



## Public Health Brief

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# COVID-19 Guidance for Special Events and Gatherings

## Background

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness that is spread through the air via respiratory droplets from an infected person or by touching contaminated surfaces. The virus can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. It is thought that the virus may also spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose, mouth, or eyes, causing infection.

## Events and Gatherings

A “gathering” is an event, assembly, meeting, or convening that brings together multiple people from separate households and possibly different geographic areas in a single space, indoors or outdoors, at the same time and in a coordinated fashion – like a conference, festival, fair, reception, class, party, or performance.

Events such as marriage ceremonies, cultural ceremonies, funerals, and worship services have specific guidance that applies to them. This guidance can be found at:

<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>

## Blueprint for a Safer Economy

The California Department of Public Health and Governor Newsom have created a “Blueprint for a Safer Economy”, a statewide, stringent and slow plan for living with COVID-19 for the long haul. The plan imposes risk-based criteria on tightening and loosening COVID-19 allowable activities and expands the length of time between changes to assess how any movement affects the trajectory of the disease. See: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/COVID19CountyMonitoringOverview.aspx>.



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Each county is ranked according to one of four Tier levels, based on the average number of cases and the test positivity in a seven-day period, with a seven-day lag, in said county. Since the beginning of this Blueprint, Alpine County has been in Tier 4 with “Minimal Risk” and the least restrictions, allowing the public and businesses to enjoy greater freedom to increase capacity and activities. All of the surrounding counties are now in the next lowest Tier 3, meaning that risk of the spread of infection is considered “Moderate” in those counties.

However, with this freedom comes responsibility to act accordingly. Criteria that are used to determine risk for different sectors and activities include:

- Ability to accommodate face covering wearing at all times (e.g. eating and drinking would require removal of face covering)
- Ability to physically distance between individuals from different households
- Ability to limit the number of people per square foot
- Ability to limit duration of exposure
- Ability to limit amount of mixing of people from differing households and communities
- Ability to limit amount of physical interactions of visitors/patrons
- Ability to optimize ventilation (e.g. indoor vs outdoor, air exchange and filtration)
- Ability to limit activities that are known to cause increased spread (e.g. singing, shouting, heavy breathing; loud environs will cause people to raise voices)

### **Application to Alpine County**

Based on what we know about COVID-19, the status of COVID-19 in Alpine County, and the State’s Blueprint for a Safer Economy, we have created the following guidance for events and gatherings in Alpine County.

1. Remember that the safest place to be is at home. Persons who are elderly or those with underlying medical conditions putting them at higher risk for serious outcomes from COVID-19 infection should stay at home unless necessary, and seriously consider not participating in gatherings or events.
2. The more people involved in an event or gathering, the more households involved, and the greater variation in geographic area represented, the higher the risk. Therefore, we recommend gatherings include not more than 12 persons representing no more than 3 households, preferably only from the local area.



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3. Alpine County has only had 2 confirmed cases in the last 7 months. Should the situation change in Alpine County or in surrounding counties with evidence of increased risk, this guidance will be changed accordingly to reflect the changing epidemiology and increased COVID-19 infection risk.

4. Indoor gatherings are prohibited at this time.

5. 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. The criteria include, but are not limited to:

- the event is located outside
- the event is designed for easy social distancing of households (6 feet)
- the event does not encourage or lead to mingling and interaction of people from separate households
- the location has support facilities (restrooms and handwashing) that can be kept stocked and sanitized
- the event does not offer or encourage alcohol consumption
- the event does not lead to lines or crowding of entrance or exit areas
- the event lasts for a limited period of time and doesn't encourage people to stay longer than the designated time
- the event does not encourage people to cheer, laugh, or sing
- the event is arranged to ensure social distancing between any staff and attendees

6. Examples of events that are allowed:

- Drive-in events (people don't get out of their cars)
- Outdoor yoga in the park
- Book club in the park
- Outdoor art galleries
- Recreational classes: art, gardening, etc.

7. Examples of events that are not allowed (virtual OK):

- Movie nights in the park, comedy in the park
- Outdoor performances (concerts, plays)
- Indoor art galleries
- Gatherings at event centers (Turtle Rock), lodges, social clubs, etc.
- Conventions, conferences, retreats, product demonstrations



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- Reunions – family, class
- Career fairs
- Receptions (including wedding receptions, parties, celebrations)

8. Requirements for events that are allowed:

- Face coverings must be worn by all at all times. Exceptions include children under 2 years of age, people for whom face coverings are medically inadvisable, or people who are hearing impaired. Face coverings can also be removed to meet urgent medical needs (for example, to use an asthma inhaler, consume items needed to manage diabetes, or to take medications), and to eat and drink. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-wear-cloth-face-coverings.html>)
- Signs are required at all entrances and in prominent locations within the event area. They should include instructions on social distancing and face coverings. Signs should also be posted and information communicated requesting that people do not attend if they feel sick or have any COVID-19 symptoms. (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>)
- Events must be held entirely outside, except that attendees may go inside to use restrooms as long as the restrooms are frequently sanitized. There must be enough restrooms available so that lines do not form for restrooms.
- If seating is available, it must be arranged to provide at least 6 feet of distance between different households in all directions (front-to-back and side-to-side).
- Ensure that handwashing facilities are stocked with soap, paper towels, and hand sanitizer. Encourage frequent handwashing and/or the use of hand sanitizer.
- Eliminate the use of shared items. People must bring their own picnic baskets, mats, books, 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 put their donations in one-by-one.
- Singing is allowed outside and only with a face covering.
- Any shared microphones or podiums must be sanitized after each use. Instrumental music is allowed as long as the musicians maintain at least 6 foot social distancing.

For further considerations for events and gatherings, go to:

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



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