

SPECIAL NEWSLETTER RESPONDING TO COVID-19

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On March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the virus known as COVID-19 or Novel Coronavirus a global pandemic. This virus is a real public health threat that must be taken seriously. Leaders at all levels of government have called upon individuals and organizations to take steps to reduce the spread of the virus. One common theme from health experts about how to address this crisis is through the practice of "social distancing", which is physical distancing from others. Guidance from leaders continually changes to meet the dynamic nature of the situation. As such, please continue to rely on resources published by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), WHO, and local health agencies for the most up-to-date guidance.

As of March 15, 2020, California Governor Gavin Newsom recommends that all individuals over the age of 65 and those with chronic disease remain home to reduce their exposure to the virus. Also, Newsom asked that all bars and other entertainment venues close until the state issues further guidance. Also, on March 16, 2020 the CDC issued a guidance recommending people avoid: 1) gatherings of more than 10 people, 2) unnecessary travel, and 3) eating or drinking at restaurants until at least the middle of May.

According to health experts and government leaders, it is apparent that decreasing non-essential social interactions is the best way to reduce the spread of the virus. Common Interest Developments have a role in this effort. First, Associations should follow the directions and recommendations from public health professionals and leaders throughout all levels of government. Second, Associations should exercise common sense to address how their community should implement recommendations. Below are a series of common steps that an Association should consider adopting to help reduce the spread of the virus:

Board of Director and Member Meetings

Associations should hold all board and member meetings using a telephone conference and should disclose in meeting agendas that meetings are being held by telephone in an effort to prevent the spread of the virus. Not creating a physical space where the virus may spread from person to person in the form of an in-person meeting is essential for Associations to protect residents and do its part to slow the spread of the virus throughout the community.

Civil Code § 4090(b) allows Board meetings to be conducted via telephone conference and Civil Code § 4925 requires a meeting held by telephone conference to be open to residents. Providing residents, a "call-in" number that they can dial to listen to the Board Meeting is an option that will comply with the law and ensure transparency with residents.

In light of the public health emergency the virus poses, it appears that Associations should forego the requirement found in Civil Code § 4925 that requires a physical location for residents to gather and listen to the Board meeting. It would be irresponsible for an Association to provide a location where residents would be in close proximity with other residents and create situation where the virus can spread. The current health crisis should justify an Association foregoing this requirement.

A final option that an Association may consider is postponing meetings, consistent with its Bylaws, in an effort to allow the Association to prepare to hold meetings through teleconference. Current social distancing recommendations from the CDC extend through May, meaning that this crisis will likely last a few more months. This means that simply postponing a meeting cannot be the only response to this matter. Instead, Associations will need to take steps to hold remote Board meetings, but postponement can allow an Association to ensure its telephone meetings will properly operate.

Common Areas and Association Events

Associations should strongly consider cancelling all non-essential gatherings. This recommendation comes directly from the CDC, which recommends that events that have less than 10 people should only be held if the event adheres to guidance protecting vulnerable populations and social distancing. This means that an Association should consider closing pools, fitness centers, meeting areas, and other similar non-essential facilities. Nevertheless, Associations cannot close portions of common area that residents use to access their home, such as hallways, stairs, elevators, and parking areas. In the portions of common area that cannot be closed, the Association should increase its efforts to sanitize all touch areas (door knobs, buttons, countertops, and handrails) to protect residents. If possible, the Association should consider increasing its janitorial services with an emphasis on sanitizing these high traffic areas.

Variations and Accommodations

During the crisis, some residents may need accommodations to protect themselves from the virus. This can include postponing disciplinary hearings, extensions on the time to comply with architectural applications and construction, and modifications of maintenance responsibilities. A resident may even need to be quarantined in their home to protect their health and the health of others. If residents request an accommodation or variance from governing documents, the Association should exercise its business judgment and rely on guidance from health professionals to determine the best course of action. It would be wise to grant reasonable requests, at least in the short-term, so long as the request does not threaten the health and safety of other residents.

Disclosure of Resident Health Status

If the Association becomes aware of a resident's health status, the Association must balance the private interests of the resident's right to privacy and the desire to disclose the status of a potential health threat. If the Association learns that a resident has contracted or been exposed to the virus, the Association should refer to its local health professional recommendations to determine how to react. We anticipate that if an Association learns that a resident has contracted the virus, the Association should reach out to its local health department to find out what the department wants the Association to do next. The Association cannot, however, take no action. It must respond to protect its residents from a known health threat. The Association's response to that health threat should be based upon the recommendations of local health experts.

Communication and Transparency

During a time of crisis, people look to figures of authority for accurate information and guidance on how to respond in the face of a crisis. An easy way for an Association to maintain the trust of its residents throughout this public health crisis is to be open and honest with residents, share how it is responding to the crisis, and ensure that the Association consistently references accurate facts and information. It should utilize various communication methods to inform residents of how the Association is addressing the virus. It should ensure that there is one unified message coming from the Association's leadership and should encourage residents to reach out to a designated officer or manager with any questions about how the Association is responding to the crisis and how residents may still participate in the Association's governance by providing guidance of how to listen to Board meetings through teleconferences.

One easy method of ensuring transparency is to affirmatively share the minutes of Board meetings that are held during this crisis with residents. This action will show residents that the Association is trying to keep them informed of what it is doing during the crisis. In summary, Associations should prioritize taking steps to be open and honest with residents in an effort to maintain trust throughout the crisis.

Resources

There are numerous agencies and entities providing resources and guidance on how to respond to the virus. Below is a list of resources that Associations should rely on to guide their decisions in responding to the virus. Some guidance from the federal government, CDC, State of California, and local health agencies may even be mandatory. You can also dial 211 or text the word "coronavirus" to 211-211 for more information.

Centers for Disease Control, (800) 232-4636

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

California Department of Public Health, (916) 558-1784

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>

Alameda County Public Health Department, (510) 267-8000

<http://www.acphd.org/2019-ncov.aspx>

Butte County Public Health Department, (530) 552-4000

http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/Home/fbclid/IwAR3fS GcPlbTuP9oMALiinPe68ft2E_vscOm2hDIGwwyilvdXog7KZwY9vTw

Calaveras County Public Health, (209) 754-6460

<https://publichealth.calaverasgov.us/>

Contra Costa Health Services, (877) 661-6230

<https://www.coronavirus.cchealth.org/if-you-are-sick>

El Dorado County Health and Human Services Agency, (530) 642-7300 or (530) 642-7300

<https://www.edcgov.us/Government/hhsa/Pages/EDCCOVID-19.aspx>

Marin Health and Human Services, (415) 473-7191

<https://coronavirus.marinhhs.org/>

Napa County Health and Human Services, (707) 253-4279

<https://www.countyofnapa.org/2739/Coronavirus>

Nevada County Health and Human Services, (833) 342-5211

<https://www.mynevadacounty.com/2924/Coronavirus>

Placer County Health and Human Services, (530) 886-5310

<https://www.placer.ca.gov/6367/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19>

Plumas County Public Health Agency, (530) 283-6330

[https://www.plumas.ca.gov/6367/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19](https://www.placer.ca.gov/6367/Novel-Coronavirus-COVID-19)

Sacramento County COVID-19, (800) 500-4931 or (916) 498-1000

<https://www.saccounty.net/COVID-19/Pages/ContactInformation.aspx>

San Francisco Department of Public Health, (415) 554-2500

<https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus.asp>

San Joaquin County Public Health Services, (209) 468-3411

<http://www.sjcphs.org/coronavirus.aspx>

San Mateo County Health, (650) 573-2222

<https://www.smchealth.org/coronavirus>

Santa Clara County Public Health, (408) 792-5040

<https://www.sccgov.org/sites/phd/DiseaseInformation/novel-coronavirus/Pages/home.aspx>

Shasta County Health and Human Services Agency, (530) 229-8400

<https://www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/hhsa/health-safety/current-health-concerns/coronavirus>

Sierra County Public Health, (530) 993-6700

<http://sierracounty.ca.gov/582/Coronavirus-COVID-19>

Solano County Public Health, (707) 784-8988

<https://www.solanocounty.com/depts/ph/ncov.asp>

Sutter County Health and Human Services, (530) 822-7327

https://www.suttercounty.org/doc/government/depts/cao/em/cs_es_home

Yolo County Health and Human Services, Contact 211

<https://www.yolocounty.org/health-human-services/adults/communicable-disease-investigation-and-control/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Yuba County Health and Human Services, (530) 749-6311

<https://www.yuba.org/coronavirus/>



To protect public health and slow the rate of transmission of COVID-19, gatherings as described below should be postponed or canceled across the state of California for at least the remainder of the month of March.

The California Department of Public Health finds the following:

- Large gatherings that include 250 people or more should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings such as concerts, conferences, and professional, college, and school sporting events.
- Smaller gatherings held in venues that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings in crowded auditoriums, rooms or other venues.
- Gatherings of individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be limited to no more than 10 people.
 - This includes gatherings such as those at retirement facilities, assisted living facilities, developmental homes, and support groups for people with health conditions.
- A “gathering” is any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, cafeteria, or any other indoor or outdoor space.

This applies to all non-essential professional, social, and community gatherings regardless of their sponsor. Gatherings that do not meet the aforementioned criteria should only be conducted when they are essential—that is, if the activity is essential and could not be postponed or achieved without gathering, meaning that some other means of communication could not be used to conduct the essential function.

What will this achieve?

The timely implementation of aggressive strategies that create social distance and those that reduce close contact of people not regularly together, including limiting gatherings, has proven effective in prior pandemics at delaying rates of transmission and reducing illness and death.

By decreasing the prevalence of disease across California we will:

- Reduce the number of Californians who contract COVID-19 before an effective treatment or vaccine is available.
- Protect those most likely to experience severe symptoms, such as older Californians and those with underlying chronic conditions.
- Preserve and protect our health care delivery system, including our health care workforce, so they can care for the least healthy individuals in the community for any medical condition, not just COVID-19.
- Minimize the social and economic impacts of COVID-19 over the long run.

How long will these limitations apply?

This guidance will remain in place at least through the month of March. As with all guidance that relates to COVID-19 response, authorities will revisit this guidance on a regular basis to evaluate the continued public health need for it and to evaluate if any elements need to be changed. To stay informed, continue to monitor this link:

<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Guidance.aspx>

What is Social Distancing and how is it achieved?

Social distancing is a practice recommended by public health officials to stop or slow down the spread of contagious diseases. It requires the creation of physical space between individuals who may spread certain infectious diseases. The key is to minimize the number of gatherings as much as possible and to achieve space between individuals when events or activities cannot be modified, postponed, or canceled.

Although the Department expects most events with more than 250 attendees to be postponed or canceled, we emphasize that the venue space does matter. Achieving space between individuals of approximately six feet is advisable. Additionally, there is a particular focus on creating space between individuals who have come together on a one-time or rare basis and who have very different travel patterns such as those coming from multiple countries, states or counties.

What can be done to a make a gathering safer if it is essential or small?

- Stagger activities.
- Add frequency of an event to spread out attendance, e.g. hold more, smaller gatherings.
- Add distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables.
- Add additional hand washing stations and restrooms.
- Limit the number of people in lines.
- Avoid direct physical contact, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
- Extend hours to allow for staggering of attendance or participation.
- Use phones, videos or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions.
- Consider ways to encourage anyone with fever and respiratory symptoms to stay home when sick, such as
 - Offering refunds or support reselling of tickets for persons who become ill.
 - Placing messages on websites, tickets, and venue entrances reminding people to protect one another by staying home if sick.

Examples of Essential Events this Does Not Apply To

The goal of this recommendation is to prevent people physically coming together unnecessarily, where people who have the infection can easily spread it to others. This guidance does not apply to activities such as attendance at regular school classes, work, or essential services.

Please see the [guidance for schools](#) document for additional information.

Certain activities are essential to the functioning of our state and must continue. Hence, this does not apply to essential public transportation, airport travel, or shopping at a store or mall. Other [specific guidance](#) can be found on the CDPH website to help people take actions that can protect them in those settings.

This does not apply to congregate living situations, including dormitories and homeless encampments. For more information on what can be done to protect homeless individuals, please see the [Guidance for Homeless Assistance Providers on Novel Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(PDF\)](#).



COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

Self-Isolation for Older Adults and Those Who Have Elevated Risk

March 16, 2020

This guidance is based on what is currently known about the transmission and severity of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) will update this guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

This document is intended to be statewide guidance to help older adults and individuals who are at high risk for serious illness, this includes:

- Individuals over 65 years of age
- Individuals who have serious chronic medical conditions like:
 - Heart disease
 - Diabetes
 - Lung disease
- Individuals who have compromised immune systems

This guidance does not apply to people who work in essential services, such as hospital and health care workers, pharmacists, peace officers, firefighters, staff at skilled nursing facilities and residential care facilities for the elderly, and other essential workers.

Background

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel virus that has been spreading worldwide. Community-acquired cases have now been confirmed in California. We are gaining more understanding of COVID-19's epidemiology, clinical course, immunogenicity, and other factors as time progresses, and the situation is changing daily. CDPH is in the process of monitoring COVID-19, conducting testing with local and federal partners, and providing guidance and resources to prevent, detect and respond to the occurrence of COVID-19 cases in California.

At this time, community transmission of COVID-19 has occurred in California. All individuals should prepare for possible impacts of COVID-19 and take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19 as well as other infectious diseases, including influenza and gastroenteritis.

Illness Severity

The complete clinical picture with regard to COVID-19 is not fully understood. Reported illnesses have ranged from mild to severe, including illness resulting in death. Older people, those with compromised immune systems, and people with certain underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example, seem to be at greater risk of serious illness.

Measures for Older Adults and Those Who Have Elevated Risk

Individuals at elevated risk can take steps now to slow reduce the risk from infectious diseases, including COVID-19. CDPH recommends implementing the following steps:

- Remain at home until further guidance is issued.
 - Cancel any non-essential travel, appointments, etc.
 - For routine medical care, contact your health care provider to discuss rescheduling, if not urgent. Otherwise, discuss alternative provision of services, such as telehealth or in-home care.
 - If you are in need of medical care, and in consultation with your health care provider, make an appointment and visit your provider to get the necessary care. If you have an emergency and need immediate medical care, call 9-1-1.

- Continue with outdoor activities.
 - As long as you practice social distancing, we encourage you to continue your outdoor activities such as walks, runs and yardwork, to the extent your health allows it.

- Practice social distancing, both in and outside the home.
 - Maintain distance, at least six feet, between yourself and anyone who is coughing or sneezing.
 - Avoid handshaking, hugging or other intimate types of greetings—greet others with a wave, nod or bow instead.

- Stay in touch with others by phone, email, or other on-line tools (like Skype and Facebook).
 - Ask friends, family, neighbors, and other networks to do any essential grocery shopping, picking up medications, etc. Consider on-line ordering for food and other supplies.
 - Ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
 - Identify friends, family, neighbors, and other networks who can provide you with care if your caregiver gets sick or otherwise adjusts their scheduled services.

- Identify Family, Friends, Neighbors, and Caregivers who can provide Support
 - Family, friends, neighbors, and caregivers who come to homes to provide support should be asymptomatic, meaning having no fever, cough, or other respiratory symptoms.
 - Family, friends, neighbors, and caregivers can support by knowing what medications your loved one or client is taking and seeing if you can help them have extra on hand; monitoring food and medical supplies (oxygen, incontinence, dialysis, and wound care) needed and creating a back-up plan; and stocking up on non-perishable food items to have on hand in your home.

- Have supplies on hand
 - Contact your healthcare provider to ask about obtaining extra necessary medications to have on hand.

- If you cannot get extra medications, consider using mail-order for medications.
- Be sure you have over-the-counter medicines and medical supplies (tissues, etc.) to treat fever and other symptoms.

- Have a plan for if you get sick
 - Consult with your health care provider for more information about monitoring your health for symptoms suggestive of COVID-19.
 - Stay in touch with others by phone or email. You may need to ask for help from friends, family, neighbors, community health workers, etc. if you become sick.
 - Watch for symptoms and emergency warning signs
 - Pay attention to potential COVID-19 symptoms including fever, cough and shortness of breath. If you develop symptoms, call your doctor or local public health department.
 - If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately. In adults, emergency warning signs* include:
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
 - Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
 - New confusion or inability to arouse
 - Bluish lips or face
 - *This list is not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptom that is severe or concerning.

- Practice Hand washing
 - Wash hands frequently for at least 20 seconds.
 - Encourage hand washing by family and friends, particularly children.
 - Provide alcohol based hand sanitizers to supplement hand washing.
 - Avoid touching eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Clean frequently used devices, such as mobile phones.

- Use “respiratory etiquette”
 - Cover cough with a tissue or sleeve. See CDC’s Cover Your Cough page for multilingual posters and flyers, posted at the bottom of webpage.
 - Provide adequate supplies within easy reach, including tissues and no touch trash cans.

- Clean and disinfect your home to remove germs: practice routine cleaning of frequently touched surfaces (for example: tables, doorknobs, light switches, handles, desks, toilets, faucets, sinks & cell phones) with common cleaning supplies

- See the Center for Disease Control and Prevention’s guidance regarding the prevention of disease in homes and residential communities.

Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19): Cleaning and Waste Management Considerations for Residences February 2020

This document provides guidance to people with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 who are able to receive care at home, and to their household members and/or caregivers, regarding the cleaning of residences and disposal of waste.*

General Guidance

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has released general guidance on their website, [Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html) (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>), which should be reviewed closely and checked regularly. Additionally, the CDPH webpage, [Coronavirus Disease 2019](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx) (see <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/nCOV2019.aspx>), provides general information on how to limit the spread of COVID-19:

- Washing hands with soap and water.
- Avoiding touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
- Avoiding close contact with people who are sick.
- If you become sick with respiratory symptoms like fever and cough, stay away from work, school or other people.

These are all ways to reduce the risk of infection with a number of different viruses.

Residence Decontamination and Removal of COVID-19 Waste

CDC has released [Interim Guidance for Preventing the Spread of Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) in Homes and Residential Communities](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-preventspread.html) (see <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/guidance-preventspread.html>?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fguidance-prevent-spread.html).

That document provides detailed guidance, but these are the key current recommendations of the CDC and CDPH regarding cleaning and waste disposal:

- Perform hand hygiene frequently. Wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with 60%-95% alcohol. [Handwashing - Clean Hands Save Lives | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/) (see <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/>).

- Respiratory etiquette: Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw into a lined trash container.
- Avoid sharing personal household items, dishes, drinking glasses, cups, eating utensils, towels or bedding with other people or pets in your home. After using these items, wash thoroughly with soap and water.
- Wash laundry thoroughly: Wear disposable gloves while handling soiled items. Read and follow the directions on the labels of bedding, clothing, detergent and/or washing machines. Dry thoroughly using the warmest temperatures recommended on the clothing label.
- Clean all “high-touch” surfaces every day, such as counters, tabletops, doorknobs, fixtures, toilets, phones, etc. Also, clean any surfaces that may have blood, stool, or body fluids on them. Use a regular household cleaning spray or wipe according to the label instructions, which include precautions you should take when applying the product, such as wearing gloves and making sure to have good ventilation during use of the product.
- When removing personal protective equipment, first remove and dispose of gloves. Then immediately clean your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Next, remove and dispose of facemask, and immediately clean your hands again with soap and water or alcohol based hand sanitizer.
- Place all used gloves, facemasks and other contaminated items in a lined container before disposing of them with other household waste.
- Clean your hands (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer) immediately after handling these items.

Individuals may also consult with their local health department or healthcare provider for any COVID-19 related issues.

*The California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Medical Waste Management Program regulates the generation, handling, storage, and treatment of medical waste by providing oversight under the authority of the Medical Waste Management Act (MWMA). COVID-19 waste generated in residences is not regulated as medical waste; however, it is biohazardous and precautions need to be taken during the cleaning and handling of this waste.

SYMPTOMS OF CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019

Patients with COVID-19 have experienced mild to severe respiratory illness.

Symptoms* can include

FEVER



COUGH



*Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure.

Seek medical advice if you develop symptoms, and have been in close contact with a person known to have COVID-19 or if you live in or have recently been in an area with ongoing spread of COVID-19.

SHORTNESS OF BREATH



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19-symptoms

STOP THE SPREAD OF GERMS

Help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases like COVID-19.

Avoid close contact with people who are sick.



Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.



Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.



Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.



Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.



Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.



For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

Interim Guidance: Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)

Summary of Recent Changes

Revisions were made on 3/12/2020 to reflect the following:

- Highlights vulnerable populations
- Adds a section on “Considerations for Postponing or Cancelling a Mass Gathering”
- Adds a section on discouraging handshakes and high fives (for sporting events)
- Adds standard language regarding disinfection procedures

This interim guidance is based on what is currently known [about the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#). The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will update this interim guidance as needed and as additional information becomes available.

This interim guidance is intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning mass gatherings or large community events in the United States. **A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event with a large number of people in attendance that could strain the planning and response resources of the community hosting the event, such as a concert, festival, conference, or sporting event.** Guidance specific to schools and childcare settings, institutions of higher education, and community- and faith-based organizations can be found on [CDC’s website focused on prevention COVID-19 spread in communities](#).

COVID-19 is an emerging respiratory disease and there is more to learn about its transmission, clinical course, and populations at increased risk of disease and complications (see [How COVID-19 Spreads](#)). Everyone can do their part to help plan, prepare, and respond to this emerging public health threat.

[Older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions](#) are considered to be at increased risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19. Priority should be given to ensuring the safety of these groups of people, particularly for any mass gatherings that are expected to have a large number of older adults or persons with underlying conditions.

In This Document

- [Considerations for Cancelling or Postponing a Mass Gathering](#)
- [Steps to Plan, Prepare, and Proceed with a Mass Gathering](#)
- [Follow-up After a COVID-19 Outbreak has Ended](#)
- [Readiness Resources](#)

As the COVID-19 outbreak evolves, CDC strongly encourages event organizers and staff to prepare for the possibility of outbreaks in their communities. Creating an emergency plan for mass gatherings and large community events can help protect you and the health of your event participants and the local community.

CDC has developed recommended actions for preventing the spread of COVID-19 at mass gatherings and large community events. This guidance suggests strategies to



3/13/2020

For more information: www.cdc.gov/COVID19

help you plan for and implement ways in which to better protect all involved in a mass gathering.

Organizers should continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees (if possible) for mass gatherings. Listed below are some considerations organizers should keep in mind as they make decisions about whether to postpone or cancel an event. If organizers decide to proceed with an event they should consult the “Steps to Plan, Prepare, and Proceed with a Mass Gathering” section of this document.

Considerations for Postponing or Cancelling a Mass Gathering

There are a number of factors to consider when determining the need to postpone or cancel a large gathering. These include:

- ✓ **The overall number of attendees.** Larger gatherings (for example, more than 250 people) offer more opportunities for person-to-person contact and therefore pose greater risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- ✓ **The number of people attending who are at greater risk of more serious illness after contracting COVID-19.** Older adults and persons with severe pre-existing health conditions are thought to be at increased risk.
- ✓ **The density of attendees within a confined area.** Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within 6 feet).
- ✓ **The potential economic impact to participants, attendees, staff, and the larger community.**
- ✓ **The level of transmission in your local community and the level of transmission in the areas from which your attendees will travel.** To better understand the level of community transmission in your community (and in the communities from which your attendees will be traveling), consult with your local and/or state public health department.
- ✓ **If there are ways in which to significantly reduce the number of attendees.** For example, for sporting events or school concerts, organizers could consider holding the event but significantly reduce the number of audience members.

At a minimal-to-moderate level of community transmission, it is recommended to:

- ✓ Cancel community-wide mass gatherings (for example, >250 people; **the cutoff threshold is at the discretion of community leadership based on [the current circumstances the community is facing and the nature of the event](#)**) or move to smaller groupings.
- ✓ Cancel gatherings of more than 10 people for organizations that serve higher-risk populations.

At a substantial level of community transmission, it is recommended to cancel mass gatherings of any size.

Steps to Plan, Prepare, and Proceed with a Mass Gathering

The details of your emergency operations plan should be based on the size and duration of your events, demographics of the participants, complexity of your event operations, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer.

Review the existing emergency operations plans for your venues

- ✓ **Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team at your venues.** Discuss the emergency operations plans and determine how they may impact aspects of your events, such as personnel, security, services and activities, functions, and resources. Work with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team to prepare for the key prevention strategies outlined in this guidance. Develop a contingency plan that addresses various scenarios described below which you may encounter during a COVID-19 outbreak.

√ **Establish relationships with key community partners and stakeholders.** When forming key relationships for your events, include relevant partners such as the local public health department, community leaders, faith-based organizations, vendors, suppliers, hospitals, hotels, airlines, transportation companies, and law enforcement. Collaborate and coordinate with them on broader planning efforts. Clearly identify each partner's role, responsibilities, and decision-making authority. Contact your local public health department for a copy of their outbreak response and mitigation plan for your community. Participate in community-wide emergency preparedness activities.

Address key prevention strategies in your emergency operations plan

√ **Promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions.** Use [health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as CDC](#) or your local public health department to encourage your event staff and participants to practice good personal health habits. Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants to engage in [everyday preventive actions](#) to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These include:

- Stay home when you are sick, except to get medical care.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- [Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily.](#)

Handshakes and “high-fives” are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person. As a way of decreasing the social pressure to engage in these common behaviors, consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the gathering.

Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.

√ **Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies to event staff and participants.** Ensure that your events have supplies for event staff and participants, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, disposable facemasks, and cleaners and disinfectants. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with detergent and water prior to disinfection, especially surfaces that are visibly dirty.

- Routinely clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched. Clean with the cleaners typically used. Use all cleaning products according to the directions on the label.
- For disinfection most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
 - A list of products that are EPA-approved for use against the virus that causes COVID-19 is available [here](#). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products (e.g., concentration, application method and contact time, etc.).
 - Additionally, diluted household bleach solutions can be used if appropriate for the surface. Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Check to ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser. Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted. Prepare a bleach solution by mixing:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water or

- 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

- Additional information on cleaning and disinfection of community facilities can be found on [CDC's website](#).

Note: [Disposable facemasks](#) should be kept on-site and used only if someone (worker or attendee) becomes sick at your event. Those who become sick should be immediately isolated from staff and participants who are not sick and given a clean disposable facemask to wear.

- ✓ **Plan for staff absences.** Develop and implement flexible attendance and sick-leave policies. Event staff need to stay home when they are sick, or they may need to stay home to care for a sick household member or care for their children in the event of school dismissals. Allow staff to work from home when possible. Identify critical job functions and positions and plan for alternative coverage by cross-training staff (similar to planning for holiday staffing). Provide instructions about how and when to safely return to work.
- ✓ **Implement flexible staff attendance and sick-leave policies (if possible).** Require staff to stay home if they are sick or caring for a sick household member. Notify staff when you plan to implement COVID-19 leave policies.

Note: Direct staff who get sick with COVID-19 symptoms to avoid contact with others and to seek medical advice.

- ✓ **Consider alternatives for event staff and participants who are at increased risk for complications from COVID-19.** Currently, [older adults and persons with severe underlying health conditions](#) are considered to be at increased risk for severe illness and complications from COVID-19. Event organizers can consider reassigning duties for higher-risk staff to have minimal contact with other persons. People in higher-risk groups should consult with their healthcare provider about attending large events. Consider providing refunds to event participants who are unable to attend because they are at high risk and/or provide information on alternative viewing options.
- ✓ **Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events.** This could include electronic messages sent to attendees prior to travel to the event as well as messages requesting that people leave events if they begin to have symptoms of COVID-19, which include fever, cough, and shortness of breath. Attendees should be encouraged to seek medical advice promptly by calling ahead to a doctor's office or emergency room to get guidance. See CDC guidance on [what to do when sick with COVID-19](#). *Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources.*
- ✓ **If possible, identify a space that can be used to isolate staff or participants who become ill at the event.** Designate a space for staff and participants who may become sick and cannot leave the event immediately. Work with partners, such as local hospitals, to create a plan for treating staff and participants who do not live nearby. Include a [plan for separating and caring for vulnerable populations](#). If any staff member or participant becomes sick at your event, separate them from others as soon as possible. Establish procedures to help sick staff or participants leave the event as soon as possible. Provide them with clean, [disposable facemasks](#) to wear, if available. Work with the local public health department and nearby hospitals to care for those who become sick. If needed, contact emergency services for those who need emergency care. Public transportation, shared rides, and taxis should be avoided for sick persons, and disposable facemasks should be worn by persons who are sick at all times when in a vehicle. Read more about [preventing the spread of COVID-19 if someone is sick](#).

Note: Providing a sick staff member or event participant with a disposable facemask to wear does not replace the need for that person to leave as soon as possible, stay home, and seek medical advice. Wearing a disposable facemask in the workplace or while participating in a large event is not a sufficient infection control measure.

- ✓ **Plan ways to limit in-person contact for staff supporting your events.** Several ways to do this include offering staff the option to telework if they can perform their job duties off-site, using email, and conducting meetings by phone or video conferencing. Reduce the number of staff needed such as staggering shifts for staff who support essential functions and services during events.
- ✓ **Develop flexible refund policies for participants.** Create refund policies that permit participants the flexibility to stay home when they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

- ✓ **Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events.** Work closely with local public health officials to assess local capacities in the area. During a COVID-19 outbreak, resource limitations among local healthcare systems and/or law enforcement can influence the decision to postpone or cancel your events. If possible, plan alternative ways for participants to enjoy the events by television, radio, or online.

Communicate about COVID-19

- ✓ **Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.** Get [up-to-date information](#) about local COVID-19 activity from public health officials. Be aware of temporary school dismissals in your area because these may affect event staff.

Note: Early in the outbreak, local public health officials may recommend schools [dismiss temporarily](#).

- ✓ **Update and distribute timely and accurate emergency communication information.** Identify everyone in your chain of communication (for example, event staff, participants, suppliers, vendors, and key community partners and stakeholders) and establish systems for sharing information with them. Maintain up-to-date contact information for everyone in the chain of communication. Identify platforms, such as a hotline, automated text messaging, and a website to help disseminate information. Update key community partners and stakeholders regularly. Share information about how you and the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for the venues are responding to the outbreak.
- ✓ **Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and participants.** Information you share should be easily understood by everyone attending the events. 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](#) .

Follow-up After a COVID-19 Outbreak has Ended

Remember, a COVID-19 outbreak could last for a long time. When public health officials determine that the outbreak has ended in your local community, work with them to identify criteria for scaling back COVID-19 prevention actions at your events. Base the criteria on slowing of the outbreak in your local area. If your events were cancelled, work with your venues to reschedule your events.

Evaluate the effectiveness of your emergency operations and communication plans

- ✓ **Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for your venues to discuss and note lessons learned.** Gather feedback from event staff, participants (if possible), community partners, and stakeholders to improve plans. Identify any gaps in the plans and any needs you may have for additional resources.
- ✓ **Maintain and expand your planning team.** Look for ways to expand community partnerships. Identify agencies or partners needed to help you prepare for infectious disease outbreaks in the future and try to add them to your planning team.
- ✓ **Participate in community-wide emergency preparedness activities.**

COVID-19 Readiness Resources

- Visit www.cdc.gov/COVID19 for the latest information and resources about COVID-19
- COVID 2019 Situation Summary <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-nCoV/summary.html>
- Prevention and Treatment <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/prevention-treatment.html>
- What to Do If You Are Sick <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>

- Pregnant Women and COVID-19 FAQs <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/pregnancy-faq.html>
- FAQs: Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) and Children <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/children-faq.html>
- Handwashing: A Family Activity <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/handwashing-family.html>
- Handwashing: Clean Hands Save Lives <http://www.cdc.gov/handwashing>

CDC Interim Guidance for Specific Audiences

- Get Your Household Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/get-your-household-ready-for-COVID-19.html>
- Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Childcare Programs and K-12 Schools to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-2019) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-for-schools.html>
- Interim Guidance for Administrators of US Institutions of Higher Education (IHE) to Plan, Prepare, and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-ihe-response.html>
- Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>
- Interim Guidance for Travelers <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

CDC Communication Resources

- Interim Guidance: Public Health Communicators Get Your Community Ready for Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/public-health-communicators-get-your-community-ready.html>
- Print Resources <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- Buttons and Badges <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/buttons-badges.html>