BANQUET AND CONFERENCE CENTER GUIDELINES

These guidelines are effective as updated on November 17, 2020 in St. Louis County in accordance with the Department of Public Health's (“DPH’s”) Safer At Home Order (the “Order”) effective November 17, 2020. These guidelines may be replaced or modified by DPH based on new scientific information and local information including the trajectory of influenza-like illnesses, cases of COVID-19, and any other information deemed relevant to protect public health in St. Louis County.

The guidelines contained herein do not supersede public health orders, laws or regulations that may apply to these businesses.

These guidelines place restrictions on banquet centers, conference venues, and any similar venue where members of the public gather for meetings or events. Since the COVID-19 virus is easily transmitted in group settings, capacity limitations in these centers and venues are necessary to limit the number of individuals in these centers and venues at any one time. These capacity limitations, in addition to face coverings, social distancing restrictions and disinfection processes, have proved to be significant in the mitigation of the transmission of COVID-19.

Adherence to these guidelines is not only for the protection of the guests of these centers and venues, but also for the protection of the employees that are employed by the centers and venues. The requirements that together prevent the spread of infections by respiratory transmission (including COVID-19) include:

- **Social distancing:** maintain at least 6 feet between and among employees and guests at all times.
- **Monitoring employee health:** screen employees for symptoms of COVID-19.
- **Using personal protective equipment (PPE):** staff and guests must always wear a mask, except while eating.
- **Disinfecting and cleaning:** wash hands regularly and clean surfaces with an EPA-approved disinfectant.

CAPACITY AND GATHERING RESTRICTIONS

**EFFECTIVE NOVEMBER 17, 2020** – Banquet centers and conference venues must abide not only by the 25% capacity limitation but also by the gathering limitations of DPH’s Safer At Home Order. Only 10 or fewer persons may be in attendance at any gathering, including weddings, parties, celebrations, etc.

These gathering limitations apply to conference centers in businesses other than those operated solely as banquet centers and conference venues, including those located in hotels, private businesses, halls, and public accommodations, such as parks.
While banquet and conference centers are allowed to have up to 25% (twenty-five percent) of their facility's authorized fire or building code occupancy at any one time, each gathering within the facility must be limited to 10 or fewer individuals.

Indoor food and beverage service is not allowed.

Banquet and conference centers may provide outdoor spaces, such as tents, as approved by the DPH as long as they comply with the gathering limitation of 10 or fewer individuals. Food and beverages may be served in these outdoor spaces.

Banquet and conference centers must provide the following to ensure social distancing:

- Install physical barriers, such as Plexiglas, between guests and employees where possible or otherwise ensure 6 feet of distance between guests and employees in any place where there is prolonged contact between individuals.
- In all areas which are prone to lines or congregation, such as lines to enter the facility or for restrooms, install clear markings with signage, tape, or other means that show 6 feet of distance as the appropriate spacing between guests.
- Provide signage inside and outside the facility outlining social distancing requirements, limitations on crowd size, and procedures to limit crowd size.

**RIGHT TO DENY ENTRY TO GUESTS NOT COMPLYING WITH FACE COVERING REQUIREMENTS**

To protect their employees and guests, a banquet center or conference venue must deny entry to guests who refuse to wear face coverings for non-medical reasons. The guest shall not be required to produce medical documentation verifying a medical condition and the facility may not ask about the nature of a medical condition.

Guests must wear face coverings at all times unless they are seated and engaged in consuming food or drink while adequately distanced from other guests.

The banquet center or conference venue must post the requirement that guests wear face coverings at the entrance of the facility. It is also recommended that the facility provide information regarding the requirement for face coverings on their website to allow guests to know in advance the requirement before arriving.

**RESPONSIBILITIES WITH RESPECT TO SOCIAL DISTANCING AND EMPLOYEE HEALTH**

All banquet centers and conference venues must comply with social distancing requirements and disinfection processes, and must take the following additional precautions:

**Hygiene requirements**

- Provide hand-washing or sanitizing opportunities for guests where possible.
- Frequently sanitize of high touch areas with products thought to destroy COVID-19.
- Provide reasonable breaks for employees to wash their hands.
- Train employees about procedures related to disinfection processes and social distancing.
Employee health and safety

- Provide employees working in the facility with face coverings or supplies to make face coverings.
- Require employees to wear face coverings while at work, unless the employee is working alone in an enclosed area or has a medical reason not to wear a face covering.
- Conduct daily screenings of employees who work in their facilities for symptoms of COVID-19. Employees must be masked while the employer conducts the health screening. Conduct such health checks safely and respectfully, and in accordance with applicable privacy laws and regulations.

Employers may use examples of screening methods in CDC’s General Business FAQs as a guide.

- Take each employee’s temperature with a touchless thermometer.
- Ask about the presence of a new or worsened cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, fever, chills, muscle aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell.
- Ask if the employee has had close contact with a person diagnosed with COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Employees with a temperature of 100.4-degree F or above, or who answer yes to any of the screening questions, must not be allowed to enter the workplace. Employees who develop symptoms of a respiratory illness while at work must immediately be sent home.
- Require employees to quarantine or isolate if they have or are believed to have COVID-19 or if they have come into contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19.

CLEANING THE FACILITY

In order to ensure that the banquet center or conference venue protects its guests and employees, the facility must be cleaned in accordance with the following guidelines:

- Use EPA-approved disinfectants for all routine cleaning. Diluted bleach solutions (1/3 cup bleach per gallon of water) may be used for appropriate surfaces. For a list of products that meet the EPA’s criteria for use against novel coronavirus, visit https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/
- Make disinfectant wipes available to front-of-house staff and instruct them to wipe down countertops, tables, chairs, pens, and other shared surfaces.
- Kitchen surfaces, especially hand sinks, handles, prep stations, and door knobs, need to be wiped down with disinfectant or sanitizer at least every hour. A log should be created to document all practices with a two-person verification checklist.
- Ensure that all shared surfaces and objects are wiped down with disinfectant between each guest, including tables, chairs, and condiment bottles.
- China, glass, and silverware may be used for outdoor dining as long as FDA-approved washing, rinsing, and sanitizing standards are met. Diligent care should be taken to ensure sanitizer concentration and water temperature requirements are strictly followed and dish washing machine mechanisms are working properly. If possible, the use of disposable products is preferred.
- Give additional training to all cleaning staff. Staff should know how to put on and remove disposable gloves safely, use disinfectants according to manufacturer directions, and disinfect all high-touch surfaces.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

For general questions or concerns call 877-435-8411. Get text message alerts by texting STLOUISCOALERT to 67283. To keep up with the local response and testing sites visit stlcorona.com or call 314-615-2660.
• Attempt to limit the number of employees present at one time to encourage social distancing.
• Try to keep employees assigned to a single task or area, when possible, to reduce cross contamination concerns.
• Increase handwashing if changing tasks is necessary.
• Establish and post maximum outdoor dining area capacity using updated COVID-19-compliant floor plans.
• Immediately isolate and seek medical care for any individual, employee or guest, who develops symptoms while working or while in attendance at the facility.
• Contact the local health department about suspected cases of exposure.
• Establish record-keeping systems to assist public health officials with contact tracing if necessary.
• Arrange tables to ensure that there is always 6 feet of distance between guests at different tables. Consider leaving empty tables (clearly marked as such) between each occupied table.
• Where possible, seat only members of one household at the same table. It is recommended that only 6 guests sit at a table. Tables with more than 10 guests are not recommended.
• Require guests to wear face coverings upon arriving and leaving the facility and when leaving their table for any reason.
• Require employees to keep all personal items in a designated area.
• Require employees to dispose of personal protective equipment before leaving the facility.
• Post both interior and exterior signs reminding customers not to enter if they have symptoms and to obey social distancing requirements.
• No self-serve drink, food service, or buffet options are allowed.
• Make sure that there are clear pathways, establishing one-way pathways when possible, throughout the establishment, including to and from entrances and restrooms.
• Prop open frequently used interior doors to limit contact with doorknobs. Increase ventilation by opening exterior doors and windows if this can be done while maintaining other health and safety practices.
• Cups, lids, napkins, and straws should be brought directly to customers by staff and not placed out for self-service. Do not place utensils on table until patrons are seated.
• Keep condiments, including salt and pepper shakers, off of tables and have servers bring them when requested, or consider using single-serve condiment packages. Clean shakers after each party’s use and discard any remaining single-serve packages.
• Comply with DPH’s Food Establishment and Bar Operating Guidelines.