

Guidelines for Event Planning

Event Considerations while COVID-19 Remains a Threat

Overview

Effective August 20, 2021: Based on current COVID-19 infection rates and guidance from UCF health professionals, event organizers should modify university sponsored events and gatherings as follows:

- **Event organizers should assess the criticality and necessity of planned events and postpone if possible.**
- **Planned events should be reformatted to exclude indoor food consumption either by prohibiting food consumption or transitioning food consumption to outdoor setting.**

This guidance will remain in place until COVID transmission returns to “moderate” or “low” levels.

Per the CDC, "Low" transmission is considered no more than 10 cases per 100,000 people, or a test positivity rate of less than 5%. "Moderate" transmission is 10 to 50 cases per 100,000 people, or a positivity rate between 5% and 8%. "Substantial" transmission is 50 to 100 cases per 100,000, or a positivity rate between 8% and 10%, and "high" transmission is 100 or more cases per 100,000 people or a positivity rate of 10% or higher. Orange County and the state of Florida are currently at a high transmission level.

The previous emergency event policy has been rescinded and replaced with event planning guidelines which are outlined below. The guidelines should be used by event organizers planning events taking place on the university's campuses or at any facility controlled by the university (such as UCF-leased facilities and UCF Connect Campuses), collectively referred to as “campus”. These guidelines are also useful for events taking place off-campus. They serve to provide considerations for event organizers planning events, including guidance to determine when to use some level of informative communication/warning, acknowledgement, or waiver related to COVID-19.

As communities in the United States begin to plan and hold events and gatherings, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has provided guidance on COVID-19 health measures that are recommended for events and gatherings. The guidelines are premised, in part, on two points made by the CDC in their Guidance on Events and Gatherings: first, the *more people* an individual interacts with at a gathering and the longer that interaction lasts, the higher the potential risk of becoming infected with COVID-19 and COVID-19 spreading; and second, the *higher the level of community transmission* in the area that the gathering is being held, the higher the risk of COVID-19 spreading during a gathering.

The CDC encourages event organizers and participants to consider the level of risk when deciding to host or participate in an event. Event organizers should promote healthy behaviors and maintain healthy environments to reduce risk when events or gatherings are held. Participants are asked to take personal responsibility by following all Florida Department of Health and CDC health measures as well as consider their personal situation when making decisions regarding event participation.

The university cannot guarantee a risk-free environment. However, the following guidelines are intended to minimize the spread of COVID-19 when faculty, staff, students, visitors, contractors, and volunteers participate in, or staff, events.

Definitions

- **Event.** Any gathering or other assembly of people that requires the reservation of space. “Event” does not include instructional activities (e.g., classes, labs, etc.), athletic competitions arranged or sponsored by UCF Athletics Association, day-to-day activities of the Recreation and Wellness Center, or camps and youth programs.
- **Gathering.** The CDC defines a “gathering” as “a planned or spontaneous event, indoors or outdoors, with a small number of people participating or a large number of people in attendance such as a community event or gathering, concert, festival, conference, parade, wedding, or sporting event.” A gathering may or may not require space reservation. Like “events”, “gathering” does not include instructional activities (e.g., classes, labs, etc.), athletic competitions arranged or sponsored by UCF Athletics Association, day-to-day activities of the Recreation and Wellness Center, or camps and youth programs.
- **University-Sponsored Event.** Any event that is held either on campus or at an off-site venue that is sponsored, co-sponsored, and/or funded by the university. University-sponsored events exclude those hosted at a personal residence not owned by UCF.

Recommended Guidelines / Considerations

Health Precautions

- Everyone involved in an event should follow good hygiene practices such as frequent and thorough hand washing (or use of hand sanitizer), avoiding touching of the face, and disinfecting touched items.
- No person should come to campus or participate in or staff an event if they have tested positive for COVID-19, even if they are asymptomatic, until such time as they are cleared to return to normal activities. No person should come to campus (or, if they live on campus, leave their residence hall room) or to an event:
 - if they are ill, or are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or
 - if unvaccinated, if any person living in the same residence has tested positive for COVID-19 or is sick with or experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, or
 - if unvaccinated, for the advised period after close contact with a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 or is ill with COVID-19 symptoms, or
 - until released by a healthcare provider or a public health official after receiving a positive COVID-19 test result, even if asymptomatic, or
 - for the period advised by a healthcare provider or public health official while waiting for COVID-19 test results.

- For more information about close contact and about quarantine and isolation, see the university's [COVID-19 Campus Policy](#).

Facial Coverings

- Individuals staffing and/or participating in events are encouraged to follow CDC guidelines regarding facial coverings. Consistent with these guidelines, we strongly recommend individuals continue to wear face coverings indoors. More details regarding how to prevent getting sick including facial covering use can be found [here](#).

Event Location and Format

- Addition of an optional virtual forum is encouraged when possible.
- Outdoor in-person events are preferred to indoor in-person events.

Event Process

- Event organizers are encouraged to leverage e-tickets or electronic RSVP.
- The e-ticket or electronic RSVP should include the appropriate level of warning as defined by university guidance.
- Event organizers **must** maintain event guest lists for 60 days to allow for contact tracing as needed.
- All events on campus that meet the definition of a potentially hazardous event, including those sponsored by staff, faculty, departments/offices, registered student organizations and outside organizations, must complete a SAFE Form <https://safe.sdes.ucf.edu/>
- Event organizers are encouraged to develop an COVID safety plan outlining steps that will be taken to minimize risk of COVID transmission at planned events.

Food and Beverage

For events at which food and beverage will be provided as part of the event, the following recommendations should be considered:

- Catering services along with food and beverage offerings should be offered by internal third-party contractors and / or on-campus food vendors.
- Pre-packaged boxes or bags are recommended in lieu of buffet or family-style meals. Event goers should avoid sharing food and utensils and consider the safety of individuals with food allergies.
- Grab-and-go options meals should be provided when possible. If a cafeteria or group dining room is typically used, then, if possible, serve individually plated meals (versus buffet or self-serve stations).

- Disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes) are recommended. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, all non-disposable food service items should be handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.
- Individually packaged food items are encouraged to be commercially pre-packaged.
- Any catering services should have adopted health and safety standards to address COVID-19 concerns, including such things as appropriate PPE training for staff, provision of appropriate PPE and hand sanitizer to staff, staff hygiene and food handling rules, ongoing cleaning of the food service space, appropriate pre-event staff screening, use of disposable food service items as appropriate, appropriate physical barriers (e.g., sneeze guards or acrylic shield protection), and appropriate illness response protocols.

Communication

- In-person events should display health and safety reminders in prominent locations, as well as any applicable warnings, as appropriate. Event organizers are encouraged to communicate to participants in advance of and, as applicable, during the event.
- Event organizers should communicate information about the following to attendees: the university's COVID policy, handwashing, respiratory etiquette and hygiene, and encouraging those who are feeling unwell (or who are waiting for COVID-19 test results, or who have tested positive for COVID-19 and have not yet been released to return to normal activities) not to attend or to participate in the event virtually.
- Event organizers should consider providing additional messaging through websites, social media channels, ticket purchasing sites, emails and push notifications, mobile apps, signage, event registration and check-in, and event organizers and volunteers.

Warnings

- Event organizers or venue operators at the university should leverage the appropriate warnings to ensure event attendees, activity participants, and venue visitors understand the COVID transmission-related risks of such attendance, participation, or visitation.
- The university developed Guidance on Drafting and Use of Warnings (disclaimers, assumption of risk, waivers, releases, and similar written instruments) for the COVID-19 era, available at <https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/> (direct document link: [here](#)). Event organizers should refer to this document to determine what kind of warning would be appropriate for the event in question and whether it can be drafted using the guidance provided.

Related Information

Questions regarding the Event Guidelines: COVID19questions@ucf.edu

UCF Coronavirus Information page (regularly updated): <https://www.ucf.edu/coronavirus/>

UCF Emergency Policy (EP-20-1.) – COVID-19 Return to Campus:

<https://policies.ucf.edu/documents/PolicyEmergencyCOVIDReturnPolicy.pdf>

UCF Regulation UCF-4.0292 Potentially Hazardous Events – the SAFE Form process:

<https://regulations.ucf.edu/chapter4/documents/4.0292PotentialHazardousEventsFINALJune18.pdf>

UCF EICRT Guidance-Use of Warnings for the COVID-19 era: <https://generalcounsel.ucf.edu/>

CDC Guidance on Events and Other Gatherings

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>