



ADVISORY FOR COUNTY FAIRS AND LOCAL FESTIVALS DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

As of May 18, 2021

Advisory

This Advisory for County Fairs and Local Festivals during the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency ("Interim COVID-19 Advisory for Fairs and Festivals") was created to provide owners/operators of local fairs and/or festivals and their employees, event staff, vendors, contractors, patrons/attendees, as well as local governments, with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19.

Effective May 19, 2021, this advisory shall apply to any publicly and/or privately operated fair or festival held indoors or outdoors, including but not limited to: community fairs and festivals, craft fairs, food and beverage festivals, harvest/crop/agricultural festivals, community garage sales and swap meets, and community parades.

The guidelines described in this document are minimum requirements only and any fair or festival is free to provide additional precautions or increased restrictions. New York State Department of Health (DOH) industry-specific guidance must be followed for the applicable activities and operations present at any fair or festival (e.g., amusement and family entertainment, food and beverage service, performing arts and entertainment), as detailed below. Applicable Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) applicable guidance (e.g., "[Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings](#)") should also be consulted, as appropriate. Fair and festival organizers/operators are accountable for adhering to all local, state, and federal requirements relative to the fair and festival activities, staying current with any updates to these requirements, and incorporating the same into any fair, festival, and/or any event safety plan.

Fair and Festival Notice and Approval

Any fair or festival that plans to accommodate attendees above the social gathering limit must notify the appropriate government or health authorities as a part of the event permitting process, as outlined below. (As of May 19, 2021, the State's social gathering limit is 250 people indoors and 500 people outdoors). Local governments should incorporate the State's COVID-19 health and safety guidance as a part of any existing event permitting review/approval.

- **Events of Fewer than 5,000 Attendees:** For fairs or festivals that plan to accommodate fewer than 5,000 attendees, exclusive of employees, event staff, vendors, and contractors, the owner/operator of the event must notify the respective local government agency that is issuing the permit or, if no such permitting agency is involved, the respective county health department or local public authority, at least 7 days in advance of the event date. The event notice shall contain event details including a list of activities taking place at the fair and/or festival and specific details on the measures in place to meet the standards listed in this advisory and any relevant guidance, including but not limited to the (1) organizer/operator contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration (including loading and unloading times), (6) expected number of patrons/attendees, (7) expected number of employees/event staff, inclusive of vendors and contractors, and (8) location on premises (e.g., indoor, outdoor) indicated by description and/or an event layout.
- **Events of Greater than 5,000 Attendees:** For fairs or festivals that plan to accommodate greater than 5,000 attendees, exclusive of employees, event staff, vendors, and contractors, the owner/operator of the event must – in addition to any county or local event permitting process – notify the New York

State Department of Health, at least 7 days in advance of the event date. The event notice shall contain event details including a list of activities taking place at the fair and/or festival and specific details on the measures in place to meet the standards listed in this advisory and any relevant guidance, including but not limited to the (1) organizer/operator contact information, (2) event name, (3) event address, (4) event date and time, (5) estimated event duration (including loading and unloading times), (6) expected number of patrons/attendees, (7) expected number of employees/event staff, inclusive of vendors and contractors, and (8) location on premises (e.g., indoor, outdoor) indicated by description and/or an event layout.

Events may be subject to inspection by health authorities to ensure compliance with all provisions of this advisory and any applicable State guidance.

- For the purposes of this advisory, "outdoor" is defined as an open-air event space used to accommodate the fair or festival, which may have a temporary or fixed cover (e.g., awning, roof) so long as such cover has at least two sides open for airflow. For a side to be open for airflow, at least 50% of the area of such side must be open whenever attendees/patrons are on the premises. (Fixed doors that open and close to access the outdoor space do not count as area that is open for airflow.) If separate, adjacent covers have open sides that face one another, such covers must be spaced at least six feet apart.

Capacity Limitations

Fairs and festivals must ensure that the total number of attendees is limited such that at least six feet of distance can be maintained between individuals who are not members of the same party/household/family (i.e., approximately 100 square feet per attendee or 250 square feet per group of 4 attendees) within the space available for the fair or festival, except as provided below.

- This event-specific capacity limit based on social distancing for fairs and festivals is intended to allow employees and event staff to enforce, and vendors and attendees/patrons to comply with, the requirements of the State's guidance.
- Fairs and festivals may eliminate the 6 feet of required social distancing, and therefore increase capacity, if all attendees within the event space -- or a separate designated area in the event space -- present proof of full vaccination status. Proof of full vaccination status -- as defined as having completed the COVID-19 vaccination series at least 14 days prior to the date of the event -- can be provided by attendees through paper form, digital application, or the State's [Excelsior Pass](#).

For designated gathering spaces at the event (e.g., food courts, picnic areas, seating to view live entertainment), such spaces shall be limited to the State's social gathering limit, which is 250 indoors or 500 outdoors as of May 19, 2021. Gathering spaces in excess of the social gathering limits may occur if individuals present proof of full vaccination status or recent negative COVID-19 test result, as required by the applicable State's guidance for congregate activities.

Attendee Contact Information

Fairs and festivals should encourage all attendees to be ticketholders, in order to appropriately manage capacity limitations, plan and control for the movement of attendees through the event space, and prevent unnecessary congregations that may violate social distancing.

Fairs and festivals should encourage at least one attendee from each party signs-in during ticketing, or before or immediately upon entering the event space, providing their name, address, and phone number for use in potential contact tracing efforts.

- The sign-in process may be conducted through any means that the fair or festival organizer/operator establishes to collect the above contact information, including but not limited to a digital application and/or paper form.

- Responsible Parties must maintain a record of the aforementioned sign-in data for a minimum period of 28 days and make such data available to state and local health departments upon request.

Health Screening

Fairs and festivals must implement health screening for all on-site individuals, including employees, event staff, vendors, contractors, and patrons/attendees. Health screenings may be performed via signage, at ticket purchase, by e-mail/website, by telephone, or by electronic survey before individuals enter the festival or fair.

- Health screenings should include questions on COVID-19 symptoms, close contacts, recent positive COVID-19 test result, and compliance with State's travel advisory, prior to, or immediately upon, arrival to the fair and/or festival grounds.

Social Distancing Requirements

Unless all attendees are fully vaccinated, fairs and festivals must ensure that any attractions, whether indoors or outdoors, maintain the social distancing requirements and, if there is greater public interest in such attraction, a socially distanced line is formed for those waiting for the attraction.

- Unless all attendees are fully vaccinated, where applicable, fairs and festivals must ensure that a distance of at least six feet is maintained among individuals at all times (e.g., waiting in line, while on rides), unless safety or the core activity being performed by employees, event staff, vendors, and contractors require a shorter distance (e.g., operating cash registers, moving and lifting equipment), with the exception of individuals who are members of the same party/household/family.
 - In areas where employee-attendee interactions frequently occur and six feet of distance is not possible between employees and attendees, fairs and festivals may consider enacting physical barriers between employees and attendees (e.g., cash registers, ticket kiosks, concessions, and ticket-taker stations), and indicate distances of at least six feet for attendees who may form lines.
 - Where applicable, fairs and festivals must ensure that a distance of at least twelve feet is maintained, or that an appropriate physical barrier is installed, between performers on stage (e.g., singers, talent, demonstrators) and any attendees in the audience, particularly if involved individuals are unvaccinated or their vaccination status is unknown.

Face Covering Requirements

Fairs and festivals may require masks for all on-site individuals, including employees, event staff, vendors, contractors, and patrons/attendees. Consistent with CDC guidance, fully vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in most settings, however, the fair or festival operator may require mask wearing for all individuals. Unvaccinated individuals must continue to wear masks. For indoor settings and settings where vaccination status of attendees is unknown, DOH strongly recommends mask wearing for all individuals.

- Mask requirements by businesses must adhere to all applicable federal and state laws and regulations and shall only be required for individuals over the age of two who are able to medically tolerate a face covering.
- While indoors, individuals may temporarily remove their face covering when eating or drinking while seated at in a designated area to eat or drink.
- Outdoor fair and/or festival areas do not have to require attendees to wear face coverings if individuals can maintain the appropriate social distance.
- Where applicable, face coverings must not be worn on water rides or in aquatic settings (e.g., pool).
- Where applicable, performers on stage (e.g., singers, talent, exhibitors, demonstrators) may temporarily remove their face covering during performances, rehearsals, and other on-stage

interactions, or when it may interfere with a core activity, such as hair, makeup, or wardrobe, consistent with the State's guidance.

Controlled Movement

- Fairs and festivals should put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using tape or signs with arrows in narrow aisles, hallways, or spaces, and post signage and distance markers denoting spaces of six feet in all commonly used areas and any areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate (e.g., common areas, restrooms, entrances and exits, ticket stations, clock in/out stations, health screening stations).
 - Where possible, place markers or barriers to encourage one directional traffic.
 - Mark areas for six feet apart at commonly congested areas (e.g., common seating areas in lobbies, restrooms).
- Fairs and festivals should monitor and control the flow of patrons/attendees into, and within, the fair and/or festival areas to adhere to maximum capacity and social distancing requirements by maintaining sufficient employee, event staff, or security presence.
- In accordance with DOH's COVID-19 health guidance for congregate commercial and social events, fair and festival organizers/operators must control access to defined event areas to ensure capacity limits based on applicable social distancing. Specifically, this provision would apply to defined, clearly designated event areas in excess of the social gathering limits that include fixed or flexible seating for patrons/attendees to sit and eat/drink or enjoy live performing arts or entertainment.

Hand Hygiene

- Fairs and festivals provide hand hygiene stations, such as hand washing (e.g., soap, running warm water, disposable paper towels) and hand sanitizing (e.g., alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% or more alcohol) for common areas and areas where handwashing facilities may not be available or practical.
 - Place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands.
 - Provide hand sanitizer throughout common areas at the fair or festival (e.g., entrances, exits, security/reception desks, games or attractions that involve handling shared equipment).

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Fairs and festivals must regularly clean and disinfect, focusing on high-traffic areas (e.g., restrooms) and frequently touched surfaces (e.g., service counters, seats).
- Fairs and festivals must ensure equipment or objects that are shared between patrons who are not members of the same party/family/house and/or employees (e.g., attractions, throwing rings, gaming machines) are cleaned and disinfected between every user or, at least, every two hours during operations, if not more frequently.

Communication

- Fairs and festivals must post signage informing patrons/attendees of health precautions (e.g., face coverings, social distancing, hand hygiene) and distance markers indicating six-foot spaces in areas where lines form or people congregate.

Potential Activities and Industry Specific Guidance to Consider

Performing Arts and Entertainment (e.g., concerts, plays, performances, talent shows)

- [Interim Guidance for Large Scale Performing Arts and Entertainment During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Small and Medium Performing Arts and Entertainment During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Incidental, non-ticketed performances that are passive in nature, meaning that they are not the primary draw of patrons to the venue or establishment (e.g., exhibits, dining with musical accompaniment) are generally subject to separate guidance (e.g., low-risk outdoor arts and entertainment, food services) but should abide by the above guidance where applicable to their activities and operations. All other incidental, non-ticketed performances that are active in nature, meaning that they draw patrons to a defined area at a set start and end time presenting the risk of audience crowding without appropriate social distancing and/or congregating in excess of the social gathering limit (e.g., solo singers, bands, or other performers performing in public locations) are subject to the above guidance.

Amusement and Water Parks (e.g., outdoor rides, games, attractions)

- [Interim Guidance for Amusement and Water Parks During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Indoor Amusement and Family Entertainment (e.g., indoor arcades, games, attractions)

- [Interim Guidance for Indoor Amusement and Family Entertainment During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Food and Beverage Service (e.g., food stands, trucks, restaurants)

- [Interim Guidance for Indoor and Outdoor Food Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- [Interim Guidance for New York City Indoor Food Services During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Retail and Market Service

- [Interim Guidance for Essential & Phase II Retail Business Activities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- [Interim Guidance for the Operation of Farmers' Markets](#)

Low-Risk, Passive Arts, Entertainment, and Agritourism (e.g., exhibits, galleries, zoos)

- [Interim Guidance for Low-Risk Indoor Arts and Entertainment During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)
- [Interim Guidance for Low-Risk Outdoor Arts and Entertainment in New York City During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Agricultural Demonstrations and Exhibitions (e.g., animal demonstrations, exhibitions)

- [Interim Guidance for Non-Food Related Agriculture Activities During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

Sports and Recreational Activities (e.g., toss/bowl games)

- [Interim Guidance for Sports and Recreation During the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency](#)

**** This is a non-exhaustive list of potential activities and industry-specific guidance. Depending on activities organized, other New York State guidance may apply. Responsible Parties are accountable for staying up to date with the [New York Forward website](#) and [DOH COVID-19 website](#). ****

Notes:

- Fair and festival organizers/operators must consult the appropriate guidance documents set forth by the State and DOH, as applicable to any activities on-site. State guidance is subject to frequent revision as the State continues its measured and phased re-opening through New York Forward.

Additional health and safety information and resources are available at:

New York Forward Industry Reopening Guidance

<https://forward.ny.gov/>

New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website

<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

Occupational Safety and Health Administration COVID-19 Website

<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>