



2019 Novel Coronavirus [COVID-19]

cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus | cdc.gov/coronavirus

RECOMMENDED GUIDANCE FOR SOCIAL GATHERINGS AND EVENTS

Purpose

Idaho's public health officials cannot predict what the threat of COVID-19 will be across the state in July, August, September 2020, and beyond. Depending on the severity of the outbreak, Idaho's public health officials may recommend community actions designed to limit exposure to COVID-19. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), event organizers must be prepared for contingencies with their safety plans as they may be asked to modify, postpone or cancel the events for the safety and well-being of their staff, participants, and the community. This guidance is intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning events and social gatherings who are looking to establish a safety operations plan for their events. Creating a safety operations plan can help protect you and the health of your event, participants and the local community.

Recommended Actions

Considerations for Cancelling or Postponing

Event organizers should consider the following questions:

- *How many people are expected to attend?* Please keep in mind that gatherings with more than 250 people have a higher risk of coronavirus transmission.
- *How many of the attendees are more vulnerable to COVID-19?* Older adults and people with pre-existing health conditions are considered to be at higher risk.
- *How close will the attendees be?* Person-to-person spread is most likely to occur within close contact of six feet or less.
- *Are there opportunities and ways to safely space attendees?* Practicing social distancing can help reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19.
- *What is the level of transmission within your local community?* Stay informed.

Event organizers should continually assess, based on current conditions, whether to postpone, cancel, or significantly reduce the number of attendees, if possible. If organizers decide to proceed with an event, they should consider the following recommendations.

Before the Event

- Establish an operations plan or protocol taking into consideration recommended measures. If feasible, meet with the venue's operations or planning team to discuss an emergency protocol or a contingency plan that addresses scenarios that could affect the event.
- Train event staff on policies and procedures described in your plan as well as sanitation and safe food handling.
- Encourage the event staff and all attendees to practice good personal hygiene and other preventive measures. Use health messages and materials developed by credible public health sources such as CDC (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets>) and your local health district.
- Consider displaying signs (physical and/or electronic) throughout the event to provide frequent reminders to participants and staff to engage in everyday preventive actions. These should 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. Ensure that trash cans provided have lids.
 - 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, sneezing, or coughing. 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.
- Encourage attendees to avoid direct physical contact, such as handshaking, holding hands, hugging, and "high-fives" as these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person.
- Consider ways to encourage anyone with respiratory symptoms and/or fever to stay home.
 - Offer refunds or support reselling of tickets for persons who become ill.
 - Place messages on websites, social media, tickets, and venue entrances reminding people to protect one another by staying home when sick.
- Establish procedures to help sick staff and participants leave the event as soon as possible. Provide them with clean, disposable facemasks to wear, if available.
- If possible, designate a space for staff and participants who may become sick and cannot leave the event immediately. Create a plan for treating staff and participants who do not live nearby.
- Create a plan for those staff and attendees who have very different travel patterns such as those coming from another country or state.
- Special considerations should be given to staff and participants who are at higher risk of conducting COVID-19. The CDC also recommends drafting a plan for how those who are at-risk will be separated and cared for if need to be.
- Plan for employee absences. Adopt flexible attendance and sick-leave policies that encourage staff members who are ill or caring for someone else who is ill to stay home. Staff should be cross-trained to accommodate any changes that may arise.
- Aim to limit staff contact on site. If feasible, develop a staggered shift schedule to reduce the risk of exposure and allow staff to telecommute if they are not needed at the venue.
- Gather supplies such as soap, hand sanitizers, tissue and disposable face masks that will be distributed on site. Make sure staff and attendees have access to the supplies.

- Develop a plan in case the situation changes and the event or gathering must be cancelled or postponed. Assess whether the event could be held virtually, if necessary.
- Identify automated platforms that can be used to quickly disseminate updates to event staff and attendees via text message, email, etc. Take care to consider any potential language, cultural or disability barriers that may affect communication.

During the Event

- Stay informed and closely follow all COVID-19 related news and updates. Pay particular attention to developments in the local area.
- Share frequent updates with staff, participants, partners and more. Promote preventive resources and address any concerns.
- Instruct any staff member, participant, or vendor exhibiting symptoms of illness to remain home and advise those at higher risk to avoid areas of congregation.
- Consider conducting health screening at the entrance to the event.
- Encourage face coverings or provide disposable face masks at all times, especially if social distancing is not able to be maintained including in entry/exit areas, bathrooms, etc.
- Special attention needs to be placed on reducing close contact at entry/exits or other areas of congregation and/or congestion.
- If feasible, increase the footprint of the event to allow attendees, staff, and vendors to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet between each other.
- Consider limiting the number of attendees and vendors to ensure everyone maintains at least 6 feet separation between themselves at all times.
- Increase the footprint of the table, booth, tent, cars, etc. with at least 10 feet of distance between them to reduce congestion and allow for proper social distancing.
- Anywhere there is a potential for people to stand in line, queue lines should be set up to control distancing and should be either a straight line or an "L" shaped line. 6 feet distancing should be marked in those queue lines (using tape, spray paint, flag rope, cones, etc.). Directional arrows can also be used to direct the flow throughout the event. Areas to consider include ticketing, restrooms, food stands, buffets, etc.
- Assign staff to help regulate attendees flow and ensure social/physical distancing of at least 6 feet as well as other preventive measures.
- Consider closing all parts of the event location that are not directly associated with the booth, table, tent, etc. to prevent people from co-mingling, including common seating areas.
- Considerations for food service may include:
 - Frequent washing and sanitizing of all multiuse utensils on the service line
 - Constant monitoring of the buffet by an employee trained in safe operating procedures
 - Ensure one-way flow of attendees around or at the buffet line
 - Install sneeze guards over buffet line
 - Provide hand sanitizer or disposable napkins for holding serving utensils at the beginning of service line
 - Only use pre-wrapped utensils and single use/to-go plates
 - Serve prepackaged meals or utilize menu order only
 - Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of self-service line counters and condiment containers
 - Consider cafeteria style model. Have an employee plate the food for the attendees

- Post notice informing attendees to wash their hands after using serving utensils
- Food service employees must practice frequent hand washing and glove changes
- Always practice social distancing measures

For more information and additional recommendations refer to CDH's Guidance for Salad Bars, Buffets, and other self-service areas <https://www.cdhd.idaho.gov/pdfs/cd/Coronavirus/Resource%20Docs/food-childcare/Guidance-Self-Service-Areas-06-05-20.pdf>

- Provide ample opportunities for staff, attendees, and vendors to wash hands with soap and water. Consider providing additional hand sanitizer or hand washing opportunities throughout the event such as portable sanitizer and handwashing stations.
- Allow only vendors and their staff to handle products. Discourage attendees from touching and handling a product unless it is an item that can be disinfected.
- Vendors and event organizers should consider using only vinyl or plastic table covers for easy disinfecting.
- Vendors should consider using a touchless credit card reader when possible to avoid the exchange of cash, checks, and as possible credit cards.

Event organizers should clearly communicate and enforce their policies and procedures to minimize the possibility of spread of COVID-19 amongst their vendors, staff, and event attendees.

After the Event

- Hold a post event meeting with your staff and venue operations or planning team to discuss the effectiveness of your safety plan and lessons learned.
- Gather feedback from event staff, vendors, participants, and community partners.
- Identify any gaps in the plans and any needs you may have for additional resources.
- Look for ways and partners that can help you to improve future safety plans.
- Identify additional training opportunities for your staff.

Considerations for Cleaning and Disinfection

Cleaning and disinfection can help reduce the risk of exposure to COVID-19 and are key to reopening public spaces, according to the CDC.

- 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. Frequently touched surfaces are surfaces that are handled frequently throughout the day by numerous people. These surfaces may include doorknobs, light switches, sink faucets, tabletops, chairs and other seating, counters, phones, computers, key boards, microphones, and toys. Frequently touched surfaces can become contaminated by direct contact with bodily fluids or through indirect contact with other contaminated objects, such as inadequately cleaned rags and sponges or improperly washed hands.
- All surfaces must be cleaned 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 at <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>. 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. Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
 - 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](#).

This guidance is subject to change as more information becomes available about limiting the transmission of COVID-19. Business-specific information is currently under development. For more information on COVID-19, resources are available at the following:

- CDC Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) Print Resources:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/factsheets.html>
- CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations:
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- CDC When and How to Wash Your Hands
<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>
- State of Idaho Official Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website:
<https://coronavirus.idaho.gov/>
- Central District Health COVID-19 Web Pages:
<https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/dac-coronavirus> and <https://www.cdh.idaho.gov/dac-resources>
- Central District Health Call Center: 208-321-2222 | M-F 8:30 am-4:30 pm

Sources:

CDC, Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/index.html>