



White Magic

COVID-19 SAFE
HEALTH AND SAFETY GUIDELINES

INTRODUCTION

Being a responsible adventure travel company, health and safety has always been the most important aspect in White Magic trip offerings. Covid-19 pandemic has added a risk of communicable disease, both, in daily life and in travel. White Magic has carefully reviewed each element of our treks and climbs and developed a set of guidelines for resuming trips safely.

These guidelines have been developed in compliance with guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare (India); Adventure Tour Operator's Association of India; Adventure Travel Trade Association (USA) and the Indian Mountaineering Foundation (IMF).

PURPOSE

As we move into the next phase of the pandemic, many countries across the world are easing restrictions and moving towards a gradual reopening of travel and tourism. While there is still no vaccine for Covid-19, there is still a risk, to varying degrees, of catching the virus via community transmission. The purpose of this document is to outline the key health and safety risks in operating treks and climbs within this environment and to propose mitigation strategies.

COMMITMENT TO HEALTH & SAFETY

White Magic is committed to continuously monitoring, adopting and evolving our approach to travel – providing guests flexibility, security and peace of mind during Covid-19. The safety of our staff, travellers, leaders, crew and local communities is of utmost importance and resumption of operations is being undertaken very carefully, to minimise the risk of transmitting the disease.

GENERAL INFORMATION ON COVID-19 TRANSMISSION

Although most people are familiar with how Covid-19 is transmitted, we would still like to remind everyone about the basics of transmission:

Transmission Dynamics

Covid-19 predominantly spreads through droplets generated by the acts of: coughing, sneezing, loud talking and laughing that can travel distances up to 1 to 2 meters (3-6 feet) and then settle down on adjacent surfaces and objects. The SARS-CoV-2 virus carried in these droplets can enter the human system either, directly through breath, or indirectly, through contaminated hands touching the T- area of the face (nose, mouth and eyes).

Outdoors Transmission

Evidence so far suggests that the risk of Covid-19 transmission is very low in well-ventilated outdoor spaces, provided social distancing is maintained.

Measures to Prevent Transmission

Social distancing measures, together with frequent hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, are the main measures to prevent transmission of Covid-19.

- **Social Distancing** includes refraining from hugging and shaking hands with guests as well as among staff. It involves maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet and avoiding anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
- **Hand Hygiene** means regularly and thoroughly cleaning hands with an alcohol-based hand rub or washing them with soap and water. Also, avoid touching eyes, nose, and mouth. Hand disinfection is recommended after exchanging objects (money, credit cards, equipment, keys etc.) with people or after touching surfaces like door handles, etc.
- **Respiratory Etiquette** means covering mouth and nose with bent elbow or tissue when coughing or sneezing. The used tissue should be disposed of immediately in a bin with a lid.

Protective Gear to help reduce the Transmission

Face Masks (2 or more layers) & **Eye Protection Gear** (Sunglasses or Plain Glasses)

to be worn in public places and when social distance of 6 feet is not possible, for example while travelling in a car.

Gloves While wearing gloves is not necessary in most situations, it can be an effective reminder to not touch your face and eyes. You can wear light gloves (recyclable) when you are out in public places and most likely to be exposed to touching surfaces that may have the virus.



RISKS INVOLVED WITH TRAVEL

Travelling in a world affected by Covid-19 presents an additional layer of health risk for our guests, staff, trip leaders, suppliers or communities, and with it the risk of serious illness or even death. Until community transmission is eradicated and/or a vaccine well established, some risk will always remain and cannot be eliminated completely.

We all know that when it comes to adventure trips there is always an inherent risk while participating in an activity and there are some risks that are not obvious and cannot be identified. Situations are too complex and involve too many variables for us to entirely control the underlying risks, even with our rich experience and knowledge. Knowledge and experience are an essential foundation but they can never fully prepare us to deal with all unforeseen eventualities. With a track-record of running trips in the mountains with zero fatal incidents, we feel that the objective risks we face in the mountains are far higher than the risks posed by Covid-19 while travelling. With increasing knowledge about the virus, we believe that if we take due precautions, we can minimize the threat from Covid-19.

COVID -19 RISKS IN TREKKING / MOUNTAINEERING

Trekking and non-technical mountaineering is a low-risk activity for transmission of Covid-19 due to several factors. These activities usually take place in well-ventilated areas, involves little to no gear, is typically done in small groups, is easy to practice while maintaining social distance, is not technical, and does not require close supervision. However, because trekking involves a familiar activity and clients are highly independent, it is necessary that clients themselves be aware of and be committed to following Covid-19 safety protocols and guidelines.



OUR APPROACH & PROTOCOLS

Flexible Booking Conditions

Customers will now be supported with flexible booking conditions to stay home if unwell. We have amended our cancellation policy to allow customers to make changes to their plans without any penalties. There would be no charges on cancellations caused by having Covid-19/ “flu-like symptoms” supported by a medical certificate.

Covid-19 Test Requirement

White Magic will not require a negative Covid-19 test as proof of health from customers or leaders at this stage unless it is required by local law or regulations. This is partially due to the lack of availability of easy & quick testing for people with no symptoms. A negative test result is only a piece of imperfect information and is not conclusive on its own to suggest if a person is carrying the virus or not (especially if one is asymptomatic). A test only tells us if the swab sample had the Covid-19 virus at the time of taking the test. [Click](#) to read an article which explains this in detail.



ENHANCED CLIENT & STAFF SCREENING / (Before & During the Trip)

Health Risk Stratification (COVID specific risk) would be done by factoring in a two-variable matrix of:

Age	<u>Underlying Chronic Medical Conditions</u> (Diabetes, Hypertension, Obesity, Coronary Heart Disease, Chronic Kidney Disease, Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease, Immunosuppressed States)
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Age	Underlying Chronic Conditions	Risk Level	Decision
Less than 50	No	Small	Go
Less than 50	Yes	Moderate	Consult your doctor
More than 50	No	Small	Go
More than 50	Yes	High Risk	Defer trekking plans till pandemic settles down
More than 65	No	Moderate	Consult your doctor
More than 65	Yes	Very High Risk	No Go, until the pandemic ends

Self-Declaration: As part of the screening process, each member needs to fill in a Covid-19 self-screening form and under confidentiality, disclose their contact history and symptoms of illness, if any.

Daily Screening (Twice every day): Vitals and symptoms for all clients and staff to be noted by the Trip Leader twice every day.



ROAD TRANSPORT RELATED

The use of vehicles to transport clients includes a high degree of Covid-19 transmission risk. Measures to mitigate risk would be used whenever possible:

- While all vehicles are cleaned before each duty they would now also be disinfected between each use.
- High touch areas (door handles, seats, seat backs, steering wheel, power window buttons, door locks, windows) would be sprayed with disinfectant surface cleaner regularly.
- Use of washable seat covers, head rest covers are recommended for all vehicles.
- Hand sanitizer dispenser available in every vehicle
- Air Conditioning to be turned off most times and all windows kept open to maintain cross ventilation.
- Air Conditioner could be switched on if caught in traffic jams or if crossing dusty roads. In that case, AC should be put on the fresh air mode and the recirculation mode should be off.
- Covid-19 screening of all drivers to be done before the journey.
- Drivers to always wear masks and gloves and undergo thermal screening before every trip.
- Guides and Drivers to sanitise their hands before and after handling client luggage.
- We recommend that travellers carry a small stock of some packed food, fruits and water to reduce the number of stops at roadside eateries.



ACCOMMODATION RELATED

While Camping

- Twin Sharing tents for Guests from same household or in a social bubble (on private trips). Single tents available on requests
- Maintain a 20m /65 ft separation between client tents and kitchen tent. More tents for staff in the field to ensure their physical distancing
- Each campsite will have at least 2 water stations with soap for hand washing.
- All the mattresses / tents / chairs to be numbered and packed individually (inside plastic or smaller bags) before packing into a bigger kit bag. Each client gets the same numbered item every day.
- Tents to be disinfected everyday.
- Staff to wash their hands before setting up the campsite and wear masks (washable) while doing it. Hands to be sanitised after setting up each tent to prevent cross contamination and masks to be washed immediately after the whole camp has been set up so it can dry up for the next day.
- Temperature scan, symptoms and vitals check (pulse, O2 saturation) for all clients, staff, porters, horseman twice every day.
- Toilet Tent Ratio at least 1:3.

At Hotels/ lodges/ homestays

All hotels/ lodges/ homestays being used on our trips are handpicked and are committed to implement the enhanced hygiene protocols to mitigate the risk of Covid-19 infection. We however suggest bringing a bedsheet and a pillow cover to be on the safe side. Other than this you should plan on bringing a separate towel for use at hotels. All these items can be left behind in a small bag before going on the trail which you will receive back at the end of the trip.



FOOD RELATED

Precautions in Dining Area

- White Magic staff to wear protective gear while serving food.
- Tables, chairs, linen etc. to be thoroughly cleaned on daily basis
- Utensils, cutlery, and service ware etc. be washed with hot water and food grade/ approved disinfectants.

Precautions in the Kitchen/ Food Preparation Area

- Cooking staff to wear face masks and chef caps.
- Only cooking team to be permitted inside the kitchen.
- All tools to get sanitized after each use.
- Even with proper hand washing, all kitchen staff to use a barrier such as tongs, gloves or utensils to prevent direct hand contact with food.



ON THE TRAIL

- On the trail maintain a physical distance of 2 meters (6 meters while on steep uphill sections with the resultant deep, heavy breathing that may spread aerosols through the slip stream effect)
- Ensure clients wear mask/ face covering and have min 2 feet distance when being in close vicinity/ briefings/ breaks during trek
- Masks need not be worn while trekking; they will get wet from the breath vapour and turn ineffective, as also cause a sense of suffocation. Quick dry masks recommended for use on the trail. Buff Bandanas can also be used to cover the face while hiking.
- When crossing paths with other groups or with local people, try to follow social distancing space. If distancing is not possible, for example, in a canyon or thick forest trail, use face coverings.
- Consider using face coverings when in situations where there is a higher risk of spreading virus, such as, during briefing and de-briefing, when helping each other in tough terrain, when trekking on crowded trails where it is difficult to maintain social distancing.
- Proper records of any symptoms such as cough/cold/fever would be maintained in a template by the guide



EQUIPMENT

- Improving sanitation is a key part of mitigating Covid-19 risk. Participants should avoid sharing equipment and should care for all of their own personal equipment.
- Each person should bring his/her own personal equipment (backpack, water bottle, trekking poles, sleeping bag etc) for the whole duration of the trip.
- Each customer is required to bring a large bag made of tough plastic or a light fabric. It should be large enough to take in your entire duffel bag. As part of the Covid-19 safety measures, we expect all customers to pack their duffel bags inside this plastic/ light fabric bag each morning, only after which our team will handle your baggage. Numbered items (like chairs, mattress, tents) for each client to be packed separately. Support staff to sanitise hands after packing/ unpacking each set to prevent cross contamination.
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MEDICAL CONSIDERATIONS & EVACUATION PROTOCOL

All trips to carry an exhaustive First aid kit, Pulse Oximeter, Rescue oxygen, and Satellite based messaging device.

a. Protocol for handling suspected Covid-19 cases (customer or staff)

In case anyone has symptoms pertaining to Covid-19 virus like cough, cold, fever, breathing difficulty etc., following safeguard measures are required to be adopted:

- Immediately provide surgical mask to the guest
- Maintain a safe distance of 6 feet from the guest
- Check guest travel history to affected area or contact with the affected person
- Encourage guests to sanitize their hands/ wash hands with soap
- Offer medical assistance to the guest if required.
- Ensure the person does not come in contact with others. Ask them to maintain a distance of at least 2m from other people
- Maintain empathy with the guest / guests

If it happens before reaching the trail or while heading back.

- Call the Corona helpline number of the state where travelling. The Guide would have these numbers with him. Immediately inform the nearest medical facility (hospital/clinic) or call central helpline no. +91-11-23978046.
- Abort the client's further journey

If this happens on the trek

- Anyone with fever or Flu like symptoms must be put up in a separate tent, should wear a triple layer surgical mask and be served food in the tent through a dedicated set of utensils and cutlery.
- Explore the possibility for evacuation/ aborting the trip
- Ensure that the guest is taken to the nearest medical facility

b. In case of an Emergency (other than Covid Case)

When administering first aid, some distancing methods need to be adapted or cannot be used. Guides would use Personal Protective Equipment - PPE such as face coverings, eye protection gear and sterile gloves.

If we may need to make a rapid retreat due to an emergency situation, speed trumps the potential transmission of the virus. The immediate safety of the guests is priority one; preventing possible contagion is lower on the list.

