

## **Running Event COVID-19 Safety Plan (Last Updated 5/24/21)**

### **Updates for Illinois 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 are unvaccinated and 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.
- Participants are encouraged to avoid traditional forms of physical contact (handshakes, high-fives, hugs, partner stretching, etc.), as well as close group gathering (group pictures, etc.).
- Do not spit or blow nose while running in the group.
- Do not share personal items, such as hydration, energy gels, towels, etc.
- Persons that are two weeks post full vaccination for COVID19 are not required to wear a mask or face covering during the event. Other persons are required to wear a mask or face covering while gathering pre- or post run. When proper start wave procedures have been implemented by the event to avoid congestion on-course, both vaccinated and unvaccinated persons are not required to wear masks or face coverings while running / walking on course.

### **Event Capacity Guidelines**

- The capacity of the event venue at any one time should be equal to or less than that of the festival guidelines. Each start wave should not exceed the recreation guidelines.
- For outdoor festivals, the Bridge Phase allows 30 people per 1,000 square feet of event space. 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 spread out to.
- For outdoor recreation, the Bridge Phase allows maximum group sizes of 100, with multiple groups of 100 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. 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 plan for 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 until the time to report to start waves. (CARA is no longer advising restricting gathering only individual pods during the full timeline of the event).
- Allowing persons to gather freely over the full scope of the venue allows the most space available for physical distancing.

#### **Common Gathering Areas and Flow:**

- Events are advised to limit the need for participants to gather within or line up at common areas for prolonged periods of time (i.e 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, and having awards mailed post-race.
- Post-race celebrations, entertainment, and areas such as beer gardens that promote close contact for prolonged periods is discouraged.
- 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 area, avoiding the need for any person to remain in line for any extended period of time. Service time, from arrival in line to exit, should not exceed 10-15 minutes. This may mean creating additional pick-up stations, or additional toilets above previous typical needs.
- 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.

- Staff or volunteers should be dedicated to guiding participants through the venue, and to maintain safety guidelines.
- Allow for a clear path to reach que lines, and a clear path to exit common areas without congestion.
- 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 within the early stages of the race.
- The size of each wave should not exceed 100 persons, but event directors may find smaller waves (i.e. 50) more manageable.
- 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 minutes before their race start time. Limiting the time runners have to be confined to their start wave is recommended.
- 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.
- For smaller events, with a total participation below the capacity limit of the recreation guideline (100), a single start wave could be implemented since participants of varied paces will spread out quickly. However, participants should still line up by estimated finish time or pace, to avoid the need for extensive passing on course.

### **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. Staff or volunteers should oversee guiding participants



to maintain physical distancing.

- It is advised 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. Note, 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.
- Having all participants within the same start wave begin at once is allowed, but not advised. If allowed to start at once, consider requiring participants to wear masks or face coverings for several hundred meters into the course until they are able to maintain physical distance.
- 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.
- 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, the event should supply dry masks for those who need them after the run.
- 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 greet other finishers.
- 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) 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. 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. 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.

## **Packet-Pick Up / Registration**

- 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.
- If race day pick-up is allowed, the event should be prepared to service each participant quickly to avoid lines and congestion at this common area.

## **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.

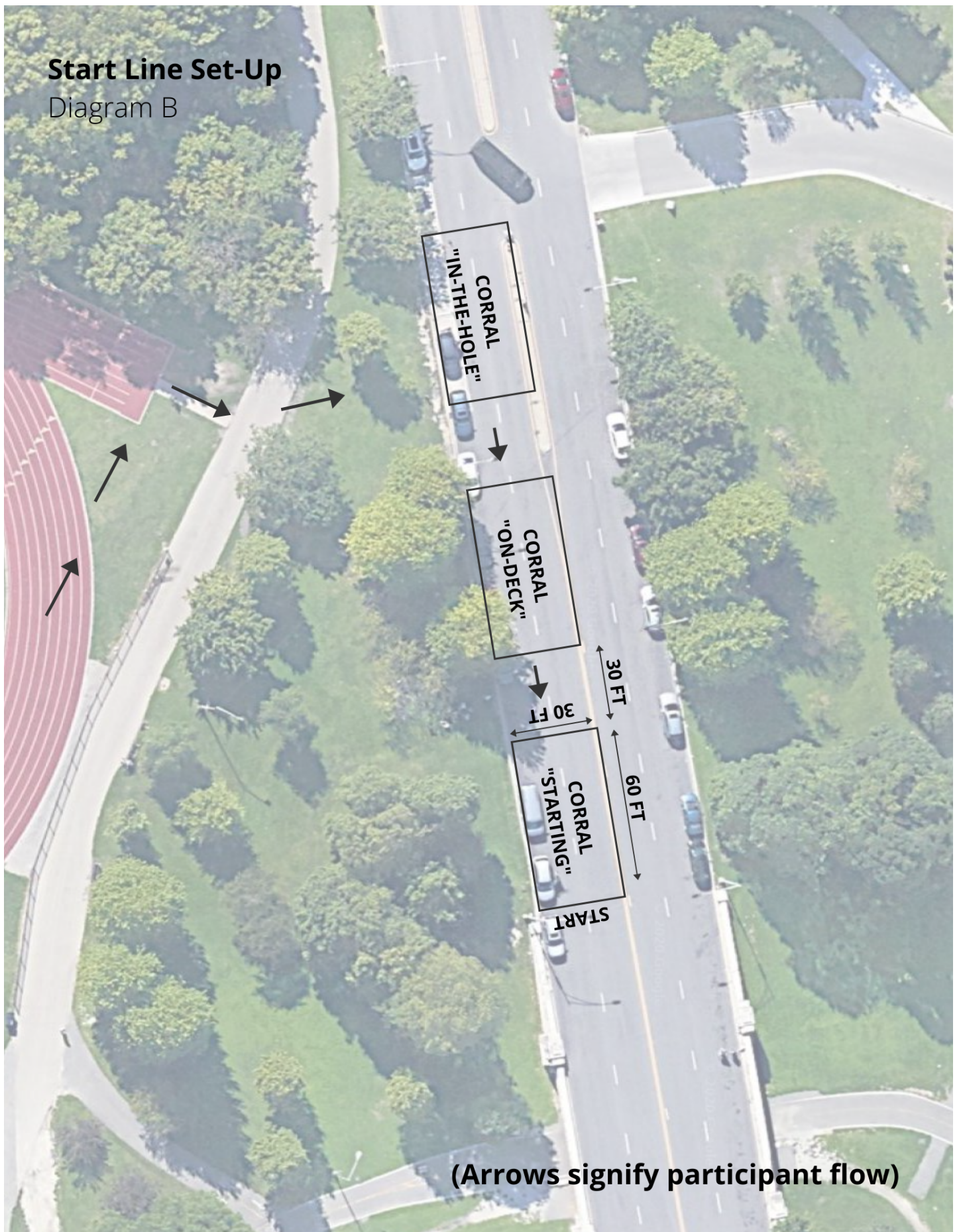
## **Results Posting / Look-Up**

- 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 shared kiosks and devices.

## **Diagrams and Pictures**

## Start Line Set-Up

Diagram B



## Start Corral Set-Up (At Start Line)

(Diagram C)

