CDC Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CDC 24/7: Saving Lives, Protecting People™

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

WEAR A MASK.

Considerations for Events and Gatherings

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As some communities in the United States begin to plan and hold events and gatherings, the CDC offers the following considerations for enhancing protection of individuals and communities and preventing spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). Event planners and officials can determine, in collaboration with state and local health officials, whether and how to implement these considerations, making adjustments to meet the unique needs and circumstances of the local community. Because COVID-19 virus circulation varies in communities, these considerations are meant to supplement—**not replace**—any state, local, territorial, or tribal health and safety laws, rules, and regulations with which gatherings must comply. Organizers should continue to assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees for gatherings.

> After reviewing the considerations listed on this page, event planners and administrators can use CDC's Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool 📄 [9 pages] to protect staff, volunteers, and attendees.

Guiding Principles

- A gathering refers to a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.

- The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.

- The *higher the level of community transmission* in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

- The size of an event or gathering should be determined based on state, local,

territorial or tribal safety laws and regulations.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading at events and gatherings increases as follows:

Lowest risk: Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).

Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.

Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

Targeting COVID-19's spread

SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, is thought to be mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as handwashing, staying home when sick, maintaining 6 feet of distance, and wearing a mask) and environmental prevention practices (such as cleaning and disinfection) are important ways to prevent the virus's spread.

These prevention principles are covered in this document. They provide event planners and individuals with actions to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during gatherings and events.

Promoting Healthy Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Event planners should consider implementing strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 among staff and attendees.

- **Staying Home when Appropriate**
  - Educate staff and attendees about when they should stay home.
    - Advise employees and attendees to stay home if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
    - Advise employees and attendees to stay home and monitor their health if they have had a close contact with a person who has symptoms of COVID-

19 within the past 14 days.

- Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees are aware of these policies.
- CDC's criteria can help inform when employees should return to work:
    - If they have been sick with COVID-19
    - If they tested positive for COVID-19 but had no symptoms
    - If they have recently had a close contact with a person with COVID-19
- Consider developing flexible refund policies for attendees for events that involve a participation fee.

- **Hand Hygieneand Respiratory Etiquette**
    - Require frequent employee handwashing (e.g., before, during, and after taking tickets; after touching garbage) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence.
    - If soap and water are not readily available, employees can use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub their hands until dry.
    - Encourage staff to cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
    - Encourage attendees to wash hands often and cover coughs and sneezes.
    - Attendees often exchange handshakes, fist bumps, and high-fives at meetings and sporting events. Display signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the event.

- **Masks**
    - Require the use of masks among staff. Masks are **most** essential in times when physical distancing is difficult (e.g., when moving within a crowd or audience).
    - Provide all staff with information on proper use, removal, and washing of masks.
    - Advise staff that masks should **not** be placed on:
        - Babies or children younger than 2 years old
        - Anyone who has trouble breathing
        - Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance
    - Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use masks at the event.
    - Masks are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Masks are not meant to be a substitute for personal protective equipment such as surgical masks, respirators, or other medical personal protective equipment.
    - Masks are strongly encouraged in settings where individuals might raise their voice (e.g., shouting, chanting, singing).

- **Adequate Supplies**
    - Ensure you have accessible sinks and enough supplies for people to clean their hands and cover their coughs and sneezes. Supplies include soap, water, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfectant wipes, masks (as feasible), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered).

- **Signs and Messages**
    - Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread 🅿 of germs by properly washing hands and properly wearing a mask 🖼 .
    - Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems.
    - Include messages (for example, videos) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff, vendors, and attendees (such as on the event website and through event social media accounts).
    - Consider developing signs and messages in alternative formats (e.g., large print, braille, American Sign Language) for people who have limited vision or are blind or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.
    - Find freely available CDC print and digital resources about COVID-19 on CDC's communications resources main page.

Maintaining Healthy Environments

Event planners should consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

- **Cleaning and Disinfection**
    - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the venue at least daily or between uses as much as possible—for example, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, grab bars, hand railings, and cash registers.
    - Clean and disinfect shared objects between uses—for example, payment terminals, tables, countertops, bars, and condiment holders.
    - Consider closing areas such as drinking fountains that cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected during an event.
    - Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
    - Plan for and enact these cleaning routines when renting event space and ensure that other groups who may use your facilities follow these routines.
    - If transport vehicles like buses are used by the event staff, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff—for example, washing hands often and wearing masks and maintaining social distance of bus riders. To clean and disinfect event buses, vans, or other vehicles see guidance for bus transit operators and drivers for hire, and adapt

as needed.

- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaners and disinfectants ⬈ to avoid harm to employees and other individuals. Always read and follow label instructions for each product, and store products securely away from children.

- Use EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 ⬈ .

- Cleaning products should not be used near children. Staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent attendees or themselves from inhaling toxic vapors.

- Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash.

  - After using disposable gloves, throw them out in a lined trash can.

  - Do not disinfect or reuse the gloves.

  - Wash hands after removing gloves.

- **Restrooms**
  - Consider limiting the number of people who occupy the restroom at one time to allow for social distancing.

  - Do not allow lines or crowds to form near the restroom without maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. It may be helpful to post signs or markers to help attendees maintain the appropriate social distance of at least 6 feet.

  - Ensure that open restrooms are:
    - Operational with functional toilets.

    - Cleaned and disinfected regularly, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, doorknobs, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches.
      - Clean and disinfect restrooms daily or more often, if possible, with EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19.

      - Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.

    - Stocked with enough supplies for handwashing, including soap and water, a way to dry hands (e.g., paper towels, hand dryer), tissues, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), tissues, and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans (preferably covered).
      - If you are providing portable toilets, also provide portable handwashing stations and ensure that they remain stocked throughout the duration of the event. If possible, provide hand sanitizer stations that are touch-free.

- **Ventilation**
  - Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not

open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or attendees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).

- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.

- **Water Systems**

- - To minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and attendees to bring their own water, as feasible, to minimize touching and use of water fountains.

- **Modified Layouts**
  - Limit attendance or seating capacity to allow for social distancing, or host smaller events in larger rooms.
  - Use multiple entrances and exits and discourage crowded waiting areas.
  - Block off rows or sections of seating in order to space people at least 6 feet apart.
  - Eliminate lines or queues if possible or encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing signs or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.
  - Prioritize outdoor activities where social distancing can be maintained as much as possible.
  - Offer online attendance options in addition to in-person attendance to help reduce the number of attendees.

- **Physical Barriers and Guides**
  - Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating one-way routes).
  - Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart. Barriers can be useful at cash registers and other areas where maintaining physical distance of 6 feet is difficult.
  - Change seating layout or availability of seating so that people can remain least 6 feet apart.

- **Communal Spaces**
  - Stagger use of shared indoor spaces such as dining halls, game rooms, and lounges as much as possible and clean and disinfect them between uses.
  - Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks and beds, especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.

- Clean and disinfect bathrooms regularly (e.g., in the morning and evening or after times of heavy use) using EPA-registered disinfectants ⬈ .
- For more information on communal spaces in event housing (e.g., laundry rooms, shared bathrooms, and recreation areas) follow CDC's guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing.

- **Food Service**
  - There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread by food. However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk.
  - If the event includes food service, refer to CDC's COVID-19 considerations for restaurants and bars.
  - Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available.
  - Ask customers and employees to exchange cash or card payments by placing them on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand-to-hand contact.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use and encourage patrons to use their own pens.
  - Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart when waiting in line to order or pick up.
  - If a cafeteria or group dining room is used, serve individually plated meals or grab-and-go options, and hold activities in separate areas.
  - Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
  - Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
  - Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee.

- **Shared Objects**
  - Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
  - Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
  - Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and clean and disinfect them between use.

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Event organizers and staff may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations.

- **Regulatory Awareness**
  - Be aware of local or state regulatory agency policies related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held.

- **Protections for Staff and Attendees who are at Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19**
  - Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of any age with underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. For example:
    - Offer telework and modified job responsibilities for staff, such as setting up for the event rather than working at the registration desk.
    - Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls whenever possible.
  - As feasible, offer options for attendees at higher risk for severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g., virtual attendance).
  - Consider limiting event attendance to staff and guests who live in the local area (e.g., community, city, town, or county) to reduce risk of spreading the virus from areas with higher levels of COVID-19. If attendance is open to staff and guests from other communities, cities, town or counties, provide information to attendees so they can make an informed decision about participation.
  - Put policies in place to protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding their underlying medical conditions.

- **Limited, Staggered, or Rotated Shifts and Attendance Times**

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  - Consider ways to significantly reduce the number of attendees.
  - Use flexible worksites (e.g., telework) and flexible work hours (e.g., staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing of 6 feet between employees, volunteers, and others.
  - Rotate or stagger shifts and arrival times to limit the number of employees in a venue at the same time.
  - Stagger and limit attendance times to minimize the number of guests at the venue.

- **Travel & Transit**
  - Encourage employees to use transportation options that minimize close contact with others (e.g., walking or biking, driving or riding by car – alone or with household members only). Consider offering the following support:
    - Ask employees to follow the CDC guidance on how to Protect Yourself When Using Transportation, including public transit.

- Allow employees to shift their hours so they can commute during less busy times.
- Ask employees to wash their hands as soon as possible after their trip.

- Reconfigure parking lots to limit congregation points and ensure proper separation of employees (e.g., closing every other parking space).
- Encourage rideshare drivers to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle and avoid providing pooled rides or picking up multiple passengers who would not otherwise be riding together on the same route.

- **Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact**
  - Designate an administrator or office to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff and attendees should know who this person or office is and how to contact them.

- **Communication Systems**
  - Put systems in place to:
    - Encourage staff and attendees to self-report to event officials or a COVID-19 point of contact if they have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days, in accordance with health information sharing regulations for COVID-19 (e.g., see "Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts" in the **Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick section below**), and other applicable privacy and confidentiality laws and regulations.
    - Advise attendees prior to the event or gathering that they should not attend if they have symptoms of, a positive test for, or were recently exposed (within 14 days) to COVID-19.
    - Notify staff, attendees, and the public of cancellations and restrictions in place to limit people's exposure to COVID-19 (e.g., limited hours of operation).
    - Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and participants. Tailor information so that it is easily understood by various audiences and is available in alternative formats and languages.
    - Learn more about reaching people of diverse languages and cultures by visiting: Know Your Audience. You also can learn more about communicating to staff in a crisis at: Crisis Communications Plan. ⬈

- **Leave (Time Off) Policies**
  - Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that are not punitive and enable employees to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, are caring for someone who is sick, or who must stay home with children if schools or child care centers are closed.
  - Examine and revise policies for leave, telework, and employee compensation as

needed.

- Ensure that any relevant policies are communicated to staff.

- **Back-Up Staffing Plan**
  - Monitor absenteeism of employees, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff.
  - Develop policies for return-to-work and event facilities after an employee has COVID-19. CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation and quarantine can inform these policies.

- **Staff Training**
  - Train staff on all safety protocols. Consider using CDC's Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers as a guide.
  - Conduct training virtually to ensure that social distancing is maintained during training.
  - If training needs to be done in person, maintain social distancing. Virtual training is clearly better for infection control when feasible.

- **Recognize Signs and Symptoms**
  - If feasible, conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of staff and attendees safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.
  - Event administrators may consider using examples of screening methods in CDC's General Business FAQs as a guide.

- **Sharing Facilities**
  - Encourage any organizations that share or use the same venue to also follow these considerations and limit shared use, if possible.

- **Support Coping and Resilience**
  - Promote employees' ability to eat healthy foods, exercise, get enough sleep, and find time to unwind.
  - Encourage employees to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.
  - Consider posting signs for the national distress hotline: 1-800-985-5990, or text TalkWithUsto 66746; The National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224; and The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

- **Lessons Learned After the Event**
  - Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for your venue to discuss and note lessons learned.
  - Determine ways to improve planning and implementation processes if the

event will happen again.

- Update your plans regularly according to the state and local situation and orders.

Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Event planners should consider several strategies to implement when someone gets sick.

- **Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria**
  - Communicate to sick staff members that they should not return to work until they have met CDC's criteria to discontinue home isolation.

- **Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick**
  - Make sure that staff and attendees know that they should not come to the event and that they should notify event planners (e.g., the designated COVID-19 point of contact) if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a suspected or confirmed case.
  - Immediately separate staff and attendees with COVID-19 symptoms (e.g., fever, cough, shortness of breath) at the event. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are, and follow CDC guidance for caring for themselves.
  - Individuals who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms should be separated, sent home, and advised to follow CDC guidance for community-related exposure (see "Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts" below). If symptoms develop, individuals should follow CDC guidance for caring for themselves.
  - Planners may follow CDC's Guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing for any staff who live in event housing.
  - Work with venue administrators, local officials, and healthcare providers to identify an isolation area to separate anyone who has COVID-like symptoms or who has tested positive but does not have symptoms. Event healthcare providers should use Standard and Transmission-Based Precautions when caring for sick people. See: What Healthcare Personnel Should Know About Caring for Patients with Confirmed or Possible COVID-19 Infection.
  - Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

- **Clean and Disinfect**
  - Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable).

    Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not

feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning ⬈ and disinfection products, including storing them securely away from children.

- **Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts**
  - In accordance with state and local laws and regulations, event planners should notify local health officials, staff, and attendees of any case of COVID-19 while maintaining confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) ⬈ and other applicable laws and regulations.
  - Advise those who have had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 to stay home, self-monitor for symptoms, and follow CDC guidance if symptoms develop.

After reviewing the considerations listed on this page, event planners and administrators can use CDC's Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool ⬘ [9 pages] to protect staff, volunteers, and attendees.

Other Resources

Latest COVID-19 Information

Cleaning and Disinfection

Guidance for Businesses and Employers

Guidance for Schools and Childcare Centers

Guidance for Park Administrators

Shared and Congregate Housing

COVID-19 Prevention

Handwashing Information

Face Coverings

Social Distancing

COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions:

Persons at Higher Risk

Managing Stress and Coping

HIPAA and COVID-19 ↗

CDC communication resources

Community Mitigation

Transportation

Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith

Crisis Communications Plan. ↗

Restaurants and bars

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other applicable laws and regulations ↗

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