

Covid-19

Canyoning Prevention

Good Practice Guide



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Document:

Covid-19_Canyoning Prevention _ Good Practice Guide

Version: 1.0

Date: April 30, 2020

Available at: lab@ica-canyoning.org

Sponsors:



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Support:



(Communication agency)



(Graphic Design)



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01 INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This document is addressed to canyoning organizations and guides and serves to aid in the transition of activities for the COVID-19 period so that they may operate within an acceptable level of risk.

It is important to emphasize that these procedures, rules, and guidelines will not eliminate the possibility of contagion, but **it will reduce the likelihood of contagion.**

To prepare this document, we gathered a multidisciplinary team linked to the Canyoning sector in several areas, such as equipment, health and safety in the workplace, and logistics. One of the fundamental objectives of this work team was to create a set of procedures that is applicable and feasible for organizations at acceptable costs.

We analyzed guidelines from several official health entities in Portugal and Europe to prepare this document.

The procedures or guidelines presented in this document are complementary to the existing procedures in the organizations, especially those which follow the operational/training standards of the International Canyoning Academy (ICA). Given the problem of COVID-19, this document reflects only the punctual changes in each phase of an activity according to the ICA standard.

Legal notice: This document does not override legislation, rules, or guidelines issued by the official entities of the regions where professionals or organizations operate. If any of the points in this document contravenes directives from official authorities at a certain moment in time, the official directives prevail. Reading this document does not dismiss one from following along with official directives.

02

DEFINITIONS

Briefing Card

ICA internal document that regulates how guides should communicate information. This document is an operational procedure. This document is also known as SAFER.

Briefing

The moment or moments when guides communicate crucial information on performing an activity safely.

Golden rules

A subgroup of information that reflects the most important guidelines that should be fulfilled in a canyoning activity.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

In this context, it is the set of equipment that the customer needs to carry out the activity safely.

IRATA

Industrial Rope Access Trade Association

Master Rule

Conscious Remoteness, which means the application of social distancing when there is not another, more urgent security situation.



03

WHAT IS CANYONING?

Canyoning started out as an extreme activity which consists of descending mountain rivers, or Canyons, and overcoming their obstacles with various techniques. These techniques include rope techniques (abseiling, guided abseiling, zip-lining, etc.) and free techniques (jumping, sliding, etc.).

This activity requires the use of specific equipment and advanced technical understanding to explore and enjoy unique locations and construct an unparalleled life story.

In its most recent history, this activity has transformed into an outdoor sports and leisure activity whose conditions for safety are ensured by tour operators so that a large part of the population may enjoy these sites and emotions.

Today, the equipment, techniques, and professional training have evolved to the point where it is possible for almost everyone to perform this activity, including practitioners whose ages range between 4 and 70 years old, special populations, descents with dogs, etc.

04 GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Wear a mask: We recommend wearing a protective mask at all times, except when wearing the mask is counterproductive.

- Frequent hand washing and disinfection.

- We do not recommend the use of gloves within the scope of this document, as it is considered counterproductive in the work environments where canyoning takes place.

- The proper procedures for waste management must be followed, especially upon entering the river, so we advise using garbage bags with a zipper closure. At the end of the day, waste must be discarded in the proper locations for waste disposal in the existing network in the region.

05

CUSTOMER RECEPTION AND INSTRUCTIONS

Customer reception (meeting point)

1. Greet customers with the right hand over the heart and a slight nod of the head while maintaining the minimum safe distance recommended by the health authorities of the region concerned.
2. All customers must disinfect their hands at the location and in accordance with the rules of each organization before the briefing for the activity begins.

Briefing location

Whenever possible, the briefing should be held outdoors or in a well-ventilated space, favoring places with good sun exposure (following recommendations by health authorities).

If the briefing is held outdoors, the distance/direction of the wind must be taken into account, as the way the virus spreads is different. A position parallel to the wind direction must be adopted so that the wind passes laterally by the group and not in front of them.

General presentation for the activity

1. Explain the meaning of ICA COVID-19 Canyoning Prevention.
2. Explain general procedures and emphasize that the organization has adopted the recommendations/rules in this document.
3. Inform customers of the equipment disinfection procedures that the organization has adopted (according to the information in the chapter **Equipment**).
4. Guides must communicate the rules in **Briefing Card edition 2020 - COVID-19**, which follow the guidelines in the chapters on **Equipment** and **Logistics** in this document.

Before starting the route

ICA uses a system of 3 golden rules in the briefing for the activity. Due to the issue of COVID-19, the **Master Rule**¹ has been added, which is conscious remoteness (**Approach to Activity**).

¹ As presented in the chapter Definitions, Conscious Remoteness means the application of social distancing when there is not another, more urgent security situation.

06 EQUIPMENT

PPE DELIVERY (start of activity)

Each customer must disinfect their hands before collecting their personal protective equipment although they have already been through this process at the meeting point, as indicated in the chapter on **Customer reception and instructions**.

Guides provide customers with orientation on how to obtain the equipment that they will use for the activity and the appropriate place to equip themselves. The customer will be handling their equipment under the guide's supervision, favoring a contactless approach.

PPE disinfection (end of activity)

1. Each customer or guide removes their own equipment and puts it in washing receptacles or transport bags.
2. The equipment may be washed with water at 30° C and detergent with a pH between 5.5 and 8.5 for a minimum of 15 minutes (Singing Rock, 2020). There are examples of detergents in the chapter on **identified materials or equipment**.
3. Place the equipment to dry in a well-aired or well-ventilated place for a quarantine period of 72 hours and implement an equipment rotation system (Petzl, 2020).
4. The organization must ensure that there are separate spaces for quarantined equipment and equipment for use and implement a circuit for the entry and exit of equipment.
5. The abovementioned procedures are not the only ones, so other forms of disinfection recommended by manufacturers may be applied.
6. **The organization must always observe the instructions of the manufacturer of the equipment in question.**

Transporting personal belongings

1. Each individual group or person must be given a disposable bag or something similar so that they may transport their personal belongings.
2. This bag must bear identification so that the customer may identify their possessions at the end of the activity.
3. At the end of the activity, the customer retrieves their belongings at the place where the equipment for the activity was issued and finally disposes of the bag in the proper place.

07

APPROACH TO ACTIVITY

Choosing canyoning routes

1. Perform activities on easy and commercial routes.
2. Choose open canyoning routes without complicated passages.
3. Choosing aquatic walking routes may help with social distancing.
4. Prepare routes where the customers can execute the maneuvers autonomously whenever possible and under the guide's supervision.
5. Prepare a place at the beginning of the route to train techniques in order to assess and determine the customers' level of autonomy.
6. Choose canyoning routes where it is possible to work alone. The guide and vehicle driver (in the case of transfers) will be the same person, thus preventing contact with the other employees, even at the base of operations.

Preparation for the activity

1. Transportation must be individual or in individual groups.
2. Avoid gathering customers from different backgrounds.
3. Avoid large groups and favor small groups of up to 6 people (bet on private services, for example, instead of 6 customers and 2 guides, make it 3 customers and 1 guide in 2 groups, when the risk assessment allows it).
4. Backpacks, water bottles, or other equipment shall not be shared.

07

APPROACH TO ACTIVITY

Social distancing in the Canyon

1. Minimum distance of 2-3 meters between people.
2. Access and exit trails must guarantee social distancing.
3. Avoid confined spaces.
4. While waiting for maneuvers, leave customers in a comfortable place and call the customer one at a time without crowding people.
5. Invest time in teaching customers how to use equipment (placing and removing the descender, using the safety lanyards, etc.);
6. Favor simple techniques that allow the customer to enter and leave autonomously.
7. Avoid passages that compel the guide to help the customer or the customer to help another customer.
8. If necessary, the guide should give multiple briefings to avoid crowding.

Educational videos

In addition to the previous procedure, the use of information and communication technologies can be important tools for the guides' and organizations' work. Depending on the organization's structure and/or available infrastructure, educational videos can be used to complement the instructions provided. Here are some examples:

- How to put on and remove all the equipment, including the wetsuit, socks, boots, harness, and helmet
- Placing and removing the figure 8 descender (normal and Canyoning)
- Using the lanyards
- Abseiling technique
- Safe approach to an anchor
- Handrails
- Guided abseiling

08 CHOOSING PARTNERS AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

Payment options					
Priority	Method	Resources	Advantages	Disadvantages	Observations
1	Prepayment	Online Banking, Paypal, Revolut, MBWay, etc.	Eliminates direct contact at the time of payment	Some customers prefer to pay after the service. Some customers may not have access to these services or may not have the necessary applications installed.	Organizations should raise awareness about preference for this payment method and facilitate access to the applications by making recommendations on their websites or through reservation emails
2	Post Payment via Plataforms	Online Banking, Paypal, Revolut, MBWay, etc.	Reduces direct contact at the time of payment	Some customers may not have access to these services or may not have the necessary applications installed.	If the previous method is not applicable, organizations should raise awareness about preference for this payment method and facilitate access to the applications by making recommendations on their websites or through reservation emails
3	Post Payment via Debit or Credit Card	Payment Terminal, disinfectant, tissues	Safer and easier to sanitize than cash payment	Not all organizations have card payment terminals due to the associated costs	Upon payment: - Customer inserts the card in the terminal. - After paying, customer sanitizes hands with disinfectant solution. - After payment, Guide/Employee sanitizes the entire payment terminal with a hand cloth soaked in disinfectant and then disinfects their own hands.
4	Post Payment via Cash	Envelope or Small safe/box to place money inside, Disinfectant	---	Greater interaction and contact with common surfaces	- The Guide/Employee must open the envelope/box/safe wherein the customer will place the money. - The customer must not touch the envelope/box/safe directly. - The money received must not be handled for 24 hours, and during this time, it must be kept in the place where it was put. - After the payment process, both the customer and the Guide/Employee must sanitize their hands.

08 CHOOSING PARTNERS AND PAYMENT OPTIONS

Partners

Choosing partners in the value chain is fundamental to completing the customers' perception of security. Thus, we suggest that the organizations' partners follow operational benchmarks for good practices in relation to COVID-19.

Given that, in general, the main direct work partners are in the restaurant sector, we consider the procedures proposed by the World Health Organization as a reference, in its document, "COVID-19 and Food Safety: Guidance for Food Businesses" .

Moreover, we also find it pertinent for the organization to promote the following additional procedures:

1. Notify the partner of the possibility that there may be a group with a certain number of people on a certain day at a certain time. In light of the partner's contingency measures (such as the maximum capacity defined by government measures), the partner must inform whether or not there will be room for the entire group, observing the appropriate measures for preventing contagion.
2. If the partner is able to make the accommodation, make the reservation as soon as possible, so that the measures to prevent contagion in the respective location are complied with at the time of service.
3. Before entry, everyone must sanitize their hands with a disinfectant solution.

09

LOGISTICS

Reservations

1. Upon reservation, the customer must answer a COVID-19 screening questionnaire (annex 1), or the customer will be informed that they will have to answer this questionnaire via email, which will state that false statements regarding unreported symptoms may incur civil/criminal liability.
2. Customers should be informed that upon entering the vehicle that will transport them, the Guide will monitor their temperature using a laser thermometer.
3. Inform customers that the guide will not enter the premises where the customer is accommodated and that they must be attentive to their cell phones so that the Guide may notify their location in real time (WhatsApp application or another).
4. Whenever possible, the customer must wait outside the pick-up location.
5. Organizations may consider charging a reservation fee since the number of no-shows without prior notification is expected to rise.
6. All processes involving the processing of personal data must follow the guidelines of the supervisory authorities of the region of influence (example: General Data Protection Regulation).

09

LOGISTICS

Customer reception (Pick-Up Location)

1. Fully protected with a face mask, the Guide must present themselves at the pick-up location. Gloves must be disinfected after handling door handles or other parts subject to public use; however, the Guide should always try to be the one to handle the opening and closing of doors.

2. The Guide must not enter the premises where the customer is accommodated and must wait by the vehicle.

3. Upon reception, the Guide greets customers with their right hand over their heart and a small nod of their head and presents themselves at the minimum safe distance recommended by the health authorities of the region concerned, as described in the chapter "Customer reception and instructions."

4. The guide should immediately distribute protective masks and gloves to customers in case they do not have them and inform them that they should preserve the mask until they enter the river, where it will be discarded. A new one will be issued at the end of the activity, which they will have to use until drop-off.

5. The Guide should briefly address the recommendations regarding the need for social distancing and the use of PPE, as described in the chapter "Customer reception and instructions."

6. After communicating the information and procedures, the Guide shall act accordingly and measure the customers' temperatures with a laser thermometer and accommodate them in accordance with the following point, "Accommodation in vehicle."

7. The Guide briefly explains the distance and time they will need to reach the location for the activity or the organization's base.

09

LOGISTICS

Accommodation in vehicle

1. If the customers are all from the same household or are traveling in a group, it is possible to transport up to 7 customers, while keeping the seat between the Guide and the customer in the front passenger seat unoccupied.
2. If they are from different households, there must always be one unoccupied seat between the different households and a limit of only 5 customers in total (for 9-passenger vehicles), while always keeping the middle seat of each row of seats unoccupied.
3. In the event that there are 4 customers or fewer, it is always preferable to accommodate them in the rear seats of the vehicle.
4. The customers must occupy the exact same places upon returning from the activity.

Materials to install/provide in vehicles

1. 2 gel/spray dispensers (we recommend placing them on the dashboard and on the vehicle's B-pillar behind the front seat on the right side)
2. Box of disposable masks
3. Zip garbage bags
4. Organization's cell phone with mobile data that allows location sharing

09

LOGISTICS

Route

1. During the route, allow for air to circulate within the vehicle by opening the windows whenever possible. If this is not possible, the Air Conditioning system must be activated with air coming in from the outside and never in a closed circuit.

Vehicle sharing for Logistics

1. Whenever possible, we should avoid that the vehicle used for the logistics of one group be used for different groups on the same day, in order to avoid cross-contamination. If an imperative need arises, the vehicle's interior must be properly disinfected. This disinfection may occur in the presence of the customers who need to be transported, thus transmitting a sense of safety and professionalism to them.

2. At the end of the day, the vehicle must be thoroughly sanitized, especially its interior.

10 RISK ANALYSIS MODEL

A risk analysis is the day-to-day assumption of the professionals and organizations that operate in commercial Canyoning. However, COVID-19 introduces new variables that require a very careful analysis given the probability of infection of a customer or guide during the course of an activity.

Considering this problem, this document proposes a risk analysis model that is based on the IRATA framework, with the necessary adaptations for the COVID-19 issue.

The purpose of this table is to provide a simple, easily implementable tool to help professionals and organizations identify risks and make an analysis of their measures to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 within the scope of an activity, knowing that no activity is risk-free.

Moments	Risk (before measures)		Risk (after measures)		
	Risks	Who is affected	Measures	Risks	Who is affected
Transfer (transporting customers)	5	Guides and Customers	Reduce the no. of passengers; Nobody travels with the driver; Wear gloves and masks during transport; Disinfect vehicle after each service.	2	Guides and Customers
Arrival and briefing	4	Guides and Customers	Disinfect hands; Social distancing; Small groups.	1	Guides and Customers
PPE Distribution	3	Guides and Customers	Each customer takes their own; Small groups.	1	Customers
Progress during activity	2	Guides and Customers	Maintain social distancing; Very small groups or closed groups of friends.	1	Guides and Customers
Maneuvers with ropes/assistance	4	Guides and Customers	Try to give the customer maximum autonomy; Do not speak directly to the customer face-to-face; While speaking, protect mouth with elbow; Wash hands immediately afterward, even without soap.	2	Guides and Customers
PPE Removal	4	Guides and Customers	Each customer removes their own PPE and puts it in a receptacle with water and detergent for 15 min.	1	Guides and Customers
PPE Storage	4	Guides	Put on mask; Disinfect hands right away.	1	Guides
Results	23			9	

10 RISK ANALYSIS MODEL

Considerations:

- The data presented in the table above is a generic exercise for an activity's main moments. Each organization must adapt to its reality.
- Risk is the result of considering probability vs. impact.
- The variation in risk is from 1 to 5.
- The acceptable level of risk after applying measures is less than 10, but there should always be an analysis from moment to moment.
- Moderate risk is between 11 and 14.
- High risk is above 15.

Final note: It is very important for each professional or organization to analyze their activity and identify the various moments. Depending on the activity's structure, the moments can change due to working conditions: transportation, support base, need for logistics for equipment, routes, etc.

11 COURSE OF ACTION IN SUSPECTED CASE OF Covid-19

According to the Portuguese Directorate-General of Health , an “isolation” area and the path(s) to it must be established.

Placing a suspected case in an “isolation” area is intended to prevent other individuals from exposure and infection. Its main purpose is to prevent the spread of the communicable disease in the organization and community.

The "isolation" area (room, office, section, zone) in an organization serves to prevent or restrict direct contact between employees and the sick employee (with signs and symptoms and an epidemiological link compatible with the definition of a suspected case, according to with the table below):

Definition for a Suspected Case

The following definition is based on current information made available by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and must be adopted by organizations.

Clinical criteria		Epidemiological criteria
Acute respiratory infection (fever or cough or breathing difficulties) which either does or does not require hospitalization	And	<p style="text-align: center;">Epidemiological criteria</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Travel history to areas with active community transmits 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Contact with confirmed or probable cases of infectious SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 14 days prior to the onset of symptoms</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Healthcare professional or person who has been in healthcare institution where persons with COVID-19 are treated</p>

Adapted from Portuguese Directorate General of Health (2020).

11 COURSE OF ACTION IN SUSPECTED CASE OF Covid-19

In this way, we ensure correct social distancing between them and other guides and customers. Large organizations or organizations with several establishments can establish more than one “isolation” area.

The “isolation” area must have natural ventilation or a mechanical ventilation system and smooth, washable coverings (e.g., there should be no rugs, carpets, or curtains). This area must be equipped with a telephone, a chair or couch (for the employee's comfort and rest, pending validation of the case and eventual transport by the National Institute of Emergency Medicine – INEM), a kit with water and some non-perishable food items, a waste receptacle (with a non-manual opening and plastic bag), alcohol-based antiseptic solution (available inside and at the entrance of this area), wet wipes, surgical mask(s), disposable gloves, thermometer. In or near this area, there must be a properly equipped sanitary station, namely a soap dispenser and paper towels, for exclusive use by the person with Symptoms/Suspected Case.

The organization must establish the favored path(s) for when a person with symptoms goes to the “isolation” area. Upon moving the person with symptoms, places with greater crowds of people/employees on the premises should be avoided.

12 IDENTIFIED MATERIALS OR EQUIPMENT

Cleaning products

- Sanytol - <http://sanytol.pt/pt/product/desinfetante-de-roupa>
- Zoono - <https://zoono.com>
- O3 Waves - <http://www.ewaves.pt/>

13

TECHNICAL TEAM

- **Bruno Martins** (International Canyoning Academy)
- **Bruno Silveira** (Tobogã Azores)
- **Filipe Ferreira** (Madeira Adventure Kingdom)
- **João Granja** (International Canyoning Academy)
- **Joel Pereira** (Escola Superior de Desporto e Lazer de Melgaço – IPVC; APECATE)
- **Manuel Costa** (Tobogã - Portugal Adventure Tours)
- **Mark Costa** (Work and Safety Expert)
- **Nuno Guerreiro** (International Canyoning Academy)
- **Pedro Santos** (International Canyoning Academy)
- **Pedro Sousa** (International Canyoning Academy)
- **Rui Borges** (Azores Adventure Islands)

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15 FORM - COVID-19

Name	Age
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1	<p>Any of the following symptoms:</p> <p>Fever</p> <p>Cough</p> <p>Breathing difficulty</p> <p>Sore throat</p> <p>Nasal discharge</p> <p>Joint pain</p> <p>Chest pain</p> <p>Others:</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
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2	<p>List of places you've been in the last 14 days:</p> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
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3	<p>Have you been in contact with anyone who has had covid-19 in the last 14 days?</p>	<p>Yes <input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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4	<p>I hereby declare on my word of honor that the statements made are true.</p>
Signature	Date:

