hotel, local, and official guidelines.
- For further information on lodging see Small Lodges amid COVID-19: Guidelines.



## VII. Open Boats:

Either operated independently as a tour, or as support vessels, smaller open boats present unique characteristics associated with COVID-19 risks.

- Ask that guests sanitize hands before entering and as often as needed throughout the ride.
- Apply the same principles for preventing surface contact and promoting sanitation described for on board common areas.
- Principles of social and physical distancing should be considered, such as distance between people decreasing capacity and designating spaced seating.
- Especially when sightseeing, people tend to congregate in one area of the boat, so consider active measures to maintain distancing such as by requiring designated seating or by limiting capacity.
- When closer contact is required consider the use of face coverings.



### VIII. On Shore and Attractions:

- When visiting public attractions or encountering other groups, maintain your company standards of distancing and sanitation. Often people socialize and chat at attractions – remember they might not know nor be following the same health and safety standards that you provide and require of your group.
- Favour visiting popular attractions in times of lesser use to minimize your exposure to other people or groups.
- Every place visited is a new environment. Get to know the local risk levels, accepted practices, and local authority recommendations
- Guests may undertake activities that are run through a separate establishment such as safaris or wildlife experiences, treks, or water sports. For any such activity, enhancing sanitation is a key part of mitigating COVID-19 risk. Whenever possible, participants should avoid sharing equipment and should care for and carry their own personal equipment.
- If side activities led by other operators are part of your tour, ensure your health and safety protocols extend to the shoreside experience. For further information see Cultural Experiences and Sightseeing amid COVID-19: Guidelines
- Consider additional protocols or measures for guests upon return of an activity.



### IX. Facilities and Equipment:

- Identify and establish cleaning and sanitation schedules and procedures for common areas and high-use areas.
- Prevent surface contact where needed, for example:
  - Identify high-use areas and frequently touched areas, such as dining halls, corridors, or handrails.
  - Increase sanitation in high-use areas and touchpoints, such as staterooms, handles, doorknobs, and switches, etc.
- Sanitization of adventure gear and equipment before and after each use.
  - Further recommendations for sanitization of equipment used in certain activities, such as trekking, rafting, wildlife viewing, etc can be found in ATTA Adventure Travel Covid-19 Health And Safety Guidelines
- d.Consider sanitizing any gear that could be a vector for COVID-19 transmission.
- Use recommended methods for cleaning and sanitizing that have been determined to kill the COVID-19 virus, such as, appropriate rest time in between uses, or using soap and water or bleach solutions. Follow manufacturer’s instructions and the recommendations of official health and safety agencies.
- Consider implementing safe-handling procedures for personnel who use cleaning products to clean equipment to prevent harm from chemicals or cross-contamination



### X. Additional resources:

- [ATTA COVID-19 Guide for the Adventure Travel Industry](#)
- Cleveland Clinic
  - [Return to work amid COVID-19: A Cleveland Clinic Guide](#)
  - [COVID-19: Creating a Safe Workplace](#)
  - [Advice on Reopening Business: Frequently Asked Questions](#)



# ADVENTURE TRAVEL TRADE ASSOCIATION (ATTA)

**The Adventure Travel Trade Association is a vital leadership voice and partner for the adventure travel industry around the world.** Our mission is to **empower the global travel community** to **protect natural and cultural capital** while **creating economic value** that benefits both trade members and destinations. The ATTA community today is a vibrant, thriving, interactive network, over 25,000 members strong and representing 100 countries worldwide. From tour operators to tourism boards, specialty agents to accommodations, all ATTA members share a genuine love for global exploration and a vested interest in the sustainable development of tourism.

[COVID-19 Guide for the Adventure Travel Industry](#)

[Strategic Opportunities For Destination Recovery & Resilience](#)

[Online Education Safety and Risk Management Course](#)

# CLEVELAND CLINIC

Cleveland Clinic is a leading provider of specialized medical care, focused on providing clinical excellence and superior patient outcomes. The integrated healthcare system includes hospitals, outpatient clinics and wellness centers across the globe with facilities in the United States, Canada and the United Arab Emirates. In 2021, its newest hospital, Cleveland Clinic London, will open.

Founded in 1921, Cleveland Clinic has grown and evolved both clinically and geographically, becoming home to:

- The world's largest heart valve program and vascular surgery program.
- The world's largest and most specialized urology practice.
- One of the top cancer centers in the US, centered on multidisciplinary patient care.
- The UAE's first and most comprehensive multi-organ transplant program.
- A leader in quality clinical care in Florida, offering easy access from Latin America and the Caribbean.

For patients traveling outside of their home country to a Cleveland Clinic location, Cleveland Clinic's Global Patient Services department provides personalized and compassionate care. This team of international caregivers serves as a point of contact to help guide patients through every aspect of travel and care.

Other select services available to global patients include:

- MyConsult Online Medical Second Opinion program, which gives patients secure, online access to Cleveland Clinic specialists for second opinions and consultations.
- Cleveland Clinic's Critical Care Transport team, an expert team of critical care providers available 24/7 to transport critically ill and injured patients of all ages via ground mobile intensive care unit, helicopter or jet aircraft.

**For more information about Cleveland Clinic, visit [clevelandclinic.org](https://clevelandclinic.org).**





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## SUPPORTING CONTRIBUTORS

