Safe travels

by WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

LEADING GLOBAL PROTOCOLS FOR THE NEW NORMAL

ADVENTURE TOURISM

WORLD TRAVEL & TOURISM COUNCIL

OVERARCHING OBJECTIVES & APPROACH FOR THE TRAVEL & TOURISM SECTOR

OBJECTIVES

1. Have the sector lead the definition of industry best practices as Travel & Tourism moves from crisis management to recovery.

2. Put the safety, health and security of travellers and the Travel & Tourism workforce at the core of the development of global protocols.

APPROACH

1. Ensure coherence through a coordinated, collaborative, and transparent approach, supported by medical evidence, within the Travel & Tourism sector as well as with governments and public health authorities.

2. Share harmonised and consistent protocols which are outcome driven, simple and practical across destinations and countries.

3. Rebuild trust and confidence with travellers through effective communication & marketing; letting them know the protocols implemented and assurances available to keep them healthy.

4. Advocate for the implementation of enabling policies to support the recovery and demand re-generation for the sector.

INTRODUCTION

The below suggested protocols for the adventure tourism industry were compiled on the basis of insights and frameworks developed by the Adventure Travel Trade Association (**ATTA**) to support the safe, healthy, and responsible restart of adventure tourism around the world. The objective is to ensure that protocols are in place across all relevant functions with an increased focus on health, safety, and physical distancing standards which travellers will need and expect.

Within these protocols, the adventure tourism industry refers to a wide variety of adventure tourism experiences including cycling, rafting, trekking, skiing, snowboarding, wildlife safaris and culinary tours among others. Not only are these activities mostly outdoors, thus limiting time spent in indoors; but group sizes can be managed to allow for distancing.

Note that these recommendations are subject to change and may be enhanced as new information about the virus becomes available. While not all these recommendations will apply to every business in the adventure tourism industry, the information is intended to provide guidance. It is recommended that all adventure tourism practices follow local and national legislation and the latest guidance from public health organisations including the WHO.

It is essential to note that the measures highlighted are based on higher risk contexts where sustained ongoing transmission is evident. As such, there will be a need to moderate the protocols, as they may not be necessary in low risk contexts. Measures should be limited in time and re-evaluated and monitored regularly. In effect, it will be critical to reduce the measures as the risk diminishes. What is more, when more effective, suitable, and less disruptive and scientifically supported measures become available, they should be implemented at the earliest opportunity and defunct measures removed.

For the Travel & Tourism sector to recover from the COVID-19 crisis, travellers will need to feel assured of the safety of travel. In that context, it is important that travellers are clearly and simply advised of the new protocols implemented within their travel experience to ensure their safety.

For the purpose of alignment across industries within the Travel & Tourism sector, WTTC has divided the protocols in four pillars, namely:

1. **Promoting Operational & Staff Preparedness**

2. **Delivering a Safe Experience**

3. **Rebuilding Trust & Confidence**

4. **Implementing Enabling Policies**

1. PROMOTING OPERATIONAL & STAFF PREPAREDNESS

As adventure tourism companies restart their operations, they should ensure they can optimise operational quality and delivery and have trained staff to prepare and execute on the operational plans.

Adventure Tourism Companies (ATCs) may achieve operational readiness for reopening by having:

- Obtained the applicable reopening license if required by local government

- Implemented a COVID 19 Plan including an action/checklist for infection prevention and a special cleaning and disinfection plan, as well as a process to monitor changing regulations and contingency plans in place, risk contexts in host countries and the impact on local companies and local communities among others, as applicable

- Implemented protocols and guidelines for staff health, including health checks for staff if required by local legislation. If not required, ATCs to issue and communicate a stay-home policy for anyone displaying any symptoms as per World Health Organisation (WHO) guidelines

- Reflected physical distance in office layout and limited the number of staff in common back-of-house areas where possible if required by local legislation. Support working from home to reduce density in the workplace where possible and establish fixed shifts for the staff to minimise risk

- Reviewed employee sick leave policies and updating them as needed

- Implemented protocols to minimise physical contact. Implemented physical distancing protocols using a risk-based approach, especially for queues, and, where possible, marked to clearly communicate to participants and staff if required by local legislation

- Undertook risk assessment of each adventure activity to determine the measures required, such as physical distancing, the wearing of face-coverings, as the risk amongst Adventure Travel Activities varies

- Mapped out, where possible, alternate routes and activity areas to avoid high traffic areas and promote easier physical distancing; while considering topography, difficulty level, track, and environmental conditions such as snow, river, sea and water conditions

- Made personal protection equipment (PPE) available to staff, such as masks and sanitiser, as long as required as per risk-based approach by local legislation. For activities in sub-freezing temperatures, ensure sanitiser is kept above 0C/32F

- Integrated technologies to enable automation such as contactless touchpoints and payment where possible. If contactless payment is not possible, consider using prepayment or gloves and hand sanitisation

- Evaluated innovations for cleanliness and disinfection, with validation from expert bodies and governmental institutions, such as WHO, and share best practices

- Established with suppliers and partners including restaurants, kiosks, hotels, equipment suppliers, and transport partners that they follow likeminded health and hygiene protocols and guidelines to protect guests as required by local legislation. See WTTC protocols for Hospitality and Tour Operators for detailed guidelines relating to these industries

- Implemented health screenings for staff and guests

- Introduced a COVID-19 emergency plan in collaboration with suppliers and partners should new cases emerge during a trip or after an activity, in line with local and national protocols

- Explored different options for operations, where possible, such as advanced tickets, timed entries, staggered launch and land times, alternate route starting points, spacing on ski lifts, and smaller groups

ATCs should train all their staff to prepare and execute on operational plans by:

- Creating and implementing staff protocols, guidelines, and operations such as Q&As

- Providing their staff with the tools and information necessary regarding infection control, physical contact, appropriate attire and enhanced hygiene measures, and the use of masks and gloves as recommended by local health authorities in host countries or as required by the activity procedures when these go beyond local requirements

- Ensuring staff know and understand travel restrictions and procedures at the host, arrival, and departure countries, particularly if adventure activities span more than one country

- Requesting that key stakeholders such as partner hotels, transport partners, and activity partners have trained their staff on the basis of likeminded protocols to enable consistent approach across sector

- All training should be informed by the latest advice from public health authorities and/or WHO

- Regular monitoring of well-being of team members by leadership, encouraging them to following governmental and WHO guidelines

- Preparing on-site staff to deal with an emergency, including processes for isolation, transportation, and evacuation

2. DELIVERING A SAFE EXPERIENCE

As adventure tourism companies work to deliver a safe experience for their staff and guests through enhanced cleanliness and hygiene best practices, they should have:

• Worked with suppliers and partners to understand what additional measures have been introduced

• Implemented processes focused on enhanced sanitisation, disinfection, and cleaning practices as well as increase their cleaning/disinfection frequency:

  o Selected disinfecting products approved by health authorities

  o Revisited guidance to cleaning team with a specific focus on high-frequency touch points, particularly equipment and gear as well as handrails, common areas, and washrooms if applicable. Enhance cleaning frequency as appropriate and consider rest time between uses if required. Extraneous items should be removed

  o Provided participants with information on recommended distancing and other health measures during activities and during the trip

  o Approved disinfecting products made available at sanitisation stations to guests in the form of alcohol-based or hypochlorous acid water hand sanitiser in high-traffic areas such as launch or start locations, ski lifts, food and beverage locations, merchandise shops and exits, as appropriate. Provide or make available for purchase additional individual disinfecting products for guests if possible

  o Established with transport partners and suppliers that they have likeminded processes for sanitisation, disinfection, and deep cleaning practices

  o Enhanced frequency of waste disposal by venue or activity as appropriate

  o Laundered towels and gear using a detergent and high-heat washer and dryer settings and any other methods determined by national government and health authorities (like WHO)

• Reduced participant capacity limits for activities as appropriate and required by local legislation to allow for physical distancing. Distinguished between different areas of risk during the activity and considered measures accordingly

• Ensured activity difficulty levels do not exceed guest ability and skill, thus decreasing the need for a possible rescue

• Implemented customer processes including guest information, minimising physical contact and the use of gear and equipment:

  o Promoted shared responsibility for health and safety

  o Implemented guest health checks and screening if appropriate and required by local legislation

  o Limited physical contact and queuing where possible

  o Maintained distancing when encountering other groups at popular and/or communal areas such as rest stops, sightseeing locations, ski lifts, and outdoor meal spaces

  o Coordinated with other companies to stagger start and end times for activities that begin in high-traffic areas where possible, such as rafting launch and land times and starting points for routes

  o Notified guests, ahead of travel, of the health and safety measures in place

  Advised guests to bring their own face coverings and other PPE. Consider appropriate PPE for the activity. For instance, face coverings for skiing and snowboarding may differ to those for trekking. Encourage guests to wear masks or face coverings within venues as well as in all modes of transportation

  o Reduced face-to-face transactions where possible. Developed online procedures where appropriate and possible

  o Encouraged guests to purchase tickets online if possible. Consider all-inclusive package offers Encouraged guests to reduce the number of personal items they bring into the venue. Evaluate locker arrangements if relevant and appropriate

  o Kept the same households, families, or members of group bookings together for all activities to lower risk of exposure for those outside of that unit, wherever possible

  o For outfitting, gear collection, and change rooms; arranged spaces and scheduled times to limit the number of people in the same space and promote distancing and minimise contact

  o Ensured, where possible, that each guest can handle their own equipment and gear for the duration of the trip. Where possible, guests should be encouraged bring their own equipment or gear, such as bikes, skis and helmets among others.

  o Reminded guests that where there is a risk of falling in water, the use of face coverings is not advised, for instance in some sections of a rafting activity

• Considered unique guidance for specific activities, notably:

  o For the transportation of guests between meeting points, such as rafting, cycling and trekking routes, considered mandatory face coverings, distancing or even separate transport where possible, also taking into account the duration of the trip and ventilation of transport

  o For wildlife safaris, reminded guests to maintain distance from wildlife. Whilst there have been very few cases of human to animal virus transmission, there is very little science or evidence to prove that humans cannot transmit the virus to animals; such transmission could have devastating consequences on endangered species

3. REBUILDING TRUST & CONFIDENCE

As adventure tourism companies works to enhance trust and confidence through transparency and communication with guests, they should:

- Provide clear, consistent, and up-to-date communication to customers on new health & hygiene protocols via the organisation's channels, both digitally and physically through clear signage

- Share guest guidelines ahead of trip or activity digitally and in person upon arrival on the basis of advice from health authorities, which may include the wearing of face masks or coverings, guidance on hand hygiene and avoiding physical contact. Consider having consumers acknowledge guidelines

- Inform guests about support available if questions or concerns arise. Guest facing staff should be trained and prepared to answer questions, resolve challenges such as the detection of new cases, provide demonstrations, address situations where guests are not complying, and share protocols before and during trip and/or activity to reassure guests. Communicate to guests that the responsibility is shared between the ATC and the guest

- Promote contact tracing apps if required by local legislation

4. IMPLEMENTING ENABLING POLICIES

As the adventure tourism industry works to recover, it is essential that enabling policies are implemented at the governmental level. The adventure tourism industry calls on governments to:

- Enhance destination and activity promotion to boost demand both domestically and internationally

- Create incentives and provide direct support to boost travel and tourism

- Provide financial relief to the sector through grants and the reduction of taxes, fees, and charges to stimulate demand in recovery

FURTHER INFORMATION

The Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA) developed specific health and safety guidelines focusing on different types of adventure travel. ATTA's guidelines for trekking, cycling, rafting, wildlife safaris, culinary experiences, camping and skiing and snowboarding can all be downloaded free of charge **here**.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank all of our members and partners who have contributed to the protocol, including:

The World Travel & Tourism Council is the global authority on the economic and social contribution of Travel & Tourism.

WTTC promotes sustainable growth for the Travel & Tourism sector, working with governments and international institutions to create jobs, to drive exports and to generate prosperity. Council Members are the Chairs, Presidents and Chief Executives of the world's leading private sector Travel & Tourism businesses.

Together with Oxford Economics, WTTC produces annual research that shows Travel & Tourism to be one of the world's largest sectors, supporting 330 million jobs and generating 10.3% of global GDP in 2019. Comprehensive reports quantify, compare and forecast the economic impact of Travel & Tourism on 185 economies around the world. In addition to individual country fact sheets, and fuller country reports, WTTC produces a world report highlighting global trends and 25 further reports that focus on regions, sub-regions and economic and geographic groups.

To download reports or data, please visit **www.wttc.org**