

# Alpine sports & COVID-19

Guidelines of the Association of Austrian Alpine Clubs (VAVÖ) on the practice of alpine sports in times of COVID-19.

## Preamble

As mountain and outdoor athletes, we know of the importance of personal responsibility, risk awareness, team work and experience. Unexpectedly, without any previous know-how and for an unforeseeable period of time, we are now faced with a new virus. Therefore, we must add some additional measures to our already well-known safety precautions in order to minimize the risk of infection while practising our sports with people who do not live in our household.

Experts from the Austrian Alpine Club (ÖAV) and the Naturfreunde (NFÖ) have teamed up with the Association of Austrian Alpine Clubs (VAVÖ) to develop guidelines for practising alpine sports in accordance with the regulations issued by the Federal Government which, at the same time, still make it possible to practise sports in a reasonable and pleasant manner. The guidelines consist of seven basic rules and sport-specific additional recommendations.

## Basic rules

- 1. Lower your readiness to take risks**  
Stay below your personal performance limit when on the mountain. Consider the corona-related risks and complications for rescue operations. The motto is: Be in good health and fit for alpine sports!
- 2. Keep your distance, at least 1 meter**  
If - in exceptional cases - you can't keep one meters apart, use a face mask. Some alpine sports (e.g. mountain biking) may require even bigger distances (see below).
- 3. Prefer outings in small groups**  
Keep in mind that larger groups make it increasingly difficult to keep your distance. Avoid popular routes and crowded spots.
- 4. Refrain from the usual rituals**  
For example: shaking hands, hugging, kissing, offering your drinking bottle to others etc.
- 5. Bring a face mask and disinfectant**  
For the time being, pack a face mask and an disinfectant in addition to your regular emergency equipment.
- 6. Proceed as usual in case of emergency**  
First responders proceed according to the commonly recommended first aid guidelines plus wear a face mask.
- 7. Use face masks when car-pooling**  
Moreover, only two people are allowed in each row of seats, including the driver. Opt for public transport where possible.
- 8. Observe the hut rules**  
Bring your own light sleeping bag and pillow case - and of course face mask - for staying overnight in huts. You must book your spot ahead.

## **Sport-specific recommendations**

### **A) Mountain walking/Mountaineering/Ski Mountaineering/Snow Shoeing**

Follow the basic rules.

### **B) Sport Climbing (climbing crags) & Outdoor Bouldering**

1. Follow the basic rules.
2. Disinfect your hands regularly.
3. Do not hold the rope in your mouth when clipping.
4. Use your own equipment: quick draws, belay device, rope.
5. Partner check: You are allowed to come closer than 1 meter since this is necessary for security reasons.
6. Wear a face mask when spotting and disinfect your hands afterwards.

### **C) Klettersteigs**

1. Follow the basic rules.
2. Partner check: You are allowed to come closer than 1 meter since this is necessary for security reasons.
3. Refrain from climbing if there are already a several climbers and queuing is foreseeable.
4. Pace yourself to avoid coming too close to the climber in front of you.
5. Don't climb the klettersteig in the opposite direction.
6. Wear klettersteig gloves.

### **D) Multi-Pitch Routes/Alpine Climbing/Glacier Mountaineering**

1. Follow the basic rules.
2. Only one roped party at a stance.
3. Partner check: You are allowed to come closer than 1 meter since this is necessary for security reasons.
4. Disinfect your hands before and after climbing.

### **E) Mountain Biking/Touring Biking**

1. Follow the basic rules.
2. Higher speeds require bigger distances when riding one after the other: 2 meters uphill, 20 meters downhill and on flat terrain.
3. When overtaking, do it quickly and only if you can keep a side clearance of 2 meters.

**Note:** Please keep in mind that these guidelines bear a date. New regulations and findings can result in changes respectively updates. You can find the current version on the websites of the alpine clubs and associations.

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