



LARGE OUTDOOR EVENTS GUIDANCE

Michigan.gov/Coronavirus

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Executive Summary

MDHHS is providing guidance on how to hold safer large outdoor events – such as sporting events, festivals, and fairs – during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document provides general recommended guidance for how organizers for large outdoor events can create a safer environment.

Individuals are not required to wear face masks at outdoor events. However, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) recommends that individuals who are not yet fully vaccinated continue to wear face masks while in crowded spaces outdoors and practice social distancing.

While gathering in outdoor settings lowers the risk of COVID-19 transmission because of fresh air flow, it is still possible to breathe in enough of the respiratory droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19 to become infected when gathered close to others unmasked.

As the epidemiology of COVID-19 around the country and the state of Michigan evolves, MDHHS will continue to review and update this guidance.

Recommended Mitigation Measures for Large Outdoor Events

MDHHS recommends the following infection control measures to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission in large outdoor event settings:

1. Infection Control Plans

Large event organizers may develop a plan to mitigate COVID-19 transmission. This plan should:

- Demonstrate that the event is designed such that groups of patrons can maintain six feet of distance from other groups
- Include entry and exit protocols that maintain physical distancing requirements to minimize congregation

- Cooperate with local public health officials during any case investigation and contact tracing
- Include specific protocols for social distancing (examples listed below)
- Be posted on a public website; and
- Be provided to the local health department at least seven days before scheduled events. (This submission does not constitute or require approval from the local health department, but rather is for awareness only.)

2. Food and Beverage Service Requirements

Food or beverages should only be consumed while seated in designated areas. While eating/drinking, no more than 6 people should be seated together in a group, and groups should be separated by at least 6 feet; groups should avoid mingling.

3. Wear Face Masks in Crowded Spaces

MDHHS strongly recommends that individuals continue to wear face masks while in crowded spaces outdoors, especially individuals who are not yet fully vaccinated.

- While gathering in outdoor settings lowers the risk of COVID-19 transmission because of fresh air flow, it is still possible to breathe in enough of the respiratory droplets containing the virus that causes COVID-19 to become infected when gathered close to others unmasked.

4. Participant Cohorts

It is best if participants stay in small groups or cohorts, while gathering at outdoor events.

- For outdoor events that have assigned seating, individuals should attempt to remain at least six feet from other cohorts throughout the duration of the event.

5. Physical Distancing Protocols

Organizers for outdoor events should develop plans to prevent congestion:

- Individuals should enter at designated sections of the venue during designated times to avoid mass congregation. MDHHS recommends scheduling a limited number of individuals to enter in 10-minute increments.
- Individuals should follow a staggered exit schedule as well.
 - o For example, spectators at sporting events should be dismissed by sections and required to exit at designated doors.
- Designate one-way stairwells or paths to minimize congestion.
- Establish capacity limits for restrooms and other enclosed spaces, such as gift shops.
- Institute distancing markers six feet apart for queues.

6. Self-Screening Practices

Individuals, including employees, should conduct self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms before attending an outdoor event.

- The free [MI Symptoms tool](#) can be used to complete self-screening for COVID-19 symptoms.

Individuals, including employees, should not attend any types of gatherings while [symptomatic](#) (even with a negative COVID-19 test or fully-vaccinated against COVID-19).

7. Contact Tracing Capabilities

Outdoor event organizers should collect and maintain contact information from all those in attendance to help inform contact tracing efforts.

- To expedite this process, MDHHS recommends prohibiting same-day ticket sales.
- Ticket re-sale and forwarding should be prohibited to maintain accurate contact tracing records.

Venues should help local health departments with contact tracing and quarantine and isolation requirements, that result from attendance of a large outdoor event.

8. Comprehensive Communications Strategy

Large event organizers should communicate public health guidance clearly and effectively to attendees and employees:

- Post information about the symptoms of COVID-19 in order to help attendees and employees to self-assess whether they have any symptoms.
- Display signs regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures throughout the venue.
- Make regular PA announcements regarding COVID-19 mitigation measures and other event rules.
- Provide a list of all nearby sites to receive a COVID-19 test to all individuals who attend large outdoor events.
 - o Please find a list of MDHHS COVID-19 testing sites [here](#).

9. Event Hygiene Procedures

Venues should establish a schedule for increased, routine cleaning to disinfect common spaces.

- Venues should use FDA-approved cleaning supplies that are listed [here](#).

Public event spaces should establish numerous hand sanitizing stations with hand sanitizers that are at least 60% alcohol.

MDHHS recommends utilizing contactless/no-touch practices whenever possible, including:

- Ticketed entry
- Concessions and other purchases
- Waste/recycling disposal

10. Testing

Encourage all individuals who attend large gatherings who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19 to seek a COVID-19 test 1-3 days before the event.

For further information:

- [CDC Readiness and Planning Tool to Prevent the Spread of COVID-19 Events and Gatherings](#)
- [Considerations for Events and Gatherings | CDC](#)
- [Large Gatherings | CDC](#)

For the latest information on Michigan's response to COVID-19, please visit Michigan.gov/Coronavirus. You may also call the COVID-19 Hotline at 888-535-6136 or email COVID19@michigan.gov.