



# MANDATORY DIRECTIVE:



# Gatherings

**Effective July 13, 2020**

[sccgov.org/coronavirus](https://sccgov.org/coronavirus)

**County of Santa Clara**  
**Public Health Department**

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**MANDATORY DIRECTIVE FOR GATHERINGS**

**\*Please confirm that your gathering is allowed under the State Order.  
Where there is a difference between the local County Order and the State Order,  
the more restrictive order must be followed.\***

Information on the State's Order and State guidance is available at [covid19.ca.gov](https://covid19.ca.gov)

**Issued: July 14, 2020**  
**Revised: September 8, 2020**

*The State Health Officer has generally prohibited gatherings of all kinds statewide, with limited exceptions for worship services, cultural ceremonies like weddings and funerals, and protest activities. Because there is an elevated risk of COVID-19 transmission when people gather indoors for prolonged periods, the County Health Officer prohibits any gatherings from occurring indoors. Accordingly, worship services, cultural ceremonies, protests, and political events may occur outdoors subject to the requirements of this Directive, but they may not occur indoors.*

*Note: While wedding ceremonies may occur outdoors subject to the mandatory requirements of this Directive, the State has clarified that "wedding receptions/parties/celebrations are NOT permitted at this time" under State Public Health Officer's Orders.*

While COVID-19 is still circulating in our community, the Health Officer strongly discourages any gathering together with people from other households. Indoor gatherings are particularly risky because COVID-19 transmission occurs more easily indoors than outdoors, and COVID-19 continues to circulate widely. Case counts are rising in the County, and the most recent scientific evidence underscores the risks associated with transmission indoors. **Accordingly, indoor gatherings continue to be prohibited at this time.** But outdoor gatherings are allowed as long as everyone attending the outdoor gathering strictly complies with all the requirements set forth below to reduce risk and keep everyone who attends as safe as possible.

A “gathering” is an event, assembly, meeting, or convening that brings together multiple people from separate households in a single space, indoors or outdoors, at the same time and in a coordinated fashion—like a wedding, banquet, conference, religious service, festival, fair, party, performance, barbecue, protest, or picnic. Although the County allows all such outdoor gatherings to occur in compliance with this Directive, at this time the State only allows gatherings for purposes of worship services, cultural ceremonies like funerals and weddings (but not wedding receptions, which are prohibited), and protest or political activities. Because the stricter of the requirements applies, the only outdoor gatherings allowed in the County are those allowed by the State.

A gathering does not include, and this Directive does not apply to, school classrooms; areas where people may be in transit (like train stations and airports); settings in which people are in the same general space at the same time but doing separate activities, like medical offices, hospitals, or business environments like offices, stores, and restaurants where people may be working, shopping, or eating in the same general area but are not gathering together in an organized fashion. A gathering also does not include internal meetings solely among employees of a single business held at that business’s facility or worksite. Those activities are subject to separate requirements and guidance set forth in the Health Officer’s July 2 Order and/or other Health Officer Directives.

This Directive explains the local requirements for gatherings in Santa Clara County. **This Directive is *mandatory*, and failure to follow it is a violation of the Health Officer’s Order issued July 2, 2020 (“Order”).**

### *The Order Issued July 2, 2020*

The Order imposes several restrictions on all businesses and activities to ensure that the County stays as safe as possible. All businesses (including nonprofits, educational entities, and any other business entity, regardless of its corporate structure) that organize or host gatherings—such as religious institutions, wedding venues, wedding planners/coordinators, convention centers, and conference/meeting room rental facilities—must comply with the following requirements:

- **Social Distancing Protocol:** All businesses must fill out and submit the newest version of the Social Distancing Protocol to the County using the online form, available [here](#). The Protocol is submitted under penalty of perjury, meaning that everything written on the form must be truthful and accurate to the best of the signer’s knowledge, and submitting false information is a crime. The Protocol must be distributed to all workers, and it must be accessible to all officials who are enforcing the Order. Businesses are responsible for ensuring that workers understand and are trained on Protocol requirements in a language that they understand.
- **Signage:** All businesses must print (1) an updated COVID-19 PREPARED Sign and (2) a Social Distancing Protocol Visitor Information Sheet, and both must be posted

prominently at all facility entrances. These are available for printing after submission of the Social Distancing Protocol online.

- **Face Coverings:** Everyone at a business facility or worksite must wear a face covering at all times (except very young children, people for whom face coverings are medically inadvisable, or for communication by or with people who are hearing impaired).

### ***Mandatory Requirements for All Gatherings***

In general, the more people a person interacts with at a gathering, the closer the physical interaction is, and the longer the interaction lasts, the higher the risk that a person with an unknown COVID-19 infection might spread it to others. If not everyone follows the rules to safely gather, the risk of spreading COVID-19 is even higher. Based on those principles, the Health Officer's directives for *all* gatherings are:

#### *1. Gather Only Outdoors*

- Gatherings that occur outdoors are significantly safer than indoor gatherings. All gatherings must be held entirely outside, except that attendees may go inside to use restrooms as long as the restrooms are frequently sanitized.
- Gatherings may occur in outdoor spaces that are covered by umbrellas, canopies, awnings, roofs, and other shade structures provided that at least three (or 75%) of the space's sides are open to the outdoors.

#### *2. Don't Attend Gatherings If You Feel Sick or You Are in a High-Risk Group*

- If you feel sick, have any COVID-19-like symptoms (fever, cough, shortness of breath, chills, night sweats, sore throat, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, tiredness, muscle or body aches, headaches, confusion, or loss of sense of taste/smell), **stay home and do not attend any gatherings.**
- As explained on the [People Who Need Extra Precautions](#) page, people at higher risk of severe illness or death from COVID-19 are strongly urged not attend any gatherings.

#### *3. All Gatherings Must Have an Identified and Designated Host, Who Is Responsible for Ensuring Compliance With All Requirements*

- ***A specific person or business (including nonprofits, religious organizations, educational entities, or any other business entity) must be the designated host for a gathering and ensure compliance with all requirements in the Order and this Directive.***

- The host also must maintain a list with names and contact information of all participants at the gathering. If a participant tests positive for COVID-19, the host is legally required to assist the County Public Health Department in any case investigation and contact tracing associated with the gathering. Public Health will ask for the list of attendees *only* if an attendee tests positive for COVID-19, and information related to attendance at the event will be used only for public health purposes.

4. *Practice Social Distancing and Hand Hygiene at Gatherings*

- At all gatherings **everyone must stay at least 6 feet away from other people (except people in their own household) at all times.**
- Seating arrangements must provide at least 6 feet of distance (in all directions—front-to-back and side-to-side) between different households. This can be done by spacing chairs apart, or for fixed seating like benches or pews, by marking off rows and indicating seating areas with tape. Seating and tables must be sanitized after each use.
- Everyone at a gathering should frequently wash their hands with soap and water, or use hand sanitizer if soap and water are not available. The host must make handwashing facilities or hand sanitizer available for participants to use.
- Use of shared items during a gathering is prohibited. People must bring their own picnic blankets, prayer mats, hymnals/religious texts, and similar items. Any item that is normally passed from hand-to-hand, like a donation box, must be put in a stationary place for people to place their donations into one-by-one. Any shared microphones or podiums must be sanitized after each use.

5. *Wear a Face Covering to Keep COVID-19 from Spreading*

- **Everyone must wear a face covering at all times during a gathering** (except for very young children, people for whom face coverings are medically inadvisable, or for communication by or with people who are hearing impaired)—with very limited exceptions at outdoor gatherings, described below.

6. *Stagger Attendance at Gatherings*

- For gatherings that have the potential to draw larger groups, like community meetings or religious services, consider offering multiple sessions, requiring reservations that cap attendance at each session, staggering arrivals and departures, and encouraging or requiring that the same group stays together (for example, Group A attends the Sunday morning worship service every week, and Group B attends the separate

Tuesday evening worship service every week).

- There is no limit on the number of gatherings that may be held at different times on a single day—for example, a mosque may hold prayer services five times a day—as long as (i) each gathering follows all the rules, and (ii) restrooms, chairs and tables, and any other high-touch surfaces are properly sanitized between groups.
- A venue may host *multiple outdoor gatherings* at the same time (for example, multiple small barbecues in a large outdoor space like a 20-acre ranch)—as long as:
  - Each gathering follows all the rules in the Order and in this Directive.
  - Each gathering has its own area marked by prominent signage, barriers, or ropes, and there is a buffer zone of at least 100 feet between the boundaries of any two separate gatherings.
  - Everyone at a gathering, including hosts, workers, and guests, does not mix between or among different gatherings and stays strictly in their own area.
  - There are sufficient restroom facilities, or a system of using the restroom facilities, such that participants from different gatherings do not have contact with one another when they use the restroom.

## 7. *Attendance*

- The maximum number of people allowed at an outdoor gathering of any type is **60 people** (even if the space is big enough to allow proper social distancing for more than 60 people). This includes everyone present, such as hosts, workers, and guests. The space must be large enough so that everyone at a gathering can maintain at least 6-foot social distance from anyone (other than people from their own household).
  - Example 1: A small church hosts a funeral ceremony in its churchyard. The churchyard is only big enough to allow 15 people to easily maintain 6-foot social distancing between households at all times. **No more than 15 people may be present at the funeral ceremony.**
  - Example 2: A couple holds their wedding ceremony outdoors at a historic hotel. The outdoor ceremony space is big enough for 250 people to maintain 6-foot distancing. **Even so, no more than 60 people may be present at the wedding ceremony, as 60 is the absolute maximum for outdoor gatherings.**
- People at outdoor gatherings may remove their face coverings to eat, drink, exercise, or play non-contact sports, as long as they stay at least 6 feet away from everyone

outside their own household, and put their face covering back on as soon as they can.

- To the maximum extent possible, any food or beverages at outdoor gatherings must be in single-serve disposable containers. If providing single-serve containers is not possible, food and beverages must be served by a person who washes their hands frequently and wears disposable gloves and a face covering. **Self-serve items from communal containers are not allowed.**
- Face coverings can also be removed to meet urgent medical needs (for example, to use an asthma inhaler, consume items needed to manage diabetes, take medication, or if feeling light-headed).

#### 8. *Rules for Singing, Chanting, Shouting, and Wind Instruments at Outdoor Gatherings*

Singing, chanting, shouting, or playing wind instruments significantly increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission because these activities exacerbate the release of respiratory droplets and fine aerosols into the air. They are therefore subject to the following rules and recommendations.

- All people who are singing or chanting **must wear a face covering at all times** while singing or chanting, including any individual who is leading a song or chant. Because these activities pose a very high risk of COVID-19 transmission, face coverings are particularly essential to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets and fine aerosols; therefore, people who cannot wear a face covering for medical or other reasons may not sing or chant.
  - Similarly, the opening of any wind instrument must be covered (e.g., with cloth) to reduce the spread of respiratory droplets from the instrument.
- People who are singing, shouting, chanting, or playing wind instruments are strongly encouraged to maintain increased social distancing greater than 6 feet to further reduce risk.
- People who are singing or chanting are strongly encouraged to do so at a quiet volume (at or below the volume of a normal speaking voice).
- Instrumental music that does not involve wind instruments (meaning any instrument that is played by the mouth, such as a trumpet or clarinet) is allowed as long as the musicians maintain at least 6-foot social distancing.
- Singing, chanting, and playing wind instruments is **strictly prohibited indoors** if there are members of more than one household present.

*Stay Informed*

For answers to frequently asked questions about this industry and other topics, please see the FAQ page. **Please note that this Directive may be updated.** For up-to-date information on the Health Officer Order, please visit the County Public Health Department's website at [www.sccgov.org/coronavirus](http://www.sccgov.org/coronavirus).