

# BMC COVID POLICY

**Last Updated 2/1/2022**

The following outlines the Covid exposure reduction protocols for the BOEALPS Basic Mountaineering Course (BMC), and applies equally to all BMC students and instructors. Failure to follow this policy and these protocols may result in expulsion from the class.

The Covid-19 pandemic has proven difficult to predict and conditions have been found to change drastically in short periods of time. Accordingly, the BMC Covid Policy may be altered or amended to address changing circumstances; and to comply with changing federal, state, or local regulations and guidance.

## **CONTACT TRACING**

The BMC Head Instructor will maintain a participant roster with names and contact information for each person present for each in-person class, activity, and outing.

If a participant develops Covid, receives a positive Covid test result, or has reason to believe they have Covid within 5 days after any in-person class activity, they **MUST** immediately contact the BMC Head Instructor by email at [bmc@boealps.org](mailto:bmc@boealps.org) AND by phone at 812-371-5723 to initiate and facilitate contact tracing. Timely, frequent, and clear communication with the BMC Head Instructor is the best tool for effectively managing any Covid cases/exposures/scars/symptoms that may arise during the BMC season.

The BMC Head Instructor will promptly notify all persons with potential exposure.

## **VACCINATION**

BMC requires that all participants (BMC students and BMC instructors) are **fully vaccinated** against Covid-19, in alignment with the latest [CDC recommendations](#). Proof of Vaccination Status must be submitted before participation in any in-person class activity, with no exceptions.

The BMC Head Instructor will verify that proof of vaccination for all students and instructors is in good standing and correctly documented prior to the first class meeting. A Covid-19 booster is strongly recommended because they have been shown to be much more protective against the Omicron variant than “full” vaccination.

Getting an annual flu shot is also highly recommended in general, and because symptoms of the flu and Covid are often similar. All illnesses with symptoms similar to Covid will be presumed to be Covid.

## **MASKING INDOORS**

Indoors, masking will be required for all persons present. Everyone must wear a **properly fitting** and **correctly worn** face mask with multiple layers at all times. N95, KN95, or similar masks are preferred. Multilayer cloth masks are currently still permitted, but we recommend pairing them with a surgical mask. Buffs, scarfs, and bandanas will not be considered sufficient.

Indoors very brief mask removal is only allowed for consumption of water or other drinks. Food consumption will not be allowed at indoor BMC activities. It is anticipated that indoor mask wearing requirements will be retained for the entire BMC season/class.

## **MASKING OUTDOORS**

Outdoor masking is the most likely policy element to change due to changing Covid pandemic circumstances. It is the primary Covid risk management lever that will be adjusted as needed in response to wherever the latest Covid trends are in the weeks prior to a given outing.

If Covid case numbers are “reasonable” in the weeks leading up to the start of class, then outdoors masks will be **recommended but not required** during weekend outings whenever social distancing of 10 feet or more cannot be maintained.

Additional masking requirements for Covid mitigation if conditions warrant could include:

Requiring face masks outdoors during outing weekends, whenever social distancing of 10 feet or more cannot be maintained. Requiring surgical face masks during outdoor class time during outings that involve larger groups, including at the entire St. Edward and Mt. Erie outings due to the close proximity required during instruction.

For 'Team Climb Outings' and other smaller team settings the masking requirement will be decided by each team independently. One possibility is that teams will wear masks while crammed together on summits, but not while doing the aerobically strenuous climbing. Masks are recommended for participants carpooling together.

These masking requirements will establish a clear ‘minimum standard’ for the class, but any individual is allowed to exceed these requirements fully at their own Covid risk discretion. Peer pressure from others to “unmask” will not be tolerated, and may result in dismissal from the class.

## **SYMPTOM CHECKING**

Prior to all in-person activities, including lectures and outings, all participants must self-screen for symptoms of Covid-19. The CDC provides a full [list of Covid-19 symptoms here](#). If you have symptoms, do NOT attend any in-person activities; and promptly communicate your status to the BMC head instructor. The exception to this required isolation is if you have a negative Covid test AND BMC Head Instructor approval (see Covid Testing, below).

## **COVID TESTING**

If you are experiencing symptoms consistent with Covid-19, you may still attend an in-person activity IF you test negative (you will need to take a photo of your negative test result to provide to your Team Lead and the BMC Head Instructor). We will accept a PCR test or an at-home rapid test. If using the at-home rapid test, the result needs to be from within 12 hours of the activity, preferably just a few hours before. We recommend keeping a couple of at-home rapid tests on hand for these types of situations.

For example, if you wake up the morning of a BMC climb and have a runny nose or cough, take a rapid test before leaving for the outing. If it is negative, you are allowed to attend that day's outing. If you test negative with a rapid antigen test, but still have symptoms within 24 hours of the next activity, you will need to test again just before the next in-person activity.

For those with allergy symptoms similar to Covid symptoms, we will need to see a negative Covid test, even if you feel reasonably sure it is your normal allergies.

If you test positive for Covid-19, you will need to follow the CDC's [guidance on quarantine and isolation](#), (currently requiring at least 5 days of isolation after the onset of symptoms). Please contact the BMC Head Instructor at [bmc@boealps.org](mailto:bmc@boealps.org) AND 812-371-5723 as soon as possible so she can take appropriate next steps with regards to contact tracing and notifying classmates who may need to quarantine.

### **KNOWN EXPOSURES**

If you have a known exposure within the 5 days preceding any class activity, notify the BMC Head Instructor prior to attending. Since all participants will be fully vaccinated, if you do not have any symptoms you may still attend class activities; but must wear a mask at all times until 10 days after the exposure.

### **GROUP SIZE**

The BMC group size falls under the current gathering group size limits. If group size limits are lowered, BMC will adjust operations to comply.

### **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

Social distancing of 6 feet or more will be encouraged when practicable, but is secondary to the more effective vaccination and masking risk mitigation tools detailed above. Due to the nature of the class there will be many times when social distancing is not practicable, possible, or advisable.

During in-person activities, we will maintain more than 6' distance from others as much as possible and increase distance when engaged in high-intensity aerobic activity. When social distancing is not feasible or possible, masks will be encouraged.

### **SANITATION**

All participants are individually responsible for and encouraged to contribute to good sanitation, hand washing, and disinfection of high-touch surfaces. All participants must bring their own personal gear, water, and food; and sharing food, water, or gear will be discouraged. All participants are encouraged to carry an alcohol based hand sanitizer during outdoor activities and outings.

### **ABSENCES**

Any class absences due to Covid precautions or Covid cases will be accommodated as much as possible, to make up any missed outings/content and try to allow for continuation in the class. The overall goal being to not penalize someone for doing the right thing with respect to Covid. But if the resulting skills gap cannot be closed in a safe and timely manner, the impacted student will be offered priority enrollment in BMC for next year instead and issued a refund, if applicable.

### **LECTURES**

The preferred plan is to conduct lectures in-person at the Boeing 2-22 building, however, at the current time, Boeing is not permitting rec clubs like ours to use their facilities. Additionally, with the current local infection levels and explosive spread of the Omicron variant, it may not be prudent to hold large indoor lectures. As a result, we are preparing for the possibility that the first few classes will be held virtually. A virtual class is not ideal, but our priority is safety and civic responsibility. We are also exploring the possibility of meeting in small outdoor groups to work on the skills and trip planning that would normally occur after the lectures.

### **CHANGES TO THIS POLICY**

The BMC Head Instructor will continue to monitor local and CDC guidance and will adjust this policy as necessary as conditions evolve. It is our hope that during the course of BMC, as spring progresses, we will be able to relax some of our prevention and mitigation measures. If any changes are made, we will update this document and notify BMC students and instructors.

### **CLOSING REMARKS**

The Covid-19 pandemic may be the new normal for the foreseeable future, thus the BMC needs to adapt to manage this reality while still providing an amazing learning experience to our students and nurturing our BOEALPS climbing community. Neither “ignoring the pandemic” nor additional “waiting it out” are advisable solutions; so we will strive to find the right middle ground with measured and science based mitigation policies commensurate with the changing Covid pandemic circumstances.

The BMC Covid Policy obviously will not be a perfect match with all participants’ current Covid risk tolerance levels (which will vary widely). However, if everyone puts in a good faith effort to comply with the current BMC Covid Policy at each activity and let it be just another one of many important logistics details; then it will allow the efforts/attention of the class to focus on the climbing skills and community aspects we all love!