

Proposed Guidelines & Protocols for Group Meetings & Events

Section 1 — Pre-Meeting/Event

Hotels and Event Venues will coordinate with meeting and event planners with respect to the following:

- Safety and wellbeing enhancements for all meeting attendees.
- Providing pre-meeting/event communication to attendees including information on everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. These may include:
 - People in higher-risk groups should consult with their healthcare provider about attending large events.
 - Attendees who are sick or have symptoms should stay home and not attend!
 - Organizers should consider providing information on alternative viewing options when available.
 - 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. If soap and water are not available, use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Handshakes and “high-fives” are often exchanged at meetings and sporting events, and these can be ways in which COVID-19 can be transmitted from person to person – alternative, non-physical greetings will be suggested and encouraged.

Section 2 — Meeting/Event Size

In order to ensure the safety of all guests involved in a meeting/convention/event, social distancing will be enforced. In addition, it is recommended that guest occupancy of meeting rooms or event venues shall not exceed 50% of fire code occupancy.

As recommended by the CDC’s social distancing guidelines, guests shall be advised to practice physical distancing by standing at least six feet away from other groups of people not traveling with them, including any area where guests or employees queue. Such areas shall be clearly marked for appropriate physical distancing, and where possible, encourage one-way guest flow with marked entrances and exits. Where practical, lobby furniture and other public seating areas will be reconfigured to promote social distancing.

Section 3 — Arrival & Departure of Attendees

This will vary by property or venue but may include:

- Guests will be strongly encouraged to use mobile check-in and checkout.

- Where mobile check-in/check-out are not available, lobbies will be modified or staffed to ensure social distancing.
- Where available guests will be encouraged to use the mobile key app to avoid key cards.
- Hotels with doormen/bellman service will work with those staff members to manage the number of guests in the lobby at any one time.

Section 4 — Movement of Guests Before/During/After Event

This will vary by property, but may include:

- Provide staff at high traffic points, including elevators, escalators, and hallways in and around meetings space to ensure that social distancing requirements are followed.
- Place signage on social distancing, usage of masks, health and hygiene reminders at high-traffic areas throughout the property.

Section 5 — Food & Beverage

- If meeting or event involves sit-down meal service, existing guidance for restaurant service will apply (See Executive Order 141 and Guidance for Restaurant Reopening)
<https://files.nc.gov/governor/documents/files/EO141-Phase-2.pdf>;
- <https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Restaurants-Phase-2.pdf><https://files.nc.gov/covid/documents/guidance/NCDHHS-Interim-Guidance-for-Restaurants-Phase-2.pdf>
- F&B staff will wear masks at all times (and gloves during food/beverage service or setup).

Section 6 — Breaks

Hotels will, when possible:

- Breaks recommended every 2 hrs.
- Full disinfecting following each break recommended during the conference of common areas.
- No preset or self-service poured water or coffee or other drinks or food items. Bottled or staff service to guests. Attendees encouraged to bring their own reusable drink containers.
- Eliminate bulk ice and self-service.
- All condiments or service items (e.g. utensils) should follow CDC guidance.
- Eliminate cash bars. Utilize smaller and more frequent satellite bars to promote distancing.
- Alcoholic Beverages may be served using recyclable/sustainable, canned/bottled wines and cocktails. No pre-sliced bar fruit/garnishes used.

Section 7 — Emergency Planning

Hotels/Venues will, when possible:

- Identify a space that can be used to isolate staff or participants who become ill at the event.
- Designate a space for staff and participants who may become sick and cannot leave the event immediately.

- Work with partners, such as local hospitals, to create a plan for treating staff and participants who do not live nearby.
- Include a plan for separating vulnerable populations.
- Establish procedures to help sick staff or participants leave the event as soon as possible
- Work with the local public health department and nearby hospitals, contacting emergency services if necessary, for those participants and staff who need emergency care.
- Update and distribute timely and accurate emergency communication information.