

COVID Safety Requirements

For Karmê Chöling Household Members when interacting with the public

Updated Nov. 1st, 2020

Karmê Chöling (KCL) is formally implementing measures to protect its household members (staff, residents, long-term participants, etc) from the COVID-19. These measures are based on the recommendations of the CDC, the WHO and the requirements of the State of Vermont for businesses and individuals. As the State of Vermont loosens restrictions these safety measures will be adjusted at the discretion of the KCL COVID Officer and Director, with input from the KCL COVID Task Force.

This document focuses on best practices for interacting with a person outside of our direct household. For the purposes of this document KCL is currently functioning as a large household with 17 members. As KCL considers opening back up for programs it will need to comply with further regulations for businesses working with the public.

There are two specific areas of concern:

- 1. A household member being exposed to the virus while interacting with nonresidents off the land, and consequently bringing the virus back to KCL.**
- 2. An outdoor visitor or service person who may pass the disease to someone in the household, who then brings it back to the rest of the community.**

These all increase the risk of an individual becoming ill from the virus or bringing it back into the household and making others ill. In addition, these measures are being implemented to aid Karmê Chöling in its financial recovery. This is contingent upon potential participant's confidence that KCL has measures in place to protect those staying here from becoming ill. Staff becoming sick with the virus will seriously undermine this confidence and prolong KCL's shutdown period, resulting in further financial strain.

Daily Health Record

- Each household member will be required to record their temperature and check their oxygen levels each day at lunchtime.
 - This "hard copy" record keeping will show that you were tested and within normal range.
 - It is recommended to check your symptoms at the same time everyday, as temperature and blood oxygen naturally vary over the course of the day.
- If you develop any symptoms of illness, please notify the COVID officer (Elisa Shafa) and isolate yourself as soon as possible in the dorms underneath the Main Shrine Room.

Hand washing tips:

1. Turn on the water, put soap on your hands and scrub for 20 seconds.
2. Don't turn off the faucet with your newly cleaned hands.
3. Dry your hands with a clean paper towel and use *it* to turn off the water faucet.

Off-Land Trips

Given the increase in COVID cases around the US in general and in the state of Vermont especially, we are adjusting our travel requirements for trips off the land.

Any trips taken off-land still need to be limited to day trips unless you are planning to quarantine when you return.

The [COVID Act Now map](#) (click link and then the green "Counties" button in the right hand corner to see info for Vermont) shows counties in the local region and their status based on percentage of COVID cases to population. This map has changed dramatically as the cold weather has begun to arrive. Many counties that were previously green, signifying that the number of COVID cases there was low and that it was safe for travel, are now yellow or orange, showing that COVID cases are on the rise.

This includes our own county of Caledonia.

Even with masks and social distancing, COVID is able to spread more easily as the number of cases in an area increases.

*In order to keep COVID from coming into Karmê Chöling and to **maintain our ability to remain mask free in the house**, we are implementing these travel protocols:*

1. If a county is green or yellow each one of us individually can take a single trip to one destination per week within that county.

*Take out food, curbside pickup, drive through windows, self-service gasoline are all fine and do not count as your one trip per week into town! Long drives in the countryside, hikes outside away from others, outdoor recreation where social distancing is maintained are all good. Being **INSIDE and/or around non household members** is the issue.*

2. **There are no trips to a destination in a county that has turned "orange" in the previous or current week.** (unless it is for a medical reason and you are going to a medical facility where they are taking COVID precautions)
Burlington and Chittenden county where the city is located, is perpetually high in COVID cases and should be considered "orange" on an ongoing basis.
3. If our county (Caledonia) turns orange we will return to how we were running errands in the spring. Instead of each person running their own errands, we will designate 1-2 people who will run errands for all of us. Again this is for errands that entail going inside a building and being around non household members.

4. As the COVID situation looks to get worse before it gets better, this is the time to start thinking about stocking up supplies. It would be a good time to:
 - a. Find the pharmacies that deliver
 - b. Locate the retail stores that do curbside service or will pull an order for you and keep it at the front counter
 - c. Note which restaurants will do take-out orders
 - d. Ask other businesses you need to work with if they are able to use a drive through window or curbside service. Explain you are part of a large household and are trying to be safe (the banks have been good about this if you call ahead)

A list has been started where businesses can be noted that are practicing safe COVID procedures. We can make a point of buying from these businesses and thus helping them survive this pandemic.

Check with Elisa before taking any trips out of Caledonia county. We will check the map together and go over supplies and plans.

Please follow these procedures to keep all of us, especially our more vulnerable household members safe!

- a. Realize that it takes several hundred to 1000 virus particles to show the effects of COVID. Brief exposure isn't enough to make an effect, but close, repeated or prolonged exposure can.
- b. Please consider these 4 factors carefully when you are planning a trip. They can increase or decrease your risk of exposure to COVID.
 - i. Is the activity indoors or outdoors
 - ii. Can you maintain at least 6 feet of distance from non-household members?
 - iii. How much time will you spend interacting with non-household members?
 - iv. Will you be wearing a mask?
- c. Budget your risk factor for your activities over a given week.
 - i. If there is something you want to do that is at higher risk consider engaging in very low risks activities for the rest of the week.
 - ii. Indoor trips are less than an hour in the same location.

When you go off land :

- a. Make an effort to stay in **safe areas as designated by the state of Vermont** ([Cross State Travel Information](#)). There is a smaller incidence of disease here and the risk is lower.
- b. Try to interact with non-household members outside whenever possible.
- c. Stay at least 6 feet away from non-household members both inside or outside of buildings.

- d. When you need to go inside of a building, try to find businesses and organizations that are following best practices to minimize COVID exposure.
- e. Wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose inside of buildings, or outside if being within 6 feet of another person is unavoidable.
- f. Keep your time interacting with another under 60 minutes. Under 15 minutes is highly recommended and presents lower risk.
- g. Take hand sanitizer or alcohol wipes and use them on your hands after each stop. Do this before you touch your face or get back into your car to avoid bringing any contamination back with you.
- h. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth until you have had a chance to wash or sanitize your hands.
- i. Record each place that you go. If an outbreak occurs, it will be useful to know if you were at that business on the day of the outbreak.
- j. When you return to KCL, enter through the mudroom. Wash your hands thoroughly at the sink.

When contemplating Employment outside of Karmê Chöling:

1. Meet with the COVID Task Force before you take a position that requires you to work physically outside of KCL.
2. Please look at [OSHA's COVID-19 Work Hazard Guidelines](#) page. This guide assesses workplaces in terms of risk of contracting COVID-19.
 - a. Individuals who are considering jobs that fall into the “High” and “Very High” risk levels would not be able to live at Karmê Chöling if they take this work.
 - b. Individuals who are considering work that fall into the “Low” risk category most likely will be able to live at KCL and take this work
 - c. Individuals considering work in the “Medium” risk category will be considered on a case by case basis.
3. Please come to the meeting with information about the business including:
 - a. The name and type of business you are considering working at
 - b. Location of the business
 - c. Number of days and hours you would be working
 - d. What type of exposure will you have to clients, customers, staff and other people while working there
 - e. Contact info for their COVID officer
 - f. What preventative measures are being taken in order to prevent contracting COVID-19? What protections are there in place?
 - g. How well does the business enforce these preventative measures?
 - h. Does the business have a written COVID plan? Please bring a copy with you.
 - i. What will the business do if there is an outbreak at the business?
 - j. What will the business do if the incidence of COVID-19 in Vermont increases?
 - k. Would you be able to keep your job if you had to quarantine for 14 days or longer because of an outbreak at KCL?
 - l. Increase in frequency of testing 2x/month

A non-resident in the house:

- a. Visitors are not permitted inside the Main House. Maintenance people and scheduled presenters are allowed. Other exceptions may be approved by the COVID officer on a case by case basis.
- b. Inform the staff about the visit, including timing and the planned path to be taken by the person. These areas will be off-limits to other residents during the visit and during the “air out” time following the visit.
- c. The person and the staff person interacting with them both wear masks that cover the mouth and nose
- d. Maintain 6 feet of distance where possible
- e. Sanitize any surfaces that were touched during the visit
- f. Wash your hands
- g. Allow 3 hours for the space to “air out” before an unmasked staff person enters the space.

When interacting with a non-resident on the land:

- a. Maintain 6 feet of distance from the other person
- b. If you are closer than 6 feet, both of you each wear a mask
SPECIAL NOTE: If you are working in the greenhouse in the garden, this is a structure. Wear a mask inside when working with non residents.
- c. If you give a ride with a non resident, both of you wear a mask. Wipe down surfaces as appropriate after the ride. As part of the anticipated regulations to reopen, no more than 2 workers are allowed to ride in a vehicle together and they need to wear masks.
- d. When handling any tools, supplies, or other items, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Wash your hands after you finish using the tools.
- e. When you come back into the house use the mudroom and wash your hands at the sink.

When interacting with a non-resident off the land:

- a. Maintain 6 feet of distance from the other person.
- b. Wear a mask when interacting with a non-household member.
- c. Sanitize or wash hands regularly.
- d. When you come back into the house use the mudroom and wash your hands at the sink.

Quarantine Options

When moving to KCL or returning from travel/staying with non-KCL residents, all KCL residents are asked to quarantine. Please see the Quarantine/ “Onboarding” document for guidelines.

This document is a living document that will be updated with current guidance and regulations from the State of Vermont, the CDC, the WHO, and any other relevant

organizations. The KCL staff community will be included in the ongoing development and implementation of safety precautions as KCL moves towards reopening to participants and guests.

I have read and understood the Karmê Chöling COVID Safety Requirements. I agree to abide by them as a resident at KCL while the Coronavirus is an ongoing concern. I understand that if I do not comply with these safety measures I will be required to quarantine or to permanently leave the Karmê Chöling household.

Signature: _____

Name: _____ Date: _____