

Phase Two Guidance Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) Guidance for Private Gatherings

This guidance is intended for the hosts and guests of private indoor and outdoor social gatherings. This guidance applies to private homes, dormitories, apartments, condominiums and cooperatives, and common rooms of such residences. During Phase Two, the public and businesses must adopt behaviors and rigorous safeguards to reduce risk for all. Epidemiologic data shows that private gatherings are a strong contributor to transmission of the COVID-19 virus. **The following measures should be implemented to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.** For additional information, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or recently exposed to someone diagnosed with COVID-19, should not host or attend gatherings due to the risk of exposing others. Symptoms of COVID-19 may include: fever (subjective or 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, diarrhea, or otherwise feeling unwell.

Basics for Private Gatherings

- **Indoor gatherings cannot exceed 10 people, including the hosts.¹**
- **Outdoor gatherings cannot exceed 25 people, including the hosts.**
- When deciding how many people to invite to your gathering within these limits, consider the amount of space you have and the ability to maintain social distancing during the event.
- Outdoor activities are preferred over indoor. However, it is important to understand that **the more people interact in any setting increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission and outbreaks**, and the same preventive measures need to be followed.
- It is important to follow social distancing, cloth face covering, and hand hygiene recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during both outdoor and indoor gatherings.

Risk of Spreading COVID-19 spreading at Private Gatherings

- Lowest risk: Virtual-only gatherings.
- More risk: Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear masks, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or county).
- Higher risk: Medium-sized in-person gatherings that are adapted to allow individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and with attendees coming from outside the local area.
- Highest risk: Large in-person gatherings where it is difficult for individuals to remain spaced at least 6 feet apart and attendees travel from outside the local area.

Hosts and Guests Should Practice Everyday Prevention Measures

- **Do not host or attend a gathering if you or anyone in your household are feeling unwell.**
- **Practice social distancing.** Stay 6 feet from other people who don't live in your same household.
- **Wear a cloth face covering** or face mask. Hosts and guests must wear masks when coming into contact with persons outside of their own households. Masks protect the wearer and protect other people.

¹ Unless the number of persons in a household exceeds 10 people.

- Those who cannot wear face coverings for medical reasons should reconsider attending.
- Masks are not required for children 2 and under.
- For more information about mask wearing see *Masks and Cloth Face Coverings for the General Public* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
- Key times to perform hand hygiene include:
 - Before arriving and after leaving;
 - Before preparing or serving food;
 - Before and after eating food;
 - After using the toilet;
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings;
 - After handling another person's belongings; and
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- These **everyday prevention measures should be followed at indoor and outdoor gatherings** to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Considerations for Hosts

- Be socially responsible and cancel your gathering if you or any one in your household becomes sick or is exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Remind guests to stay home if they feel sick or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19.
- Provide plenty of soap and water and hand sanitizer for guests to use. Consider creating hand hygiene stations at key locations around the space.
- Keep a list of guests who attended for potential future contact tracing needs.
- Please see “Signs You Can Use to Make Your Home and Guests Safer” on coronavirus.dc.gov/phasetwo.
- **For additional information specific to hosting social gatherings** see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/personal-social-activities.html.

Avoid Close Contact and Reduce Touchpoints

- Remind guests not to form lines (e.g., at the door, for food, for the bathroom) or congregate.
- Arrange seating and outdoor settings in ways that promote social distancing.
- Groups should be seated by household and separated from other groups by at least 6 feet. No more than 6 people should be seated in a group.
- Avoid shaking hands and physical contact with people who don't live with you. Instead wave and verbally greet people.
- If planning activities for adults and/or children, consider those where social distancing can be maintained (e.g., sidewalk chalk art or frisbee).
- Limit use of shared items (e.g. sports or game equipment).
- Use single-use hand towels or paper towels for drying hands so guests do not share a towel.
- Use touchless garbage cans or pails.
- Use gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash. Wash hands before wearing and after removing gloves.

Serve Food Safely

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread by food. However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub before performing any food preparation or serving activities.

- Limit the number of people handling or serving food.
- Encourage guests to bring their own food and drinks.
- Avoid sharing food and utensils.
- Limit people going in and out of the areas where food is being prepared or handled, such as in the kitchen or around the grill.
- If serving any food, identify one person to serve all food so that multiple people are not handling the serving utensils.
- Use single-use options or identify one person to serve sharable items, like salad dressings, food containers, and condiments, so that multiple people are not handling the items.

Clean and Disinfect

- Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between use.
- If you choose to use any shared items that are reusable (e.g., seating covers, tablecloths, linen napkins), wash, clean, and sanitize them after the event.
- Consider also providing cleaning supplies that allow guests to wipe down surfaces after use and before they leave.
- For more information about cleaning and disinfecting homes and public spaces and disinfectants that are effective against the virus that causes COVID-19, see the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website: [cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website: [epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19).

The guidelines above will continue to be updated as the outbreak evolves. Please visit coronavirus.dc.gov regularly for the most current information.