

Guidance for Safe Celebrations and Events

UPDATED JULY 22, 2020

This guidance is for event planners, venue managers, catering companies, and others who may be involved in the planning and coordination of celebrations and events that take place in indoor or outdoor venues, including rental space in event centers, 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 social gatherings related to ceremonies.

For the ceremonies themselves, see [Guidance for Gatherings: Faith-based Communities, Places of Worship, and Ceremonies \(PDF\)](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaith.pdf) (health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/guidefaith.pdf).

Requirements

- ✓ **Preparedness Plan:** All businesses, organizations, and venues for gathering are required to develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan in accordance with applicable guidance on the [Stay Safe Minnesota website \(staysafe.mn.gov\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov).
- ✓ **Masks and face coverings:** As of July 25, 2020, people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all public indoor spaces and businesses, per Executive Order 20-81. Additionally, the Executive Order requires workers to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing cannot be maintained. The Executive Order includes exemptions for people who are unable to wear or tolerate a face covering due to medical or mental health conditions or other reasons. There are also situations in which a face covering may be temporarily removed, such as when eating or drinking, provided that social distancing is maintained between members of different parties. Businesses and venues may choose to have more protective requirements than those in the Executive Order.
For more information, 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).
- ✓ 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 \(revisor.mn.gov/rules/4626\)](https://revisor.mn.gov/rules/4626).

- ✓ Limit indoor and outdoor occupant capacity to no more than 25% up to 250 persons.
- ✓ Limit table to 4 persons, or 6 if part of one household (“household” means a group of individuals who share the same living unit).

Recommendations

The recommendations below are for use when developing a Preparedness Plan for an event.

- **Social distancing:** Maintain a distance of at least 6 feet between individuals from different households at all times.
- **Symptom screening:** Consider providing screening for those entering the event.
 - Send communication *prior* to the event to inform staff and participants that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms (cough, fever, shortness of breath, etc.) is not advised to attend. See the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH)’s [Visitor and Employee Health Screening Checklist](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf) ([health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf)).
 - Discourage those who are “high risk” from attending. Consider offering a virtual option.
- **Post signage** outlining established protocols at the venue entrance, near restrooms, and in areas where people may be standing in line.
- **Face coverings** Even where face coverings are not required, it is recommended that face coverings be worn whenever social distancing cannot be maintained.

Food and beverages

- Control lines at concession 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.
 - Curbside concessions may be available for pickup upon entry to the venue to minimize crowding at concession stands.
- Use remote payment systems when possible.
- Self-service food and beverage areas are allowed as long as the 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 masks in the self-service area. The responsible party can be the venue administrator or caterer.
- Best practice would be to serve prepackaged food as much as possible.
- Face coverings may be temporarily removed to enable eating and/or drinking when attendees are seated and apart from members of other households.

Managing occupancy

- Restrict number of participants to allow for social distancing and not exceed capacity limits.

GUIDANCE FOR SAFE CELEBRATIONS AND EVENTS

- Provide controlled flow of participants as much as possible, including upon start and at end of the event.
- Bands are allowed but must maintain social distancing, even during performance.
- Modify activities that generally involve close contact between persons, such as dancing, to safely increase physical distance between persons from different households.
- Limit the number of speakers and make arrangements so that they maintain distance with others. Whenever possible, provide individual microphones for multiple speakers. If a microphone must be shared, consider cleaning between speakers or leaving it untouched on a stand.

Restrooms

- 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 cleaning and disinfection protocol.

Summary

We all have a role to play in protecting ourselves and fellow Minnesotans from COVID-19. By following current [Executive Orders from Governor Walz \(mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp\)](http://mn.gov/governor/news/executiveorders.jsp) and guidelines on the [Stay Safe Minnesota website \(staysafe.mn.gov\)](http://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 \(cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html\)](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html)

[CDC Event Planning and COVID-19 \(cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html\)](http://cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html)



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