

**ALAMEDA COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT**  
**COVID-19 GUIDANCE FOR MASS GATHERINGS**  
**3/10/2020**

ACPHD offers this guidance to help people planning or attending large gatherings to make informed decisions. We have seen evidence of community transmission and increasing cases of COVID-19 across the Bay Area, and we have weighed the potential benefits to our community's health alongside the potential for disruptive impacts on event organizers and attendees.

The goals of this guidance are: (1) to protect people attending and working at the event and the local community from COVID-19 infection; and (2) to reduce community transmission, decrease the introduction of COVID-19 into new communities, and slow and decrease the spread of the virus.

These recommendations are effective immediately and will be reassessed periodically as this COVID19 outbreak evolves.

### **Guidance for Persons at Higher Risk**

Older people and people with certain underlying health conditions like heart disease, lung disease and diabetes, for example, may be at greater risk of serious illness. Persons at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19 should stay home and away from crowded social gatherings as much as possible. These types of gatherings include, but are not limited to parades, conferences, sporting events, and concerts where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another.

Those considered at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

### **Guidance for Event Organizers**

At this time, we recommend postponing or canceling non-essential mass gatherings and large community events where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another. Mass gatherings do not include typical office environments or stores.

- As the COVID-19 situation continues to evolve, community event calendars should be assessed on a rolling 30-day basis.
- *Large events* (more than 1000 people): Cancel or postpone
- *Medium events* (100-1000 people): Consider the following recommendations when determining event cancellation or postponement:
  - **Size**: Smaller is better. The risk of getting the virus increases as the size of the crowd increases.
  - **Duration**: Shorter is better. The risk of getting the virus increases as the duration of the event increases (e.g., a 2-hour meeting is lower risk than a 2-day conference).
  - **Density**: Risk of getting the virus increases in crowded settings. If the venue or setting doesn't enable people to keep social distance (more than arm's length of one another), the risk of spreading the virus increases. People should avoid crowded places where large numbers of people are within arm's length of one another.
  - **Geographic reach**: Mixing of people across regions, states, and countries

- *Small events* (<100 people): Cancel smaller community events where people at increased risk of severe illness (older adults and those with chronic medical conditions) will be congregating.

If you can't avoid bringing groups of people together:

- Urge anyone who is sick to not attend.
- Encourage those who are at higher risk for serious illness to not attend.
- Find ways to give people more physical space and reduce close contact as much as possible.
- Encourage attendees to follow increased hygiene, such as:
  - Washing their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds
    - If soap and water are not available, alcohol-based hand sanitizer can be used
  - Avoid close contact with other people
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
  - Covering their cough or sneeze with a tissue - if available - or into their elbow
- Clean surfaces with standard cleaner.
- Provide alternative options for attending the event via phone, video, or web applications.
- Maintain a registration list of participants and staff; this will assist local public health officials in contact tracing in the event a COVID-19 case is later identified as having attended the event.
- Ensure that event venues are well ventilated.
- Use event messaging and communications to provide COVID-19 updates and promote everyday preventive health messages to your participants and staff.
- For additional recommendations and resources, please see:
  - CDC: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/mass-gatherings-ready-for-covid-19.html>
  - CDPH: [https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPH%20Guidance%20for%20Mass%20Gatherings%20and%20Large%20Community%20Events\\_ADA%20Compliant.pdf](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/CDPH%20Guidance%20for%20Mass%20Gatherings%20and%20Large%20Community%20Events_ADA%20Compliant.pdf)

In deciding whether to hold an event, organizers should stay informed:

- <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>
- <https://www.acphd.org>