AUDIENCE: Hosts, organizers and participants of gatherings of people from more than one household. This information does not apply to gatherings of people living together in a single household.

BACKGROUND: San Francisco Health Directives allow people in different household to gather, with restrictions to prevent spread of COVID-19. This tip sheet cover frequently asked questions about how to safely organize, host, and participate in gatherings of people from different households.

The Directives and associated documents are available on the Health Directives page under Gatherings.

- Directive 2020-19 – Outdoor Gatherings
- Directive 2020-28 – Drive-In Gatherings
- Directive 2020-34 – Indoor Worship

Additional guidance can be found at www.sfcdcp.org/covid19.

Changes to this FAQ since the Oct. 20 Version:

- Drive-In Gatherings may have up to 6 live performers. All performers must wear face Coverings/masks and observe Social Distancing Rules. Performers who sing, shout, chant, or play a wind instrument must keep 12 feet away from others. Only one performer at a time is allowed to sing, shout, chant, or play a wind instrument.

- Mandatory signage on reporting health violations: Beginning on Nov. 10, businesses and organizations must post signs informing personnel that they can report violations of COVID-19 health orders by calling 311 or visiting sf311.org. Signs must state that employee’s identity will remain anonymous.

- Information on ventilation and fire safety added.

- Note: Indoor social gatherings among different households are still not allowed.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GATHERING TYPE</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION OF GATHERING</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Outdoor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Meal Gatherings</td>
<td>Gatherings where eating or drinking take place</td>
<td>6 people from no more than 3 households</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outdoor Special Gatherings</td>
<td>Political protests; Religious services or ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals, but <strong>not</strong> receptions;</td>
<td>200 people</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small Outdoor Gathering</td>
<td>All other types of outdoor gatherings (e.g. receptions, gatherings at a park, hosted tours)</td>
<td>25 people from no more than 3 households</td>
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<tr>
<td>Drive-in Gatherings</td>
<td>In vehicles (e.g. for movie)</td>
<td>100 vehicles; all occupants of a vehicle must be from the same household</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Indoor</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indoor Religious and Cultural Ceremonial Gatherings</td>
<td>Indoor religious and cultural ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals but <strong>not</strong> receptions</td>
<td>25% of capacity or 100 people, whichever is fewer. Time limit: 2 hours</td>
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</table>
How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These respiratory droplets enter the air when a person breathes. Even more droplets can get in the air when infected people talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets that can infect others. Transmission can occur through:

- Larger droplets. These larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.

- Smaller droplets or infectious particles. These can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.

COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite); however, this is less common.

How can I stay as safe as possible at a gathering?

- Wear a face covering or mask at all times. A face covering is required at all gatherings outside the house.

- Stay for a shorter period of time. The less time you spend with people you don’t live with, the safer it is.

- Stay 6 feet away from people outside your household.

- Only participate in activities or sports where you can stay 6 feet away from people outside your household. Sports and exercise are higher risk because people produce more respiratory droplets when they are breathing harder. Balls and other sports equipment can be shared between only two households.

- Stay away from activities like singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments. These activities produce many more respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. If you must participate in or be near people who are singing, changing, shouting or playing wind instruments, see “How can singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind/brass instruments be done more safely?”

- Wash or sanitize your hands frequently. Bring your own hand sanitizer to gatherings where there will be no place to wash or sanitize your hands.

- Consider staying home if you are at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 due to your age or medical conditions. See https://www.sfcdcp.org/vulnerable for a list of groups at higher risk.

- Keep others safe: don’t attend if you are or a family member feels ill or has COVID-19 like symptoms. For a list of symptoms, see www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/covid-screening.pdf.

- Get a flu vaccine. Preventing influenza is especially important during the COVID-19 epidemic because
people who have flu and COVID-19 at the same time much more likely to die.

**As a business or organization hosting a gathering, what must I do?**

- Complete, maintain, and implement the following documents:
  - A **Health and Safety Plan** for the type of gathering, including COVID-19 screening for all personnel ([www.sfcdcp.org/screening-handout](http://www.sfcdcp.org/screening-handout)) and participants ([www.sfcdcp.org/screeningvisitors](http://www.sfcdcp.org/screeningvisitors)). The Health and Safety Plan must be provided to Host Personnel, available to participants, and posted at the physical entrance where the Host operates. See [www.sfph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp](http://www.sfph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp) to find the correct link for your gathering.
  - A **SFDPH Social Distancing Protocol** including a plan to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as seating, doors, and others before each Gathering (see [SFDPH Cleaning/Disinfection Guidance](http://www.sfcdcp.org/covidcleaning), posted at [www.sfcdcp.org/covidcleaning](http://www.sfcdcp.org/covidcleaning)).
  - **Signage on reporting violations of COVID-19 Health Orders.** Beginning on Nov. 10, Host Businesses or organizations are required to post signs in employee break rooms or areas informing employees of the right to report violations of COVID-19 health orders and directives by calling 311 or visiting [www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation](http://www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation). Signage needs to state that employee’s identity will remain anonymous. Sample signage is available online at [https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19](https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19).

- **Keep a record of people at your gathering, in case someone is later found to have COVID-19.** People with COVID-19 can infect others up to 2 days before they develop symptoms or test positive. Hosts must help public health authorities in contact tracing efforts in case an attendee develops COVID-19. We can help prevent COVID-19 transmission by contact tracing which helps identify people who may have been exposed and helping them quarantine so they don’t inadvertently spread the disease.
  - Keep the attendance/schedules of all personnel at your organization for up to three weeks.
  - Consider maintaining a list of participants willing to voluntarily provide their names for three weeks after an event. Any lists should be discarded after three weeks (unless your business keeps such records in the ordinary course of business).
  - Try to maintain an up-to-date contact list to alert attendees in the event of potential exposure.
  - For more information, see [https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing](https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing).
  - Follow SFDPH’s guidelines on “**COVID-19 Positive At Workplace**” if someone at your gathering tests positive for COVID-19.

**If you are hosting an Indoor Religious/Cultural Gathering, you must also:**

- **Post signs about the increased risk of COVID-19 indoors.** Post [SFDPH Approved Signage](http://www.sfcdcp.org/approved-signage), stating:
  - That COVID-19 is transmitted through the air and that indoor settings carry a much higher risk of infection.
  - That seniors and those with health risks should avoid indoor settings with crowds.
  - The maximum capacity of the space and the maximum capacity currently permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.
• **Ensure that indoor spaces are well-ventilated.**

*Good ventilation controls droplets and infectious particles to prevent COVID-19 transmission by:*

– removing air containing droplets and particles from the room;
– diluting the concentration of droplets and particles by adding fresh, uncontaminated air;
– filtering room air, removing droplets and particles from the air.

○ Comply with the ventilation protocols laid out at Section 4.i of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, including to review and follow SFPDH’s Ventilation Guidance.

○ Implement as many improvements in the Ventilation Guidance as feasible. Keep a hand-annotated copy of the Ventilation Guidance showing which specific improvements were considered and implemented.

○ Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the establishment, including:

  ▪ Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions allow and if permitted by fire and building safety requirements. Fire doors should not be wedged or propped open.

  ▪ If an HVAC systems is present,
    • Ensure HVAC systems are serviced and functioning properly.
    • Evaluate possibilities for upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible.
    • Increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, readjusting or overriding recirculation (“economizer”) dampers.
    • Disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
    • Evaluate running the building ventilation system even when the building is unoccupied to maximize ventilation. At the minimum, reset timer-operated ventilation systems so that they start operating 1-2 hours before the building opens and 2-3 hours after the building is closed.

  ▪ Consider installing portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).

  ▪ If the establishment uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the direction of fans to minimize air blowing from one individual’s space to another’s space.

For more information and additional resources, please see the following: San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH): [www.sfcdcp.org/COVID-ventilation](http://www.sfcdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).

• **Discontinue indoor singing, chanting, shouting and wind instruments.** The State of California does not currently allow these activities indoors.

As a host/organizer, how else can I keep our gathering as safe as possible?

• Keep your gathering under 2 hours, even if it is outdoors. The shorter it is, the safer it is.

• Avoid high-risk activities such as singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments, even outdoors. The activities produce large numbers of respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. See more under “How can singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind/brass instruments be done more safely?”

• Promote flu vaccination. Flu vaccines are critical in the fight against COVID-19 by (1) keeping workers
and communities healthy and (2) reducing strain on our healthcare and testing systems that are responding to COVID-19. Post signage to encourage flu vaccine among personnel and participants. Find out more information at [http://sfcdcp.org.flu](http://sfcdcp.org.flu).

**What else can I do to decrease the risk of our indoor gathering?**

In addition to the measures laid out in “*How can I keep a gathering as safe as possible?*”

- Make sure that personnel and participants are aware that indoor gatherings are much higher risk for COVID-19 than outdoor gatherings, so they can decide if they can safely attend.
- Consider making changes to minimize crowding and make physical distancing easier for people from different households. Examples include moving podiums, creating physical barriers, taping off or moving seating, identifying entrance and exits, indicating walking paths in areas where participants pray or kneel on the floor, prohibiting access to common areas.
- Make changes to minimize touching of high-touch surfaces, for example, by keeping bathroom doors propped open to minimize touching of door handles.
- Make hand sanitizer or handwashing stations available at entrances and exits.
- Discontinue use of shared water vessels, fonts, fountain, and sinks for ceremonial purposes.
- Regularly clean and disinfect common and high touch areas, including bathrooms.

**Can I host more than one gathering on the same day?**

Yes, as long as you schedule gatherings far enough apart that participants from different gatherings do not mix, and you can clean/disinfect high-touch areas between gatherings.

- Hosts must separate outdoor gatherings by at least 20 minutes and indoor gatherings by 30 minutes between gatherings, to allow time for participants to exit and for personnel to clean/disinfect.
- Between gatherings, personnel must:
  - Clean and sanitize high-touch surface;
  - Clean, sanitize and/or replace any items of clothing that became soiled or contaminated with bodily fluids before using them for a later gathering;
  - Thoroughly wash or sanitize their hands.
- Hosts may not hold more than one Outdoor Gathering at a single location at the same time.
- Hosts may not hold both indoor and outdoor gatherings simultaneously to allow for more people to attend a gathering (e.g. indoor and outdoor wedding or funeral).

**Can I hold more than one indoor worship or cultural ceremonial gatherings at the same time in a large facility?**

Yes, you may hold simultaneous or overlapping indoor gatherings if all of the following conditions are met:

- Each gathering must be held in its own, physically separate space, either in different buildings, or in different rooms separated by sealed floor-to-ceiling walls. Partitions may not be used to divide an indoor space for two different gatherings.
- Participants from different gatherings are not allowed to mix.
o Different gatherings must use separate entrances and exits. If only one shared entrance and exit exist, the Host must ensure participants from different gatherings do not enter or exit at the same time, for example, by staggering start and end times.

o Personnel and participants must not move between gatherings.
  • The host must develop a written plan to describe how they will keep people in different gatherings from mixing, as outlined in Section 4.1.3 of the Indoor Worship Directive.
  • In general, keep the areas that are not reserved for an indoor gathering closed to participants, unless expressly permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

Can personnel who are not involved in a gathering work on-site while a gathering is taking place?

Yes. Personnel are allowed to work inside the facility while multiple indoor gatherings occur as long as staff follow rules for the Business Operating Office Facilities Directive and Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

Can we eat or drink at gatherings?

• Eating and drinking are permitted at Outdoor Meal Gatherings, at Drive-In Gatherings, and as part of religious or faith-based ceremonies, as long as it is done in a way that minimizes the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
  o Eating and drinking may not take place when personnel and/or participants are within 6 feet of one another, since face coverings must be worn when people are within 6 feet.
  o Avoid hand-to-mouth contact between different people. Respiratory droplets from one person’s mouth can land on the other person’s hand, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
  o As an example, communion rituals could have the priest and participants masked at all times, with the participants receiving communion in the hand and moving away from others to briefly lower their mask to place the sacramental bread on the tongue (see example video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8tg8A5jmP0).

• People from different households should not drink out of the same glass or cup. They also should not share utensils. If glasses, cups, or utensils are shared, they must be disinfected between households, and anyone handling the shared item must also wash or disinfect their hands.

• Self-service food, potlucks, or family-style eating with shared serving plates or drink dispensers are not allowed.

Must we wear masks/face coverings all the time?

• You must wear masks as specified in the Face Covering Order.

• Proper use of face coverings is even more critical when in higher risk gatherings, such as indoors.

• Face coverings may be removed briefly while eating or drinking, however proper social distancing should be maintained. If removing face coverings/masks is deemed as essential in a ritual or ceremony, a person may briefly remove their face covering only if they (1) maintain social distance and do not speak, recite, chant, shout or sing; or (2) isolate themselves from all other people to speak or recite, such as by speaking inside an enclosed chamber or behind a plastic or glass partition or face shield no more than 12
What about camping, cookouts, or BBQs?

- Bring your own supplies including soap, disinfectants, hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc.
- Do not share BBQs or outdoor grilling stations with people outside of your household. Clean all stations frequently.
- If camping with people from outside your household, consider self-isolating for 14 days before and after if you will be in close contact with people you are camping with.
  - “Close contact” is defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet of an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over 24 hours) starting from 2 days before the illness starts (for people without symptoms, this means 2 days before they were tested; www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact).

Can we sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?

Outdoor Special Gatherings and Drive-In Gatherings may have singing, chanting, shouting or wind instruments, if all of the following conditions are met:

- Only one person may sing, chant, shout, or play a wind instrument at a time. Group singing, chanting, shouting, or wind instrument playing is not allowed.
- The person performing the activity must be at least 12 feet from any other person.
- The person singing, chanting, or shouting must wear a Face Covering at all times.
- The wind instrument’s bells and/or openings where air/sound exit must be covered with a mask/other fabric at all times.

- When these activities are allowed, consider the following to reduce risk:
  - Ensure the performance is in a large, well ventilated area (see www.sfcdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).
  - Minimize the amount of time engaged in these activities.
  - Sing, chant, yell, or play wind instruments more quietly, to produce fewer respiratory droplets. Consider using amplifiers.
  - Consider a physical barrier between the performer and others.
  - Have performers position themselves so that voices and air exiting from instruments is directed from Participants (for example, in silhouette).
  - Encourage performers to get tested for COVID-19 as close to the performance date as possible, accounting for the turnaround time for the test. People can get tested by their regular healthcare provider or at CityTestSF (https://sf.gov/citytestsf).
  - Take special care to ensure that performers do not have symptoms of COVID-19 and are not “close contact” of someone with COVID-19. See www.sfcdcp.org/screeningvisitors.
  - For wind/brass instruments:
- Performers must be masked at all times as much as possible when not performing.
- Instruments must not be shared among individuals of different households.
- If relevant to the instrument, performers should use a large, thin, plastic-lined pad on their chest and lap to collect spit.

## Resources

Useful COVID-19 Resources to keep checking:

- San Francisco guidance: [www.sfcdc.org/covid19](http://www.sfcdc.org/covid19)
- Printable resources such as signage: [https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19](https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19)
- California guidance:
  - [https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/](https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/)