

Frequently Asked Questions: 2021 APHSA Hybrid Conferences

The following frequently asked questions (FAQ) will assist you in preparing for your visit with us at our upcoming conferences.

This FAQ is for guidance only and may change based on public health guidelines as we get closer to the event (i.e., a “required” item may become an option and/or an “optional” item (not wearing a mask, if vaccinated) may become required).

APHSA will follow the current public health guidelines of the host city/state where the conference is being held.

APHSA CHATBOT “ASK ABBY”

Q: What is the chatbot “Ask Abby” for? Do I need to opt in to receive conference updates? How do I connect to the chatbot?

A: “Ask Abby” is the APHSA chatbot (“bot”) and replaces our conference app. A bot is “trained” to answer many questions specific to an event. The “Ask Abby” bot will have all the answers you need to navigate prior to and during the conference – from agenda, floor plans, connecting to attendees, local attractions, HealthShield (below) and much more. All attendees will, at minimum, need to engage with the bot for the daily Wellness Check. When the bot goes live for each event, attendees will be invited to join via a “text to” number for the bot. The bot will provide a prompt to attendees, and an attendee can opt in and out by following the instructions provided by the bot.

WELLNESS CHECK, CONTACT TRACING, COVID EXPOSURE

Q: Will temperature screenings or other measures be in place at entrance doors and/or at registration during the event?

A: Yes, all attendees will be required to participate in a wellness check through the “HealthShield” in our conference chatbot by sending a text to activate the screening. There will be three CDC-compliant questions to answer to proceed into the meeting space (see below). Some venues may have additional temperature screenings at the door and/or on entry into the building. Any temperature readings of 100.4°F/38°C or above will be denied entry. Attendees who have a temperature will be asked to return to their hotel room.

Questions in HealthShield

1. In the past 24 hours, have you had any signs or symptoms of fever, such as chills, sweats, feeling “feverish” or having a temperature that is elevated for you, or 100.4°F or greater?
2. Do you have new onset or worsening of any of the following symptoms in the last 48 hours NOT related to allergies: Cough, shortness of breath, or chest tightness, sore throat or unexplained loss of taste/smell, diarrhea, nausea, or vomiting?
3. In the last 14 days, have you: Traveled outside of the United States, been in contact with anyone who has a confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis, or been notified that you may have been exposed to COVID-19?

Q: Is information collected for contact tracing?

A: Yes, all attendees are required to provide a cell phone number at the time of registration for contact tracing purposes and will also be used for event announcement push notifications. This information is not shared with any sponsors and/or other attendees.

Q: Will COVID testing be available or required?

A: If you are not fully vaccinated, you will be required to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours prior to arriving at the event. Access to a confidential, no-cost COVID-19 test before and/or after the conference is available through [this link](#).

Q: What should I do if I have a positive COVID result during the event or immediately following the event? Who should I contact?

A: Should you become exposed or have a positive COVID result during the event, please contact the designated event staff. The assigned event staff will begin the protocols for contact tracing. Prior to each event, attendees will be informed in a specific contact tracing protocols email who the assigned event staff is for that specific event.

Q: Do I need to provide proof of vaccination to attend the event?

A: All in-person attendees and sponsors are required to be fully vaccinated or prepared to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test taken within 72 hours prior to arriving at the event. Once registered, you will receive instructions to securely provide proof of your vaccination or a negative test result ahead of the event as part of our HealthShield chatbot through a Secure Document Upload Portal.

Q: Where will my vaccination record or test result be stored?

A: In a third-party secure document storage service.

Q: Who will have access to the records?

A: A limited number of staff will have read only access to your record to verify. Records are read-only and cannot be downloaded by any staff.

Q: How long will my records be stored?

A: Records are stored for 21-30 days past the event when all images are deleted.

Q: What if I don't want to upload my vaccination record or am not vaccinated?

A: All in person attendees must either show proof of vaccination by uploading their vaccination card or upload a negative COVID-19 test 72 hours prior to arriving in Cincinnati for the event.

Q: Can I bring my proof of vaccination or negative test to the conference?

A: We encourage you to upload your proof prior to the event to expedite your check in at registration. If you cannot upload your card or proof of a negative prior to arriving the event, you will be asked to do so at registration. If you do not wish to upload your record, you will not be permitted into the conference. We offer a virtual attendee option.

PERSONAL PROTECTION EQUIPMENT

Q: Will attendees be required to wear a mask or face covering?

A: Yes, in accordance with the CDC guidance, all attendees will be required wear masks at all indoor functions. Masks may be removed when eating or drinking. The registration desk and each check-in area will have a supply of masks should someone not have one with them.

Q: Will presenters be required to wear a mask during their presentation?

A: As a presenter, you may remove your mask during your presentation.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES

Q: Will entry and exits have a one-way entry to key areas (keynote, breakout sessions, and expo)?

A: Yes where possible, we plan to have one-way entry and exits in meeting rooms. We will maintain one-way line queuing with physical distancing noted.

Q: Will space layouts for the conference ensure physical and social distancing?

A: Yes, we will be following the guidelines from the CDC and the local jurisdiction to ensure proper room sets including, where possible, one way entry/exit to rooms.

CLEANING AND DISINFECTION

Q: Will all breakout rooms and other event areas be cleaned between each session?

A: Yes, all session rooms and common areas will be cleaned between session times. There will also be hand sanitation stations placed in all high-traffic areas.

Q: Will disinfect wipes be available when using a community microphone or podium?

A: Yes, there will be disinfectant wipes available in every break out room for disinfecting high touch items used by presenters.

FOR THE ISM CONFERENCE ONLY

Q: Will EMTs or licensed health professionals be available onsite from setup to tear down?

A: Yes, per the convention center guidelines, an EMT is required for any event of 500+ persons. EMTs will be on-site for both set-up and tear down of the event.

Q: Will there be a dedicated area for attendees who are sick but cannot leave the venue?

A: Yes, there will be a triage area located with the EMT personnel and will include the necessities (water, juice, packaged snacks, etc.), a first-aid kit, and seating with social distancing.