



# COVID-19 INDUSTRY GUIDANCE: Private Venues and Events

**April 14, 2021**

**Effective 15, 2021**

*This guidance is designed to address sectors and activities opening statewide. However, local health officers may implement more stringent rules tailored to local epidemiological conditions, so employers should also confirm relevant local opening policies.*



## OVERVIEW

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact the health of Californians. Reported illness ranges from very mild (some people have no symptoms) to severe illness that may result in death. Certain groups, including those with serious underlying medical conditions, such as heart or lung disease or diabetes, are at higher risk of hospitalization and serious complications. In addition, the risk of more severe disease and death increases with increasing age. As the pandemic has unfolded, we have learned that many organs can be affected by COVID-19 and there are many ways the infection can affect someone's health.

While most persons with COVID-19 recover and return to their baseline level of health, some people can have symptoms that can last for weeks or even months after recovery from acute illness. Even people who are not hospitalized and who have mild illness can experience persistent or late symptoms.

Transmission is most likely when people are in close contact or in a poorly ventilated area with an infected person. Transmission can occur when the infected person has symptoms, is without symptoms, or has not yet developed symptoms. Virus particles can travel more than six feet in indoor spaces and remain suspended in air even after an infected person has left the room. Indoor settings pose a much higher risk of transmission than outdoor settings. When an infected person does certain activities, such as singing or chanting, loud talking, or heavy breathing, for example with exercise, it can further increase risk compared to normal breathing and talking.

Therefore, it is essential that all possible steps be taken to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

Key prevention practices include:

- ✓ physical distancing to the maximum extent possible,
- ✓ use of face coverings by workers (where respiratory protection is not already required) and customers/clients,
- ✓ for indoor locations, ensuring adequate ventilation in all spaces,
- ✓ frequent handwashing and regular cleaning and disinfection,
- ✓ training workers on these and other elements of the COVID-19 prevention program.

On November 30, 2020, the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health (Cal/OSHA) implemented mandatory [emergency temporary standards](#) (ETS) to prevent worker exposures to COVID-19 in most workplaces where workers are not covered by Cal/OSHA's [Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard](#). Under the ETS, employers have obligations including to develop and implement policies and procedures to prevent disease transmission in the workplace; to identify new disease cases if they occur; and, when they are identified, to intervene quickly and work with public health authorities to halt the spread of the virus. The ETS covers topics that are also addressed by this guidance. The guidance has been updated to clarify any instances where public health guidance imposes additional requirements beyond those mandated by the ETS and to highlight additional recommended practices for public health purposes beyond those mandated by the ETS.

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# Purpose

This document provides guidance for Private Venues and Events to support a safe, clean environment for workers, guests and customers. Private Venues and Events are distinguished from Gatherings in that Private Venue and Events must have defined guest lists and the ability to assign seating for guests. In order for private event operators to increase capacity limitations based on 100% testing or proof of full vaccination for all attendees, they must have the ability to verify testing or vaccination status. Attendance at private venue and events shall be limited according to the County Risk Level. For the most updated information on county status, visit [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). Please note that local health departments can have more restrictive criteria and different closures. Find [your county's local information](#). Stay current on changes to public health guidance and state/local orders, as the [COVID-19](#) situation continues.

- **Across all Tiers:** Attendance at Private Events and Venues must be limited to a pre-determined attendee list.
  - Employers who have employees working at a private event must develop a worker COVID-19 testing program for weekly optional testing of all workers who may encounter other employees. PCR or antigen are permissible diagnosis tests for workers/performers where the interval between tests is no greater than seven days. For workers returning to work where the interval between a prior test has been greater than seven days after receiving a prior test, only a PCR test is permissible.
    - Workers participating in routine weekly testing or showing proof of full vaccination are NOT counted toward any occupancy capacity limit. All workers not participating in a routine weekly testing program or not fully vaccinated shall count toward any occupancy limit.
  - Use of face coverings is mandatory unless actively eating and/or drinking. Guests who do not comply should be removed from the event immediately. Allow for exemptions identified in the [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#).
  - Entry and exit should be tightly controlled to prevent concentrations of people at entry and exit.
  - If buffet style dining or bar service is provided, food and drink must be served to guests (no self-service) and all guests must maintain physical distancing and face coverings. Event attendees and workers are only permitted to eat and drink at designated areas.
  - Live entertainment is permitted at events, ceremonies, receptions, etc. but must follow all relevant guidance for [Outdoor Seated Live Events and Performances Guidance](#) or Indoor Seated Live Events and Performances.
  - Private event operators must allow for at least two hours between events to prevent mixing across attendees.
  - Assigned seating is required to control mixing and permit physical distancing of at least 6 feet between people from different households. People who are fully vaccinated do not need to be 6 feet apart in accordance with the

Addendum to Blueprint Activity & Business Tiers Chart – Tested and Fully Vaccinated Individuals and Sections.

- Physical distancing between and amongst vendors (e.g. photographers, florists, etc.), officiants, and other event workers and event attendees must be maintained at all times. Photographers should use lenses that allow for physical distancing.
- Refer to [CDPH Travel Advisory](#) for all guests and attendees.
- Refer to the Addendum to Blueprint Activity & Business Tiers Chart – Tested and Fully Vaccinated Individuals and Sections for guidance on testing and vaccination requirements.

**Purple – Widespread – Tier 1:** Private events can occur in outdoor venues and must follow the modifications in this guidance, including:

- **Outdoor ONLY:**
  - Attendance limited to a maximum of 25 people.
  - If attendees show proof of negative test or full vaccination, then a maximum of 100 people.
  - Attendance limits include all staff and volunteers working at the event.

**Red – Substantial – Tier 2:** Private events can occur in indoor and outdoor venues and must follow the modifications in this guidance, including:

- **Outdoor:**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 50 people.
  - If attendees show proof of negative test or full vaccination, then a maximum of 200 people.
  - Attendance limits include all staff and volunteers working at the event.
- **Indoors**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 100 people. All attendees must show proof of negative test or full vaccination.

**Orange – Moderate – Tier 3:** Private events can occur in indoor and outdoor venues and must follow the modifications in this guidance, including:

- **Outdoor:**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 100.
  - If attendees show proof of negative test or full vaccination, then a maximum of 300 people.
  - Attendance limits include all staff and volunteers working at the event.
- **Indoors**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 150 people. All attendees must show proof of negative test or full vaccination.

**Yellow – Minimal – Tier 4:** Private events can occur in indoor and outdoor venues and must follow the modifications in this guidance, including:

- **Outdoor:**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 200.
  - If attendees show proof of negative test or full vaccination, then a maximum of 400 people.
  - Attendance limits include all staff and volunteers working at the event.
- **Indoors:**
  - Attendance must be limited to a maximum of 200 people. All attendees must show proof of negative test or full vaccination.

**NOTE:** Private event operators have a number of operational aspects and service offerings available in other guidance on the [Industry Guidance to Reduce Risk](#) website. Operators must review this guidance to apply the appropriate protocols to all aspects of their operations, unless otherwise required in this document. Such operations may include:

- Hotels and lodging (see [Hotels, Lodging, and Short-Term Rentals Guidance](#))
- Trams, shuttles, and other transit ([Public and Private Passenger Carriers, Transit, and Intercity Passenger Rail Guidance](#))
  - Limit shuttle service whenever possible and in accordance with obligations to individuals with disabilities.
- Grounds, building maintenance, custodial services ([Limited Services Guidance](#))
- Live Performance (see [Outdoor Seated Live Events and Performances](#) or [Indoor Seated Live Events and Performances](#))
- Places of worship and cultural ceremonies (see [Places of Worship and Cultural Ceremonies](#))

For the most updated information on county tier status, visit [Blueprint for a Safer Economy](#). Please note that local health departments can have more restrictive criteria and different closures. Find [your county's local information](#).

The guidance is not intended to revoke or repeal any worker rights, either statutory, regulatory or collectively bargained, and is not exhaustive, as it does not include county health orders, nor is it a substitute for any existing safety and health-related regulatory requirements such as those of Cal/OSHA.<sup>1</sup> Stay current on changes to public health guidance and state/local orders, as the COVID-19 situation continues. Cal/OSHA has more safety and health guidance on their [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Guidance](#). CDC has additional guidance for [businesses and employers](#).



## Required Use of Face Coverings

Consult the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) Guidance on the Use of Face Coverings](#), which mandates the use of face coverings for both members of the public and employees in all public and workplace settings outside the home. Complete details, including all requirements and exemptions

to these rules, can be found in the guidance, which should be checked periodically for updates. Additionally, CDPH provides [advice](#) on effective practices regarding face covering.



## Workplace COVID-19 Prevention Program

As required by the Cal/OSHA [COVID-19 prevention standards](#), employers must establish, implement and maintain a written COVID-19 Prevention Program that is available to employees and their authorized representatives (i.e., union). Complete details, including all requirements and exemptions to these rules, templates for model COVID-19 Prevention Programs, and Frequently Asked Questions can be found at the following [link](#). All references and guidance should be checked periodically for updates.



## Outbreak and Testing

Employers are also required to comply with Cal/OSHA's regulations for [outbreaks](#) and [major outbreaks](#), including any [relevant testing requirements for employees and reporting requirements](#). They should review [FAQs on Outbreaks](#) for more considerations and explanation of the regulations.

Consult [CDPH's Responding to COVID-19 at the Workplace](#) for specific definitions on what constitutes an outbreak and all required reporting requirements.



## Individual Control Measures and Screening

The Cal/OSHA ETS requires employers to develop and implement a process for screening employees for and responding to employees with COVID-19 symptoms, as well as to address several other individual control measures through implementation of the required components of the COVID-19 Prevention Program. See the linked materials for details on those requirements.

In addition to the requirements under the ETS, employers must:

- Take reasonable measures, including public address announcements, posting signage in strategic and highly-visible locations, and in reservation confirmations, to remind the public and workers that they must use face coverings whenever not eating or drinking (unless exempted per the ETS or [CDPH Face Covering Guidance](#)), practice physical distancing, not touch their face, frequently wash their hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, and use hand sanitizer.
- CDPH recommends the following additional measures to further mitigate risk of transmission or other health risks:
  - Encourage guests or customers who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 to stay home.
  - Provide resources to promote workers' and customers' personal hygiene. This will include tissues, no-touch trash cans, hand soap, adequate time



for handwashing, alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and disposable towels.

- Consider where disposable gloves may be a helpful supplement to handwashing or use of hand sanitizer, such as when handling commonly touched items.



## Ventilation

- All businesses permitted to operate indoors must follow the CDPH and Cal/OSHA interim [guidance for ventilation, filtration, and air quality](#) to reduce the spread of COVID-19 in indoor settings. This guidance also addresses ventilation requirements contained in the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 ETS.
- Additional detailed guidance on ventilation is also available from the [CDC](#).



## Cleaning, and Disinfecting Protocols

- Employers must implement cleaning and disinfecting procedures, as defined within the Cal/OSHA [COVID-19 ETS](#). Cleaning and disinfecting must be done in a manner that does not create a hazard to workers.
- CDPH guidance does not impose any additional requirements beyond those under the ETS.
- CDPH recommends the following additional measures to further mitigate risk of transmission or other health risks:
  - 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., drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown.
  - Provide time for workers to implement cleaning practices during their shift. Assign cleaning assignments during working hours as part of the employee's job duties. Procure options for third-party cleaning companies to assist with the increased cleaning demand, as needed.
  - Install hands-free devices, if possible, including motion sensor lights, contactless payment systems, automatic soap and paper towel dispensers, and timecard systems.
  - Encourage the use of debit or credit cards by customers, for example, through signage.
  - When choosing disinfecting chemicals, use products approved for use against COVID-19 on the [Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-approved](#) list and follow product instructions. Choose disinfectants that are less likely to trigger asthma by using products on EPA's "N" list that contain hydrogen peroxide (no stronger than 3%) or ethanol (ethyl alcohol) and that do not contain peroxyacetic acid or peracetic acid. Avoid disinfectant products on the "N" list that contain asthmagens, such as bleach (sodium hypochlorite) or quaternary ammonium compounds



(e.g., benzalkonium chloride). Follow the [asthma-safer cleaning methods](#) recommended by the California Department of Public Health and ensure proper ventilation.



## Physical Distancing Guidelines

- Physical distancing alone is insufficient to prevent transmission of COVID-19.
- Employers must implement protocols and procedures regarding physical distancing of at least six feet between workers and other persons, as defined within the Cal/OSHA [COVID-19 Prevention ETS](#). More details and examples can be found in [Cal/OSHA's FAQs](#).
- CDPH recommends the following additional measures to further mitigate risk of transmission or other health risks:
  - Avoid in-person meetings and, if they are necessary, adjust them to ensure physical distancing and use smaller individual meetings at facilities to maintain physical distancing guidelines.
  - Provide a single, clearly designated entrance and separate exit to help maintain physical distancing where possible.
  - Install transfer-aiding materials, such as shelving and bulletin boards, to reduce person-to-person hand-offs where possible. Wherever possible, use contactless signatures for deliveries.
  - Where possible, create outdoor break areas with shade coverings and seating arrangements that ensures physical distancing.
  - Sign-in areas should be set-up at multiple stations to maintain physical distancing.
  - All public areas and lobbies should be configured to include wider aisles and orderly queues, where needed. Some walkways should be designated "one way."
  - Dedicate workers during event breaks, mealtimes, etc., to ensure orderly exit from and entrance to facility areas. Use workers to preserve appropriate space in queuing areas and help attendees understand where lines begin as additional space may make it difficult to see where to stand.



## Dining and Food Service

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- Attendants, bussers, and other workers moving items used by attendees (dirty cups, plates, napkins, etc.) or handling trash bags should wear disposable gloves (and wash hands before putting them on and after removing them) and be provided aprons that are changed frequently.

- Shared items, such as condiment bottles, shakers, etc., should be supplied as needed upon request and hand hygiene should be used before each use.



## Entertainment, Audio Visual, Photography/Videography

- Encourage the use of microphones to decrease voice projection. Disinfect all communication technology before and after each use.
- Lavalier microphones should be put on only by the person using it versus the provider, for instance the disc jockey or videographer.
- Disinfect lavalier microphones and transmitters before and after each use, according to manufacturer's directions, and replace lavalier mounting components that cannot be thoroughly cleaned.
- Microphones should not be shared between entertainers and/or event attendees, if possible. If event attendees will be using a microphone for speeches, etc., a separate microphone should be provided.
- It is recommended that entertainment companies purchase microphone covers to help assist with the sharing of microphones during the event.
- An overhead mic or mic stand should be used so that visitors or employees do not have to touch the microphone.
- All high-touch equipment: microphones, mic stands, presentation remotes, and audio/video cables should be disinfected frequently and between use by different persons. Equipment should be dedicated to individual users where possible or disinfected after each use.
- All equipment should be handled by the relevant vendor whenever possible.
- Photo booths should only be used by members of the same household at a given time. Open air photo booths are strongly encouraged.
- Signage indicating only group photos with members of the same household only should be displayed.
- If props are used, ensure hand sanitizer is available for use prior to use.
- After each use, all communal touched surfaces, like touch screens, should be cleaned frequently by the photobooth attendant.

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<sup>1</sup> Additional requirements must be considered for vulnerable populations. Event operators must comply with all [Cal/OSHA](https://www.cdph.ca/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/CalOSHA) standards and be prepared to adhere to its guidance as well as guidance from the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](https://www.cdc.gov/) and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\)](https://www.cdph.ca/). Additionally, employers must be prepared to alter their operations as those guidelines change.