

## Small assemblies for testing and training

### Scope

This supplemental guidance to the [Seated Entertainment and Meetings](#) guidance applies to small assemblies for adult-learning, training, and formal testing, as recommended by the Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) to address the mitigation of COVID-19 exposures. This guidance does not pertain to elementary, secondary and post-secondary education institutions.

### Information for training entities and trainers

#### General priorities

- Virtual training or testing is always preferable to in-person, if possible.
- The use of all technology is highly encouraged for conducting training and testing, to further minimize direct person-to-person contact.
- Minimizing the number of persons within a training or testing venue is emphasized. Facilitating more sessions with fewer persons is preferable to a single session with a large group.
- Ensure training and testing venues are not scheduled or occupied by multiple groups in a single day, to allow for proper sanitation between sessions.
- Training and testing sessions must be limited to 25% occupant capacity for the venue and not to exceed 250. Occupancy must be reduced further, if necessary to maintain social distancing.
- Ensure social distancing requirements are promoted and followed by all persons in the training or testing venue.
- All persons must be expected to wear a face covering while in the training or testing venue. Executive Order [20-81](#) includes exemptions for individuals who are unable to wear or tolerate a face covering due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or disability; and for situations in which a face covering may be temporarily removed. An individual's exemption from face covering use due to medical/mental health/disability conditions needs to be communicated when registering for a session and acceptable alternatives prearranged. Encourage those individuals to trial various face covering types, to determine if other face covering designs/materials can be tolerated.
- Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation when determining event locations.

## Registration and payment

- Establish a process for participants to register, complete and submit documentation, and provide payment in advance and online.
- Do not permit unplanned “walk-ins” participants.
- Expressly advise participants *not* to attend if they are symptomatic.
- Establish a process for granting extensions or refunds for participants who are not able to attend due to considerations related to COVID-19.

## Acquisition and distribution of materials

- Consider sending materials and handouts, to participants in advance via online downloads, email or mail, rather than distributing them on the day of the training session.
- Consider using “virtual” materials and electronic testing rather than physical handouts and materials.

## Room dimensions, layout and setup

- Provide seating arrangements that minimize face-to-face contact, such as traditional lecture front-faced seating or a U-shaped seating layout; avoid “pods” and “engaged” seating arrangements.
- Ensure adequate social distancing in seating arrangements for participants – side to side and front to back.
- Arrange tables to allow only two participants at each table; each participant seated with aisle immediately to their left or right, to minimize participants having to walk or step behind other seated participants.
- Provide staggered seating to ensure participants are not seated directly in front of or behind other persons.
- Delineate seating areas by limiting chairs, marking or taping tabletop areas or providing assigned seating.
- Consider providing barriers or screens between seated participants.

## Sanitation

- **Training and testing entities:** Ensure a sanitation schedule is implemented that includes restrooms, trash containers, tables, chairs, equipment, devices, etc. Disinfection of the facility should be in accordance with the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA’s) [Guidance for cleaning and disinfecting public spaces, workplaces, businesses, schools and homes](#).

- **Training and testing facilitators:** Inquire in advance to ensure proper sanitation practices are established and implemented.
- Sanitize training devices and equipment prior to use, such as whiteboards, projectors and control panels.

## Arrival

- Ensure persons arriving to the training or testing venue are screened for travel, symptoms and potential COVID-19 exposure prior to being permitted to enter (see MDH's facility health screening information at [www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf](http://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facilityhlthscreen.pdf)).
- Prohibit participants who are symptomatic from entering.
- Consider conducting temperature-screening each day of the training or testing, and prior to the training or testing session (see the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) general business FAQs at [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html](http://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/general-business-faq.html)).
- Ensure participants have a face covering (or allowed alternative) and require the use while within the venue.
- Provide participants with a brief safety orientation about COVID-19 protocols upon arrival or at the start of the session.

## Access and egress

- Provide separate points of access and egress for the training or testing venue and designate one as an entrance and one as an exit. For example, have participants enter from the back of the room and exit from the front of the room to minimize face-to-face contact.
- Arrange for a one-way flow through the training or testing venue to minimize face-to-face cross-traffic.
- When filling the room: Have participants enter from the rear entrance of the room; ensure the first participant entering the room is seated furthest from the entry-point (and nearest to exit); and continue to fill from the front to the back to minimize participants passing by each other while filling the room.
- Promote that only one participant leaves at a time during the training or testing session to avoid face-to-face cross-traffic.
- Upon leaving the training or testing venue, unseat participants in order, starting with those closest to the exit and ending with those farthest from the exit.

## **Considerations for testing-based use**

- Consider distributing testing materials prior to seating, as opposed to “handing them out” or “passing them around.”
- Avoid passing around sign-in sheets.
- Avoid providing writing utensils for sharing; consider requiring participants to arrive with their own writing utensils.

## **Considerations for lecture-based training use**

- Ensure the facilitator maintains a large area in front of participants, such as 12 feet from the front row.
- Facilitators should avoid walking into the seating area while participants are present.
- Facilitators should speak away from the audience, instead of toward participants.

## **Considerations for dynamic- or practical-based learning use**

- Avoid demonstrations and exercises involving interaction between participants, which conflicts with social-distancing practices.
- Ensure instrumentation and props are sanitized prior to use and in between handling by participants.
- Limit the number of participants at a time having to leave their seat to participate in exercises.
- Avoid passing around materials, equipment and props.
- Avoid huddling of persons, both facilitators and participants.

## **Additional considerations**

- Food catering should provide individually packaged meals.
- Avoid group catering, buffet-style service or other “common service” food-service options.
- Advise participants to provide their own food and water.
- Ensure waste, such as food wrappers and bottles, are readily disposed of immediately in trash receptacles, rather than remaining on tables or in the seating area.

## Information for attendees and participants

### General considerations

#### Know the signs of COVID-19

- Symptoms of COVID-19 are flu-like symptoms, including a fever of 100.4°F or chills, body aches, a sore throat or a headache.
- Symptoms of COVID-19 can also include a cough, shortness of breath, difficult breathing or a loss of smell or taste.

#### Act responsibly

- If you are having symptoms or are positive for COVID-19, tell your manager, self-isolate at home and do not return to work:
  - for at least 10 days *and* when your temperature has been below 100.4 degrees for three days without use of fever lowering medicines;
- If you have had extended direct contact (living with or working closely for one hour or more) with a suspected or diagnosed COVID-19 case, tell your manager, self-isolate at home and do not return to work:
  - for at least 14 days without any COVID-19 symptoms or until tested for COVID-19. If you are COVID-19 positive, follow the above recommendation.

### Protect yourself and others from COVID-19

- Keep your distance by allowing at least six feet of space between persons.
- When indoors at work or in a public setting wear a face covering. When outdoors at work or in a public setting and unable to maintain six feet social distancing wear a face covering.
- Do not touch your face – eyes, nose, mouth especially – without having washed your hands.
- Cover your cough and sneezes using the crook of your arm or a tissue.

## Handwashing to prevent COVID-19

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water. When soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- When to clean your hands:
  - before eating or preparing food;
  - before, during and after your work shift;
  - at the start of work breaks;
  - after touching public surfaces;
  - after using the toilet; and
  - after blowing your nose, coughing or sneezing.

## Additional references

CDC guidance for cleaning and disinfecting your facility – [www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html)

EPA guidance – [www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/316485-c\\_reopeningamerica\\_guidance\\_4.19\\_6pm.pdf](https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-04/documents/316485-c_reopeningamerica_guidance_4.19_6pm.pdf)

Minnesota Department of Health, Occupational Health, P.O. Box 64882, St. Paul, MN 55164, 651-201-5000, [www.health.state.mn.us](http://www.health.state.mn.us)

Minnesota OSHA Workplace Safety Consultation, 443 Lafayette Road N., St. Paul, MN 55155, 651-284-5060, 800-657-3776, [osha.consultation@state.mn.us](mailto:osha.consultation@state.mn.us)

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