



SAFETY & LIABILITY GUIDELINES FOR ADULT & CONTINUING EDUCATION PROGRAMS

We actively monitor guidelines from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to keep our safety guidelines current and protect our staff and program participants. You can monitor North Carolina [counties of high or substantial levels of transmission](#) as defined by the CDC for current case numbers in determining your level of engagement in public programs. [Monitor current Buncombe County guidelines here.](#)

Any scenario in which people gather together indoors or out poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. The risks of COVID-19 exposure are less outdoors; however measures such as being fully vaccinated, wearing a mask, practicing physical distancing, and good hygiene are known to reduce risk. The following recommendations outline how we commit to reducing risk for program participants. For these safety measures to be as effective as possible requires commitment and diligence from *all* participants, families and Arboretum staff. By registering for a course through Adult Education Programs, you accept responsibility for adhering to safety guidelines and accept liability as outlined below.

Following national, state and local guidelines, Adult Education Programs at the Arboretum continues to reinforce safety by recommending these precautions:

- **Be alert for [symptoms of COVID-19](#)** regardless of vaccination status, especially if you've been around someone who is sick or if you have been notified of possible exposure. If you have symptoms of COVID-19, get [tested](#) and [stay home](#) and away from others. Come back to join us another time for a program.
- **Voluntarily share information with co-participants in small group settings** before close contact or carpooling occurs so that all can make informed decisions.
- **Notify Adult Education staff** if you learn that you test positive for COVID-19 in a 14-day period following participation in a public program so that we may contact co-participants if required.

Indoor Settings: Adult Education Programs will not resume indoor programming until a determination is made later in the spring. While at the Arboretum for meetings, continue to practice the 3 Ws:

- **While indoor mask mandates have been rescinded in Buncombe County at present, Adult Education Programs staff still request that students meeting indoors with staff or instructors continue to wear a mask that covers the nose and mouth in all indoor public indoor settings.** Wait 6 feet apart in all public settings. Wash your hands often. [Current Buncombe County guidelines](#) recommend that all individuals mask up regardless of vaccine status when in crowded indoor public spaces.

Outdoor Settings: Adult Education Programs continues to facilitate a variety of experiences onsite at the Arboretum and in the field. We work with instructors to plan locations carefully with distance in mind; however participants may at times be in close physical proximity to one another on a trail. Participants should consider in advance their level of comfort engaging in outdoor group activities. Currently mask wearing is not required or regulated for outdoor classes.

- We continue to recommend that all participants arrive at any program wearing masks out of consideration for the group's needs and then determine the level of comfort for removing while participating in any activity. Unvaccinated and immuno-compromised individuals should consider remaining masked at all times. Always try to maintain distance while in a group.

We encourage all participants to make conscious, courteous decisions based on your own and others' wishes and needs for safety.

Liability - By participating in Adult Education Programs, you:

- Acknowledge the contagious nature of COVID-19 and voluntarily assume the risk of being exposed to or infected by COVID-19.
- Accept such risks and volunteer to participate with full understanding of the dangers involved. By participating in programs, you waive and release the Arboretum, its employees, agents, officers, and representatives from any and all claims, costs, liability, and expense for any injury, loss, or damage whether known, anticipated, or unanticipated arising from your voluntary visit and/or program participation.

Note that these guidelines are subject to change as Arboretum policies are revised and as local, state and CDC recommendations are revised. We will keep you informed and current as possible. Current guidelines will be linked to class participation and are available on our website.

<https://www.ncarboretum.org/education-programs/adult-education-programs/>

**Contact rcaldwell@ncarboretum.org with questions or concerns.
Rebecca Caldwell, Manager, Adult & Continuing Education Programs**
