



Coronavirus (COVID-19) guidance to organisers and attendees of mass gatherings

Last reviewed: 06/03/2020

This guidance is based on the prevailing circumstances in Ireland at the time of its preparation, with a small number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 and with limited evidence of community transmission. Based on these prevailing circumstances, and based on current ECDC guidance, most events are likely to take place as expected.

However, the cancellation of an event may be justified in exceptional circumstances, for example large events with a significant number of participants from an affected area. **Organisers seeking further information should contact HSE Emergency Management (contact details on page 5).**

Organisers and attendees should familiarise themselves with and use the relevant parts of this guidance, while noting that the guidance is subject to change as the COVID-19 outbreak evolves. People who are unwell should not attend mass gathering events.

This guidance on mass gathering events should be considered together with other guidance on minimising the spread of COVID-19. Comprehensive information on COVID-19 is available on the HSE website at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and the HPSC website at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>

Definition of a mass gathering

WHO define a mass gathering as follows: 'A mass gathering is a planned or spontaneous event where the number of people attending could strain the planning and response resources of the community or country hosting the event.' Therefore, the term incorporates a wide range of events.

Background

In late December 2019 Chinese authorities identified a cluster of novel coronavirus infections in Wuhan City, China. The name of the virus is SARS-CoV-2 and the name of the disease it causes is COVID-19. The outbreak has evolved rapidly and further global spread is likely. Because of the risk of the disease spreading to Ireland, we must take all possible action to prevent the potential spread of the disease in the community. This document, based on guidance from the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and the World Health Organization, is part of a range of measures to minimise the spread of COVID-19.



Advice for Organisers of Mass Gatherings

Before the event

- Be familiar with and direct potential attendees to travel advice at Department of Foreign Affairs. Available at: <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/>
- Advise potential attendees and staff not to attend the event if unwell.
- Ensure your emergency plan is up to date
- Advice for attendees attending from affected areas is available at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/advice-for-people-returning-from-affected-areas.html>
- Give consideration to advising potential attendees from affected areas not to attend
Current affected areas of presumed ongoing community transmission list are available at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/affectedareas/>
- Give consideration to advising potential attendees from vulnerable groups not to attend e.g. the elderly, those with underlying medical conditions (e.g. heart disease, lung disease, diabetes, liver disease).
- Ensure that sufficient resources are in place at the event to meet the health needs of the attendees
 - Your event medical provider should develop medical plan procedures for the management of any suspected cases which may present at the event site, they should also be aware of and adhere to the recommended patient management algorithms associated with COVID -19
 - There will be a need, for the event organisers, to show how isolation of individuals and groups will be managed at the event location.
 - The management of crowd disturbance due to possible negative reaction on the rumour of an outbreak at the event
- Work with HSE emergency management/environmental health/public health where appropriate to ensure that you can meet the requested procedures of the Health Service to eliminate or reduce the impact of cases arising at their event.
- Ensure that you have the facility to share health information with attendees at short notice
- Provide information on the event's website and social media pages on infection prevention measures attendees can undertake to protect against the spread of COVID-19 including
 - Handwashing advice <https://www2.hse.ie/wellbeing/how-to-wash-your-hands.html>



- Cough etiquette <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/influenza/seasonalinfluenza/infectioncontroladvice/respiratoryhygieneposters/>

At the event

- Have appropriate briefings for all levels of staff on the approach being taken by the event to COVID-19 highlighting their individual roles in this approach.
- Brief your event staff on how to practice good hygiene and making it easy for staff and attendees to practice good hygiene
- Ensure that there are sufficient hygiene facilities available – toilets, hand-washing facilities, soap, paper towels, alcohol-gel
- Ensure there are supplies to enable regular cleaning of surfaces.
- Consider developing information leaflets on COVID-19 for distribution at the event, as well as signage/screens with COVID-19 messages.
- Posters on preventing spread of infection are available on the HPSC website. <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/microbiologyantimicrobialresistance/infectioncontrolandhai/posters/> and <https://www.who.int/gpsc/5may/resources/posters/en/>



Advice for attendees of mass gatherings

Consider the following advice on how to protect yourself from COVID-19 infection. Information for the public on COVID-19 is available at the HSE website at <https://www2.hse.ie/conditions/coronavirus/coronavirus.html> and HPSC website at <https://www.hpsc.ie/a-z/respiratory/coronavirus/novelcoronavirus/>

- If you are unwell, do not attend a mass gathering event
- Review travel guidance from your own country's Department of Foreign Affairs and the Irish Department of Foreign Affairs, available at <https://www.dfa.ie/travel/travel-advice/>
- Measures to protect against the spread of COVID-19 at mass gathering events
 - wash your hands properly and regularly with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand rub
 - cover your mouth and nose with a tissue or your sleeve when you cough and sneeze
 - put used tissues into a bin and wash your hands or use alcohol-based hand rub
 - do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth if your hands are not clean
- Read available information and recommendations available on the mass gathering event's website, social media pages prior to attending the event
- High risk groups - those considered to be at higher risk for COVID-19 include the following:
 - People aged 65 years and older
 - People with long-term medical conditions – for example, heart disease, lung disease, diabetes or liver disease

If you are in a high risk group, consider if attending the mass gathering is in your best interest. Discuss your concerns with your doctor.

- Keep your distance from people who are sick
- Read distributed leaflets and signage when attending mass gathering events
- Follow the instructions of organisers and health personnel while at the event
- Be mindful of alcohol and drug use, as these may limit your ability to follow advice of the organisers and emergency personnel



HSE Emergency Management contact details

Emergency Management Regional Offices

East Region Emergency Management Office

Emergency Management Office
Phoenix Hall
St. Mary's Hospital Campus
Acres Road, Phoenix Park
Dublin 20, D20 CK33

Email: emergency.planning@hse.ie
Phone: 076 6959840

South Region Emergency Management Office

Emergency Management Office - HSE South,
Eye, Ear and Throat Hospital
Western Road
Cork, T12 WP62

Email: emo@hse.ie
Phone: 021 4921622

West Region Emergency Management Office

Emergency Management Office,
Clinical and Administrative Building
Block A, Merlin Park Hospital
Old Dublin Road
Galway, H91N973

Email: emergency.managementwest@hse.ie
Phone: 091 775933