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## NYCRUNS DASH To The Start

*(09-01-20) This is a draft document meant to outline changes to NYCRUNS standard event plans in response to COVID-19. This version of the document is the first iteration to be released after NYCRUNS' first pandemic era event, the NYCRUNS Lousy T-Shirt Race on 8-28-20. For more information contact Steve Lastoe at [steve@nycruns.com](mailto:steve@nycruns.com).*

This document assumes that mass event permitting has resumed according to current CDC, NYS, and NYC guidelines. It also assumes that no vaccine has been released and that good hygiene, social distancing and face covering use are the primary defenses against infection.

This document assumes an initial field size for events of 500 but is meant to be extensible to events as large as 3,000 athletes. Individual event plans will be specifically tailored to a more accurate number of participants.

This document is generalized so that it can be applied to any of our existing event plans. Signage plans, corral layout, and other specifics will be determined on an event by event basis. Information on event specific pages, emails and social media always supersedes this document.

## **Introduction**

At NYCRUNS, we're as excited as you are to return to racing, and we're committed to creating the safest possible environment for that to happen. We've spent months reviewing our event plans, researching what industry leaders are thinking, developing COVID-19 protocols that reflect the best information currently available, and determining how to produce our events safely and responsibly, in accordance with the best public health principles.

Much of our work can be framed within the DASH To The Start protocol. DASH is a simple framework of the steps NYCRUNS, and our employees, vendors, and athletes; in conjunction with our municipal partners need to follow for us to safely reach the start line together.

**DASH** is:

**Density Reduction**  
**Athlete Communication**  
**Self-Reliance**  
**Hygiene**

While DASH encompasses most of the changes you will see at our events, we will be also making some significant structural changes.

### **Social Distancing**

When possible, athletes must maintain 6' of social distance from each other, staff, vendors, and the general public throughout the event.

### **Face Coverings**

Athletes will be required to wear face coverings prior to and after running. On the course, athletes will be required to either wear a mask throughout the race or wear a mask when unable to maintain social distancing. If the latter, a mask must always be worn in such a way that it can quickly be used properly.

Staff and vendors will be required to wear face coverings any time they are within 20' of an athlete or each other. Staff and vendors will always be provided with face coverings to be used while working.

### **Medical**

In addition to the practices documented herein, in conjunction with our Medical Director, Dr. Stuart Weiss, we have adopted the following medical practices.

- Temperature checks of all staff, vendors, and participants before entering the venue on event day.
- Health questionnaire screening of all staff, vendors, and participants before entering the venue on event day.
- In depth health questionnaire screening of all staff several days before the event.
- Contact tracing of staff, vendors, and participants throughout the two weeks following the event.

### **Staffing**

For the time being, only trained and vetted staff and vendors will be permitted to work any aspect

of our events. By relying entirely on staff and vendors, we not only minimize the overall number of people at our events but ensure the safest possible atmosphere. Volunteers, while incredibly helpful, are no substitute for trained staff and currently should not be used in the high contact situations they are traditionally used in.

Additionally, while our employees have always been well trained, we will be holding them to much higher standards going forward, particularly in connection with COVID-19 protocol, but also in terms of event knowledge. This will allow them to be not just employees, but true community liaisons at a time when they need to uphold our proposed standards consistently, intelligently, and without fault.

### **Infrastructure**

We will be using less tents to provide greater clarity of purpose within the event site and decrease social interaction. Instead of using between 8 and 12 tents, we will be relying on as few as 2, all utilizing spit guards where necessary.

To further limit personal interaction, signage may include QR codes to direct runners to Race Day FAQs that will include all details discussed in pre-race communications.

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With all of that in mind, from a public facing perspective, DASH is our overarching protocol and will be the focus of what we are communicating to participants. Let's DASH To The Start together!

## Density Reduction

From bib pickup to our post-race festival, we will be doing everything possible to keep things uncrowded and minimize face to face interactions. Without question, reducing density is the most important step NYC RUNS can take to ensure staff and athlete safety and we'll be focusing on it throughout the event planning process.

Density can best be adjusted by expanding the time and or space an event takes place in. In NYC, where space is at something of a premium, time is far more malleable, so most of our changes descend from expanding the time during which an event takes place, centering on the start time. That means that while the overall layout of our events may remain very similar, how we function within those layouts will change.

By way of example, a starting corral that is 3,750 square feet can normally accommodate over 1000 people. To accommodate safe social distancing, that starting line can be revised to accommodate waves of 125 people. Those waves of people could start once an hour allowing 500 people to start at a safe social distance over the course of 4 hours. However, with refinement they could just as easily start every 15 minutes allowing 2,000 people to start at the same social distance.

Other prominent changes minimizing density that you can expect to see at our events include:

- Guests and spectators will not be allowed in event areas or in close proximity to areas where crowding is likely. Specifically, access to the areas near our start and finish lines will be tightly controlled, keeping in mind most of our events take place in public spaces. Pre-race and post-race areas will be completely closed to non-participants.
- Bag Check will be strongly discouraged. Bag check may be divided into discrete pickup and drop-off zones to decrease density.
- Bib and Shirt pickup will not be available on race day for the foreseeable future. Instead we will consider two distinct options for events:
  - One option will be expanding packet pickup to multiple days and exclusively in outdoor environments.
  - The second option will be to mail all bibs and shirts for each race. The fee will be rolled into the registration fee for the race and is not optional. This method will require registration to close earlier than normal to allow for items to be shipped in a timely manner.
- Start times for our events will be expanded significantly and each participant will need to start within a designated window/wave. The window may be as little as 15 minutes or as much as 1 hour depending on the event in question. For our first events, we expect no more than 200 participants per hour to start. This process will allow us to stage participants at an effective social distance from the time they enter our event until the time they cross the starting line.
- Athletes will not be allowed into the event site before or after their window/wave. Entry points to the Parks or event areas will be staffed by an NYC RUNS employee. Bibs must be worn on chest to pass this point, and the bibs will be strategically numbered or otherwise designated to easily distinguish between waves.
- Density will be strictly controlled from the time athletes arrive at the event site through the time they cross the starting line and again once they cross the finish until they exit the event site. All areas will be clearly delineated. Delineators will be updated with stickers to let runners know they should "stand here" while waiting for the

restrooms, baggage check or start of their wave.

- Participants will be forbidden from running in groups of two or more and instructed to observe social distancing whenever possible when on the course.
- The post-finish area will be simplified and consolidated to minimize density after the finish line. There will be no finish line festival and athletes will be instructed to leave the event immediately.

## Athlete Communication

It is difficult to overstate how important athlete communication is to this process. In order to ensure we have consistent conversations with our athletes, we will be doubling down on prerace communication and taking steps to ensure our messaging is understood and that athletes have resolved any perceived loose ends. These steps include:

- Registration will be closed earlier than usual in order to ensure consistent communication with all athletes. If all bibs and shirts are being mailed, registration may close as early as two weeks prior to an event.
- Athletes will receive COVID-19 protocols via email several times before each event. These protocols will also be published on event pages and social media.
- Athletes may be required to sign an additional instrument indicating that they understand and agree to the protocols that are part of DASH. Athletes that do not sign this waiver will not be provided with a bib and a starting assignment. The waiver will be signed during the registration process for new registrations. Preexisting registrants will be emailed a digital waiver to sign.
- Signage will be in place at events to reinforce our COVID-19 protocols.
- Athletes will be encouraged via pre-race communication to ask questions prior to event day decreasing staff interactions at the event.

## Self-Reliance

While NYCRUNS will continue to offer necessary amenities such as hydration, port-a-potties, and bag check we will also actively encourage athletes to be as self-reliant as possible. This will minimize the need for direct interaction with staff on event day and lessen the use of common amenities. Relevant changes include:

- Athletes will be encouraged to use the bathroom before leaving home, rather than rely on the port-a-potties.
- Athletes will be encouraged to travel lightly so as to not have to use bag check.
- Athletes may be required to provide their own pre-event hydration and encouraged to supply as much of their own on course hydration as possible. Hydration packs, fuel belts, water bottles and similar materials will be actively encouraged.
- Athletes will be required to bring their own face coverings. While we will provide supplemental face coverings as needed, any athlete not conscientious enough to bring their own face covering, should not be participating in these events.

## Hygiene

Hygiene is closely intertwined with our overall effort and we will be working closely with our medical team and within CDC and NYCDOH guidelines to provide the most hygienic environment possible. As might be expected, our focus is on limiting face to face interactions, mandating face coverings at most times, providing copious amounts of hand sanitizer, and cleaning thoroughly throughout the event.

- Touchpoints and areas of close interaction between staff and athletes will be greatly reduced. Cleaning of common areas and touch points will be done regularly. All staff members will be issued cleaning supplies. Hand sanitizer will be available at any other common area such as bag check the Solutions tent, or hydration stations.
- All registration and race related purchases will take place online. Under no circumstance will cash, checks or credit cards be accepted in person.
- After crossing the finish line, athletes will be given any finisher amenities (hydration, medals, heat sheet etc.) in a plastic bag and directed to bag check (if necessary) and to exit the event. Items will be prepackaged ahead of time by staff.
- We will forgo the traditional high fives and other points of significant contact at the finish line.
- Areas of close interaction such as Solutions tents will be outfitted with spit guards.
- Course Hydration stations will be staffed by smaller teams who will not come within 6' of athletes. Hydration will be provided in the form of tiny bottles of water rather than disposable cups in some instances. Hydration items will be spaced out significantly to minimize athlete contact. Hydration stations will be expanded as needed to minimize density on the course. Each hydration station will also have a hand sanitizer unit nearby.
- Port-A-Potties will be stocked with sanitizer and have additional sanitizer stations outside as well as portable sinks. They will be sanitized throughout the event. Port-A-Potties will be spaced 6' apart or alternating entry sides where possible.

The main bank of Port-A-Potties will be split into three segments. A bank of 15 toilets might be split into 3 sections of 5 units apiece with 6' between the sections. Each unit within the section will alternate the way it faces if possible.