

COVID-19 and Your Community

How to plan an event during a pandemic



ABSAs International is pleased to provide this brochure to assist organizations with providing a safe and healthy environment during periods when infectious diseases are of concern, such as the current COVID-19 pandemic. The following information serves as a guide for organizations to plan activities involving community members, volunteers or others where personal interaction is slated to occur.









Every activity, event, or gathering should be assessed for risk and an action plan developed incorporating the relevant key aspects detailed in this brochure. There are numerous considerations and no “one size fits all” approach will be sufficient to keep people safe and healthy. The organization’s leadership team should work together to assess the risk and develop the action plan well in advance of the activity, event, or gathering. Preplanning is key to keeping the venue as safe as possible and facilitating the activity, event, or gathering in a safe and healthy manner.

The first step in your decision process should be to identify any local, state, or federal requirements that apply to your organization. Your local and/or state health department can be an important resource. Also consider whether your proposed activity, event, or gathering will be passive or active. An example of a passive activity is sitting in a room listening to a lecture or concert.

An active activity includes such things as running in a road race, planting trees in a park, and swimming in a community pool. Knowing how many people are slated to attend as well as how close together they will be is essential to know when assessing the risk.





The following key aspects should be considered:

1. Communicate with participants in advance of the event so they are aware of what to expect before, during, and after the event. Depending on the activity or event, the activity or event may be conducted differently from what participants remember from the past. **Best Practice:** *Develop a communication plan (email, phone calls) so that participants know what to expect in advance and can ask questions prior to the event.* 
2. Consider hosting the event outdoors. For indoor activities, keep windows and doors open if possible. 
3. Require that participants attend only if in good health and feeling well. They must stay home if sick. **Best Practice:** *Call or email participants one day in advance of the activity to remind them of this very important requirement.* 
4. Institute temperature checks. Request that participants use a personal thermometer to check their temperature prior to coming to the event. **Best Practice:** *Purchase a hand-held touchless thermometer or thermal imaging camera to screen participants as they arrive at the event.* 
5. Consider how participants will travel to/from the event. Families can drive together, but it is not recommended that persons from different households use the same vehicle. 
6. In some areas public transportation may not be advisable. If the organization will provide the transportation, ensure that there will be adequate capacity in each vehicle to allow physical distancing (at least 6 feet apart) can be maintained. Provide masks and hand sanitizer. 
7. Ensure adequate cleaning and disinfection supplies are on-hand at the event. Develop procedures for cleaning/disinfecting frequently touched surfaces on a regular basis. List surfaces and/or equipment that will be touched by participants. All chemicals are handled safely (i.e. never mix bleach with other chemicals). Commercially available disinfectants that you would use in your home are a good choice. You can find a list of effective disinfectants and recommendations on cleaning and disinfection



at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cleaning-disinfection.html>.

Include restroom facilities in the plan. **Best Practice:** *List cleaning and disinfection in writing noting date/time, surface or item, and disinfectant used.*




7. Ensure adequate supplies of personal protective equipment (PPE) are on hand and determine what PPE is necessary to protect participants. **Masks are key to stop the spread of the virus and should be included in any PPE plan.** Additional PPE, such as disposable gloves or face shield, may be required for activities where participants may need to be in close proximity (within 6 feet) of each other. **Best Practice:** *Masks can get soiled and/or wet during strenuous activities. Consider providing multiple masks per person and protect clean masks by placing them in zipper bags prior to use.* 
8. Keep plastic bags, masks, wipes, and latex gloves out of the recycling bin. Dispose of as trash. If someone in your home has COVID-19, treat your recyclables as trash. 
9. If outdoor venues do not have handwashing facilities readily available, provide hand sanitizer 
10. Determine how physical (social) distancing will be handled by participants. Ensure at least 6 feet between each person. When this cannot be conducted for situations where 2 or more people may need to be in close contact to safely do the task, plan for additional PPE such as wearing a face shield or mask/goggles, and gloves. Plan ahead and limit the 

contact time to what is absolutely necessary. Consider seating arrangements and how participants may gather. Consider limiting restroom facility occupancy in order to maintain physical distancing. **Best Practices:** *Keep a log of close contacts in case a participant becomes ill after the event. Appoint a “monitor” and empower him/her to provide coaching when breaches of physical distancing are about to occur. Add a visual reminder to assist participants to estimate what 6 feet looks like.*

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/03/24/health/six-feet-social-distance-explainer-coronavirus-wellness/index.html>.

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11. Consider what food and/or beverages will need to be provided. Use only pre-packaged food and beverages and do not provide self-service options such as buffets and coffee stations. **Best Practices: Provide individual bottles of water to participants especially for outdoor or strenuous activities. Request participants bring their own food and beverages.** 
12. Determine if any special situations need to be considered. For example, will there be any handicapped individuals or those with special needs or needing special accommodations. 
13. Assess if any post-event considerations apply. For example, inform participants what to do and who to call if they experience any COVID-19 symptoms or test positive for COVID-19 after the event. Contact tracing will be important, which is best done in conjunction with public health authorities, like your local health department. 

In summary, events, activities, and gatherings can be conducted in a safe and healthy manner with prior planning and attention to key aspects that keep everyone safe and healthy. Plan ahead, consult local and state public health authorities, and communicate expectations to attendees before, during and after the event.

The following resources may also be of use when planning your activity or event and assessing the risk.

www.absa.org www.absa.org/covid19toolbox/
www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/

REMEMBER:

- Stay home when ill
- Keep 6 ft. distance
- Wear face cover
- Disinfect frequently
- Wash hands with soap for 20 seconds

