



Special Events Guidance



DURHAM
REGION

HEALTH
DEPARTMENT

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Special Events Guidance

Large gatherings like special events can contribute to the transmission of respiratory pathogens, such as COVID-19.

This guidance document is intended for special event risk-informed decision making during the COVID-19 pandemic, for events that have food and/or personal service setting vendors in attendance.

Event coordinators can use this document to consider risks associated with special events, in consultation with Durham Region Health Department (DRHD), regarding decisions to cancel, postpone or modify your event.

The following must be submitted to DRHD at least 30 days prior to the event for consideration and approval:

- [Special Event Coordinator Applications](#)
- [Special Event Vendor Applications](#)
- A proposal/plan that includes the [mandatory requirements](#)
- Site plan
- Completed [Risk Assessment tool](#)
- Completed [Special Events Guidance Agreement](#)

If food and/or personal service setting vendors are not in attendance at your event, please contact your local area municipality.

Currently, the maximum gathering limit for an indoor event is 50 people and an outdoor event is 100 people. In all cases, individuals are required to continue to maintain physical distancing of at least two metres with people from outside their households or social circles. If your event is going to exceed the above limits, coordinators can visit [Ontario.ca/reopen](https://ontario.ca/reopen) to work with the province on a reopening plan. For further information, please reference [A Framework for Reopening our Province: Stage 3](#).

This information has been compiled by DRHD. It is intended to provide guidance to special event coordinators to prepare for safe special events in our community, subject to direction from the Province of Ontario, and should not be construed as legal advice or to replace specific instructions that may be issued by DRHD or the Province.

If you have a specific question about anything in this document, please contact DRHD at 905-668-2020 or via [email](#).

Mandatory Special Event Requirements

The requirements listed below are mandatory for coordinators to submit to DRHD if they want their special event application to be considered. These requirements should be discussed in your proposal. Please refer to guidance information below the requirements to try and incorporate the recommendations provided to further minimize the risk.

Topics	Requirement	Public Health Rationale
Planning	Develop a proposed site plan diagram/layout for the location of the event.	A site plan will indicate the placement of vendors, washrooms, traffic control, hand washing/hand sanitizer stations etc. to demonstrate COVID-19 precautions.
Personal Protection Measures	Establish screening measures (e.g. signage) in place for visitors and staff at point of entry.	Although screening may not identify all visitors and staff with COVID-19, you may be able to quickly identify and isolate symptomatic individuals from other participants.
	Hand sanitizer and/or hand washing stations at the entrance and throughout the venue.	Hand hygiene will be performed more frequently if alcohol-based hand sanitizer (70-90% alcohol) or hand washing sinks with soap and disposable towels are readily available. Proper hand hygiene practices can reduce the spread.
	Create a policy on non-medical face mask use for visitors and staff/volunteers.	Masking of visitors and staff at the event will lower the risk of transmission.
Cleaning & Disinfecting	A cleaning and disinfecting schedule must be developed for high touch surfaces/equipment, washrooms etc. before, during, and after the event.	High-touch surfaces can be contaminated and increase the risk of transmission. COVID-19 may live on surfaces for a few hours or up to a few days. Commonly used disinfectants are effective against COVID-19.
Physical Distancing	Develop strategies to address physical distancing at your event (e.g. floor markings, signage etc.).	Respiratory droplets tend to fall within 2 metres (6 feet) of their source, so maintaining a 2 metres (6 feet) distance from others is a precaution to prevent spread.
Visitors & Staff	Visitors must be registered, with available contact information. Coordinators must have up-to-date staff and volunteer contact information.	If an outbreak is associated with the event, contact information for the visitors and staff may be requested by public health for follow up and contact tracing.

Planning



- **Site plan** to include, but is not limited to:
 - Entrance & exit points
 - Vendor placement indicating physical distance requirements
 - Washrooms
 - Hand sanitizer and hand washing stations
 - Traffic flow – directional arrows
 - Social circle seating areas (e.g. dining, event viewing etc.), if applicable
 - Waiting areas (e.g. line ups, car parking etc.), if applicable
 - Garbage receptacles

Personal Protection Measures



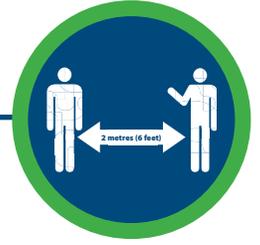
- Communicate personal preventive strategies prior and during event: stay home if ill, practice hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- Develop flexible refund policies for visitors to promote staying home when sick.
- Place passive [screening signs](#) at the entrance to the event.
- Single-use glove use is not recommended. If glove use is chosen it is important to change them every hour or more often as necessary and hands are to be washed and/or sanitized between changes. Remember to remove gloves when leaving the cash or changing tasks. When gloves are removed, new gloves must be used each time.
- A non-medical face mask/face covering policy must be in place for the event, including staff and visitors. Consideration must be taken for people with exemptions. The use of a non-medical face mask/face covering is recommended where physical distancing is not possible and/or difficult to maintain.

Cleaning & Disinfecting



- Increase frequency of cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces especially high touch surfaces and washrooms.
- Ensure adequate staffing to maintain prevention strategies for regular cleaning and disinfection.
- Have an adequate supply of cleaning and disinfecting products for the duration of the event.
- Staff/volunteers to be properly trained on chemicals used during the event.
- Limit any sharing of tools, equipment and supplies. Disinfect any shared items between use or customer (e.g. debit machine, tables, trays, touch screens etc.).
- Furniture and equipment should be made of a non-absorbent material that is easy-to-clean/disinfect.
- Create schedules and logs for staff/volunteers to fill out.

Physical Distancing



- **Physical distancing strategies:**
 - Posting [signage](#) at entrance and throughout the venue
 - Markings or pylons to mark 2 m (6 feet) distancing between visitors
 - One-way flow of traffic
 - Vendors spaced accordingly
 - When physically distancing can't be maintained, use barriers (e.g. plexiglass) and/or non-medical face masks

Visitors & Staff



- This information may be requested by DRHD to assist with tracing contacts of someone who attended your event and subsequently developed COVID-19. You may also be required to post a notice of data collection.

Risk Assessment Tool

If you respond "NO" to any of the questions below, your event may be at higher risk for COVID-19 transmission and may not be approved by DRHD. Please refer to guidance information below the tool to try and incorporate the recommendations provided to further minimize the risk.

Planning

Are the coordinators and staff informed and trained on the most current and credible public health information/recommendations on COVID-19? YES NO

Being knowledgeable on the most current COVID-19 public health information/recommendations will aid in hosting a safe and secure event.

Do you have a COVID-19 Response Plan created for your event? YES NO

Creating a plan will help staff be prepared to prevent the spread of the virus and manage visitor(s) and staff who become symptomatic or test positive for COVID-19.

Have you developed a plan to inform potential visitors of the policies at the event? YES NO

Informing customers of the expectations and advising of COVID-19 precautions before the event may minimize the transmission of the virus.

Has your event been approved by your local area municipality? YES NO

Each municipality has their own requirements regarding special events that you must follow.

Characteristics

Choose the type of event below:

Indoors

Outdoors

Indoors & Outdoors

Drive-thru

Other (please specify):

Events held outdoors and drive-thru style may lower the risk of transmission of respiratory illness than those held indoors, due to higher ventilation and minimal contact. Decreasing the interactions between visitors and staff can minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Is the anticipated number of visitors less than 250? YES NO

The larger the number of visitors, the greater the likelihood of a visitor being a case of COVID-19. Large numbers of people may also create greater likelihood of crowding and close contact.

Will your event be one day or less? YES NO

Longer events present more opportunities for transmission. Consider how overnight accommodations may affect crowding, proximity, and nature and duration of contact.

Activities

Visitors will NOT be participating in activities that promote transmission of COVID-19 (e.g. carnival games, midway rides, high frequency of money exchange, etc.)? YES NO

When visitors are participating in activities that involve reusable or high touch items, the risk of transmission increases.

There will be NO live entertainment (e.g. singers, performances, tractor pulls, demolition derby, animal shows etc.) at your event? YES NO

Live entertainment promotes crowding which can increase the risk of transmission. Offer virtual and/or live streamed events instead.

Physical Distancing

Will there be a system in place at the entrance and exit to reduce crowding and limit people being in close proximity to one another? YES NO

Crowding can put visitors at increased risk of exposure to respiratory droplets. High-touch surfaces can be contaminated and increase the risk of transmission.

Designated seating area (e.g. dining, bleacher, etc.) will NOT be provided? YES NO

The use of outdoor seated areas is permitted only with your social circle ensuring physical distance is maintained from other circles.

Personal Protection Measures

Will staff and/or visitors be required to wear a non-medical mask during the event? YES NO

The use of non-medical masks or face coverings protect others from your respiratory droplets.

Visitors & Staff

Are visitors and event staff/volunteers from demographic groups at less risk of severe disease, such as younger adults or people without underlying medical conditions? YES NO

Older adults, people with immune compromising conditions and chronic diseases appear to be at greater risk of severe disease, so consideration should be given to protecting them from possible exposure to COVID-19 cases. Communication about risk to these participants should be emphasized.

Local COVID-19 Spread

The local community ISN'T experiencing ongoing transmission of COVID-19? YES NO

Local community transmission can put public event participants at risk of infection.

Planning

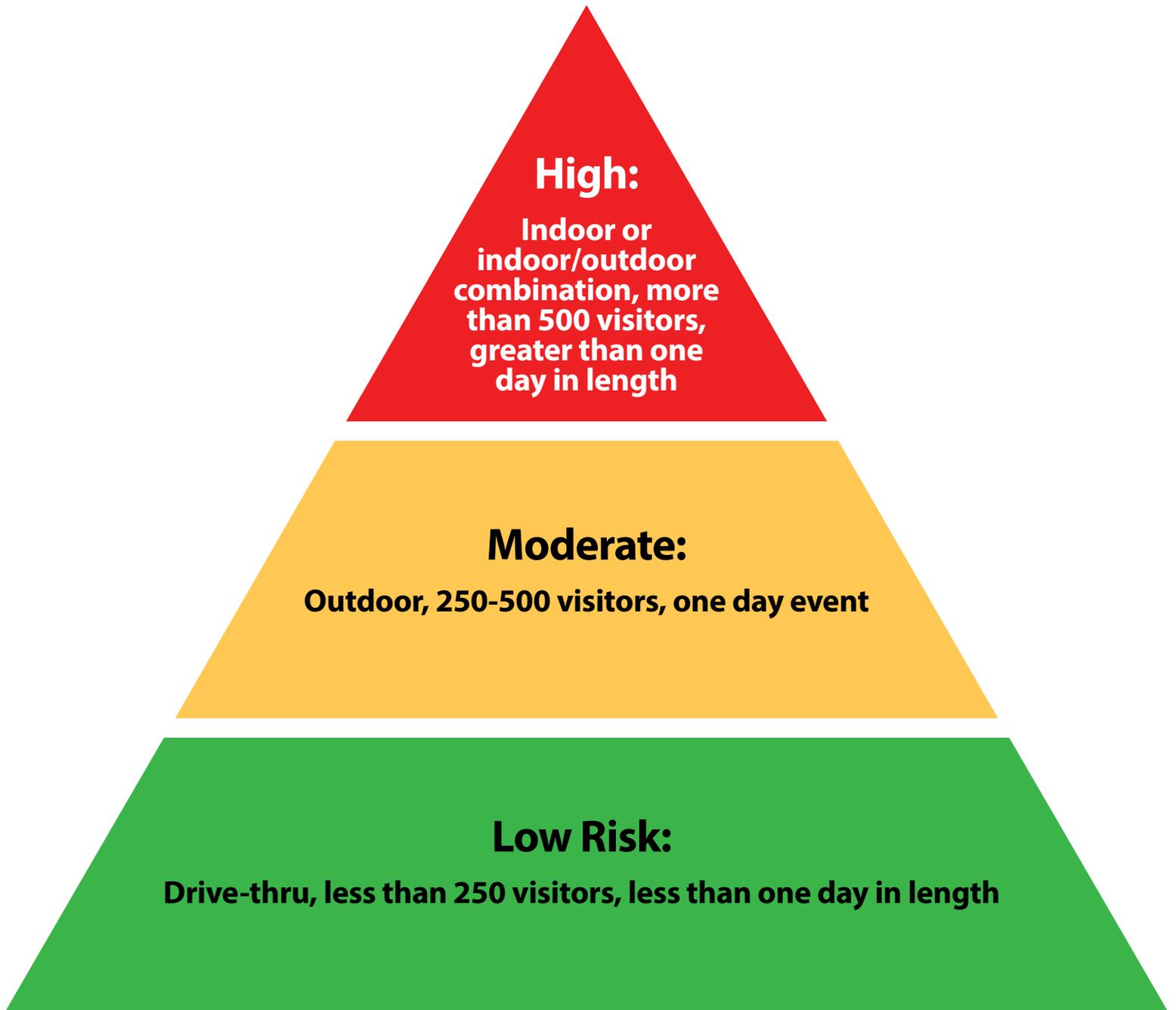


- Some resources for staff and coordinators COVID-19 training:
 - [Ontario COVID-19 website](#)
 - [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace](#)
 - [Durham Region COVID-19 Update](#)
- **COVID-19 Response Plan** should include, but is not limited to:
 - Dealing with ill individuals
 - Determining point of contact amongst staff
 - Determining isolation room(s)/area(s)
 - Contingency plan if you need to cancel/postpone the event due to increase of COVID-19 cases locally
 - Risk communication and community engagement plan for the event aimed at keeping the public informed about the health situation, key developments, and any advice and recommended actions they should take (e.g. social media monitoring)
 - COVID-19 communication plan for visitors and staff, including other languages where applicable
 - Plan for staff/volunteer absences

Characteristics



Please note, this is to provide guidance for your event and is not the overall risk of your event.



Activities



- Interactive activities are allowed as long as they can be cleaned and disinfected as frequently as is necessary to maintain a sanitary condition.
- Singing, music, and dance can be performed by a contracted performer. Ensure 2 metres (6 feet) physical distancing is maintained and an impermeable barrier is provided.

Physical Distancing



- **Crowd Control:**
 - Change venue to prevent crowding
 - Reconfigure layout of event
 - Consider changing your event to drive-thru style
 - Stagger arrivals and departures – reservation/time slots
 - Markings used for line ups 2 metres (6 feet) apart
 - Limit the number of people entering event
 - Designated staff for crowd control (e.g. entry/exit points, monitoring physical distancing in venue etc.)
- **Designated Seating Areas:**
 - Remove designated seating areas
 - Design a seating area that allows physical distancing (e.g. markings, barriers etc.)
 - A cleaning and disinfecting schedule must be created for seating areas
 - Outdoor seating areas lower the risk of transmission
 - Designated staff to control crowds in the seating area
 - Furniture and equipment should be made of a non-absorbent material that is easy-to-clean/disinfect.

Personal Protection Measures



- **Non-Medical Face Masks:**

- Mandatory masking of all visitors and staff at the event will lower the risk of transmission.
- Additional information on [non-medical face mask](#) use.
- The use of non-medical face masks are mandatory when any person is in an [enclosed public space](#).

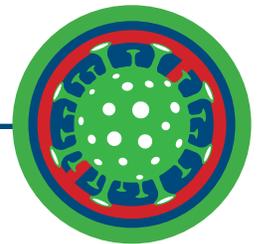
Participants & Staff



- **High Risk Population (e.g. elderly, immunocompromised):**

- Limit the number of staff members and volunteers who are in the [high risk group](#). These staff/volunteers should be given a lower risk job with minimal interaction amongst others (e.g. managing social media account from their home etc.).
- If high risk individuals are in attendance, it should be mandatory for them to wear mask. This can be promoted before the event and/or masks can be supplied at the entrance.

Local COVID-19 Spread



- Determine the local spread using the [Durham Region COVID-19 Data Tracker](#).
- High spread of COVID-19 in your community increases the risk of transmission in the public and your event should be postponed or cancelled.

Resources



[Durham Region Community Re-opening Toolkit](#)

DRHD, [Community Special Events Requirements](#)

DRHD, [COVID-19 Checklist for Reopening your Food Premises](#)

DRHD Poster, [Protect yourself and others during COVID-19](#)

Ministry of Health, [Face Coverings & Face Masks](#), May 2020

Ontario, [Face Covering Do's & Don'ts](#)

References

Risk mitigation tool for gatherings and events operating during the COVID-19 pandemic

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/health-professionals/mass-gatherings-risk-assesment.html>

Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19

<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>



durham.ca/novelcoronavirus

Durham Health Connection Line | 905-668-2020 or 1-800-841-2729

If you require this information in an accessible format, contact 1-800-841-2729.



Special Events Guidance Agreement

I/We acknowledge that due to the COVID 19 pandemic, public health rules and regulations may change between the signing of this Special Event Guidance Agreement and the date of the event that may result in the event being cancelled by DRHD with little notice. While DRHD will attempt to give at least 24 hrs notice of any cancellation, I/we acknowledge that such notice might not be possible depending on circumstances beyond the control of DRHD.

Initials

I/We acknowledge and agree that any cancellation of the event agreement is at our sole and exclusive cost and that DRHD shall at no time be liable for any expense, cost or liabilities in regards to any cancellation of this agreement.

Initials

Name

Date (MM / DD / YYYY)

Please send your completed application package, including this page, to:

Durham Region Health Department
Health Protection Division
101 Consumers Drive, 2nd Floor, Whitby, Ontario L1N 1C4
or
fax: **905-666-1887**
or
email: **ehl@durham.ca**



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