

Gathering Requirements for Celebrations and Significant Life Events

11/12/2020

This document was formerly titled Guidance for Safe Celebrations and Events. Updates include further clarification of Executive Order (EO) 20-96 on page 2 and links to venue guidance for event-specific COVID-19 Preparedness Plans.

Your health and COVID-19

Any time people are gathering with others, they are at risk of exposure to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. COVID-19 spreads through respiratory droplets produced when an infected person coughs, sneezes, or talks. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby or possibly inhaled into the lungs. People with symptoms and without symptoms can spread the virus.

COVID-19 can lead to serious medical conditions and even death for people of all ages. We cannot predict who will become severely ill, although we know that older people and people with underlying health conditions are at higher risk. We do not yet know what the long-term effects of infection from COVID-19 are; even people with mild cases may experience long-term complications.

The best way to prevent illness is to avoid exposure to this virus. The masking, physical distancing, and other steps work together to help reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. We can all take these actions to protect our families, others, and ourselves:

- ✓ Stay home when sick.
- ✓ Stay at least 6 feet apart from other people.
- ✓ Wear face coverings.
- ✓ Wash your hands often.
- ✓ Cover your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze.

Executive Order 20-96

Parties, celebrations, receptions, or other social gatherings connected to private parties

- ✓ Venues, bars, restaurants, and other event spaces may host planned celebrations, receptions, or other social gatherings such as private parties, wedding receptions, funeral receptions, celebrations of life milestones (birthdays or retirements), family reunions, gatherings before or after planned religious services, and other similar occasions that offer food or beverages (including alcoholic beverages) for on-premises consumption or that permit food or beverages to be consumed on-premises if they develop and implement an event-specific COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that complies with the following:
 - The above planned celebrations and gatherings may not take place between the hours of 10 p.m. and 4 a.m.
 - The above planned celebrations and gatherings must limit capacity as follows:
 - Effective Nov. 27, 2020, at 10 p.m., these gatherings and events are limited to a maximum of 50 people.
 - Effective Dec. 11, 2020, at 10 p.m., these gatherings and events are limited to a maximum of 25 people.
 - Regardless of the type of venue (e.g., restaurant, bar, entertainment venue), the event space must also reduce its capacity to the 25% occupancy, not to exceed the applicable maximum capacity cap.
 - If the event space does not have an established occupant capacity, the venue must calculate the occupant capacity for the space using the formula in the applicable guidance for recreational entertainment venues not to exceed the applicable maximum capacity cap.
 - Recreational entertainment venues guidance listed at the end of this section. If the establishment will remain open for service to patrons not attending the event:
 - It must designate an exclusive and separate event space within the establishment (e.g., a ballroom, private room, or other separated space) to ensure persons attending the event remain separated from other patrons who are not attending the event, and areas or activities not associated with the event.
 - Workers hired specifically for the event, such as an outside caterer or entertainer, must also be separated from other workers, patrons, or activities not associated with, staffing, or attending the event.
 - The attendees of the celebration must be included in calculating the overall capacity of the venue, restaurant, bar, or other event space.
 - The guidance in this document must be incorporated into the plan.
 - The plan must incorporate other relevant industry guidance:

- [Preparedness Plan Requirements Guidance – Recreational Entertainment & Meetings \(dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_recreational_entertainment.pdf\)](https://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_recreational_entertainment.pdf).
 - [Preparedness Plan Requirements Guidance – Seated Entertainment & Meetings \(dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_seated_entertainment.pdf\)](https://dli.mn.gov/sites/default/files/pdf/COVID_19_preparedness_plan_requirements_guidelines_seated_entertainment.pdf).
 - [Industry Guidance for Safely Reopening: Restaurants and Bars \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safedining.pdf).
- ✓ This document does not apply to wedding ceremonies, funeral ceremonies, and religious services—it applies only to the related receptions, celebrations, parties and gatherings that occur before or after the service or ceremony. For services and ceremonies, please see the [Guidance for Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaith.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaith.pdf).
 - ✓ If these gatherings and events (whether formal or informal) do not occur within a venue that has developed and implemented a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan, they must comply with the social gathering limitations in EO 20-96, which limits gatherings to no more than 10 persons and not more than three separate households.

Key requirements for significant life events and parties

Anytime people from different households gather, there is an increased risk of spreading infections. Hold an in-person gathering only if planners and participants commit to keeping at least 6 feet of space between people from different households (social distancing) at all times and wear face coverings throughout the event. Consider whether having your event encourages people in high-risk groups (particularly older adults and people with underlying health conditions) to gather. If so, consider offering a virtual celebration instead.

This guidance is for event planners, venue managers and owners, catering companies, people or families requesting these services, and others who may be involved in the planning and coordination of celebrations and events. These events may take place in indoor or outdoor venues, including but not limited to, rental space in event centers, restaurants, fellowship halls and gathering spaces in faith-based buildings, community centers, halls, or outdoor event spaces. Examples of celebrations and events covered by this guidance include but are not limited to catered parties, wedding receptions, funeral receptions, and other similar gatherings or life milestones held at a venue.

Follow the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan

All businesses, organizations, venues, and event organizers hosting celebrations and events governed by this guidance are required to develop and implement an event-specific COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that incorporates the requirements in this guidance and other applicable guidance on [StaySafe MN \(staysafe.mn.gov\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov). This plan must be available so people on the premises can easily see this document. Vendors servicing one event may collectively agree to one comprehensive plan, if they so choose.

The host(s), organizer/planner(s), vendor(s), and facility staff are all responsible for the success of the event and the implementation of plans to minimize the spread of COVID-19. Acknowledge the shared responsibility for your event and the need to keep all participants and staff safe.

Prior to the event, plan how to address a situation where people are not following the face covering and social distancing requirements throughout the entire event. If attendees are not complying with applicable requirements, stop the event.

Requirements and recommendations

Health screening

Requirements

- ✓ Establish and implement health screening for all persons planning to attend the event to ensure that anyone with symptoms, or has tested positive without symptoms, or has been exposed to anyone who has tested positive and is in their quarantine period, does not attend.

Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet

Requirements

- ✓ Implement and maintain social distancing of at least 6 feet between persons from different households throughout the event.
- ✓ Provide controlled flow of participants as much as possible, including upon start and at end of the event. Use signage, markings, barriers, paint tape or flags to eliminate congestion areas, bottlenecks and choke points, and provide queuing where necessary.
- ✓ Limit the number of speakers and make arrangements so that they maintain at least 6 feet of distance from others.

Recommendations

- ✓ Whenever possible, provide individual microphones for multiple speakers. If a microphone must be shared, consider leaving it untouched on a stand.
- ✓ Event photography: Standing close together is a high-risk activity, even when it is a shorter period of time. Consider taking individual photos and using editing software to combine them into a group photo. See additional recommendations in the [Preparedness Plan Requirements for Faith-Based Communities, Places of Worship, Weddings, and Funerals \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safefait.pdf\)](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safefait.pdf).

Use of face coverings

Face coverings are required in all indoor business and public indoor spaces. In addition, workers must wear face coverings outdoors when 6 feet of social distance from others cannot be maintained. For more information, including exemptions from the face covering requirement and situations where face

coverings may be temporarily removed, see [Masks and face coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#masks\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/prevention.html#masks)

Requirements

- ✓ Require all workers and attendees to wear face coverings in compliance with Executive Order 20-81, (see [Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations under Executive Order 20-81 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html)), and establish a procedure for accommodating persons who cannot wear face coverings due to a medical or mental health condition or disability.
- ✓ Face coverings may be temporarily removed in certain situations. For example, face coverings may be removed when eating and/or drinking, but must be put back on when not eating or drinking. Because eating and drinking require attendees to remove their face covering, only eat or drink while seated and apart from members of other households.

Recommendations

- ✓ Have masks available at the event for persons who arrive without one.
- ✓ Require or strongly recommend that patrons wear face coverings outdoors when social distancing cannot be easily maintained.

Hand Hygiene Practices

Requirements

- ✓ Provide hand sanitizer at entrances and exits and other strategic locations.
- ✓ Provide instructions and signage for attendees on regular handwashing/sanitizing.

Food and beverages

Requirements

- ✓ Food must be prepared and served in accordance with applicable rules and regulations guiding the specific event. Licensed food establishments must follow the [Minnesota Food Code \(www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/rules/foodcode/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/communities/environment/food/rules/foodcode/index.html).
- ✓ Control lines at concession, food, and beverage areas to ensure social distancing of at least 6 feet between members of different households. This can be done with floor markings or other indicators. Face coverings must be worn when in line for food or concessions.
- ✓ A limit of six people can be seated together at any one time.
- ✓ Self-service food and beverage areas are allowed as long as the COVID-19 Preparedness Plan includes protections such as oversight of the self-service area to ensure that social distancing is maintained, hands are being sanitized, and participants wear face coverings in the self-service area. The responsible party for overseeing compliance can be the venue administrator, caterer, or event organizer.

Recommendations

- ✓ Best practice would be to serve prepackaged food as much as possible.
- ✓ Use remote payment systems when possible if attendees are purchasing food or beverages.

Music and dancing

Bands, DJs, and other live music performances are allowed but must maintain physical distancing of 6 feet between other performers and 12 feet from the audience. For more information, see [Music Activities and Performances During COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/musicguide.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/musicguide.pdf).

Dancing has a higher risk of spreading COVID-19 and is strongly discouraged. Dancing, like other vigorous physical activity, results in heavier breathing and increases the volume of respiratory droplets being released into the air. Because of this, **dancing at social gatherings and events is not recommended.**

If you include dancing as a part of your event, follow these requirements and recommendations.

Requirements

- ✓ Everyone must wear face coverings while dancing at the event.
- ✓ Limit the number of people on the dance floor to allow for six feet of distance between people from different households at all times.
- ✓ If these requirements are not being followed, vendors and others who have planned and are monitoring the event are responsible for stopping the dancing portion of the event.

Recommendations

- ✓ Designate a person (DJ, performer, host, planner, or combination) to monitor and enforce the distancing, masking, and limits to the number of people on the dance floor at the same time.
- ✓ Divide participants into groups using nametags or other methods, and allow them access to the dance floor at different times.
- ✓ Repeat or split popular songs if necessary so everyone can enjoy the music in succession.
- ✓ Encourage socially distanced line dancing or other forward facing dances where people are more easily able to maintain 6 feet of distance between people.
- ✓ “Chair dancing” or dancing by moving to the music while seated in chairs at least 6 feet apart, can be a creative way to maintain distance and still dance with your arms and legs.
- ✓ Consider limiting dancing to ceremonial dances with designated participants according to your particular tradition and culture.

Restrooms

Requirements

- ✓ Mark areas where people may need to line up to ensure social distancing.

- ✓ Provide an ample supply of hand sanitizer, or soap and water.
- ✓ Clean facilities regularly following the venue's cleaning and disinfection protocol.
- ✓ Set a maximum number of guests allowed in the restroom to meet applicable capacity/size guidelines for social distancing.
- ✓ Turn off electric hand dryers and rely on touchless paper towel dispensers.

Summary

We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and fellow Minnesotans from COVID-19. This guidance is based on insuring social distance and wearing face coverings to limit the potential spread of COVID-19 whenever people gathering. By following current [Executive Orders from Governor Walz \(mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp\)](https://mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp) and these guidelines on [Stay Safe MN \(staysafe.mn.gov\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov), we can enjoy activities and events while supporting public health, slowing the spread of COVID-19, and minimizing added strain on local communities and health care systems in Minnesota.

Resources

- ✓ [CDC: Considerations for 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)
- ✓ [CDC: Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html)



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