



Interim Guidance for Large Venue Settings (July 24, 2020)

Governor Cooper has implemented a [three-phased approach](#) to slowly lift restrictions while combatting COVID-19, protecting North Carolinians and working together to recover the economy.

Starting at 5pm on Friday May 22, 2020, North Carolina will begin Phase 2 which allows certain businesses and organizations to open. Those businesses and organizations should follow the guidelines below to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Guidelines for Large Venues: Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All businesses and agencies where groups of people gather in an enclosed space should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission at their facility. The guidance below will help large venues including large theaters, sporting arenas, conventions centers, and stadiums reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

This guidance covers the following topics:

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations
- Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

[Social distancing](#) is one of the only tools we currently have to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing (“physical distancing”) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings. Phase 2 includes several requirements and recommendations to support social distancing in spaces where the public may gather.

Large Venues are **required** to:

- Limit occupancy of all operating establishments to no more than Mass Gathering Limits AND ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6-foot separation between patrons.
- Post signage reminding attendees and staff about social distancing (staying at least 6 feet away from others). [Know Your W's](#) sign templates are available in English and Spanish on the NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.

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- Provide floor markings to help customers stay 6 feet apart in concession lines and other areas where people gather, including if they are waiting outdoors due to limits on indoor capacity.

It is recommended that large venues:

- Clearly mark designated entry and exit points; if a building has only one entry/exit point, try to stagger entry and exit times if possible.
- Allow staff to work remotely as much as possible.
- Stagger shifts when remote working is not possible.
- Develop and use systems that allow for online, email, or telephone transactions.

Cloth Face Coverings

It is strongly recommended that all employees and attendees wear a cloth face covering when they may be near (less than 6 feet from) other people. An FAQ about face coverings is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

- It is encouraged that businesses provide cloth face coverings for employees and attendees. If provided, they must be single use or properly laundered using hot water and a high heat dryer between uses.
- Please share guidance to employees on use, wearing, and removal of cloth face coverings, such as [CDC's guidance on wearing and removing cloth face masks](#), [CDC's use of cloth face coverings](#), and [CDC's cloth face coverings FAQ's](#).

Cleaning and Hygiene

Washing hands with soap for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of transmission.

Large venues are **required** to:

- Perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., doors, doorknobs, rails) with an [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#) (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increase disinfection during peak times or high customer density times.

It is recommended that large venues:

- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers throughout the day or event and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at all sinks.
- Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for staff and individuals. Require handwashing of staff immediately upon reporting to work, after contact with individuals, after performing cleaning and disinfecting activities, and frequently throughout the day.
- Provide, whenever available, hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance and other areas.
- Provide tissues for proper cough and sneeze hygiene.
- Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety risk.

Monitoring for Symptoms

Conducting regular screening for symptoms can help reduce exposure to COVID-19. Staff should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

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If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and return home. More information on [how to monitor for symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.

Large venues are **required** to:

- Conduct daily [symptom](#) screening (use this standard interview questionnaire) ([English](#) | [Spanish](#)) of employees at entrance to workplace with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to [isolate](#).
- Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home.
- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who have been symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as [Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms](#) flyers (English - [Color, Black & White](#); Spanish - [Color, Black & White](#)).

It is recommended that large venues:

- Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop.
- Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:
 - Enforcing employees staying home if sick.
 - Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
 - Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:
 - No fever for at least 24 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine) AND
 - Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms

***A test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.**
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.
- Require symptomatic employees to wear masks until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedure should be implemented by designated personnel following [CDC guidelines](#) once sick employee leaves.
- Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463).

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Information on who is at higher risk for severe disease is available from the [CDC](#) and [NCDHHS](#).

It is recommended that large venues:

- Designate a specific time for persons at higher risk to access the venue without the general population (such as early morning, or late afternoon).

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- ❑ Enable employees to self-identify as high risk for severe disease and reassign work to minimize face-to-face contact and to allow them to maintain a distance of six feet from others, or to telework if possible.

Combating Misinformation

Help make sure that the information your employees is getting is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NCDHHS](#) to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is recommended that large venues:

- ❑ Provide workers with education about COVID-19 strategies, using methods like videos, webinars, or FAQs. Some reliable sources include [NC DHHS COVID-19](#), [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources](#)
- ❑ Promote informational helplines like 211 and Hope4NC and other [Wellness Resources](#).
- ❑ Put up signs and posters, such as those found [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#).

Water and Ventilation Systems

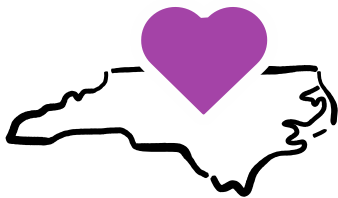
Reduced use of water and ventilation systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other waterborne pathogens from stagnant or standing water.

Before reopening, it is recommended that large venues:

- ❑ Follow the CDC's [Guidance](#) for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- ❑ Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

Additional Resources

- CDC: [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- CDC: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA): [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA): [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA): [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#)



#StayStrongNC

**Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.**

Learn more at nc.gov/covid19.



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