

COVID 19 SAFETY PROTOCOL

FOR GUIDED ACTIVITIES

Coordinated text of May 8th 2020

- adapted to the measures adopted by the National Security Council on June 3rd 2020 –

This protocol is a coordinated text, to which various representatives of organisations for guided activities worked together. Visit Flanders facilitated a consultation of the sounding board group 'Kwaliteit in Gidsenwerking'. This sounding board group is an important advisory panel within the tourism sector with the remit of identifying needs of the work field, proposing priorities, defining actions, creating support,...

The content of this protocol has been adapted to the decisions of the National Security Council on June 3rd 2020 and is in line with the content of the main protocol for the tourism sector, written by Ministers of Tourism, Ms Weykmans, Ms Demir and De Bue, and Mr Vervoort.

OBJECTIVE

The restart of guided activities with groups can be done safely using the measures and guidelines included in the present protocol. The purpose of this protocol is to ensure the safety of the guide and participants. The guidelines and recommendations in this document are in line with the measures taken by the National Security Council on June 3rd 2020 on phase 3 of the phasing-out plan of June 8th 2020.

TARGET GROUP

The field in which organisations and guides develop guided activities is very diverse. There are different types of guides: city guides, museum guides, regional guides, nature guides, agricultural guides, tour guides, foreign guides and tour guides,... There are also different types of organisations for guided activities: guide associations, tourism services, tour operators, museums, heritage sites,... Also the locations where the guided activities take place can be very different (in an urban setting, in nature, in a museum, ...) and the ways in which they happen (on foot, by bike, by boat, ...).

SCOPE OF THE PROTOCOL

The protocol contains guidelines and recommendations under which guided activities can be organised, within the general framework determined by the National Security Council.

- The directives contained in this protocol are subordinate to the general provisions imposed by the National Security Council and the cities, towns or institutions where the guided activities take place.
- When guided activities take place in buildings (museums, monuments, churches,...), the safety regulations in force on the site must be observed.
- When certain types of transport (bicycle, bus, segway, boat,...) or attributes (audiophones,...) are used, the safety instructions and guidelines (e.g. on decontamination) must be respected.

RECOMMENDED MEASURES

MEASURES TAKEN BY THE ORGANISATION FOR GUIDED ACTIVITIES

The guide organisation and the guides follow the general reporting of the National Security Council and the Crisis Centre and adjust its own security policy where necessary. Useful links: info-coronavirus, Crisis Centre, VVSG.

Measures to be taken:

- Provide an internal precautionary plan specific to your own organisation and provide in time the necessary resources.
- Involve and motivate the guides in the preparation, execution and follow-up of the precautions.
- Also write down these measures. This can be done by drawing up an internal manual for the guides. Instruct the guides, for example with a practical internal training, both for their own health (e.g. cough and hand hygiene) and that of the participants (e.g. 1.5 m).
- The guide, together with the group leader (if applicable), is responsible for the enforcement of guidelines and rules by participants during the guide activity. Instruct the guides on how to do this in a customer-friendly way.
- Ensure that the measures are followed up unambiguously and consistently by the guides.
- Monitor these measures regularly and adjust where necessary. The corona measures can become a fixed item on the agenda at team meetings for as long as necessary.
- Regularly exchange experiences and information about the measures with colleagues, with the guides and possibly also with other organisations. Ask the participants about their experiences around the measures taken.
- Provide a point of contact (corona coordinator) for questions relating to the measures taken. Communicate to the guides and participants who this contact person is and how to reach him or her.
- Make sure that all the guides you work with (self-employed, volunteers, freelancers, temporary workers, etc.) are contacted and have the same information and can work in the same safe conditions.

- Organize only guided activities (and any associated activities) where, regardless of the location, approach, methodology,... the safety measures (distance, hygiene,...) can be respected.
- Analyse the tour, content and approach of each guided activity. See to what extent its existing range of guiding activities can be retained. If there are (parts of) guided activities in which the safety measures cannot be respected (e.g. visit to a small space, walk around in narrow alleys,...) cancel these guided activities (temporarily), adjust the guide activity or look for alternatives.
- Certain types of guided activities or certain elements of them may not be safe, achievable or desirable (displaying and circulating objects in the group, close-up details watching, role-playing, tasting...) at the moment. If necessary, remove these activities from the offer, adjust the guide activity or look for alternatives.
- When guided activities take place in buildings, please respect the safety rules that apply on the spot. Only visit buildings and areas where the applicable safety rules for social distancing can be respected by the whole group.
- When for the guiding activities certain means of transport (bicycle, bus, segway, boat,...) or attributes (audiophones,...) are used, please respect the safety regulations, and guidelines that apply around them.

PRIOR TO THE GUIDED ACTIVITY

Handle a maximum group size of 20 people, excluding the guide. Always make sure that the participants can keep a distance of 1.5m between each other and that the guide can be understood by everyone. If necessary, use audio support to improve the intelligibility of the guide for the whole group.

The guide organisation or the guide himself (if the guide is not a member of organisation for guided activities):

- Communicates online (website, social media channels,...) about how the guided activities will take place, what measures will be taken and what will be expected of the participants.
- Provides participants with an information sheet with an overview of all precautionary measures that are taken in order to offer a safe guided tour activity.
- Provides participants with an information sheet with an overview of all the precautions to be taken to which participants must adhere during the guided activity: participants bring their own mouth masks, participants do not touch any objects during the guided activity, ...
- Informs the participants that they are welcome if they are not show suspicious symptoms (rhinitis, runny nose, sneezing, sore throat, light cough, increase to 38 C°) or living together with persons diagnosed with COVID19 or characteristic symptoms such as fever (from 38 C°) or shortness of breath.

- Have the participants book in advance (online, by phone or online) for the guided activity. It is important to have a name and telephone number of all participants and/or to write down the e-mail address so that contact tracing will be easier afterwards.
- Offers the possibility for contactless payment, in order to avoid paying cash on the spot. This can be done via smartphone or a portable payment terminal, which must be disinfected between each participant.
- Provides equipment that can guarantee basic hygiene during the tour activity, including disposable mouth masks (in case forgotten by the participant), disinfectant,...

THE GUIDE

- Should cancel or reschedule the guided activity if he/she shows symptoms whether there's a risk of contamination.
- Conducts a systematic check prior to the guide activity:
 - Is there enough sufficient material for guaranteed basic hygiene available?
 - Did I disinfect the previously used attributes/material?
 - Do I have a list of names and contact details of all participants?

DURING THE GUIDED ACTIVITY

- At the start of the guided activity, the guide reviews the agreements and expectations about the way in which the guided activity will take place and the measures to be respected (distance of 1.5m between each person, mandatory wearing of a mouth mask when the rules of social distancing cannot be respected, participants do not touch anything, only the guide touches the doors and opens them...).
- The guide, together with the person in charge of the group (if applicable), ensures the maintenance of guidelines and rules by the participants. He/she speaks to the participants and point out their responsibility if they do not follow the instructions.
- The guide disinfects his hands after every contact (door, banister, audiophones, etc.).
- It is compulsory for the guide to wear a mouth mask or other personal protective equipment (e.g. an face shield) during the touring activity, when the rules of social distancing cannot be respected.
- For a guided activity in a busy environment with possibly a lot of noise, audio support is recommended to respect the rules of social distancing and keep the intelligibility of the guide for the whole group.
- The guide thinks about the places where he stops to give explanations: far enough from a other group of people, without obstructing the passage of passers-by...

AFTER THE GUIDED ACTIVITY

- The guide will ensure that participants can use a disinfectant.
- At the end of the guided activity, the guide disinfects his hands.

- The organization/guide systematically disinfects all materials/attributes that were used during the guided activity.