

2020 Blue Ridge Relay
COVID-19 Guidelines
June 23, 2020

Blue Ridge Relay Overview

- The Blue Ridge Relay (BRR) is a 208-mile team running relay race, which starts in Grayson Highlands State Park, VA and finishes in Asheville, NC.
- Teams of 4-12 runners are transported in 1-2 team vans (4-6 runners/van), as the runners on each team alternate running legs of distances ranging from 2-10 miles/leg.
- The course is 100% outdoors and does not include indoor facilities, with the exception of porta-johns throughout the race route and indoor restroom facilities at the Finish.
- The course has a start, finish and 35 exchange zones, which are located in the parking lots of churches, stores, parks, etc...
- Traditionally, teams are started in 30 minute waves, with 10-15 teams per wave. The earliest start wave is 5:00am and the final start wave is 1:30pm.
- Team vans meet their active runner at an Exchange Zone, the location at which one runner finishes his/her leg and the next runner begins. The exchange of runners is typically accomplished with the passing of a wrist strap.
- Exchange Zones are staffed by volunteers from community groups, who direct parking, document the exchange of runners, enforce rules and sometimes sell food as a fundraiser.
- Once started, each team will be run continuously for 20 – 36 hours.

Resources (The information in this document has been adapted from the following resources)

- USATF (USA Track & Field) document “Logistical information and guidance for event directors and Local Organizing Committees” <https://www.usatf.org/covid19/logistical-information-and-guidance-for-event-directors-and-local-organizing-committees>
- RRCA (Road Runners Club of America) “Looking Forward: Guidelines for Races” <https://www.rrca.org/news-articles/news-archives/2020/05/03/looking-forward-guidelines-for-races>
- CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention) “Considerations for Events and Gatherings” https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fcommunity%2Flarge-events%2Fmass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html
- North Carolina Easing Restrictions on Travel, Business Operations, and Mass Gatherings: Phase 2 effective date May 22, 2020 <https://www.nc.gov/covid-19/staying-ahead-curve>
- Virginia Phase Two Easing of Certain Temporary Restrictions Due to Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19), effective date June 4, 2020 <https://www.governor.virginia.gov/media/governorviriniagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/eo/EO-65-Phase-Two.pdf>

Blue Ridge Relay COVID-19 Statement

The Blue Ridge Relay's (BRR) primary concern is to avoid propagation of COVID-19 between athletes, BRR volunteers, BRR staff, athlete communities and communities through which BRR runs. Even though the current belief is that the young and healthy tend to have less severe cases of COVID-19, every case of this disease is potentially life-altering or deadly in any age group. Individuals with select risk factors - such as asthma, hypertension, diabetes, liver disease, kidney disease, immune suppression, neurologic disorders affecting respiration, or individuals of advanced age (65 and older) are at highest risk. Until a vaccine is developed, long-term immunity can be confirmed, or a cure is found, there is no way of completely eliminating the risk of fatal infection. This is in the forefront of consideration for the 2020 BRR.

Per USA Track & Field (USATF) Guidelines, BRR is classified as Low Risk. United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Infection transmission Risk Stratification Scale identifies Low Risk as road races on road courses with a staggered start with proper social distancing AND the course has a minimum 6-foot width throughout (for safe passing). BRR is held entirely outdoors, on open roads, with established runner/volunteer/staff guidelines.

A secondary concern is to offer a means of recreation and competition for those runners who are comfortable participating in BRR. All teams were given the option of an entry fee refund through July 23. Therefore, the participating teams are doing so out of personal interest with no pressure from or obligation to BRR. As in the prior 15 years, BRR aims to offer the highest quality race experience and to maximize runner, volunteer, staff and community safety.

2020 Blue Ridge Relay Guidelines

All Blue Ridge Relay (BRR) Rules as posted on the BRR website still apply. The following set of Guidelines will be added in response to COVID-19. These Guidelines may be modified prior to September 11.

1. No pre-BRR dinner. No Thursday night packet pick-up.
2. The BRR field size will be limited to 100 teams.
3. Outside of the team van, while at the Start, Exchange Zones and Finish the mouth and nose of all runners / drivers must be covered with a face mask / covering.
4. Runner / Driver Screening:
 - a. Teams must report to the Start a minimum of 45 minutes before their scheduled Start.
 - b. All team members must report to the Start.
 - c. Every runner / driver will complete and submit a COVID-19 Survey (USATF Guidelines):
 - i. Confirm (self-reporting) no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in past 7 days (OR at least 7 days from onset of any COVID-19 infection signs or symptoms AND at least 72 hours (3 days) since signs / symptoms have resolved).
 - ii. Confirm no close sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of event.
 - iii. Confirm no travel within 14 days of the event to an international location with widespread ongoing COVID-19 transmission as determined by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>) or travel on a cruise ship or river boat.
 - iv. Confirm no history of feeling feverish within the last 72 hours.

- v. Competitors who have had a documented case of COVID-19 must have written letter from physician indicating they are cleared to compete.
- vi. Temperature check on entrance to the competition facility / area confirming temperature < 100.4 F (38.0 C).
- d. Any runner / driver who is not feeling well or has flu-like symptoms is asked to stay home and to not report to the Start.
- e. Any runner / driver who reports to the Start and is not feeling well or has flu-like symptoms will not be allowed to run and will be asked to leave the course immediately.
- f. Any runner / driver with a fever will not be allowed to participate and will be asked to leave the course immediately.
- g. Any runner / driver with a fever will be asked to return home immediately, even if one team vehicle must be used for transportation.

5. Staff / Volunteers:

- a. Every staff / volunteer will complete and submit a COVID-19 Survey (USATF Guidelines):
 - i. Confirm (self-reporting) no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in past 7 days (OR at least 7 days from onset of any COVID-19 infection signs or symptoms AND at least 72 hours (3 days) since signs / symptoms have resolved).
 - ii. Confirm no close sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of event.
 - iii. Confirm no travel within 14 days of the event to an international location with widespread ongoing COVID-19 transmission as determined by the CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/map-and-travel-notice.html>) or travel on a cruise ship or river boat.
 - iv. Confirm no history of feeling feverish within the last 72 hours.
 - v. Staff / volunteers who have had a documented case of COVID-19 must have written letter from physician indicating they are cleared to be in public.
 - vi. Temperature check on entrance to the competition facility / area or before leaving home confirming temperature < 100.4 F (38.0 C).
- b. Any staff / volunteer who is not feeling well, has flu-like symptoms or has a fever must stay home.
- c. Any staff / volunteer who is not feeling well, has flu-like symptoms or has a fever will not be allowed to work and will be asked to leave the course immediately.
- d. At all times, Blue Ridge Relay staff and volunteers will wear a face mask/covering, which cover the mouth and nose.
- e. It is strongly recommended that individuals considered by the CDC to be “at-risk” not volunteer in any capacity. This would include:
 - i. Individuals over the age of 65.
 - ii. Individuals with underlying medical conditions, noted by the CDC, which place them at higher risk, such as chronic lung disease, moderate to severe asthma, diabetes, serious heart conditions, severe obesity (BMI > 40), chronic kidney or liver disease.
 - iii. Individuals who are immunocompromised or live with someone who is immunocompromised.
 - iv. If these “at-risk” individuals choose to volunteer, it is recommended that they get clearance from their healthcare provider.

6. Start:

- a. The first BRR start wave will be 5:00am.
- b. The final BRR start wave will be 11:00am. (Based on current registered teams.)
- c. A maximum of 2 teams will start every 5 minutes.

- d. The Start will be held in the lower gravel parking lot at Grayson Highlands State Park Visitors' Center.
 - e. All team parking will be in the large, rear parking lot of Grayson Highlands State Park Visitors' Center.
 - f. Team vehicles should be parked with a minimum of two vacant parking spaces between vehicles.
 - g. Runners and team vehicle drivers only will be allowed to attend the Start. Spectators will not be allowed.
7. Packet pick-up will be at the Start 30 minutes before a team's scheduled Start.
- a. Only one representative per team may go to the Official's Tent for packet pick-up. Team captain is preferred.
 - b. The team must present a waiver signed by every runner. The waiver has been updated and the submitted waiver must include the COVID-19 disclaimer.
 - c. The team running order must also be submitted at the Start.
 - d. A team wristband will not be issued.
 - e. Race bibs will be issued and must be worn on the shirt front/shorts front of any active runner. Bibs must match the team's running order. (i.e. runner #1 = bib #1; runner #2 = bib #2).
 - f. Three (3) BRR custom Hoo-rag Bandanas (moisture wicking, lightweight, breathable & comfortable multi-use bandana) will be issued per runner.
 - i. Additional Hoo-rag Bandanas may be purchased for \$7, with the order finalized by July 23.
 - ii. A Hoo-rag, neck gaiter or other face covering must be worn when running.
 - iii. The face covering must cover the runner's mouth and nose as the runner steps from the team van into the exchange zone.
 - iv. The face covering must cover the runner's mouth and nose if the runner is within 20 feet of any runner during the active leg.
 - v. The face covering must cover the runner's mouth and nose within 50 feet as the runner enters the exchange zone at the end of his/her leg.
 - vi. If the runner is running alone (not within 20 feet of another runner), the face covering may be removed off of the mouth and nose.
 - vii. Three (3) Hoo-rags will allow runners on teams of 12 to wear a clean gaiter during each leg. Ultra teams (teams of 4-6 runners) and teams with less than 12 runners are strongly encouraged to bring additional face coverings to be worn during their additional legs so they have a clean face covering for each leg run.
8. Porta-johns:
- a. Porta-johns only will be available. Indoor restroom facilities will not be available at the Start or Exchange Zones. Indoor restroom facilities will be available at the Finish only.
 - b. As stated in BRR Rules (I.4. Public Nuisance Rule), Restroom facilities and trash cans must be used.
 - c. Porta-johns will be set with a larger footprint to allow space between units.
 - d. Each team van must have an ample supply of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol (per CDC guidelines). It is highly recommended that teams have a plastic tote to carry the disinfectant wipes and hand sanitizer to/from the porta-johns. Disinfectant wipes should comply with CDC guidelines listed here:
<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

- e. When waiting in line for porta-john use, maintain separation of 6 feet between you and others.
 - f. When using a porta-john:
 - i. Pull two (2) disinfectant wipes and leave the tote outside the porta-john.
 - ii. Wipe all handled surfaces with one disinfectant wipe as you enter the unit.
 - iii. After use of the porta-john, wipe all handled surfaces with a second wipe as you exit the unit.
 - iv. Discard the two disinfectant wipes in the trash receptacle by the porta-johns. This trash receptacle is for disinfectant wipes only...please do not use for other trash.
 - v. DO NOT discard wipes in the porta-john.
 - vi. Use hand sanitizer.
 - vii. It is also advised to sanitize the handle of the tote after each use.
9. Exchange Zones:
- a. Every other parking spot should be used if possible, which will allow one vacant parking spot between team vans.
 - b. If it is not possible to leave one open parking spot between vans, members of any adjacent van must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet from members of other vans.
 - c. Runners and Drivers may exit their vans in the Exchange Zone parking areas, but must remain near the team van unless another team needs to enter or exit their van. This is a cooperative effort between/among teams.
 - d. Face masks/coverings, which cover the mouth and nose, must be worn when all runners and drivers are out of the team van.
 - e. Only the next runner and one team representative may proceed to the Exchange Zone. After the exchange of runners, the one team representative will escort the finished runner to the team van. Teams are not permitted to gather at the Exchange Zone.
10. Transition Zones:
- a. Transition Zones, which are every sixth (6th) exchange zone, have larger parking areas than most exchange zones. For those teams with 12 runners, which is the majority of teams, the active running transitions from one van to the other (e.g. runner 6 finishes, runner 7 begins).
 - b. Vans are parked within a Transition Zone longer than in an Exchange Zone.
 - c. At minimum, every other parking spot should be used if possible, which will allow a minimum of one open parking spot between team vans.
 - d. If it is not possible to leave one open parking spot between vans, members of any adjacent van must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet from members of other vans.
 - e. Runners and Drivers may exit their vans in the Exchange Zone parking areas, but must remain near the team van unless another team needs to enter or exit their van. This is a cooperative effort between/among teams.
 - f. Face masks/coverings, which cover the mouth and nose, must be worn when all runners and drivers are out of the team van.
 - g. Only the next runner and one team representative may proceed to the Exchange Zone. After the exchange of runners, the one team representative will escort the finished runner to the team van. Teams are not permitted to gather at the Exchange Zone.

11. Runner Exchange:

- a. As the outgoing runner steps into the exchange zone, he/she must clearly verbalize their bib number to the staff/volunteer on site. It is the runner's responsibility to ensure their bib number is recorded.
- b. A wrist strap will not be issued to each team and therefore will not be passed between a team's runners at the exchange zone.
- c. The outgoing runner may depart when the incoming runner is within 10 feet.
- d. The runner who just finished his/her leg must verbalize their bib number to the staff/volunteer before leaving the exchange zone. The team representative escorting the runner back to the team van may also verbalize the runner bib number. It is the runner's responsibility to ensure their bib number is recorded.
- e. A minimum of ten (10) feet will be maintained between runners/drivers and Exchange Zone staff/volunteers.

12. Passing Runners:

- a. When the runner who is behind is within 20 feet of a runner who is in front, the behind runner will call out "Runner Behind". The front runner must cover their mouth and nose with a face mask / covering / Hoo-rag.
- b. When passing, runners should allow 6 feet of space.
- c. Passing should only occur when road visibility allows for 6 feet of space between runners.
- d. The runner who was just passed, will call "Clear", when the passer is 20 feet ahead.

13. Finish Line:

- a. The Blue Ridge Relay will comply with guidelines established by Highland Brewing.
- b. Spectators are asked to not attend the Finish.

14. Registration / Withdrawal:

- a. With the Blue Ridge Relay on schedule for September 11-12, 2020, the registration deadline has been moved to Thursday, July 23.
- b. For registered teams that desire to withdraw and receive an entry fee refund, the team captain must make that request in writing (email) no later than Thursday, July 23, 2020.
- c. Any team that withdraws after July 23, 2020 will not receive a refund of their entry fee.

15. Cancellation / Postponement:

- a. If Public health authorities or local / state government return to a lower/previous Phase prohibiting group activities, the Blue Ridge Relay may be postponed or cancelled.
- b. If the Blue Ridge Relay is postponed, the alternate days/dates will be Friday/Saturday, October 16-17, 2020.
- c. If Blue Ridge Relay is postponed to October 16-17 and your team desires to withdraw and receive a refund, the team captain must make that request in writing (email) no later than Thursday, September 3, 2020.
- d. If the Blue Ridge Relay is cancelled related to COVID-19 restrictions, the Blue Ridge Relay will extend the offer of an entry fee refund. (Please refer to the April 15, 2020 BRR Response to COVID-19 for full cancellation details.)
- e. If the course is changed, if the race is cancelled, or if the event time is changed due to circumstances beyond race management control and unrelated to COVID-19, such as act of nature, there are no refunds or transfers to subsequent years