

Marine sector consultation with Dr. Robert Strang

Discussion

1. When should barriers replace physical distancing?

- If you can't keep 6 ft apart, you create a barrier to prevent the spread of the virus. Barriers are most effective in those areas that have shorter term interaction like at cash registers.

2. If I'm selling tickets for tours with specific time slots, would this be considered an event and how does this affect gathering limits?

- There is no limit on numbers as long as you're maintaining social distancing. Consider where the groups would gather, such as line-ups to attend the event, and place signage accordingly.

3. In regards to larger vessels with a capacity of 150. If the 50% capacity rule is considered and we do have a plan in place to socially distance, are group bubbles acceptable?

- Yes. If you have enough space, you could have 5 household bubbles for example, as long as each bubble maintains 6 feet apart from the next family bubble.

4. What are the recommendations for a day sailing boat with a maximum 6 guests?

- Masks don't have to be mandatory, but operators could do this. Employees or the Captain should have a mask to protect others. This shows that the employer is taking appropriate steps to reduce the risk of spread.

5. If everyone on a boat wears a mask, could a boat operate at full capacity?

- Wearing a mask decreases risks but this does not mean you can take on extra risk in other areas, such as increasing capacity or removing social distancing.

6. Do barriers have to be approved for a boat?

- Not from a public health perspective. From an Operational Health and Safety perspective, you would not need approval but should demonstrate appropriate barrier standards. Think about the purpose of the barrier and its use if your guests cannot maintain social distancing.

7. Cleaning and mask use on boats

- A wet mask will decrease in effectiveness, but it is still effective to some extent. It's necessary to clean common surfaces between one group of passengers to the next. Cleaning/Sanitization agents recommended are those Health Canada certified cleaning products.

8. Would face shields be effective for rafting?

- Think about what you are doing upfront to ensure those who are sick are not getting on boat in the first place. So, if customers do not feel well, advise them to refrain from the activity. An online registration form could include questions about their current health.

9. Is contact tracing required for operators?

- We recommend a registry or logbook to record all those who were there (names, dates, contact information). This substantially speeds up process to contact others who may have come into contact with the infected person.

10. What are the recommendations for uniforms or protective clothing such as full fledge floater suits?

- The virus is transmitted mostly by close contact (breathing, laughing, etc.) and does not live outdoors. In many situations, the water could wash the virus away. Dr. Strang advises that while there are no strict protocols on clothing, it is recommended that guests take part in hand washing before and after wearing protective clothing.

11. White River Rafting: What are the recommendations to keep the entertaining aspects of the experience?

- It's easy to manage a small group of 8 or less people in one area. With a low risk of COVID-19 in the province, Dr. Strang is comfortable with the rafting business operating. Because of the close environment, it may be hard to maintain physical distancing, and if mask isn't reasonable, there may be some increased risk of COVID-19. People taking part in this activity should be aware of their increased risk.

12. Are we permitted to have our vessel washrooms open?

- It is recommended that you do open your washroom facilities if trips last more than 30 minutes. It's important to promote healthy hygiene by opening washrooms. With washrooms open, you will want to consider what you have in place that will facilitate hand washing, cleaning, alcohol-based wipes to wipe down the handles and other commonly used surfaces.

13. Where physical distancing is not possible, is PPE enough?

- PPE does not replace physical distancing but does reduce risk. It depends on the type of vessel. Plexi-glass barriers will not work on a Zodiac tidal bore, for example, but is feasible on the Harbour Hopper.

14. When will boat vessel be opening?

- The open date for many boat vessels is July 1.