

Chapter Statement Regarding Procedures To Return To Volunteer Service

Master Naturalist Guidance for Returning to Volunteer Service

As the State of Texas begins to enter into additional phases of ‘reopening’ it is our highest priority to maintain the health and safety of all Texas Master Naturalist volunteers as they make a decision to comfortably return to service in their local areas where allowed. All volunteers **must** comply with state, county and local public health and safety ordinances and any changes that may come up to protect the wellbeing of volunteers, clients, employees and the public.

Texas Master Naturalist volunteers are encouraged to evaluate their own comfort, risk, health and safety when considering returning to volunteer service. If you are a volunteer in a vulnerable or ‘high risk’ category, please continue to consider remote service opportunities where possible.

General health and safety guidance:

- Remain at home if you are not feeling well or have a fever.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Individuals may work independently, keeping 6 feet or more apart from others.
- Encourage use of facemasks or other personal protective equipment as a way of diminishing transmission if not already required in a local jurisdiction or program.
- Evaluate local ordinances about recommended group size for physical gatherings
- If you have traveled to certain high-risk areas, please consider self-quarantine for the recommended amount of time.

Guidance when working indoors:

- Be mindful of and follow local individual partners’ and project locations’ health and safety policies. They may require more than what other local authorities do.
- When and where allowed, groups working should be 10 or fewer people, all spaced 6 feet apart or more.
- When and where appropriate, refrain from using shared office equipment when possible. If it is necessary to share equipment, sanitize between each user.
- Help ensure that in high-touch areas, including door handles, restroom surfaces, handrails, tools, etc. are frequently cleaned.
- Recognize the use of facemasks or other personal protective equipment as a way of diminishing transmission and may be required when working in enclosed, shared space or commons areas.

Guidance for Outdoor Service:

- Be mindful of and follow local individual partners' and project locations' health and safety policies. They may require more than what other local authorities do.
- Groups working outdoors together or receiving instructions should be 10 or fewer people, all spaced 6 feet apart or more.
- Individuals may work independently, keeping 6 feet or more apart from others in a wildscape garden or other natural area.
- When possible, use your own gardening tools and equipment; shared tools and equipment should be cleaned after each use.
- Recognize the use of facemasks or other personal protective equipment as a way of diminishing transmission may be required when working in an open outdoor space.

When Inviting the Public to an Educational Event:

- Those receiving instructions should be 10 or fewer people, all spaced 6 feet apart or more.
- Do not hold educational events until state and local officials remove restrictions.
- Hosts and participants should wear face coverings, with participants expected to provide their own PPE.
- Advise participants in advance that if they have any symptoms or feel unwell, they should not attend.

Additional Texas Master Naturalist program guidance in reference to COVID-19 can be found on our website - <https://txmn.tamu.edu/welcome/covid-19-response/>