



Date: March 13, 2020

To: Public Event Organizers

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be "Maggie Park".

From: Maggie Park, M.D., Interim Health Officer

2019 Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

San Joaquin County Mass Gathering Guidance

Background

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus that has been spreading worldwide. Community-acquired cases have now been confirmed in California and as of March 12, 2020 there are three (3) confirmed cases of COVID-19 in San Joaquin County. Mass gatherings and large community events bring people from multiple communities into close contact with each other and have the potential to increase COVID-19 transmission. One method to slow the spread of respiratory virus infections, including COVID-19, is by increasing social distancing (reducing close contact).

Social Distancing

A "gathering" is any event or convening that brings together people in a single room or single space at the same time, such as an auditorium, stadium, arena, large conference room, meeting hall, cafeteria, or any other indoor or outdoor space.

- Large gatherings that include 250 or more people or more should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings such as concerts; conferences; and professional, college, and school sporting events.
- Smaller gatherings held in smaller venues that do not allow social distancing of six feet per person should be postponed or canceled.
 - This includes gatherings in crowded auditoriums, rooms, or other venues.
- Gatherings of individuals who are a higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be limited to no more than 10 people.
 - This includes gatherings such as those at retirement facilities, assisted living facilities, developmental homes, and support groups for people with health conditions.
- This applies to all non-essential professional, social, and community gatherings regardless of their sponsor.
 - Gatherings that do not meet the criteria above should only be conducted when they are essential.



This guidance will remain in place at least through the end of the month of March. At that time, it will be revisited to evaluate the continued public health need for it and whether any elements need to be changed.

Smaller Event Safety

- Stagger activities.
- Increase frequency of an event to spread out attendance, e.g. hold more, smaller gatherings.
- Increase distance between where individuals sit or stand around tables.
- Add additional hand washing stations and restrooms.
- Regularly clean frequently touched surfaces and objects.
- Limit the number of people in lines.
- Avoid direct physical contact, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
- Extend hours to allow for staggering of attendance or participation.
- Use phones, videos or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions.
- Consider ways to encourage anyone with fever or respiratory symptoms to stay home when sick.
 - Offer refunds or support reselling of tickets for persons who become ill.
 - Place messages on websites, tickets, and venue entrances reminding people to protect one another by staying home if sick.

Essential Events

The goal of this guidance is to prevent people physically coming together unnecessarily, where people who have the infection can easily spread it to others. It does NOT apply to:

- Regular school classes
- Work
- Congregate living situations such as dormitories and homeless encampments
- Essential services and activities like:
 - Public transportation
 - Airport travel
 - Shopping at a store or mall

Stay Informed

1. Full CDPH Guidance for Mass Gatherings (3/11/2020):
https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/CDPH%20Document%20Library/School%20Guidance%20ADA%20Compliant_FINAL.pdf
2. San Joaquin County Public Health Services: <http://www.sjcphs.org/>
3. California Department of Public Health (CDPH):
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/Immunization/ncov2019.aspx>



4. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Resources

1. CDC's Stop the Spread of Germs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/downloads/stop-the-spread-of-germs.pdf> (Sample enclosed)
2. CDC Handwashing Fact Sheets (Eng/Span): <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/fact-sheets.html>