

COVID-19 Guidance for Festivals, Fairs, and Large Gatherings

6/30/2021

This guidance is designed to provide considerations and best practices to help guide organizers of festivals, fairs, and other large gatherings in planning for and managing their events.

Recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 spreads when an infected person breathes out droplets and very small particles that contain the virus. These droplets and particles can be breathed in by other people; land in their eyes, nose, or mouth; or land on surfaces that people touch. The risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather with other households. Several key strategies can reduce the risk of getting sick or transmitting COVID-19:

- ✓ Get vaccinated. Vaccination is one of the best things you can do to prevent getting or spreading COVID-19. For more information about what you can do when vaccinated, visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).
- ✓ Wear a face covering when recommended by MDH or CDC.
 - There is no longer a statewide requirement to wear face coverings in most settings. However, other federal, state, and/or local laws may require face coverings in some settings, and businesses may set their own requirements.
 - For more information about face covering recommendations, refer to [Recommendations for Wearing Masks \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html).
- ✓ If you are not vaccinated:
 - Keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from other households and follow the face covering recommendations in the above MDH resources.
- ✓ Vaccinated or not vaccinated, MDH strongly recommends that everyone:
 - Wash their hands often.
 - Follow guidance on staying home (quarantine) if you were exposed to someone who has COVID-19. People who are fully vaccinated may not need to quarantine in many situations. Refer to [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf) for more details.

- Stay home if they are sick. Visit [If You Are Sick: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html).
- Follow testing recommendations for when they travel, have COVID-19 symptoms, or are exposed to COVID-19. Visit [COVID-19 Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for information about who should get tested and how to get a test.
- Employers must provide reasonable accommodations as required under existing federal and state law.

General recommendations

- ✓ Consider gradually increasing your event size over time to allow for a smooth transition to larger events. This will allow for more time for increased statewide vaccination rates and give your organization time and experience in your return to higher occupancies.
- ✓ Create space at the event.
 - Reduce occupant capacity to allow for some space to naturally occur between people or groups.
 - For parades, festivals, walk/run races and similar events, create a course that allows enough space for spectators to spread-out along the course or roadway.
 - In areas where people are seated, consider having extra space between tables or groups of people, or consider assigning seats or seating locations to promote distancing between groups.
 - Identify and manage congestion areas, chokepoints, and bottlenecks to prevent high-density areas.
 - Use queuing or signage to manage pathways, lines, waiting areas, and other areas of congestion.
- ✓ Manage occupancy and arrival to avoid congestion and crowds.
 - Encourage patrons to arrive in smaller groups (e.g., 10 people) and avoid intermingling with other groups.
 - Consider advanced ticketing and reservations to manage occupancy.
 - Schedule arrival times for longer than their typical duration to minimize the congregation of patrons waiting.
 - Establish “drop off” areas to allow for patrons to be dropped off at their designated entrance to the venue to minimize the number of persons walking through parking ramps, parking areas, sidewalks, and walk-ways. Designate staging area for taxis and rideshare vehicles to drop-off and pick-up customers.
 - Enhance security protocols for entry into an event to allow for more efficient security-checks of patrons, minimize face-to-face interaction between security personnel and patrons, and minimize wait-times (e.g., metal-detectors, scanners, transparent baggies for personal items, limit pat-down checks).
- ✓ Consider an event-level face covering requirement or recommendation based on relevant factors:
 - Prevalence of virus and vaccination rate in area.

- Anticipated presence of unvaccinated people, including children.
- ✓ Considerations for an event-level face covering requirement or recommendation:
 - Businesses may elect to create their own face covering policies, even when the law does not require face coverings.
 - Consider promoting face coverings to be worn in crowded or congested areas.
 - Offer face coverings to all persons upon entry and throughout the event.
 - Other laws (for example, federal requirements or local orders) may require face coverings, so be sure to understand the laws that apply in your area and your industry.
 - Visit [Masks and Face Coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html) for face covering requirements and recommendations, exemptions, and frequently asked questions.
- ✓ Additional recommendations.
 - Provide hand-washing stations and sanitizer throughout the event for patrons to encourage hand-washing and minimize crowding, congestion, and lines.
 - Increase the number of food-trucks, merchandizing tables, and restrooms to spread out crowds and minimize lines and waiting times.
 - Use app-based ordering to minimize patrons having to wait in line, linger and congregate in concession and merchandise areas.
 - Consider delivering concessions directly to designated seating areas, as opposed to providing concessions at concession stands, provided that workers can be protected.
 - Limit menu items to those items which can be readily retrieved or quickly prepared to minimize congestion, lingering, and waiting. Consider “pre- assembled” orders to simplify ordering and minimize ordering and wait-times.
 - For large events, consider hosting an on-site vaccination clinic to offer the COVID-19 to persons who are not yet vaccinated.
 - For additional recommendations, visit [CDC: Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html).

Food and beverage service

Follow state and local requirements for preparing and serving food and beverages.

- ✓ Additional resources
 - For additional information about types of food business licenses including food carts, mobile food units, seasonal establishments, and special events, refer to [Licensing: Food, Pools, and Lodging Services \(FPLS\) \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/index.html) and

[Minnesota Food Code, Minnesota Rules Chapter 4626](#)

www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/rules/foodcode/index.html.

- For information about licensing jurisdiction, refer to [Licensing Jurisdiction: Food, Pools, and Lodging Services \(FPLS\)](#)
www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/license/delegation.html.
- For food code requirements, visit [Food Business Fact Sheets](#)
www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/fs.html.