

Activities and Covid-19



South Wales Outdoor Activity Providers Group

An Online Workshop for Providers and
Instructors to Share Good Practice

8 September 2020

Welcome!



- Thanks for joining us
- Some tips on using Zoom:
 - Please keep yourself 'muted' when not speaking (to avoid distracting background noise)
 - 'Rename' yourself if necessary (so we know who's attending) – just right-click on your current *Zoom* name and hit 'rename'
 - Please make use of the 'Chat' function – type your questions or comments in here and I'll make sure we address them
 - If you want to speak, wave at us or type a chat message (we might not be able to see you all the time!)
- We shan't be recording, but I'll be trying to make notes as we go along, as well as sharing my screen and keeping an eye on the Chat!

Workshop Aim



Share experiences to help develop and promote
‘good practice’ for operating in the new and
unfamiliar environment of social distancing etc.

SWOAPG's Role



- Our 'mission'
 - To promote & develop sustainable outdoor activity provision in South Wales
- Our methods
 - Help Providers and Instructors deliver activity in ways that care for the environment and local communities
 - Access arrangements, Information, Training, etc.
 - Show 'the outside world' that we are a sector to be taken seriously!
 - Building relationships with public bodies and other organisations, locally and nationally



- SWOAPG Members:
 - recognise that use of the natural environment carries with it a responsibility to encourage those in our care to learn something of the countryside's special qualities and the ways in which it can be looked after.
 - make a commitment to good practice for the sustainable use of the countryside.
 - always carry out activities in a manner which maintains good relationships

Workshop Programme



1. Requirements for preventing Covid-19 transmission
2. Some 'good practice' ideas from our recent gorge-walking workshop
3. Sharing 'generic' experiences, lessons and 'good practice' that apply across the whole range of outdoor activities
4. 'Break-out' discussions for specific activities
 - Caving
 - Climbing & Mountain Activities
 - Gorge-Walking
 - Paddlesports
5. Summary

Ways of Working

- We want everyone to be heard!
- We'll go round in turns from time to time
- Use the Chat function if you have something to add!

Who's Here?



- Please introduce yourselves, very briefly (!)
 - Name
 - Business / organisation
 - How much you're currently using the gorge(s)
- Representatives attended from the following businesses / organisations:
 - Ant Morgan Coaching
 - Black Mountains Walking
 - Blue Dot Adventure
 - Borderlands Outdoor
 - Call of the Wild
 - Freelance independent instructors
 - Hawk Associates
 - LoadedUK
 - MonLife Outdoor
 - RipnRock
 - SWOAPG
 - UWC Atlantic College
 - University of Wales Trinity St David
 - Welsh Mountain Walks

Requirements for Preventing Covid-19 Transmission: Welsh Government Regulations



<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-legislation-and-guidance-law>

“The person responsible for work carried out at premises [including car parks & visitor attractions]...must

- a) take all reasonable measures to ensure that a distance of 2m is maintained between any persons on the premises (except between two members of the same [extended] household, or a carer and the person assisted by the carer)
- b) take any other reasonable measures for that purpose, for example measures which limit close face to face interaction and maintain hygiene such as...providing or requiring use of personal protective equipment [or even] ceasing to carry out certain activities
- c) provide information to those entering or working at the premises

and have regard to guidance issued by the Welsh Ministers about those measures”

“No person may, without a reasonable excuse, participate in a gathering outdoors that consists of more than 30 people

Requirements for Preventing Covid-19 Transmission: Welsh Government Guidance



<https://gov.wales/sport-recreation-and-leisure-guidance-phased-return-html>

- For Outdoor Organised Activities
 - Guidance must be implemented by NGBs and activity must follow NGB advice
 - **For “any organised outdoor activity outside the direct oversight of a sport NGB the organising body [i.e. the Provider] is responsible for implementing this guidance”**
 - 2m rules may “be breached in the narrow circumstances required by each sport during competitive play” – i.e. not necessarily for adventurous outdoor activity

• Also:

<https://gov.wales/workplace-guidance-employers-and-employees-covid-19>

- “Where people are unable to observe the 2m distancing rule and where closer working is required, take all reasonable measures to minimise exposure...for example by:
 - limiting the level of face-to-face interaction.
 - using physical barriers.
 - increased hygiene, environmental cleanliness and providing reminders about the importance of hygiene.
 - washing hands well for 20 seconds with soap and drying thoroughly, or using alcohol-based hand gels, before and after close contact”

<https://gov.wales/tourism-and-hospitality-businesses-guidance-phased-reopening>

Requirements for Preventing Covid-19 Transmission: Welsh Government Guidance



Sport, recreation & leisure guidance covers:

- Social distancing & hygiene
- Equipment cleaning
- Test, Trace, Protect; self-isolation
- Appointment of Coronavirus Officer
- Risk Assessment
 - “Where multiple sports/clubs are utilising the same training site/s all Coronavirus officers should share their risk assessments and operational plans, to ensure alignment and avoid any potential conflict between plans”
- Injury treatment
- Spectators
- Information for participants

Requirements for Preventing Covid-19 Transmission: Social Distancing with under-11s



<https://gov.wales/coronavirus-regulations-guidance>

- "In circumstances where young children mix with others, it may not be practical to attempt to maintain continual 2 metre distancing (between children, or even between children and adults). This is in part because it is harder for younger children to understand the concept of physical distancing, and in part because appropriate support from carers will often require closer contact.
- "For young children (those of primary school age or younger), it is in any case less essential to attempt to rigidly maintain continual 2 metre distance between them, or between the children and any adults outside their household or extended household. Studies have found that young children are less likely to transmit the virus, whether to other children or to adults, and the virus appears to take a milder course in children than in adults for most cases.
- "However as young children can still transmit the virus, parents of young children should still exercise their good judgement and take care especially to encourage their children to follow hand hygiene measures and keep close contact to a minimum wherever possible."
- We *think* this means that:
 - you're unlikely to be accused of breaking the law if you don't rigidly enforce social distancing with under-11s; but
 - to protect public health, you should still try to minimise the amount of close contact with and by under-11s.

Requirements for Preventing Covid-19 Transmission: “We’re Good to Go” + HSE Guidance

- ✓ Read & Understand Government & Public Health Guidance
- ✓ Covid-19 Risk Assessment
- ✓ Nominated person
- ✓ Working from home
- ✓ Staff training & communication
- ✓ Cleaning
- ✓ Social distancing
- ✓ Communicating to clients



Staying COVID-19 Secure in 2020

We confirm we have complied with the government's guidance on managing the risk of COVID-19

• FIVE STEPS TO SAFER WORKING TOGETHER •

- ✓ We have carried out a **COVID-19 risk assessment** and shared the results with the people who work here
- ✓ We have **cleaning, handwashing and hygiene procedures** in line with guidance
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **help people work from home**
- ✓ We have taken all reasonable steps to **maintain a 2m distance** in the workplace
- ✓ Where people cannot be 2m apart, we have done everything practical to **manage transmission risk**

National Governing Body Guidance



- Caving
 - Still unclear whether the law permits group caving in Wales, BCA is seeking clarity
 - <https://british-caving.org.uk/wiki3/doku.php?id=news>
- Coasteering
 - National Coasteering Charter guidelines
- Outdoor Climbing & Mountain Activities
 - Clear guidance from BMC, although primarily aimed at Clubs
 - <http://www.thebmc.co.uk/Download.aspx?id=1913>
 - Guidance for professionals from Mountain Training / BMG / AMI
 - <https://www.mountain-training.org/membership/mountain-training-association/news/helping-keep-outdoor-activities-covid-secure>
 - <https://www.mountain-training.org/latest-news/coronavirus-latest>
- Gorge-Walking & Canyoning
 - No NGB, but guidance from WATO developed by Technical Advisers in Wales
 - <https://swoapg.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Safe-Delivery-of-Gorge-Walking-and-Canyoning-post-COVID-19-.pdf>
- Paddlesport
 - Clear guidance from Canoe Wales
 - <https://www.canoewales.com/covid-19-guidance-for-members>

The Costs of Ignoring the Guidance...



- Threat to Public Health
 - Presents poor image to the public
 - Insurance might be invalidated
 - Providers could be fined
 - Providers - or the entire activity – could be banned by landowners
- ⇒ How can we meet the requirements / what “reasonable adjustments” can we make to ensure public health in the activities we provide?

Some of the 'issues' emerging from our recent gorge-walking workshop



- Need to reinforce to staff the need to keep themselves 2m away wherever they can
- Implications of an outbreak are that businesses could close down while staff self-isolate
- We need to be able to reassure landowners that we're doing what we need to
- Use published guidelines systematically to prepare risk assessment / procedures, from first point-of-contact; equipment issue; arrival; activity; equipment handling, transport, cleaning, quarantine
- Need to reduce numbers: single family units or small mixed groups; keep multiple family groups independent of one another
- Reduce time spent within 2m zone
- It's easier with 'competent' groups who don't need much physical support
- Need to think about why we're employing each measure: consider benefits vs. risk in terms both of clients transmitting to instructors and vice-versa
- Considerations for transporting staff and groups
- Educating customers – they don't always listen or comply, so what do you do?
- Differences with English rules / expectations
- Clients turn up in non-bubble groups
- Environmental conditions – easier to distance in 'safe' conditions, when less spotting etc. is needed
- Face-masks don't work in the wet environment; visors alone aren't adequate and they steam-up – but maybe appropriate for use in equipment issue etc.?
- Taking temperatures of clients – probably not worth it as it isn't a reliable indicator of infection
- Noisy environment means people move closer to hear
- Problems at pinch-points, especially with multiple groups

Some 'good practice' ideas from our recent gorge-walking workshop



- Managing clients & equipment
 - Be vigilant: repeat and reinforce messages (politely!) to clients
 - Use table to separate staff from clients during equipment issue
 - Consider using masks / visors during equipment issue, fitting & return
 - Use clients to load used kit into tubs / bags which get taken to base and cleaned / quarantined with minimal staff handling
 - Cleaning kit – including freelancers' kit – that clients have touched e.g. throwlines, slings, etc. – follow manufacturer's recommendations, otherwise good cleaning protocols using 'normal' cleaning products *may* be adequate – but the only certainty is 72-hour quarantine
- Using car parks, toilets and changing areas
 - Think about how you park – e.g. don't block the route to changing areas etc. so that other people can't avoid being 2m from your clients!
 - We'll need to think about how to manage venues when it gets busier: may need to liaise with community and adapt our advice about changing in the open...
 - Consider front-loading sessions with some exercises (e.g. how to 'spot') in the car park – help clients to be able to look after themselves and each other
- Maintaining social distancing during activity
 - Consider in advance which are 'better' & 'worse' routes and challenges
 - Move on or go elsewhere if venues and pinch-points are busy
 - Ask yourselves: if you *need* to be close, should you really be doing this? Can you avoid the situation or choose a different route or activity?
 - Reduce the amount of time you need to be within 2m – close assistance, spotting, etc. – use professional judgement to minimise this
 - Get clients to take responsibility and help themselves / each other
 - Apply appropriate range of techniques e.g. handlines to reduce the need for close assistance
 - Visors and masks – some are using these, although they don't work well in the gorge environment – but they should be available for first aiders and casualties; and *perhaps* other 'dry' / 'static' situations

Your Turn!



- Please share your 'generic' experiences, lessons and 'good practice' that apply across the whole range of outdoor activities
- Some 'topics' and questions to get us started:
 - Managing clients (meeting, greeting, briefing & organising them)
 - Handling & cleaning equipment
 - Managing staff
 - Working in busy venues, managing pinch-points & touch-points (gates, toilets etc.)
 - Other 'generic' issues?

Managing Clients



- What have you changed about the ways you meet, greet, brief and organise clients – to keep both them and your staff safe?
 - Different approaches when more than one family in group – either sit and wait in car until other families arrive or issue kit to families as they arrive to stagger / spread them out – both work
 - Use a table as a physical barrier and to help size-up kit
 - Hand-out kit, rather than ask clients to help themselves – keep at arms-length, or lay-out kit for individuals on e.g. table
 - Don't get involved in fitting kit – demonstrate only, but get 'bubble members' to help one another
 - Take spare kit for instructors to demonstrate with
 - Clients are often very relaxed about Covid – remind them that others (including public & other groups) might not be so relaxed

Handling & Cleaning Equipment



- What are you doing to ensure that Covid-19 isn't transmitted through contact with activity equipment?
- Cleaning and / or 72-hour quarantine?
- Specialist disinfectant products or 'standard' cleaners / detergents?
- Manufacturers' recommendations?
 - e.g. climbing equipment guidance:
<https://www.papertrail.io/blog/covid-19-links-and-resources-for-equipment-owners-and-managers/>
- Ask clients (not staff) to handle used kit; wash immediately on return to base – and / or quarantine
- Staff & clients clean hands before & after touching (and washing) kit
- Wash vehicle after use
- Preference = quarantine, otherwise wash [following manufacturers' recommendations – e.g. warm wash using 'normal' detergents]
- Is it better to prevent Covid by intensive washing – or protect the integrity of kit with only 'normal' cleaning (e.g. Beal rope cleaner; Grangers, Nikwax, etc.)?
- Some are using 'specialist' cleaners e.g. Safe4 for 'wet' kit (not ropes)
- Soft surfaces (may not need 72 hours) vs. hard surfaces (prob. do need 72 hours)
- If hands are cleaned between uses of kit e.g. ropes – is that enough? (“Even if hands are clean before touching a rope, a client can still breathe infected aerosols onto the rope when belaying, abseiling etc.”)

Managing staff



- What have you changed about the ways you expect your staff to behave – to keep both them and your clients safe?
 - Younger staff (especially) may be reluctant to take it seriously – need to keep reinforcing & reminding
 - Ditto freelance staff
 - For large staff groups, have distinct teams working in separate areas; one-way system in briefing room; avoiding staff going into offices
 - Inductions for freelance staff

Working in Busy Venues



- How have you been managing the interface with the public and other groups at busy venues?
- What are you doing to ensure that Covid-19 isn't transmitted through contact at pinch-points & touch-points (gates, toilets etc.)
- Liaise with other companies' instructors
- Problem with public walking through groups, esp. in car parks
- Adapt routes e.g. stay in gorge to avoid paths

Other 'Generic' Issues?



- Longer-term contact with same clients for several days is easier to manage – issue individual equipment for the period
- Avoid busy times
- Can SWOAPG ask for feedback from users on any issues arising with local crags etc.
- Concerns about insurers' response to clients becoming infected (general feeling = impossible to prove – good practice should protect us)...
- Minibus transport – participants had no direct experience but suggested small groups, masks, windows open, cleaning

Activity-Specific Discussions



- For the next 15-20 minutes...
- If we have enough participants we'll split into small 'break-out' discussions (if not, we'll discuss some or all of the activities briefly as a whole group):
 - Caving
 - Climbing & Mountain Activities
 - ~~Gorge-Walking~~
 - ~~Paddlesports~~
- Some questions to consider:
 - How easily have you been able to follow and apply NGB guidance?
 - What specific issues have arisen for this activity and how have you managed them?
 - Are there any specific questions, issues or 'good practice' ideas that we should explore and share in a practical workshop for this activity?
- **Please use the chat function to tell me your 1st & 2nd choices of activities you'd like to discuss**
- Take a brief comfort break while I setup the breakout rooms!
 - When you return, please join the breakout room you've been assigned to
 - We'll all re-join together after 15-20min
 - A 'facilitator' will take notes in each discussion and report-back afterwards

Caving



- **NGB Guidance**
 - Guidance is minimal from BCA. In absence of a definitive 'no', use your risk assessment to decide if appropriate
 - WG aware of issue of multiple households working in a cave (and “is a cave indoor/outdoor environment?”), and know they need to define answer but may not be a priority for them to respond on this
- **Challenges**
 - Keeping households apart from each other is hard in mixed groups.
- **Good practice discussion**
 - Split group if there are confined spaces e.g. Letterbox
 - “Booking” system for popular caves/times? May not work if water levels etc change. Consider a notification/booking system over a more instantaneous system.
 - Use alternative caves in the area rather than only use busy sites
- **Workshop Ideas**
 - Evening – 18:00 start
 - Shared workshop, open conversation, split groups and to include a general discussion

Climbing & Mountain Activities



- Most of the attendees within this discussion were not actively working and were very interested in listening to challenges and good practice ideas
- How do we manage multiple use of kit between participants on the crag to reduce contamination?
 - One provider said they had bought extra kit to be able to provide everyone with abseiling descenders to avoid multiple use and cross-contamination
 - *NB there seems to be a real lack of concrete advice and evidence around cross-contamination through touching the same equipment and lack of confidence on behalf of providers in how to ensure safety*
- Reduce and manage Pinch Points
 - Choosing the appropriate venue that does not place clients in areas of close proximity
 - Providers being able to share in advance crags they intend to use – so providers can avoid too many people turning up at one venue
 - Setting up one-way systems to avoid paths getting congested
- Equipment distribution
 - Provider actively setting up zones and marking areas to maintain social distance
 - Barriers – e.g. setup bags to help maintain distance between instructor and client



**South Wales
Outdoor Activity
Providers Group**

Final Words

- **Thank you for joining us today!**
- We'll publish the slides & notes from this workshop
- Watch out for details of practical workshops coming soon
 - Gorge-walking Tue 15 Sep, Dinas Rock
 - Paddlesports Mon 21 Sep, Llanelli
 - Climbing & Mountain Activities Thu 24 Sep, Dinas Rock
 - Caving Thu 1 Oct, Porth yr Ogof (to be confirmed)
- Subscribe to our 'Alerts' mailing list – or become a SWOAPG Member:
<https://swoapg.com/membership>
- Any other final words?