Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers

Information for Event Planners and Individuals

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Print

Planning and Preparedness

What actions should I take to plan for an outbreak?   —

Creating an emergency plan for mass gatherings and large community events, such as concerts and sporting events, can help protect the health of your staff, attendees, and the local community. This planning should include:

- Encouraging staff and attendees to stay home if sick.
- Developing flexible refund policies for attendees.
- Providing supplies for attendees and staff that can be used to help prevent the spread of germs.
- Consulting local public health officials about your event.

How many guests can safely attend a conference, sporting event, concert, or other community event?   —

CDC does not have a limit or recommend a specific number of attendees for these types of events and instead encourages event organizers to focus on ways to limit people's contact with each other. Each event organizer will need to determine the appropriate number for their setting in collaboration with local health officials. They should also check state, county, and city rules regarding any current restrictions limiting the number of attendees at events.

In general, the number that is chosen should allow individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart from each other. Rather than focusing on an ideal number, event organizers and administrators should focus on the ability to reduce and limit contact between attendees, staff, and others. In general, the **more people** you interact with, the **more closely** you interact with them, and the **longer that interaction**, the higher your risk of getting and spreading COVID-19. Indoor spaces are more risky than outdoor spaces because indoors, it can be harder to keep people at least 6 feet apart and the ventilation is not as good as it is outdoors.

Does CDC have recommendations on how to maintain 6 feet between attendees during events? −

Yes. CDC recommends several strategies for this. For instance, organizers can:

- Limit attendance or seating capacity to allow for social distancing, or host smaller events in larger rooms.
- Block off rows or sections of seating in order to space people at least 6 feet apart.
- Use multiple entrances and exits and discourage crowded waiting areas.
- 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.
- 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 (such as guides for creating one-way routes).
- 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.
- 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. Take steps to ensure that individuals can stay at least 6 feet apart from each other.

Should organizers test all attendees and staff for COVID-19 before they can enter an event? −

CDC does **not** recommend testing all attendees and staff before allowing them to enter. Testing all event attendees and staff for COVID-19 before allowing them to enter the venue has not been systematically studied. It is unknown if entry testing at event venues provides any additional reduction in person-to-person transmission of the virus beyond what would be expected with other preventive measures (such as social distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, hand washing, enhanced cleaning and disinfection).

CDC does recommend conducting health checks such as temperature screening and/or symptom checking of staff and attendees safely and respectfully, and in accordance with any applicable privacy laws and regulations.

Does CDC recommend all event attendees wear cloth face coverings? −

Yes. CDC recommends that people wear cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. CDC recommends that organizers require staff to wear cloth face coverings and encourage attendees ahead of events to bring and wear cloth face coverings at the event. Cloth face coverings are most essential when physical distancing is difficult (such as when moving within a crowd or audience). Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators. They are not personal protective equipment.

Cloth face coverings are strongly encouraged in settings where individuals might raise their voices (such as shouting, chanting, singing). Provide all staff with information on proper use, removal, and washing of cloth face coverings. Advise staff that cloth face coverings 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 cloth face covering without assistance

What actions can staff and attendees take to prevent the spread of COVID-19? −

Encourage staff and attendees to take everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses, such as COVID-19. This includes:

- **Cleaning your hands often.**
- **Avoiding close contact** with people who are sick.
- Staying home when you are sick.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched surfaces.
- Using a cloth face covering in public, especially when it may be difficult to maintain a distance of at least six feet from other people.

How should staff clean the facility before and during the event to limit spread of the virus? −

Event staff should use several strategies to maintain healthy environments, including 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.
- 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.
- 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.
- Ensure that ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible — for example, by opening windows and doors and prioritizing outdoor seating. However, do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to customers or employees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).

What are things to consider when determining if an event needs to be postponed or canceled? −

Consult with local public health officials and continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees (if possible) at an event or gathering. When determining if you should postpone or cancel a large gathering or event, consider the:

- Overall number of attendees or crowd size.
- Number of attendees who are at higher risk of developing serious illness from COVID-19. This includes older adults and people with underlying health problems such as lung or heart disease and diabetes.
- How close together attendees will be at the event.
- Amount of spread in local community and the communities from where your attendees are likely to travel.
- Needs and capacity of the local community to host or participate in your event.

Is there information I can share with staff and attendees about COVID-19? —

Share these resources to help people understand COVID-19 and steps they can take to help protect themselves:

- Prevention and Treatment
- What to Do If You Are Sick
- Groups at Higher Risk
- FAQs: Pregnant Women and COVID-19
- FAQs: Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and Children
- Handwashing: A Family Activity
- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives
- Considerations for Restaurants and Bars
- Considerations for Animal Activities at Fairs, Shows, and Other Events

Confirmed case of COVID-19 at an event

What steps should I take if an attendee or staff person develops symptoms of COVID-19 while at the event? —

If a staff member or attendee becomes sick at your event, separate them from others as soon as possible and until they can go home. Provide them with clean, disposable facemasks 📄 to wear, if available. If not available, provide them with a cloth face covering, which can be improvised if needed from a tee shirt, bandana or other clothing, as well as a tissue or some other way to cover their coughs and sneezes. If needed, contact emergency services for those who need emergency care. Public transportation, shared rides, and taxis should be avoided for sick persons. Be sure to contact local public health officials regarding the possible case of COVID-19 at your event and how to communicate with staff and attendees about possible exposure to the virus. Read more about preventing the spread of COVID-19 if someone is sick.

What is the best way to clean and disinfect the event space after a confirmed case of COVID-19 at my event? —

CDC has guidance for cleaning and disinfecting rooms and areas where a person with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 has visited. See Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations.