

2021 Blue Ridge Relay  
COVID-19 Guidelines  
February 3, 2021

(Adapted from BRR COVID-19 Guidelines, September 5, 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.
- 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 at times 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](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/governorvirginiagov/governor-of-virginia/pdf/eo/EO-65-Phase-Two.pdf>

## Blue Ridge Relay COVID-19 Statement

The Blue Ridge Relay's (BRR) are intended 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 2021 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. Participating teams are doing so out of personal interest with no pressure from or obligation to BRR. As in the prior 16 years, BRR aims to offer the highest quality race experience and to maximize runner, volunteer, staff and community safety. In 2020, BRR applied the following guidelines, with some minor modifications for 2021.

### 2021 Blue Ridge Relay Guidelines (for Runners, Volunteers and Staff)

All Blue Ridge Relay (BRR) Rules as posted on the BRR website still apply. The following set of Guidelines are added in response to COVID-19.

1. Face Coverings: The CDC currently recommends wearing a face covering (mouth and nose) when in public and to stay at least 6 feet from anyone you did not travel with.
2. Face covering outside of the team van while at the Start and Exchange Zones:
  - a. At the team van: if your runners are a minimum of 10 feet from other runners (one vacant parking space), a face mask is not required. Within 10 feet, a face mask is required.
  - b. If your team is "camped", such as at a transition zone and your team/runners are a minimum of 10 feet from other teams/runners, a face mask is not required.
  - c. When walking about the Start and Exchange Zones, such as walking to a porta-john, walking to the official exchange zone, etc... a face mask is required.
  - d. Exchange Zones: the runner and one team rep. may report to the EZ, and must be wearing face coverings when at the EZ.
3. Face covering when running.
  - a. The face covering must cover the runner's mouth and nose as the runner walks/jogs from the team van to the exchange zone and while in the exchange zone.
  - b. If the runner is warming up alone, a face covering is not required.
  - c. The face covering must cover the runner's mouth and nose if the runner is within 10 feet of any runner during the active leg.
  - d. If running alone, as face covering is not needed.
  - e. 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.

4. Runner / Driver Screening:
  - a. Teams must report to the Start a minimum of 40 minutes before their scheduled Start.
  - b. Only the runners in Van 1 are requested to report to the Start. Therefore, each runner's completed COVID-19 Survey must be completed and brought to the Start by Van 1.
  - c. Every runner / driver will complete and submit a COVID-19 Survey (Appendix A):
    - i. Confirm (self-reporting) no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in past 14 days.
    - ii. Confirm no close sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of event.
    - iii. Confirm no history of feeling feverish within the last 14 days.
    - iv. Runners / drivers who have had a documented case of COVID-19 must have written letter from their physician indicating they are cleared to participate.
    - v. Self-measured and self-reported temperature check on the morning of the Blue Ridge Relay 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 attend the Blue Ridge Relay.
  - e. Any runner / driver who 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 symptoms and/or 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 (Appendix B):
    - i. Confirm (self-reporting) no signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in past 14 days.
    - ii. Confirm no close sustained contact with anyone who is sick within 14 days of event.
    - iii. Confirm no history of feeling feverish within the last 14 days.
    - iv. Staff / volunteers who have had a documented case of COVID-19 must have written letter from their physician indicating they are cleared to participate.
    - v. Self-measured and self-reported temperature check on the day of the Blue Ridge Relay before leaving home to report to Blue Ridge Relay assignment 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. When interacting with runners, 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 latest BRR start wave will be 1:30pm.
  - 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 40 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. Each runner's completed COVID-19 Survey must be submitted at the Start.
  - e. A team wristband will not be issued.
  - f. Race bibs will be issued and must be worn on the runner's front of any active runner. Bibs must match the team's running order. (i.e. runner #1 = bib #1; runner #2 = bib #2).
  
8. Team Vans:
  - a. As per Blue Ridge Relay rules, teams of 7-12 runners are allowed 2 team vans and teams of 4-6 runners are allowed 1 team van.
  - b. 2020 BRR exception: (This "Exception will be considered for 2021, but is not final.)
    - i. A team may use additional vans in order to reduce the number of runners in one van.
    - ii. A minimum of 3 runners per van will be allowed.
    - iii. A team of 12 runners may have a maximum of 4 vans. A team of 6 runners may have a maximum of 2 vans.
  - c. Runners / drivers are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings when in the team van.
  - d. Teams are strongly encouraged to keep the van windows open, when possible, to maintain a flow of fresh air within the van.
  
9. Food: (2021 Food sales by community groups at Exchange Zones is not final.)
  - a. As always, teams are to be self-sufficient with fluids, food, ice, first aid, etc...and transport necessary supplies in the team van.
  - b. The only exchange zone with food sales is EZ24 Bakersville Fire Dept.. baked potatoes.

#### 10. Porta-johns:

- a. Porta-johns will be available at all EZ.
- 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 containing at least 60% alcohol. 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. DO NOT discard wipes in the porta-john.
  - v. Use hand sanitizer.
  - vi. It is also advised to sanitize the handle of the tote after each use.

#### 11. 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. 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.

#### 12. Transition Zones:

- a. Transition Zones, which are every sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) 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. 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.

### 13. 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.

### 14. Passing Runners:

- a. When the runner who is behind is within 10 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.
- 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 10 feet ahead.

### 15. Finish Line:

- a. The Blue Ridge Relay will comply with guidelines established by Highland Brewing.
- b. Spectators are asked to not attend the Finish, but may meet their runner at Highland.
- c. BRR Finisher Awards or magnets will not be issued. (May be reinstated in 2021.)
- d. Restrooms are available at The Meadow and in the Taproom.
- e. Teams will not be allowed to cross the finish line with their final runner.
- f. Teams will not be permitted to gather at the actual finish line.
- g. The final runner must have their mouth and nose covered as they enter the rear parking lot of Highland Brewing.
- h. Teams will be permitted to gather in designated "corrals" near the finish line to watch and cheer their final runner.
- i. When away from the team van, Highland asks all people on their campus to have a face covering.
- j. Teams must depart the Highland Brewing rear parking lot within approximately 30 minutes after they finish. BRR must avoid creating a crowd at Highland Brewing.
- k. Teams/runners are welcome and invited to stay at Highland Brewing as guests of Highland Brewing. The Meadow and Taproom are open for seating and food trucks are on site. Please relocate team vans from the Finish area to the front of Highland Brewing.
- l. Additional Finish Line Guidelines may be posted in advance of Blue Ridge Relay.

Appendix A

Screening Questions for Runners / Drivers  
to Participate in the 2021 Blue Ridge Relay

Answering these questions truthfully will help to prevent other team members, other teams and community members from being put at risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Name		
Team Name		
<b>For the questions below, please circle yes or no.</b>		
Yes	No	Since January 1, 2021 have you been told that you have had a positive test for COVID-19, OR have you been told by a Doctor, Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner that you had to quarantine (stay home) due to concern that you COVID-19 symptoms? If “Yes”, a note from an MD, PA or NP clearing the runner/driver for participation is required.
<b>Today or in the past 2 weeks have you had any of the following symptoms?</b>		
Yes	No	A fever (temperature more than 100.4 Fahrenheit or 38 Celsius)?
Yes	No	Shaking chills?
Yes	No	A new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
Yes	No	Racing heart, heart skipping beats or fluttering of the heart?
Yes	No	Unusual dizziness, particularly with exercise?
Yes	No	Fatigue or difficulty with exercise?
Yes	No	A sore throat different than associated with seasonal allergies?
Yes	No	New loss of taste or smell?
Yes	No	Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
Yes	No	Do you have anyone in your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
Yes	No	Have you been in contact with anyone infected with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
Yes	No	Did you check your body temperature today, September 11, 2020?
		Record your body temperature personally measured today, September 10, 2021?

By signing this document, I hereby state that, to the best of my knowledge, my answers to the above questions are complete and correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix B

### Screening Questions for Staff / Volunteers to Participate in the 2021 Blue Ridge Relay

Answering these questions truthfully will help to prevent other staff / volunteers, runners and community members from being put at risk for contracting the COVID-19 virus.

Name		
Community Group		
<b>For the questions below, please circle yes or no.</b>		
Yes	No	Since January 1, 2021 have you been told that you have had a positive test for COVID-19, OR have you been told by a Doctor, Physician Assistant or Nurse Practitioner that you had to quarantine (stay home) due to concern that you COVID-19 symptoms? If “Yes”, a note from an MD, PA or NP clearing the staff/volunteer for participation is required.
<b>Today or in the past 2 weeks have you had any of the following symptoms?</b>		
Yes	No	A fever (temperature more than 100.4 Fahrenheit or 38 Celsius)?
Yes	No	Shaking chills?
Yes	No	A new or worsening cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
Yes	No	Racing heart, heart skipping beats or fluttering of the heart?
Yes	No	Unusual dizziness, particularly with exercise?
Yes	No	Fatigue or difficulty with exercise?
Yes	No	A sore throat different than associated with seasonal allergies?
Yes	No	New loss of taste or smell?
Yes	No	Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea?
Yes	No	Do you have anyone in your household who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
Yes	No	Have you been in contact with anyone infected with COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
Yes	No	Did you check your body temperature today, September 10 or 11, 2021?
		Record your body temperature personally measured today before reporting to your assigned Blue Ridge Relay post?

By signing this document, I hereby state that, to the best of my knowledge, my answers to the above questions are complete and correct.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_