



COVID-19 Preparedness and Response

Interim Guidance for Large Events

As Rhode Island and the United States continue responding to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), the Rhode Island Department of Health (RIDOH) is issuing recommendations regarding large events. Because COVID-19 spreads between people who are in close contact with one another (within roughly six feet), cancelling or postponing large events is an important tool to limit the spread of COVID-19 in Rhode Island. This is particularly important for people who are considering planning events that will draw groups of people from out of state.

Measures such as these are most effective at limiting the spread of disease when implemented before a community is seeing widespread transmission. These recommendations are in line with the latest [guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#). They will be revisited in two weeks.

Guidance for people and organizations planning events

- Do not organize events that will be attended by 250 people or more. This recommendation is specific to organized events at which people will be concentrated for sustained periods of time, such as parties, sporting events, and parades. This recommendation does not pertain to the normal school day for students and to workplaces, as long as 250 or more people are not closely concentrated (within six feet of each other) for sustained periods of time in a workplace.
- Do not organize events that will be attended by large numbers of older adults. (CDC's current guidance is for organizations that serve high-risk populations to consider canceling events of more than 10 people.) Older adults are a high-risk population. At any event that older adults will attend, verbally screen people for illness, provide hand sanitizer, ensure that people are washing their hands regularly, and ensure that people are not closely concentrated for sustained periods of time.
- Promote messages that discourage people who are sick from attending events, regardless of the number of people at the event. Additionally, those messages should urge older adults to not attend events.
- Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies, including soap in restrooms, hand sanitizer, and tissues.
- Develop flexible refund policies for participants. Create refund policies that permit participants the flexibility to stay home when they are sick, need to care for sick household members, or are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.

While these recommendations are important, all communities are unique and will need to weigh all the factors involved in making decisions about whether to cancel events.

Guidance for people going to events

If you plan on attending an event regardless of size, you should:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- Avoid close personal contact with people. When greeting people avoid handshakes and hugs. [Additional guidance](#) is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.

More information about COVID-19

- Call 401-222-8022. This is the COVID-19 Hotline that RIDOH has available to the public. (After hours people are being directed to call 211.)
- Visit www.health.ri.gov/covid
- Write to RIDOH.COVID19Questions@health.ri.gov