



Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Gatherings

UPDATED September 17, 2020

This document was updated from September 14, 2020, to clarify and provide additional detail regarding funerals, performances, and contact tracing in the event of a case of COVID-19.

AUDIENCE: Hosts and Participants in different types of gatherings involving people from more than one household.

This Document Updates and Consolidates the following Outdoor Gathering Tip Sheets and FAQs:

- FAQ for Small Outdoor Gatherings
- FAQ for Practitioners of Outdoor Faith Based Gatherings
- FAQ for Attendees of Outdoor Faith Based Gatherings
- FAQ for Outdoor Fitness Groups

BACKGROUND: As of Sept 14, 2020, [Health Officer Directive No.20-19b](#) authorizes and provides updated guidance for Gatherings. This document summarizes tips and frequently asked questions about how to participate in these types of gatherings during COVID-19.

Overview of Types of Gatherings

GATHERING TYPE		DESCRIPTION OF GATHERING	NUMBER OF PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT HOUSEHOLDS
<i>Outdoor</i>	Outdoor Meal Gatherings	Eating or drinking	6
	Outdoor Special Gatherings	Religious services or ceremonies, political protests	50
	Small Outdoor Gathering	All other types (e.g. gathering at a park, hosted walking, bus, or maritime tours)	12
	Drive-in Gatherings	In vehicles (e.g. for movie) (see Directive)	100 Vehicles
<i>Indoor</i>	Individual faith or political activity	Single person entering religious or political (e.g. campaign headquarters) building (see Health Order C19-07i, Appendix C-2 (10))	1
	Indoor funerals	Funeral services (see Health Order C19-07i, section 8.h.iv)	12



Frequently Asked Questions

How can I keep a Gathering as safe as possible?

- Keep your gathering under 2 hours; the shorter it is, the safer it is.
- Don't attend if you are or a family member is feeling ill or experiencing COVID-19 like symptoms (see www.sfdcp.org/screeningvisitors).
- Consider staying home if you are a member of a vulnerable population, e.g. those over age 60 or with chronic medical conditions (see www.sfdcp.org/vulnerable).
- Bring items such as masks, hand sanitizers, and your own water bottles.
- Wear a face covering or mask at all times, unless you are specifically exempted per [Health Order C19-12](#).
- Avoid high risk activities that expel more air and thus increases COVID-19 transmission such as singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments. See more under "How can singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind/brass instruments be done more safely?"
- Do not do any activities or sports that don't allow physical distancing. Sports with shared equipment are only allowed among members of up to 2 households.
- 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. **Strongly encourage all personnel to get a flu shot.** Post signage to encourage flu vaccine among customers, visitors, etc.

What do I need to do as a Host business or organization?

- Complete, maintain, and implement the following documents for your Gathering:
 - The relevant [Health and Safety Plan](#) for the type of gathering (see www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp to find the correct link for your gathering), including, among other requirements, COVID-19 screening for all [Personnel](#) (www.sfdcp.org/screening-handout) and [Participants](#) (www.sfdcp.org/screeningvisitors). This must be provided to Host Personnel, available to Participants, and posted at the physical entrance where the Host operates.
 - A [SFDPH Social Distancing Protocol](#) that includes, among other requirements, a plan to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as seating, doors, and others before each Gathering (see [SFDPH Cleaning/Disinfection Guidance](#), posted at www.sfdcp.org/covidcleaning).
- Hosts are responsible for knowing who attended an event in case an attendee develops COVID-19 and there is a need to conduct contact tracing.
 - Consider keeping a list of Personnel and Participants willing to voluntarily provide their names for three weeks after an event.
 - Try to maintain an up-to-date email or contact list to alert attendees in the event of potential exposure.
- Keep the Gathering as short as possible to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- Follow SFDPH's guidelines on "[COVID-19 Positive At Workplace](#)" if someone at your gathering tests positive for COVID-19.
- Use and put out [SFDPH Approved Signage](#).



Can we host multiple gatherings one after another or at the same time?

- A Host may allow Personnel to participate in sequential gatherings in the same day. If Hosting sequential gatherings, the Host must also:
 - Ensure at least 20 minutes between gatherings for Participants to leave and Personnel to clean and sanitize all high-touch areas.
 - Ensure Personnel thoroughly wash hands and clean, sanitize, or replace any items or clothing that became soiled or contaminated with secretions or bodily fluids from Participants or different Host Personnel during earlier gatherings.
- Hosts can hold only **one** gathering at a time, unless this event is an **Outdoor Meal Gathering** or a **Small Outdoor Gathering** (but not Drive-In or Outdoor Special Gatherings) and the Host can ensure the following rules are followed:
 - The Host must ensure the gatherings will remain separate, such as by placing physical barriers between the gatherings:
 - If a physical barrier is used to keep groups separate, groups must be at least six feet apart. If there is no physical barrier, groups must be at least 12 feet apart.
 - If the gathering occurs on a moving vehicle (such as a bus or a boat) where a physical barrier between groups is not possible, at least six feet must be maintained between groups.
 - The Host must prohibit mingling among personnel or participants from different gatherings or groups.

Can we eat or drink at Gatherings?

- Eating and drinking is only permitted at **Outdoor Meal Gatherings** which are limited to 6 people from different households.
- Self-service food, potlucks, or family style eating and drinking events should not be held. By avoiding these situations, you can avoid the risk of cross contamination.
- If, as part of a faith-based ceremony, eating or drinking is required, it must be done in a way to minimize contact between people, especially involving the hands and mouth.
- Glasses, cups and utensils should not be shared. If they are, glass, cup, or utensil will be disinfected between each use and the users' hands will be cleaned using appropriate hand washing or hand sanitizer.

What about camping, cookouts, or BBQs?

- Arrive with 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 someone from outside your household, consider self-isolating for 14 days before and after if you will be in close contact to minimize the risk of transmission.
- "Close contact" is defined by the CDC as being within 6 feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes 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).



How can singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind/brass instruments be done more safely?

- Singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind/brass instruments raise the risk of transmission of COVID-19 because of the forceful exhalation involved and should be avoided. Ideally, play a recording to avoid live performance.
- These activities are permitted at an **Outdoor Special Gathering** by one person at a time and only if:
 - The person performing the activity is at least **12 feet** from any other person.
 - The person singing, chanting, or shouting is wearing a **Face Covering** at all times.
 - The instrument's bells and/or openings where air/sound exit are covered with a mask/other fabric at all times.
 - Participants may not sing, chant, or shout along with the person who is engaging in that activity.
- When these activities are permitted, consider the following to reduce risk:
 - Ensure the performance is in a large, well ventilated area (see www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).
 - Minimize the amount of time engaged in these activities.
 - Minimize the intensity to the extent possible (e.g., sing/play instruments at a reduced volume, use amplifiers, etc.).
 - Consider having a physical barrier between the performer and others in the Outdoor Special Gathering.
 - Project voices and air exhaust from instruments away from Participants (e.g. have performers position themselves 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 (which is typically about 2 days but can be longer). People can get tested by their regular healthcare provider or at CityTestSF (<https://sf.gov/citytestsf>).
 - Prohibit anyone with symptoms of COVID-19 or anyone who is a "Close Contact" of someone with COVID-19 from performing these activities. See www.sfgdcp.org/screeningvisitors.
 - For wind 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.

How does it work to have a single person inside for faith-based or political activities?

- The number of persons permitted inside for faith-based or political activities is expected to increase with further reopening, but is currently restricted to a single person at a time.
 - The person may be an adult accompanied by their children or their caregiver.
 - The person may meet briefly with a single person, such as for counseling or to pick up items.



- One staff may be allowed in the space to ensure that the individual follows all protocols, such as Face Coverings/Masks Guideline and Social Distancing Protocol; refrains from touching unnecessary objects; sits in a different spot than what was occupied by the previous individual; allows host/organization sufficient time to clean and disinfect indoor areas between visitors.

Can funerals be hosted at faith-based facilities?

- Faith-based facilities are also permitted to have up to 12 people from different households, including visitors and staff, indoors for funeral services only.
- Indoor activities carry higher risk of COVID-19 transmission. Follow Health and Safety, Social Distancing, ventilation, and other relevant guidance.

Can ventilation reduce COVID-19 transmission risks for indoor activities?

- Hosts should follow **SFDPH Ventilation Guidance** for any indoor activities: Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the establishment, including:
 - HVAC systems (if one 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.
 - Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
 - 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 (SFDPH): www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation.



Resources

Useful COVID-19 Resources to keep checking:

- San Francisco guidance: www.sfdcp.org/covid19
- San Francisco Health Officer orders: www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp
- Printable resources such as signage: <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>
- California guidance:
 - <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>
 - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>
- CDC guidance: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/index.html