OpenSafely

Stay Safe Against the Coronavirus



Conferences and Conventions

START DATE: April 28, 2021

UPDATED April 28, 2021

Conferences and conventions are preplanned, coordinated, and related events centered around a common topic or subject that encompasses multiple days, uses, and or multiple rooms. One-time, brief events, such as a single meeting, reception or party, shall comply with the guidelines for events.
Buildings used to function solely as another venue may comply with the applicable guidelines for the proposed venue. If multiple functions are proposed simultaneously, the stricter of the applicable guidelines shall apply.

***Refer to guidance provided for Events and Event Venues for guidelines applicable to events.**

***Refer to guidance provided for Shopping Malls and Retail Stores for guidelines applicable to retail venues.**

***Refer to guidance provided for Restaurants, Cafes and Coffee Shops for guidelines applicable to food service facilities.**

***Refer to guidance provided for Amusement Parks, Sports Parks, Water Parks, Fairs, Festivals, or Carnivals, or similar activities for use of these facilities.**

***Refer to guidance provided for Sports and Activities and Racing Events for use of these facilities.**

The Office of State Fire Marshal is providing you with this update in conjunction with the Office of the Governor and the Louisiana Department of Health to keep you up to date with additional information and/or changes as it becomes available during our battle with COVID-19. These notifications are issued automatically and immediately to those who sign up through "OpenSafely" (https://opensafely.la.gov/).

Every attempt is being made to highlight critical changes that have occurred since the previously published notification for your convenience. However, please read through this entire document in context as these changes do not stand on their own and all of the additional general information and clarifications made may not be highlighted.

Preface:

This phasing plan applies to those non-essential businesses that have been affected during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. Essential (critical) infrastructure businesses are not further restricted by these new guidelines and may continue to operate under the current guidelines that are applicable to the specific business. Refer to: https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/covid/Essential-Infrastructure_fact-sheet.pdf for specific information regarding critical infrastructure businesses.

COVID-19 is a highly contagious and deadly disease. The fundamental concept of this phased opening plan is to slowly open businesses at reduced occupant capacities that will allow for social distancing and circulation to keep employees and patrons safe. Everyone's cooperation is critical to the success towards defeating this disease and revitalizing our economy.

The virus spreads primarily through person-to-person contact, from droplets that are formed by coughing, sneezing or other projections, or by touching infected surfaces and then touching one's eyes, nose or mouth. Individuals can carry the virus and be contagious for up to 14 days prior to having any symptoms. The guidelines outlined below for social distancing, face coverings and sanitation are proven methods of mitigating these modes of transmission. **THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT** to remember is that COVID-19 is still prevalent across the state. We must all continue to do our part to help slow the spread, protect the most vulnerable and continue to remain vigilant until at least two weeks beyond the point where everyone has had the opportunity to receive the full administration of COVID-19 vaccine.

Every individual in Louisiana is strongly encouraged to wear a face covering over the nose and mouth when inside a commercial establishment or other building or space open to the public, whether indoor or outdoor (except while consuming food or drinks).

Below are a few additional public health recommendations to help businesses comply:

- See the Face Covering Guidance section below for a link to instruction on the proper use of face coverings.
- See the Referenced Documents section below for LDH's downloadable "thank you for wearing a mask" poster options 1 and 2 for business storefronts;
- Move to reservation systems to discourage congregating in groups while waiting for service;

- Adopt sick leave policies that reduce the disincentive for employees to try to come to work sick; and
- Allow employees in high-risk groups or who directly live with/care for a high-risk individual to work in areas without direct public contact.

Guidance:

Conference and Convention centers must adhere to moderate mitigation standards and social distancing measures in waiting areas, lobbies, or other areas where people may congregate to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Six feet of separation from other individuals not within the same household is recommended. Measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced. **Individuals 65 years or older, people of all ages with poor control of medical issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or a weakened immune system are at a higher risk for getting very sick or dying from COVID-19 and should strictly adhere to all CDC guidelines, and are encouraged to stay at home as much as possible unless fully vaccinated - at least two weeks beyond receiving a full administration of COVID-19 vaccine.** The specific requirements and guidelines for this service industry during this phase are listed below. These requirements and guidelines supplement and do not replace any directives or guidance provided by other state agencies, boards and commissions, or other authorities having jurisdiction. Where conflicts occur, the stricter of the requirements will apply.

Limitations:

- Convention and Conference planners must **submit a proposed plan to "OpenSafely" for acceptance prior to scheduling**. The plan shall document compliance with the requirements listed in this document and provide the following:
    - Provide the registration number for the business or venue that is issued to you through "OpenSafely" (https://opensafely.la.gov/) with your request.
    - Plans are to be emailed to **Open.Safely@la.gov** for review by the Office of State Fire Marshal and the Louisiana Department of Health. Every attempt will be made to provide a response to you within 10 business days of receipt. A response may not be provided for venue requests for which guidelines are not yet available.
    - Maximum capacities are subject to adjustment/reduction with future Phasing changes.
- Travel to the venue must be in accordance with CDC travel guidelines.
- Where food service is provided, follow the guidance provided for Restaurants, Cafes, and Coffee Shops.

INDOOR LIVE ENTERTAINMENT VENUES THAT HOST MUSIC INCLUDING, BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO, SINGING AND WIND BLOWN INSTRUMENTS ARE REQUIRED TO ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING:

- A minimum 10 feet of separation must be provided between the performers and attendees.
    - The performance area should not be above attendees (e.g. indoor balconies)

INDOOR LIVE ENTERTAINMENT VENUES ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO ADHERE TO THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS:

- String and percussion instruments with social distancing between band members and audience is encouraged.

- Performers should not have tested positive for COVID-19 or experienced COVID-like symptoms in the last 10 days, or have had close contact with a COVID-19 case in the past 14 days.

- Conductors and musicians that are not singing or playing wind instruments should wear a face covering at all times.

- It is strongly encouraged to provide **at least one** of the following mitigation measures ***if singing and/or wind instruments are included in performance***:

    - An HVAC system(s) that provides a minimum of 6 air changes per hour (ACH) within the space occupied by the audience and performers.
        - "CFM" (Cubic Feet per Minute) is calculated as follows:

            - Formula: "CF" x 6 / 60 = minimum required total CFM's
            - "CF" (Cubic Feet of the space) is the room length x width x ceiling height.
            - The "CFM" is on the data plate of the HVAC blower unit, or manual. All units in the space should be added to get the total CFM.
                - Example:
                - For a room that's 80' wide, 100' long, with 20' ceiling height the "CF" would be 160,000.
                - 6 air exchanges per hour x 160,000 = 960,000
                - 960,000 / 60 = 16,000
                - A minimum of 16,000 total CFM's of all HVAC blower units added together will be needed.
    - Direct air flow towards the performers/stage and away from the attendees at a minimum rate of 2,000 CFM.
        - A fan that meets the standard listed above is acceptable.
    - An independent HVAC system, dedicated exclusively for the performance area, that provides a minimum of 6 air changes per hour (ACH).
    - Use of a physical barrier, like Plexiglas, in front of sources of high-velocity aerosols including singers and musicians playing wind instruments.
        - The further the barrier is placed from the source, the larger it shall be.
    - Require singers to wear well-fitted masks, which allow for proper vowel formation while keeping the mouth and nose covered, throughout the entire performance. Require wind instrument performers to wear masks with slits at the mouth to fit mouthpieces for playing their instruments only.
        - Face shields should not be used in place of a face mask. Face shields are eye protection and should be worn in combination with a face mask.

- Wind instrument bell covers should be used in all settings (Ideally, bell covers should be made of non-stretchy material that has a Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) of 13).

- Distancing of 6X6 feet is suggested for all performers; 9X6 feet for wind instrument players.
    - Mark spaces on the floor where performers and stands will be placed.
    - Pre-set chairs and stands when possible.

- At all other times when not playing, the performers should wear a well-fitted mask that covers nose and mouth.

- Performers should not share music stands, sheet music, instruments or microphones.

- The performance area and materials such as stands and microphones should be sanitized after each performance.

- Training and proper PPE must be provided to those who are responsible for cleaning.

- Water bottles must not be shared. Performers shall bring their own water bottles.

- Signage must be posted indicating that singing and instrumental music produced by wind instruments are thought to be higher risk activities for COVID-19 spread. Older adults and people with certain medical conditions are at increased risk to become severely ill from COVID-19. It is especially important for people at increased risk of severe illness from COVID-19, and those who live with them, to protect themselves from getting COVID-19.

Occupant Capacities:

- **Indoor venues** shall be limited to the following:
    - Where no face covering requirement is in place, capacity shall be limited to 75% capacity of the fixed spectator seating, or 3 out of every 4 fixed seats, or to 75% of net occupiable floor area, as defined by 1 person per every 20 square feet.

    - Where all attendees and participants are required to wear face coverings for the entirety of the venue, 100% capacity is permitted.
        - Where face coverings are required, actively enforce the capacity, masking, and social distancing requirements and manage the customers' movements.

- There is no restriction on **outdoor venues**.

Recommended Social Distancing and Safety Rules:

- Events having a central speaker or with a central stage shall have assigned seating.

- One-way traffic should be delineated through aisles wherever possible.

- Seating should be provided for all patrons and shall be accomplished so that a minimum of 6 feet of distance between individuals and small household groups is maintained.

- Seating should not be allowed within 3 feet of aisles or above pedestrian entrance and exits (vomitoriums).

- Make arrangements to allow for the minimum of 6 feet distance between unrelated persons.

- Do not allow physical contact between staff and attendees.
- Eliminate gatherings in the areas while entering, exiting, or moving about.
- Reduce employee area capacity to allow for 6-foot distancing between employees.
- Do not allow physical contact between employees and customers.
- Eliminate gatherings in the building while entering, exiting, purchasing tickets, or moving about.

Recommended Checklist for Management:

☑ Ensure the exterior waiting areas are not blocked.

☑ Lines should be managed to maintain 6 feet distance between parties standing in line.

☑ EPA recommends that building owners and managers take proactive steps to protect public health by minimizing water stagnation during closures and taking action to address building water quality prior to reopening: https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/information-maintaining-or-restoring-water-quality-buildings-low-or-no-use

Recommended Checklist for All Staff:

☑ Check for fever or respiratory symptoms daily.

☑ Keep at least 6 feet from other employees and visitors.

☑ Wear face coverings.

☑ Frequent handwashing is the most important hand hygiene that can be done to stop the spread of COVID-19. Gloves are recommended when touching products, goods, money and credit cards, but are otherwise not recommended for tasks that do not normally require gloves. If gloves are worn:
  - Hands should be washed before putting gloves on and after removing gloves.
  - Gloves should be changed often, changed between tasks, changed when they are obviously soiled, and changed after each interaction with a new individual.

☑ If gloves are not available, use hand sanitizer between each task and after client interaction.

☑ Clean and sanitize items you touch often.

☑ Clean and sanitize surfaces that customers touch often, like gate handles, handrails, chairs, etc. Current evidence suggests that SARS-CoV-2 may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials. Cleaning of visibly dirty surfaces, as well as high-touch surfaces, followed by disinfection is a best practice measure for prevention of COVID-19 and other viral respiratory illnesses in community settings. Follow the CDC guidance for proper cleaning and disinfecting. https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

☑ Clean and disinfect the restrooms regularly.

☒ Do not touch the guests, spectators, players, etc.

Face Covering Guidance:

Refer to Louisiana Department of Health guidance here:
http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/CDC-DIY-cloth-face-covering-instructions.pdf

Steps for Cleaning Areas and Other Items:

1. First, clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent if it is dirty.

2. Then, use disinfectant.

    - If possible, use EPA-registered household disinfectant.

    - Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product.

      Many products recommend:
        - Keeping surfaces wet for a period of time (see product label).
        - Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product.

      Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.
        - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection.
        - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted.
        - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
        - Leave the solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.

      To make a bleach solution, mix:
        - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) of bleach per gallon of water; or

        - 4 teaspoons of bleach per quart of water.

      Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.

The CDC offers this additional guidance for cleaning: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html

Referenced Documents:

- ❑ Essential (Critical Infrastructure) Services remain operational with guidelines in place. See: https://gov.louisiana.gov/assets/docs/covid/Essential-Infrastructure_fact-sheet.pdf
- ❑ Face mask sign option 1: http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/Face-Mask-Sign-Option-1.pdf

- ❑ Face mask sign option 2: http://ldh.la.gov/assets/oph/Coronavirus/resources/Face-Mask-Sign-Option-2.pdf

Signage Samples:

COVID-19 DAILY SELF CHECKLIST

Review this COVID-19 Daily Self Checklist before entering this establishment.

HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED ANY OF THE FOLLOWING SYMPTOMS?

- ☑ Fever (temperature over 100.4°F) without having taken any fever reducing medications
- ☑ Loss of smell or taste
- ☑ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- ☑ Fatigue
- ☑ Muscle or body aches
- ☑ Headache
- ☑ Sore throat
- ☑ Congestion or runny nose
- ☑ Nausea/vomiting, diarrhea, loss of appetite
- ☑ Asked to self-isolate or quarantine by a medical professional or by a local public health official

SYMPTOMS MAY APPEAR **2-14 DAYS AFTER EXPOSURE TO THE VIRUS.**

If you answered yes to any of the above symptoms in the checklist, please do not enter this establishment and seek medical advice immediately.

For more information, please visit: *http://ldh.la.gov/coronaviurs* or *http://cdc.gov.*



THANK YOU FOR WEARING A MASK.

Wearing a mask or face covering can help stop the spread of the coronavirus. Thank you for doing your part to keep our staff and customers safe.

LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

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