

Phase Two Guidance

Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19): Guidance for Event and Meeting Spaces

During Phase Two, the public and businesses are required to adopt behaviors and rigorous safeguards to reduce risk for all. This guidance is intended for those who own or manage spaces that can be rented for events, such as hotels or convention centers. This guidance does not apply to venues that are primarily used as entertainment venues or sports venues. For more information about entertainment venues, please see DC Health *Guidance for Entertainment Venues* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance. The following measures must be implemented to help reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission amongst employees, attendees, and the community. For additional information, visit coronavirus.dc.gov.

Please note that any individual experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 or who is required to isolate or quarantine due to COVID-19 diagnosis or exposure¹ must not work at or attend an event 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.

General Guidelines for Events

- **Attendance at an event is limited to no more than 25% capacity of a facility (or given room in a facility with multiple event rooms) or up to 250 persons, whichever is fewer, not including staff. This number shall include all attendees, speakers, or performers.**
- **Events larger than 250 persons will require approval of submitted plans to the Government of the District of Columbia through the Homeland Security and Emergency Management Agency (HSEMA).** Plans may be submitted via their website: coronavirus.dc.gov/waiver. Outdoor events are more likely to be approved than indoor.
- Event spaces may re-open only to the extent that social distancing between and among workers, guests, and any speakers or performers can be maintained.
- Virtual events and virtual attendance options are encouraged.
- Outdoor events are safer than indoor events and are encouraged, weather permitting.
- Groups of up to 6 attendees can be seated together, preferably from the same household.
- There must be at least 6 feet between attendees, or groups of attendees, in all directions.
- Standing and dancing receptions are not permitted.
- All seats must be pre-assigned/reserved prior to an event. Seating assignment charts must be saved for 30 days and must be made available to DC Health within 24 hours upon request.

Everyday Prevention Measures

- **Get the COVID-19 vaccine.** Find out more at coronavirus.dc.gov/vaccine.
- **Stay at home if you are sick** or were recently exposed to someone with COVID-19¹.
- **Practice social distancing.** Keep at least 6 feet of distance between you and other people who are not in your household.

¹ For more information, including information about quarantine and testing exemptions, please see *Guidance for Quarantine after COVID-19 Exposure* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance

- All persons at an event **must** wear a face covering or facemask.
 - Masks are most effective if they fit snugly to the face and have 2-3 layers of tightly woven fabric.
 - Masks are not required for children younger than age 2.
 - For more information about mask wearing see *Masks and Cloth Face Coverings for the General Public* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - If the event includes food service, face coverings or masks may be removed **for the limited purpose and limited time period necessary** to consume food or beverages.
- Avoid shaking hands and physical contact with people who don't live with you. Instead wave and verbally greet people.
- Perform frequent hand hygiene (with soap and water or alcohol-based hand sanitizer).
 - Key times to perform hand hygiene include:
 - When arriving at the venue,
 - Before eating or drinking
 - Before and after preparing or distributing food,
 - After using the toilet,
 - Before and after putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings,
 - Before and after work shifts and work breaks,
 - After handling trash,
 - After handling another person's belongings, and
 - After blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.

Employer Considerations to Encourage Employee and Guest Safety

- Employers are responsible for providing a safe workplace.
- Employers must conduct a thorough assessment of the workplace to identify potential workplace hazards that could increase risks for COVID-19 transmission
- Employers must communicate COVID-19 policies to staff, guests, and speakers (e.g., on event space website, social media sites, prominent signage at entrances and throughout the event space, message screens and public announcements before and during the event).
- Signage must be posted at the entrance(s) stating that nobody with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19 is permitted to enter the event space and that individuals must wear a mask or face covering.
- Display signage throughout the event space reinforcing social distancing and hand hygiene policies.
- Employers must provide adequate supplies to allow for frequent hand hygiene (e.g., soap and water and alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol) for use by staff, guest, and performers. Ensure that hand sanitizer is readily accessible throughout the event space (e.g., at entrances, lobbies, tables, food service areas, workstations, break areas, backstage areas).
- Employers must provide staff with cloth face coverings and appropriate personal protective equipment (e.g., masks, gloves) per their job responsibilities. Gloves must be worn as indicated per routine job responsibilities.
- Consider providing disposable facemasks to guests, speakers, and performers if they need one, supplies permitting.
- Employees who handle food must wear disposable gloves to minimize bare hand contact with any food products
- Employers must stagger staff shifts, start times, and break times as much as possible. Limit number of employees in a breakroom at any given time to ensure social

distancing.

- Implement leave policies that are flexible and non-punitive, and that allow sick employees to stay home. Leave policies are recommended to account for the following:
 - Employees who report COVID-19 symptoms
 - Employees who were tested for COVID-19 due to symptoms, travel, or exposure and test results are pending
 - Employees who tested positive for COVID-19
 - Employees who are a close contact of someone who tested positive for COVID-19
 - Employees who need to stay home with their children if there are school or childcare closures, or to care for sick family members
- Encourage and support staff to get the COVID-19 vaccine by providing leave options for leaving to get the vaccine and if they experience common side effects.
- Learn about and inform your employees about COVID-related leave provided through new federal law, the Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) and all applicable District law relating to sick leave.
- Educate employees about COVID-19. Refer to coronavirus.dc.gov for more information.
- **For additional information specific to events and gatherings**, see the CDC website at cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html.

Operational Considerations

- **Events that include food and beverage service must adhere to all guidelines set forth in *Guidance for Restaurants* at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.**
 - No food and beverages shall be consumed in any area that does not provide sufficient space to maintain social distancing between groups.
 - Buffets, salad bars and other communal serving areas are permitted if an employee serves the food items.
 - As applicable, consider options for guests to place food orders ahead of time such as mobile ordering to minimize time spent in line and physical contact with staff.
 - Eliminate shared food service items (e.g., condiment dispensers, straw, utensil or napkin dispensers, salt and pepper shakers) in favor of single use items or touchless dispensers. Shared fountain drink stations must also be eliminated.
- **If the event involves any entertainment, speaker, or performance:**
 - Attendees must remain seated and socially distanced from other groups during the entire event. Dancing is not permitted.
 - The number of people on a stage or occupying a designated performance area may not exceed 10 persons at any one time.
 - People on a stage must remain at least 6 feet away from other people on the stage (unless they are from the same household).
 - Traditional choir/chorale configurations pose an unacceptably high risk of COVID-19 transmission and are prohibited at this time.
 - The following distance must be maintained between the stage and the audience:
 - A minimum of 12 feet must be maintained from the audience if speakers/hosts are masked.
 - A minimum of 18 feet must be maintained from the audience if speakers/host are unmasked
 - Contact between performers is prohibited.

- Contact between performers and the audience is prohibited. Speakers or performers must remain on the stage during their performance or presentation.

Avoid Close Contact and Reduce Touchpoints

- Minimize face-to-face passing. Have separate entrances and exits for the event space to allow one-way flow of guests.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and sidewalks and signage, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in queuing areas, both inside and outside the event space.
- Protective barriers (plexiglass or similar) must be installed in all areas where there is staff/guest interaction that cannot occur with 6 feet of social distancing, such as ticket booths and cashiers.
- Implement virtual and contactless payments as much as possible (e.g., ticket sales, food payments) and minimize cash transactions. Options include online payments and pay-by-phone.
- Use visual cues to help prevent congregating in lobby areas.
- Reconfigure or mark seating arrangements in event space to delineate physically distant seating.
- Do not allow people to congregate. Actively monitor areas prone to congregation (e.g., common areas, lobbies, restrooms, food service areas, staff breakrooms, backstage areas).
- Avoid activities that encourage guests to cluster.
- Arrange staff workstations, break rooms, and common areas to ensure at least 6 feet between individuals.
- Staff should avoid using other staff members' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment.
- Any items handed out to attendees should be single use items whenever possible.

Screening and Monitoring for Symptoms

- Businesses must perform screening (e.g., symptom questionnaires) of employees daily, prior to entering the business, over the phone or in person.
 - For **Screening Tool Guidance**, visit coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance
- Event spaces must place signage at the business entrance to inform staff and guests of screening procedures.
- Employees who report symptoms or testing positive for COVID-19 must not enter the business.
- If an employee or attendee develops any symptoms of COVID-19 while at the event space, there must be a plan in place for that individual to immediately isolate, notify their supervisor (if applicable), and leave the premises.
- Event spaces must maintain a daily record of individuals who have visited the business for at least 30 days to assist with contact tracing. Information collected must include name, date and time of visit, phone number, and email (if available). This information must be provided within 24 hours if requested by DC Health if a case of COVID-19 occurs at your establishment, in order to assist with contact tracing.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Event spaces must develop a comprehensive plan for increased routine cleaning (and disinfection as needed) of common spaces and frequently touched surfaces within the space (e.g., countertops, food service areas, door handles, handrails, light switches).
 - Ensure that any other group that uses the event space follows this cleaning protocol.

- Cleaning procedures throughout the event space must be developed in advance of opening and shared with staff. Management must properly train staff on cleaning procedures and monitor cleaning schedules to ensure compliance.
- If the event space has been closed, it must be thoroughly cleaned prior to re-opening.
- Event spaces must be thoroughly cleaned between events.
- Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned at least daily.
- Clean any shared objects frequently, based on level of use.
- Restrooms must be cleaned and disinfected at least every 4 hours when in use, with special attention to high-touch surfaces (such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, door handles, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches). Restrooms should be appropriately marked and monitored to ensure social distancing guidelines are followed (neighboring stalls may be used). Ensure an adequate supply of soap and paper towels is present at all times.
- If portable toilets are used at event spaces, provide handwashing stations close to the portable toilets. Ensure the handwashing stations are also kept well-stocked with supplies for the duration of the event.
- All food contact surfaces must be cleaned and sanitized at least once every 2 hours.
- Use disposable gloves when handling trash bags. Once done handling trash, dispose of gloves in a lined trash can. Do not reuse gloves. Perform hand hygiene after removing gloves.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for cleaning sensitive electronic equipment (e.g., assisted listening devices, projectors).
- **For comprehensive guidance on cleaning and disinfection**, please see the following DC Health guidances at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance:
 - *Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities with Suspected or Confirmed COVID-19*
 - *Guidance on Routine Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities*

Building Considerations

- Consider making the following improvements to improve building ventilation (cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html):
 - Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Use fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows.
 - Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).
 - Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and provide acceptable indoor air quality for the current occupancy level for each space.
 - Decrease occupancy of spaces with poor ventilation.
 - Improve central air filtration to the highest level compatible with the filter rack, and seal edges of the filter to limit bypass.
 - Check filters to ensure they are within service life and appropriately installed.
 - Turn off any demand-controlled ventilation (DCV) controls that reduce air supply based on occupancy or temperature during occupied hours.
 - Consider portable high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) fan/filtration systems to help enhance air cleaning (especially in higher risk areas).
 - Keep systems running longer hours, 24/7 if possible, to enhance air exchanges in the building space.
 - Consult with a specialist to see what works for your building.
- If the building was closed for an extended period of time, ensure all water systems are safe to use. For more information, see CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings after Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation: cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/building-water-system.html.

Establish a Plan for COVID-19 Exposure

- Establish a plan in the event an employee or guest is diagnosed with COVID-19.
- Identify a point of contact at the establishment that an employee or guest can notify if they test positive for COVID-19 and choose to disclose this information.
- If an employee chooses to report to the establishment that they are positive for COVID-19, the establishment must have a notification process to share the following with staff:
 - Education about COVID-19, including the signs and symptoms of COVID-19
 - Referral to the *Guidance for Contacts of a Person Confirmed to have COVID-19*, available at coronavirus.dc.gov
 - Information on options for COVID-19 testing in the District of Columbia, available at coronavirus.dc.gov/testing
- Refer to the guidance “*First Steps for Non-Healthcare Employers when Employees Test Positive for COVID-19*” at coronavirus.dc.gov/healthguidance.
 - A close contact is someone who was within 6 feet of a person who tested positive for COVID-19 for at least 15 minutes over a 24-hour period, during that person’s infectious period.
 - The infectious period starts two days before symptom onset and typically ends 10 days after symptom onset date (or test date if asymptomatic).
- Establishments must notify DC Health when:
 - An employee who frequently interacts with guests notifies the establishment they **tested positive for COVID-19** (not before results come back)
OR
 - if a guest or patron who **attended an event** at the venue notifies the establishment they tested positive for COVID-19
AND
 - the person was in the building or at the event space **during their infectious period**.
- Notify DC Health by submitting an online form on the DC Health COVID-19 Reporting Requirements website dchealth.dc.gov/page/covid-19-reporting-requirements:
 - Submit a **Non-Healthcare Facility COVID-19 Consult Form**.
- An investigator from DC Health will follow-up within 48 hours to all appropriately submitted notifications. Please note this time may increase as cases of COVID-19 increase in the District.

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