

## COVID-19 Guidance for Events and Gatherings

It should be noted that the PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19 EMERGENCY POWERS) REGULATIONS 2020 (as amended) prohibits any person from assembling in a group of more than 25 persons for any reason in any public or private place. The regulations also prohibit any person from hosting a group of more than 25 persons for any reason in any public or private place. However the Minister of National Security may grant an exemption (a “large group exemption”) permitting a group of more than 25 persons to assemble.

If you are planning to organize an event where more than 25 people will be assembling you should firstly apply to the Minister of National Security for an exemption. Applications must be made via the following link: <https://forms.gov.bm/Exemption-for-Large-Gatherings>

If you are planning to organize an event where people from different households will assemble – whether or not the total number is less or more than 25, you should follow this guidance. Please remember that we are still in the midst of a public health pandemic.

### Guiding Principles

- A gathering refers to a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.
- The *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading.
- The higher the level of community transmission in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

The risk of COVID-19 spreading at events and gatherings increases as follows:

**Lowest risk:** Virtual-only activities, events, and gatherings.

**More risk:** Smaller outdoor and in-person gatherings in which individuals from different households remain spaced at least 6 feet apart, wear cloth face coverings, do not share objects, and come from the same local area (e.g., community, town, city, or parish).

**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.

### Targeting COVID-19’s spread

COVID-19 is thought to be mostly spread by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth or eyes, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as hand washing, staying home when sick, maintaining 6 feet distance from others and wearing a cloth face

covering) and environmental prevention practices (such as cleaning and disinfecting) are important ways to prevent the virus's spread.

These prevention principles are covered in this document. They provide event planners and individuals with actions to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread during gatherings and events.

### Promoting Healthy Behaviors that Reduce Spread

Event planners should consider implementing strategies to encourage behaviors that reduce the spread of COVID-19 among staff and attendees.

#### Staying Home when Appropriate

- Educate staff and attendees about when they should stay home
- Advise employees and attendees to stay home if they have tested positive for COVID-19 or are showing COVID-19 symptoms.
- Advise employees and attendees to stay home and monitor their health if they have had a close contact with a person who has symptoms of COVID-19 within the past 14 days.
- Develop policies that encourage sick employees to stay at home without fear of reprisal, and ensure employees are aware of these policies.
- **Travel Policy Recommendation:** Ideally employees should not return to work until they receive their 14-day test results. Employees should work remotely if possible. If this is not possible, employees should wait for a negative day 8 test result before they return to work following travel. Further guidance for travellers to Bermuda can be found at: <https://www.gov.bm/coronavirus-travellers>
- Government has produced guidance for employers and employees as to when employees should return to work. This guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.bm/coronavirus-workplace>
- Consider developing flexible refund policies for attendees for events that involve a participation fee.

#### Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Require frequent employee hand washing (e.g. before, during, and after taking tickets; after touching garbage) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and increase monitoring to ensure adherence.
- If soap and water are not readily available, employees can use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol and rub their hands until dry.
- Encourage staff to cover the mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing and sneezing. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Encourage attendees to wash hands often and cover coughs and sneezes.
- Attendees often exchange handshakes, fist bumps, and high-fives at meetings and sporting events. Display signs (physical and/or electronic) that discourage these actions during the event.

## Cloth Face Coverings

- Require the use of cloth face coverings among staff. Cloth face coverings are **most** essential at times when physical distancing is difficult (e.g. when moving within a crowd or audience).
- Provide all staff with information on proper use removal and washing of cloth face coverings. Refer to Government’s advice on masks at: <https://www.gov.bm/mask-guidance>
- Advise staff that cloth face coverings should **not** be placed on:
  - Babies or children younger than 2 years old
  - Anyone who has trouble breathing
  - Anyone who is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cloth face covering without assistance
- Encourage attendees ahead of the event to bring and use cloth face coverings at the event.
- Cloth face coverings are meant to protect other people in case the wearer is unknowingly infected but does not have symptoms. Cloth face coverings are not surgical masks or respirators. They are not personal protective equipment.
- Cloth face coverings are strongly encouraged in settings where individuals might raise their voice (e.g. shouting, chanting, singing).

## Adequate Supplies

- Ensure adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors. Supplies include soap, water, hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch trash cans.

## Signs and Messages

- Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g. at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures and describe how to stop the spread of germs by properly washing hands and properly wearing a cloth face covering.
- Broadcast regular announcements on reducing the spread of COVID-19 on public address systems.
- Include messages (for example, videos) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with staff, vendors, and attendees (such as on the event website and through event social media accounts).
- Consider developing signs and messages in alternative formats (e.g. large print, braille, American Sign Language) for people who have limited vision or are blind or people who are deaf or hard of hearing.

## Maintaining Healthy Environments

Event planners should consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy environments.

## Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces within the venue at least daily or between uses as much as possible—for example, door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, grab bars, hand railings, and cash registers.

- Clean and disinfect shared objects between uses—for example, payment terminals, tables, countertops, bars, and condiment holders.
- Consider closing areas such as drinking fountains that cannot be adequately cleaned and disinfected during an event.
- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- Plan for and enact these cleaning routines when renting event space and ensure that other groups who may use your facilities follow these routines.
- If transport vehicles like buses are used by the event staff, drivers should practice all safety actions and protocols as indicated for other staff—for example, washing hands often and wearing cloth face coverings and maintaining social distance of bus riders.
- Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaners and disinfectants to avoid harm to employees and other individuals. Always read and follow label instructions for each product, and store products securely away from children.
- Use disinfectants approved by the U.S. EPA or equivalent.
- Cleaning products should not be used near children. Staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using these products to prevent attendees or themselves from inhaling toxic vapors.
- Use disposable gloves when removing garbage bags or handling and disposing of trash:
  - After using disposable gloves, throw them out in a lined trash can.
  - Do not disinfect or reuse the gloves.
  - Wash hands after removing gloves.

### Restrooms

- Consider limiting the number of people who occupy the restroom at one time to allow for physical distancing.
- Do not allow lines or crowds to form near the restroom without maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. It may be helpful to post signs or markers to help attendees maintain the appropriate physical distance of at least 6 feet.
- Ensure that open restrooms are:
  - a. Operational with functional toilets.
    - Cleaned and disinfected, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, doorknobs, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches. Clean and disinfect restrooms daily or more often, if possible, with EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19 or equivalent
    - Ensure safe and correct application of disinfectants and keep products away from children.

- b. Adequately stocked with supplies for hand washing, including soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- c. If you are providing portable toilets, also provide portable hand washing stations and ensure that they remain stocked throughout the duration of the event. If possible, provide hand sanitizer stations that are touch-free.

### Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or attendees (e.g. risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).
- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.

### Water Systems

- To minimize the risk of Legionnaires Disease and other diseases associated with water, take steps to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g. sink faucets, drinking fountains, and decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and sanitized, but encourage staff and attendees to bring their own water, as feasible, to minimize touching and use of water fountains.

### Modified Layouts

- Limit attendance or seating capacity to allow for physical distancing, or host smaller events in larger rooms.
- Use multiple entrances and exits and discourage crowded waiting areas.
- Block off rows or sections of seating in order to space people at least 6 feet apart.
- Eliminate lines or queues if possible or encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart by providing signs or other visual cues such as tape or chalk marks.
- Prioritize outdoor activities where physical distancing can be maintained as much as possible.
- Offer online attendance options in addition to in-person attendance to help reduce the number of attendees.

### Physical Barriers and Guides

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g. guides for creating one-way routes).
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart. Barriers can be useful at cash registers and other areas where maintaining physical distance of 6 feet is difficult.

- Change seating layout or availability of seating so that people can remain at least 6 feet apart.

### Communal Spaces

- Stagger use of shared indoor spaces such as dining halls, game rooms, and lounges as much as possible and clean and disinfect them between uses.
- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks and beds, especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.
- Clean and disinfect bathrooms regularly (e.g. in the morning and evening or after times of heavy use).

### Food Service

- 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.
- If the event includes food service, refer to the Government's guidance on indoor and outdoor dining at : <https://www.gov.bm/coronavirus-workplace>
- Use touchless payment options as much as possible, if available.
- Ask customers and employees to exchange cash or card payments by placing them on a receipt tray or on the counter rather than by hand to avoid direct hand-to-hand contact.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as pens, counters, or hard surfaces between use and encourage patrons to use their own pens.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart when waiting in line to order or pick up.
- If a cafeteria or group dining room is used, serve individually plated meals or grab-and-go options, and hold activities in separate areas.
- Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee.

### Shared Objects

- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
- Limit any sharing of food, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff members.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the greatest extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and clean and disinfect them between use.

## Maintaining Healthy Operations

Event organizers and staff may consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations.

### Protections for Staff and Attendees at Higher Risk of Severe Illness from COVID-19

- Offer options for staff at higher risk for severe illness (including older adults and people of any age with underlying medical conditions) that limit their exposure risk. For example:
  - Offer telework and modified job responsibilities for staff, such as setting up for the event rather than working at the registration desk.
  - Replace in-person meetings with video- or tele-conference calls whenever possible.
- As feasible, offer options for attendees at higher risk for severe illness that limit their exposure risk (e.g. virtual attendance).
- Put policies in place to protect the privacy of people at higher risk for severe illness regarding their underlying medical conditions.

### Limited, Staggered, or Rotated Shifts and Attendance Times

- Consider ways to significantly reduce the number of attendees.
- Use flexible worksites (e.g. telework) and flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts) to help establish policies and practices for social distancing of 6 feet between employees, volunteers, and others.
- Rotate or stagger shifts and arrival times to limit the number of employees in a venue at the same time.
- Stagger and limit attendance times to minimize the number of guests at the venue.

### Travel & Transit

- Encourage employees to use transportation options that minimize close contact with others (e.g. walking or biking, driving or riding by car – alone or with household members only). Consider offering the following support:
  - Allow employees to shift their hours so they can commute during less busy times.
  - Ask employees to wash their hands as soon as possible after their trip.
- Reconfigure parking lots to limit congregation points and ensure proper separation of employees (e.g. closing every other parking space).
- Encourage rideshare drivers to clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces in the vehicle and avoid providing pooled rides or picking up multiple passengers who would not otherwise be riding together on the same route.

### Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

- Designate an administrator or office to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All staff and attendees should know who this person or office is and how to contact them.

- All staff should complete the Government's online Covid-19 infection prevention and control training course. This is available online at: <https://www.gov.bm/infection-prevention-and-control-training>

### Communication Systems

Put systems in place to:

- Encourage staff and attendees to self-report to event officials or a COVID-19 point of contact if they have symptoms of COVID-19, a positive test for COVID-19, or were exposed to someone with COVID-19 within the last 14 days
- Advise attendees prior to the event or gathering that they should not attend if they have symptoms of, a positive test for, or were recently exposed (within 14 days) to COVID-19.
- Notify staff, attendees, and the public of cancellations and restrictions in place to limit people's exposure to COVID-19 (e.g. limited hours of operation).

### Leave (Time Off) Policies

- Implement flexible sick leave policies and practices that are not punitive and enable employees to stay home when they are sick, have been exposed, are caring for someone, or who must stay home with children if schools or child care centers are closed.
- Examine and revise policies for leave, telework, and employee compensation as needed.
- Ensure that any relevant policies are communicated to staff.

### Back-Up Staffing Plan

Monitor absenteeism of employees, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff.

### Recognize Signs and Symptoms

If feasible, conduct daily health checks (e.g. temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of staff and attendees safely and respectfully.

### Sharing Facilities

Encourage any organizations that share or use the same venue to also follow these considerations and limit shared use, if possible.

### Support Coping and Resilience

- Promote employees' ability to eat healthy foods, exercise, get enough sleep, and find time to unwind.
- Encourage employees to talk with people they trust about their concerns and how they are feeling.

### Lessons Learned After the Event

- Meet with the emergency operations coordinator or planning team for your venue to discuss and note lessons learned.
- Determine ways to improve planning and implementation processes if the event will happen again.



- Update your plans regularly according to the state and local situation and orders.

### Preparing for When Someone Gets Sick

Event planners should consider several strategies to implement when someone gets sick.

#### Advise Sick Individuals of Home Isolation Criteria

- Communicate to sick staff members that they should not return to work until they have been cleared to do so by their medical practitioner. They should be advised to follow the Governments Quarantine Dos and Don'ts available at:  
<https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/11436%20-%20Coronavirus%202020%20Precautions%20Poster%202020.pdf>

#### Isolate and Transport Those Who are Sick

- Make sure that staff and attendees know that they should not come to the event and that they should notify event planners (e.g. the designated COVID-19 point of contact) if they become sick with COVID-19 symptoms, test positive for COVID-19, or have been exposed to someone with symptoms or a suspected or confirmed case.
- Immediately separate staff and attendees with COVID-19 symptoms (e.g. fever, cough, shortness of breath) at the event. Individuals who are sick should go home or to a healthcare facility, depending on how severe their symptoms are.
- Individuals who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms should be separated and sent home. They should be advised to monitor their health for any symptoms.
- Planners may follow the Government's guidance for Rooming Houses for any staff who live in such shared accommodation:  
[https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/Rooming\\_House\\_Guidance2.pdf](https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/Rooming_House_Guidance2.pdf)
- Planners should liaise with the Department of Health to identify where necessary, an isolation area to separate anyone who has COVID-like symptoms or who has tested positive but does not have symptoms.
- Establish procedures for safely transporting anyone sick to their home or to a healthcare facility. If you are calling an ambulance or bringing someone to the hospital, call first to alert them that the person may have COVID-19.

#### Clean and Disinfect

- Close off areas used by a sick person and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them (for outdoor areas, this includes surfaces or shared objects in the area, if applicable). You should follow the Government's guidance for Cleaning & Disinfection of Community Facilities WITH known or suspected cases:  
<https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/Cleaning-Disinfection-With-Known-or-Suspected-Cases.pdf>
- Wait at least 24 hours before cleaning and disinfecting. If 24 hours is not feasible, wait as long as possible. Ensure safe and correct use and storage of cleaning and disinfecting products, including storing them securely away from children.

## Notify Health Officials and Close Contacts

Event planners should notify the Department of Health of any case of COVID-19

## Gaining Event Approval

### Must Haves

- A written plan developed to present to the Department of National Security indicating preparedness and protocols to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 during the event.
- Venue (s) suitable for the event (capacity for the number of people attending, capable of one way traffic in and out, proper bathroom facilities, ability to put up signage, seating areas to properly physically distance, etc.)
- You must have an adequate number of personnel to maintain protocols, crowd control and direct people throughout the event (e.g. janitorial staff to maintain disinfecting protocols, etc.).
- Submit an application and plan to the Department of National Security at least 2 weeks prior to the implementation of the event to leave room to make suggested changes. Also In the event your venue is not approved, you will need time to get an alternate venue.

### Developing a Plan for the event

- Develop protocols specific to the mitigation of COVID-19 spread. For sporting events remember the players/team, coaches, volunteers, and for the spectators / audience.
  - These protocols will focus on physical distancing, hand hygiene, face covering, and screening procedures during or before the event.
    - Temperatures must be checked before the event
    - Screen using the Bermuda Hospitals Board screening tool, which can be found via the following link: <https://www.gov.bm/sites/default/files/BHB%20COVID-19%20Symptom%20Self-Assessment%20v3%20-%2002Oct2020.pdf>
  - It would include responsibilities for all attendees (e.g. spectators / audience / attendees are responsible for wearing face coverings during the entire event).
- Develop a contingency plan to support **contact tracing**:
  - All persons attending the event or in the facility during the event must sign in and provide the following contact information:
    - The Full name of one primary diner will be recorded
    - Date and time of visit
    - The server name
    - Table number or location at the bar
    - Phone number
    - Email address
  - **The contact details of your patrons must be recorded and kept for 21 days.** If requested, this information must be provided to Public Health Officers to assist with contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

- The following procedures must be in place:
  - Tables must be numbered
  - Servers will wear name badges.
  - One server per table. However, at fine-dining establishments, a sommelier may be allowed to also service the table so long as they follow the same stipulations as those listed for servers.
- Develop protocols for notifying health authorities about possible COVID-19 cases.
- Develop protocols for disinfecting frequently used surfaces/areas (e.g. during the event the bathroom must/will be cleaned every hour)
- Develop a personnel plan, ensuring that you have enough staff, security for COVID-19 guideline adherence and to manage crowd control, personnel to direct, and personnel to keep the facility/environment healthy, etc.
- Develop protocols for pre-event testing of employees, participants in the event (e.g. require all staff and players to get tested at least a week before event)

Submit an application to the Department of National Security for an exemption to the 25 persons limitation via the following link: <https://forms.gov.bm/Exemption-for-Large-Gatherings>

- **Complete the appropriate applications/licensing for food vendors at the event**
- **Preparing the venue:**
  - Install portable hand washing/sanitizing stations throughout the facility including areas like the entrance, exit, food areas, near the sitting area, etc.
  - Install communications throughout the facility to provide guidance on COVID-19 safety measures.

#### International Travel/International contenders

Be sure to inform all international participants / contenders of travel procedures for entry into Bermuda including the Travel Authorization procedure and associated test requirements:

<https://www.gov.bm/coronavirus-travellers>