

COVID-19: City of Chicago Recommendations for Large Gatherings and Events

Should large gatherings in Chicago be canceled or postponed?

- The City of Chicago has postponed four St. Patrick's Day parade events scheduled for the weekend of March 14th due to the unique circumstances and large attendance by participants from other areas. The City will be working with event organizers to reschedule these events at a later date.
- While the City of Chicago has made the decision to postpone this year's official St. Patrick's Day parade, it is too soon to issue a blanket policy on all large events. The City's guidance and protocol for large events will be reviewed on an ongoing basis and guidance will be issued to the appropriate parties as needed.
- For those planning to attend a large gathering or event, the Chicago Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends common sense health safety tips and social distancing.

What are the recommendations by the Chicago Department of Public Health for social distancing?

- Do not attend any events or gatherings if you are sick.
- Vulnerable populations, including older individuals and those with underlying health conditions, should limit travel and should not attend large gatherings unless it is essential.
- Avoid people who are sick.
- Non-essential large gatherings should be reviewed to determine if they need to be canceled. If those events cannot be cancelled, CDPH strongly encourages event organizers to follow public health guidance.

What can organizers of essential large gatherings do to prepare?

- For events that aren't cancelled, CDPH strongly encourages that event organizers provide additional hand sanitizer and hand washing stations, and conduct additional cleaning, including for high touch surface areas like counter tops and handrails.
- Event organizers should also think about ways to limit close contact among attendees, which is defined as 10 minutes of interaction within 6 feet of another individual for COVID-19.
- Organizers should also advise attendees not to attend if sick. Organizers should also advise older individuals and those with underlying health conditions to stay home.

Why is CDPH recommending heightened social distancing?

- Strong recommendations for social distancing—including avoiding mass gatherings—are being made to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These recommendations also aim to protect the health of vulnerable populations.

How are vulnerable populations defined?

Those at higher risk include:

- People over 60 years of age. The risk increases significantly thereafter and escalates with age, with persons over age 80 in the highest risk category.
- People, regardless of age, with underlying health conditions including cardiovascular disease, diabetes, cancer, heart disease, or chronic lung diseases like COPD, as well as those with severely weakened immune systems.

How can people reduce the risk of getting sick and prevent the spread of COVID-19?

The best way for all Chicagoans to reduce their risk of getting sick, as with seasonal colds or the flu, still applies to prevent COVID-19:

- Stay home if you are sick, unless seeking medical care.
- Wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Cover your cough or sneeze.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Try alternatives to shaking hands, like an elbow bump or wave.
- If you have recently returned from a country, state or region with ongoing spread of COVID-19, monitor your health and follow the instructions of public health officials.
- There is no recommendation to wear masks to prevent yourself from getting sick.

How can people stay informed on the latest news about COVID-19?

Visit [Chicago.gov/Coronavirus](https://www.chicago.gov/Coronavirus) or if you have any additional questions, please send an email to coronavirus@chicago.gov.