COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT
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Date: 9-14-21

To: All Individuals, Businesses, and Organizations in SLO County

Subject: **COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices:**
Hosting Large Events

This document summarizes requirements, recommendations, and best practices for hosting indoor and outdoor large events located in San Luis Obispo County.

KEY FACTS:

- Large events are characterized here as a gathering of many people from multiple households in a private or public space and are often planned events. Examples of large events include sporting events, rallies, receptions, parties, fundraisers, conventions, parades, expos, festivals, concerts, and other performances. In this context, large events are not informal gatherings among known family, friends, and associates.

- Large events are higher risk for COVID-19 transmission because attendees are spending long periods of time physically close to large numbers of people they don't usually interact with, thereby increasing the risk that respiratory particles will be transmitted between attendees and participants. Activities like singing, shouting, or cheering further increase transmission risk.

- Indoor settings with crowds of people are especially high risk for transmission. Masks are required for all indoor public spaces regardless of an individual's vaccination status.

- Outdoor settings are generally safer than indoor settings. Factors that increase risk of transmission for both outdoor and indoor events include the vaccination status of attendees and staff, the number of people moving around and interacting, the ability to maintain physical distance, whether people are wearing masks, sufficient indoor ventilation, and the duration of the event.

- Vaccination continues to be the primary method to reduce transmission in large gatherings.

REQUIREMENTS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND BEST PRACTICES:

Indoor Settings– Under 1,000 in Attendance

Required:

- Masks are required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status in all indoor settings[1].
- Requirements for employees are different than those for attendees. Employers must follow the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS).
- Note that the directives in a SLO County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement, including those from CDPH and Cal/OSHA ETS.

Strongly Recommended:

- Provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking, and another for congregating or mingling.
- Facilitate increased ventilation of indoor spaces (i.e., open all windows and doors to increase natural air flow), following current CDPH and Cal/OSHA guidance.
- Require verification of COVID-19 vaccination or negative test.
  - If implemented, pre-entry negative testing needs to be conducted within 72 hours before event start time (both PCR and antigen are acceptable). Results of the test must be available prior to entry. See current CDPH Updated Testing Guidance for acceptable methods of proof of negative COVID-19 test result.
- See Best Practices for Large Events.

Indoor Settings– Over 1,000 in Attendance (Mega Event)[2,]

Required:

- Masks are required for all individuals regardless of vaccination status in all indoor settings.[1]
- Requirements for employees are different than those for attendees. Employers must follow the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards (ETS).
- Note that the directives in a SLO County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement, including those from CDPH and Cal/OSHA ETS.

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[1] In San Luis Obispo County, all individuals are required to follow the September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings in addition to the CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings. Requirements in a SLO County Health Officer Order must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement.

[2] Mega Events do not include venues such as shopping malls or museums that are open to public circulation as part of their regular operations, except to the extent that such venues host qualifying events. CDPH Guidance for Mega Events does not apply to school events that are not open to the general public. See the full guidance from CDPH: Update for Beyond the Blueprint for Industry and Business Sectors, 8/18/21 and FAQs.

- Verification of fully vaccinated status or pre-entry negative test result is required of attendees of indoor Mega Events. [3]
  - See current Options for Providing Proof of Vaccination in the CDPH Vaccine Record Guidelines & Standards for acceptable methods of vaccine verification.
  - Pre-entry negative testing must be conducted within 72 hours before event start time (both PCR and antigen are acceptable). Results of the test must be available prior to entry into the event or venue. See current CDPH Updated Testing Guidance for acceptable methods of proof of negative COVID-19 test result.
  - Indoor venue and event operators may **not** use self-attestation as a mode of verification (Effective 9/20/21).
- Information must be prominently placed on all communications, including the reservation and ticketing systems, to ensure guests are aware of testing and vaccination requirements (including acceptable modes of verification).

Strongly Recommended:

- Venues should make masks available to attendees upon request.
- Provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking, and another for congregating or mingling.
- Facilitate increased ventilation of indoor spaces (i.e., open all windows and doors to increase natural air flow), following current CDPH and Cal/OSHA guidance.
- See Best Practices for Large Events.

Outdoor Settings– Under 10,000 in Attendance

Required:

- Employers must follow the Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards ETS).
- Attendees must wear masks at outdoor events when they enter indoor areas, such as restrooms, restaurants, retail shops, concourses, or concession stands. At any time indoors, attendees must follow the September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings.

Strongly Recommended:

- Masks are strongly recommended for all individuals regardless of vaccination status when in a crowded outdoor setting.
- Provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking, and another for congregating or mingling.
- See Best Practices for Large Events.

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[3] Requirements for CDPH-defined Mega Events continue to be recommended but not mandatory for places of worship meeting the definition of a mega event, per CDPH.

__Outdoor Settings– 10,000 or more in Attendance (Mega Events)__[4,5]

Required:

- Employers must follow the [Cal/OSHA COVID-19 Prevention Emergency Temporary Standards](#) ETS).

- Attendees must wear masks at outdoor events when they enter indoor areas, such as restrooms, restaurants, retail shops, concourses, or concession stands. At any time indoors, attendees must follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#).

Strongly Recommended:

- Masks are strongly recommended for all individuals regardless of vaccination status when in a crowded outdoor setting.

- Provide a designated outdoor area for eating and drinking, and another for congregating or mingling.

- Verification of fully vaccinated status or pre-entry negative test result is strongly recommended for all attendees.[6]

   - Do **not** use self-attestation as a mode of verification.

   - See current Options for Providing Proof of Vaccination in the [CDPH Vaccine Record Guidelines & Standards](#) for acceptable methods of vaccine verification.

   - If implemented, pre-entry negative testing needs to be conducted within 72 hours before event start time (both PCR and antigen are acceptable). Results of the test must be available prior to entry. See [current CDPH Updated Testing Guidance for acceptable methods of proof of negative COVID-19 test result.](#)

- Information should be prominently placed on all communications, including the reservation and ticketing systems, to ensure guests are aware that the State strongly recommends that they be fully vaccinated or obtain a negative COVID-19 test prior to attending the event.

- See [Best Practices for Large Events](#).

BEST PRACTICES FOR ALL LARGE EVENTS:

- Encourage everyone to get vaccinated when eligible.

- Convey the risk of attending large, crowded events where the vaccine status of others in attendance may be unknown to the individuals.

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[4] See the full guidance from CDPH[: Update for Beyond the Blueprint for Industry and Business Sectors, 8/18/21](#)

[5] Mega Events do not include venues such as shopping malls or museums that are open to public circulation as part of their regular operations, except to the extent that such venues host qualifying events. CDPH Guidance for Mega Events does not apply to school events that are not open to the general public.

[6] Requirements for CDPH Mega Events continue to be recommended but not mandatory for places of worship meeting the definition of a mega event, per CDPH.

- Convey the risk of attending large, crowded events for populations that may not currently be eligible for vaccination or may be immunocompromised and whose vaccine protection may be incomplete.

- Encourage everyone to sign up for CA Notify to receive alerts when they have been in close contact with someone who tests positive for COVID-19.

- Direct everyone to wear masks except when actively eating and drinking. When actively eating and drinking indoors or at outdoor mega events, customers should be seated or positioned at a table, counter, or other stationary location. "Actively eating or drinking" refers to the limited time during which the mask can be briefly removed to eat or drink, after which it must be immediately put back on.

- Screen guests, staff, performers, and crew for symptoms before they attend the event and inform them not to attend if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are under isolation or quarantine orders.

- Reduce crowding, especially indoors. Establish procedures to prevent crowding among persons waiting to enter or exit an event.

- Encourage frequent handwashing and place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry and outside communal bathrooms with signage promoting use. Display posters in multiple languages that remind people to wash or sanitize their hands and show how to wash their hands are available in the signage section.

- Maximize ventilation. Options include installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.

- When weather and working conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Consider using fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows – position window fans to blow air outward, not inward.

- Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased. Consider use of carbon dioxide monitors to monitor the effectiveness of your ventilation in more densely occupied indoor spaces.

- Assign staff to remind attendees when they must wear a face mask.

- Use advanced registration as much as possible for your event so you know how many people will attend. Advanced registration can also help you to convey your COVID-19 safety plans to guests before they attend.

- Use your online platforms to communicate your COVID-19 safety policies to the public, including vaccination verification, testing, and face mask requirements.

- Implement related local requirements and best practices as applicable:
    - County of SLO COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices: Performing Arts
    - County of SLO COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices: Youth Sports and Extracurricular Activities