

The Idaho Department of Health and Welfare (DHW) and the seven local public health districts have developed guidance to assist with decisions regarding gatherings and public events during the COVID-19 pandemic and stages of the Rebound Idaho plan. We understand that events must be planned well in advance and some event timelines extend beyond the current Stage 4 of the Rebound Idaho plan. Idaho's ability to advance from one stage to the next is dependent on gating criteria (<https://rebound.idaho.gov/stages-of-reopening/>) being met, which requires control of the spread of COVID-19.

There is currently no vaccine to prevent COVID-19. Until such time as a vaccine is available or there is sufficient population immunity to the virus, community mitigation and personal accountability measures must be taken. Mass gatherings highly influence virus activity. It is recommended that all future plans for gatherings beyond the stages of the Rebound Idaho plan should be planned with cancellation or postponement contingencies. Idaho public health experts, DHW and all local Public Health Districts, will support any decision to postpone or cancel gatherings and public events in order to protect Idahoans and those who visit Idaho.

For the purpose of this guidance, mass gatherings and events are defined as a public gathering for business, social, academic or recreational activities including, but not limited to, community, civic, public, educational, leisure, or sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; conventions; fundraisers; and similar activities. Specific examples may include, but are not limited to, weddings, graduations, large theater performances, rallies, car shows, reunions, races, holiday celebrations, rodeo championships, adult and youth sports tournaments.

## ALL STAGES

### Everyone Should:

- Engage in physical distancing of at least six feet
- Wear cloth face coverings in public places
- Stay home if sick
- Practice good hand hygiene
- Cover coughs and sneezes
- Disinfect commonly touched surfaces and objects regularly

### Event Planners & Organizers Should:

- Check in with their local public health district periodically leading up to the event to understand the current community risk for exposure to COVID-19
- Host events outdoors, if possible
- Maintain the six-foot physical distancing requirements for employees and attendees
- Provide adequate sanitation and personal hygiene for employees, vendors, and attendees
- Ensure frequent disinfection of the event location as well as regular cleaning, especially of high-touch surfaces
- Identify how personal use items such as masks, cloth face coverings, and gloves may be required by employees, vendors, and/or attendees
- Provide services and event activities while limiting close interactions with attendees

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## Event Planners & Organizers Should:

- Identify strategies for addressing ill employees, such as the following:
  - Require COVID-19 positive employees to stay at home while infectious
    - Symptoms of COVID-19 include muscle aches, a fever of 100.4 °F or higher, cough, sore throat, and shortness of breath
  - Keep employees who were directly exposed to the COVID-19 positive employee away from the workplace
  - Closure of the event location until the location can be properly disinfected
- On a case-by-case basis, include other practices appropriate for specific types of events, such as screening of employees for illness and exposures upon work entry, requiring non-cash transactions, etc.
- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and participants.

## Idaho public health experts recommend that organizers (whether groups or individuals) postpone or cancel mass gatherings and public events in any of the following situations:

- The event will draw audiences or participants from communities, states, or countries that are currently experiencing confirmed substantial community spread of COVID-19 disease. Your local public health district can assist you in making this determination.
  - Refer to the county map provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to see if an area (county) they are from has higher rates than the overall rate for Idaho: <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>
- The event's primary audience includes or may expose high-risk populations, including adults over the age of 65 years and people with underlying chronic medical conditions like heart or lung disease or diabetes, regardless of the number of attendees.

## STAGE 2 (first stage allowing gatherings):

### In addition to the above guidance,

- Use technology (e.g., webinar, video conferencing, live stream, etc.) as a way to gather people or a way to augment a gathering to minimize the risk of COVID-19 exposure when possible
- Allow for groups of 10 people or less where physical distancing of six feet can be maintained
- Consider directing attendees to seating or standing areas that are already properly distanced
  - Use signage and barrier protection to limit movement and maintain distancing and direct the flow of traffic
  - Limit tables to groups of six
  - Space tables appropriately to keep patrons six feet apart while seated and moving in and out of chairs
  - If stadium seating is being used, use barriers or signage to appropriately physically distance families
- Limit entrances and exits to the event to control the flow of attendees
  - Consider separate entrances and exits to the event
  - Mark where people line up to keep attendees six feet apart while waiting
  - Open gates or doors to events early to allow for orderly entrance to event

- Post signs at entrance stating that if attendees have a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms, they are prohibited from entering
- Utilize on-line ticket sales, required sign-ups and/or RSVPs for crowd management
- Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies to event staff and participants
  - Make sure that events have supplies for event staff and participants, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60 percent alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, disposable facemasks, cleaners and disinfectants
- Dedicate staff members to disinfect high contact surfaces throughout the establishment and disinfect tables between parties
- If food is being served at an event, refer to Stage 2 Restaurant Protocols

## STAGE 3:

### In addition to the above guidance:

- Allow for groups between 10 – 50 people where physical distancing of six feet can be maintained

## STAGE 4:

### In addition to the above guidance:

- Allow for groups larger than 50 where physical distancing of six feet can be maintained
- If concession services are provided, prohibit in-stand concession sales and buffet-style serving areas
  - Concession services should be limited to vending and walk-up services that can provide for appropriate physical distancing while patrons wait in line

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## PLANNING FOR AFTER STAGE 4:

Idaho's public health officials cannot predict what the threat of COVID-19 will be across the state in July, August, September, and beyond or make recommendations many weeks or months in advance on attendee size, postponing, or canceling of events. For event planners who choose to move forward with planning events over the summer and fall of 2020, events should be planned using the practices outlined above in this guidance. In addition to the above:

- Be aware of any legal orders in place, which will be posted at <https://coronavirus.idaho.gov>
- Know the level of disease transmission in your local community and the level of transmission in the areas from which your attendees will travel (consult with your local public health district)
  - Refer to the county map provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to see if an area (county) they are from has higher rates than the overall rate for Idaho: <https://www.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/index.html>
- Stay in regular communication with your potential patrons about the status of COVID-19 in the state and in your area and any cancellation or change in the venue
- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to event staff and participants
- Develop a contingency plan that addresses scenarios you may encounter during the COVID-19 outbreak
  - Identify actions to take if you need to postpone or cancel events
  - Develop flexible refund policies for participants
  - Determine if the event can be convened in a different manner such as a virtual event

## Resources

Event Planning and COVID-19: Questions and Answers. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html>

Get Your Mass Gatherings or Large Community Events Ready. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance on Mass Gatherings. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplace, Businesses, Schools and Homes: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Guidance on Disinfecting: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

EPA list of COVID-19 effective disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>