



ALERT: Stay Informed

In alignment with the State’s recommendations, San Francisco began reopening at the State’s Yellow Tier starting May 7, 2021, to allow some additional activities and increased capacity for others. The decision to reopen balances the public health risks of COVID-19 transmission with the public health risks of economic and mental health stress.

Even though COVID-19 case rates have come down, and more people are vaccinated, there remains a risk that people who you come into contact with may have COVID-19. Most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms of illness and to date, only about 50% of people you may come into contact within San Francisco are fully vaccinated. We have also seen surges in other parts of the country and the world, increasingly impacting younger adults. Therefore, the opening of sectors does not necessarily signify that these activities are “safe” but getting fully vaccinated can help us get there.

We have made our best efforts to create guidance to help these activities and sectors provide safer environments for workers and the public. However, this requires that everyone do their part to make these activities as safe as possible, including wearing a well-fitted mask that covers your mouth and nose in all recommended settings (refer to Face Covering Health Order and Gatherings Directives for more information), avoiding indoor settings to the extent possible, maintaining at least 6 feet distance from those you don’t live with, getting tested and isolating if you are ill, and complying with additional health protocols required of open businesses. People at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 — such as older adults, people with health risks, and those who live with or care for them are urged to get fully vaccinated. If you are fully vaccinated (i.e., 14 days have passed since your final dose), you can feel safer about your own health risks when participating in activities permitted by our state and local health departments. However, please consider the possible risk your exposure may have on those around you, especially those you live with and those who are unvaccinated, when you take part in activities that involve people outside your household.

Business Capacities and Activities Table or BCAT

The Health Officer ordered suspensions or restrictions on capacity limits of the activities as shown in the table. These suspensions or restrictions amend any related orders, directives, or guidance. All impacted people and entities are required to adhere to these new limits and must otherwise continue to monitor and comply with all applicable Health Orders and Directives.

Refer to the BCAT (English, Chinese, Spanish, Tagalog, Vietnamese, Russian) for all current restrictions, limitations and suspensions.



Please be advised this document will not be updated beyond the date noted below. Refer to [Directive 2020-19](#) and [Business Capacities and Activities Table](#) for current San Francisco regulations and allowances .

Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Social Gatherings and Certain Other Organized Gatherings

UPDATED May 6, 2021

AUDIENCE: Hosts, organizers and participants of gatherings of people from more than one household. This information does not apply to gatherings of people living together in a single household.

BACKGROUND: San Francisco Health Officer Orders and Directives allow people in different households to gather, with restrictions to prevent spread of COVID-19. This tip sheet cover frequently asked questions about how to safely organize, host, and participate in gatherings of people from different households.

The Directives and associated documents are available on the [Health Directives page](#) under Gatherings, and the main Stay-Safer-at-Home Order also has related rules.

- Directive 2020-19 – Outdoor Gatherings
- Directive 2020-28 – Drive-In Gatherings
- Directive 2020-34 – Indoor Worship
- Order No. C19-07v Appendix C-2 – Small Indoor Gatherings

Additional guidance can be found at www.sfcddp.org/covid19.

Changes to this FAQ since the April 14, 2021 Version:

- Simplifies cleaning requirements
- Highlights that SFDPH does not recommend temperature measurement. This practice may still be a requirement by the State or regulatory agency
- Removes face covering requirement for some outdoor gatherings. Face covering are still required in certain instances (sports events, festivals).
- Updates BCAT table on capacity limits for indoor small gatherings and indoor private social gatherings, masking protocols,



Overview of Types of Gatherings

| | GATHERING TYPE | DESCRIPTION OF GATHERING |
|-----------------------|--|--|
| <i>Outdoor</i> | Outdoor Special Gatherings | Political protests; Religious services or ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals, but not receptions; |
| | Small Outdoor Gathering | All other types of outdoor gatherings (e.g. outdoor gatherings with a meal, gatherings at a park, hosted tours) |
| | Drive-in Gatherings | In vehicles (e.g., for movie) |
| <i>Indoor</i> | Indoor Religious and Cultural Ceremonial Gatherings | Indoor religious and cultural ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals but not receptions |
| | Indoor Private Social Gatherings | Indoor gathering in private settings, primarily residences or settings not involving a business or facility staff |
| | Small Indoor Gatherings | Other indoor gatherings of small groups that are not private |

Frequently Asked Questions

How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These respiratory droplets enter the air when a person breathes. Even more droplets can get in the air when infected people talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets that can infect others. Transmission can occur through:

- Larger droplets. These larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Smaller droplets or infectious particles. These can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.



COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite transmission); however, this is less common.

[Monitor Your Health Daily](#). Be alert of symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay home, and get tested.

How can we help slow the spread of COVID-19?

CA Notify – another way for us to stop the spread

CA Notify (canotify.ca.gov) is an app you can add on your smartphone. It uses Bluetooth technology to recognize when you and your phone have been in close proximity to others infected with COVID-19 to help stop the spread of the virus in our community.

If you are using CA Notify and you test positive, your diagnosis will not be shared with others. However, if other people in close contact with you are also enrolled in the app, they will be told they had an exposure. They will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location or identity.

If you are using CA Notify and you were exposed to someone who tested positive and they entered their result into the app, you will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location or identity. CA Notify is available through Apple and Google. See canotify.ca.gov for more information.

What do we know about the COVID-19 Vaccine?

The vaccine is one of the most important ways to end the pandemic. The FDA, CDC as well as California's own Scientific Safety Review Workgroup have reviewed all data from clinical trials to ensure the safety and effectiveness of all COVID-19 vaccines. **Strongly encourage all personnel to get vaccinated.** Although the first vaccines that were available are estimated to be about 95% effective in preventing sickness from COVID-19 when someone is infected, we do not know how common it is for vaccinated people to get the virus and spread COVID-19 to others. Those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine are probably less likely to get COVID-19, but it is not guaranteed. Therefore, it is still very important for those who are vaccinated, and for the rest of the population who waits for their vaccines, to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic: wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose when outside your home, avoiding gatherings, avoiding being indoors with people you don't live with, staying at least 6 feet away from others, and washing your hands often. Find out more about the vaccine, including where and when to get it at: sf.gov/covidvax

If you have received the COVID-19 vaccine, please read more about safer social interactions at: www.sfcdcp.org/lifeaftervaccine.

How can I stay as safe as possible at a gathering?

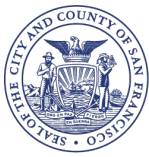
- Wear a face covering or mask. A face covering may be required in many cases at gatherings outside the house. See the [BCAT](#) for currently face covering requirements.
- Stay for a shorter period of time. The less time you spend with people you don't live with, the safer it is.
- Stay 6 feet away from people outside your household unless everyone is fully vaccinated..



- Avoid activities or sports with **unvaccinated** people unless you can stay 6 feet away from people outside your household. Sports and exercise are higher risk because people produce more respiratory droplets when they are breathing harder. If you're going to engage in sports with people outside your household, you must follow all applicable guidance including the stay at safe home order [C19-07](#) and directive [2021-01](#). Please refer to the BCAT table for key restrictions.
- Avoid activities with **unvaccinated** people like singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments. These activities produce many more respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. If you must participate in or be near people who are singing, speaking, chanting, shouting or playing wind instruments, see the question below: "Can we speak, sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?"
- Be prepared. Bring your own hand sanitizer to gatherings in case there's there will be no place to wash or sanitize your hands.
- Consider staying home if you are **unvaccinated** and at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 due to your age or medical conditions. See <https://www.sfdcp.org/vulnerable> for a list of groups at higher risk.
- Keep others safe: don't attend if you are or a family member feels ill or has COVID-19 like symptoms. For a list of symptoms, see <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/covid-screening.pdf>
- People at risk for severe illness with COVID-19, such as **unvaccinated** older adults and unvaccinated people with certain medical conditions, as well as those who live or care for them are strongly discouraged from participating in activities with other people outside their household where taking protective measures of wearing face masks and social distancing may be difficult, especially indoors or in crowded spaces.
- Get the COVID-19 and flu vaccines. The COVID-19 is nearly 100% effective a reducing severe outcomes for anyone who gets infected and also prevents most symptomatic infections entirely. Preventing influenza is especially important during the COVID-19 epidemic because people who have flu and COVID-19 at the same time much more likely to die.

As a business or organization hosting a gathering, what must I do?

- Complete, maintain, and implement the following documents:
- For any gathering allowed by a Health Directive, a Health and Safety Plan for the type of gathering, including COVID-19 screening for all personnel (www.sfdcp.org/screening-handout) and participants (www.sfdcp.org/screeningvisitors). The Health and Safety Plan must be provided to Host Personnel, available to participants, and posted at the physical entrance where the Host operates. See www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp to find the correct link for your gathering.
- For all gatherings hosted by any business, entity, or organization, a [SFDPH Social Distancing Protocol](#) is required.
- **Signage on reporting violations of COVID-19 Health Orders.** Host Businesses or organizations are required to post signs in employee break rooms or areas informing employees of the right to report violations of COVID-19 health orders and directives by calling 311 or visiting www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation. Signage needs to state that employee's identity will



remain anonymous. Sample signage is available online at <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>.

- Consider keeping a record of people at your gathering, especially if they are unvaccinated, in case someone is later found to have COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can infect others up to 2 days before they develop symptoms or test positive. Hosts must help public health authorities in contact tracing efforts in case an attendee develops COVID-19. We can help prevent COVID-19 transmission by contact tracing which helps identify people who may have been exposed and helping them quarantine so they don't inadvertently spread the disease.
- Any lists should be discarded after three weeks (unless your business keeps such records in the ordinary course of business).
- Try to maintain an up-to-date contact list to alert attendees in the event of potential exposure.
- For more information, see <https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing>.
- Follow SFDPH's guidelines on "[COVID-19 Positive At Workplace](#)" if someone at your gathering tests positive for COVID-19.

If you are hosting an Indoor Religious/Cultural Gathering, you must adhere to the changes made on the Business Capacities and Activities Table (BCAT) as well as:

- **Post signs about the increased risk of COVID-19 indoors.** Post SFDPH Approved Signage, stating:
 - That COVID-19 is transmitted through the air and that indoor settings carry a much higher risk of infection.
 - That unvaccinated older adults and those with health risks should avoid indoor settings with crowds.
 - The maximum capacity of the space and the maximum capacity currently permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.
- **Post Ventilation signage at public entrances and all break rooms indicating which of the following systems are used:**
 - All available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open
 - Fully operational HVAC systems
 - Appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room
 - None of the above
- **Ensure that indoor spaces are well-ventilated.**

Good ventilation controls droplets and infectious particles to prevent COVID-19 transmission by:

 - *removing air containing droplets and particles from the room;*
 - *diluting the concentration of droplets and particles by adding fresh, uncontaminated air;*
 - *filtering room air, removing droplets and particles from the air.*
- Comply with the ventilation protocols laid out at Section 4.i of the [Stay-Safer-At-Home Order](#), including to review and follow [SFDPH's Ventilation Guidance](#).



- Implement as many improvements in the [Ventilation Guidance](#) as feasible. Keep a hand-annotated copy of the Ventilation Guidance showing which specific improvements were considered and implemented.
- Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the establishment, including:
 - Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions allow and if permitted by fire and building safety requirements. Fire doors should not be wedged or propped open.
 - **Doors and Windows** required to be kept closed for **fire/life safety purposes** are exempt. For example, fire doors must remain closed. Make sure open windows do not create falling hazards especially for children.
 - If an HVAC system is present:
 - Ensure HVAC systems are serviced and functioning properly.
 - Evaluate possibilities for upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible.
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, readjusting or overriding recirculation (“economizer”) dampers.
 - Disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 - Evaluate running the building ventilation system even when the building is unoccupied to maximize ventilation. At the minimum, reset timer-operated ventilation systems so that they start operating 1-2 hours before the building opens and 2-3 hours after the building is closed.
 - Consider installing portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
 - If the establishment uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the direction of fans to minimize air blowing from one individual’s space to another’s space.
 - For more information and additional resources, please see the following: San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH): www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation.

As a host/organizer, how else can I keep our gathering as safe as possible?

- Limit the duration of your gathering to the shortest time possible, even if it is outdoors. The shorter it is, the safer it is.
- Avoid riskier activities such as singing, speaking, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments, even outdoors. The activities produce large numbers of respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. If you must take part in these activities, maximize physical distance from others at all times and wear a Face Covering whenever required. See more under “Can we sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?”
- Promote COVID-19 and flu vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccine is nearly 100% effective at reducing severe outcomes for anyone who gets infected and also prevents most symptomatic infections entirely. And flu vaccines are critical in the fight against COVID-19 by (1) keeping workers and communities healthy and (2) reducing strain on our healthcare and testing systems that are responding to COVID-19. Post signage to encourage flu vaccine among personnel and participants. Find out more information at <http://sfgdcp.org/flu>.



What else can I do to decrease the risk of our indoor gathering?

In addition to the measures laid out in *“How can I keep a gathering as safe as possible?”*

- There is always less risk when participants are vaccinated.
- For **Indoor Private Social Gatherings**, refer to the [safer social guidance](#).
- For **Small Indoor Gatherings**, follow the rules listed in Section 13 of Appendix C-2 of [Order No. C19-07v](#) (which include the following: following listed capacity limits; wearing of face coverings as required by the order; allow eating or drinking only with safety protocols for indoor dining; and, whenever possible, maintaining six feet physical distance between households and addressing ventilation improvements).
- For **Cultural or Religious activities at private residences or other indoor settings** follow the rules listed for **Small Indoor Gatherings** or if you want to increase your capacity limits follow the [Indoor Worship Directive](#).
- Get vaccinated when it’s your turn.
- Implement ventilation measures to bring in more fresh air in your indoor space.
- Make sure that personnel and participants are aware that indoor gatherings are much higher risk for COVID-19 than outdoor gatherings, so they can decide if they can safely attend.
- Consider making changes to minimize crowding and make physical distancing easier for people from different households. Examples include moving podiums, creating physical barriers, taping off or moving seating, identifying entrance and exits, indicating walking paths in areas where participants pray or kneel on the floor, prohibiting access to common areas.

Can I host more than one gathering on the same day?

Yes, as long as you schedule gatherings far enough apart that participants from different gatherings do not mix, and you can clean high-touch areas regularly and in accordance with CDC guidance.

- Hosts must separate outdoor gatherings by at least 20 minutes and indoor gatherings by 30 minutes between gatherings, to allow time for participants to exit and for personnel to clean.
- Keep the spaces clean in accordance with [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).
- Hosts may not hold more than one Outdoor Gathering at a single location at the same time.
- Hosts may not hold both indoor and outdoor gatherings simultaneously to allow for more people to attend a gathering (e.g. indoor and outdoor wedding or funeral).

Can I hold more than one indoor worship or cultural ceremonial gatherings at the same time in a large facility?

Yes, you may hold simultaneous or overlapping indoor gatherings if all of the following conditions are met:

- Each gathering must be held in its own, physically separate space, either in different buildings, or in different rooms separated by sealed floor-to-ceiling walls. Partitions may not be used to divide an indoor space for two different gatherings.
- Participants from different gatherings are not allowed to mix.



- Different gatherings must use separate entrances and exits. If only one shared entrance and exit exist, the Host must ensure participants from different gatherings do not enter or exit at the same time, for example, by staggering start and end times.
- Personnel and participants must not move between gatherings.
- The host must develop a written plan to describe how they will keep people in different gatherings from mixing, as outlined in Section 4.1.3 of the [Indoor Worship Directive](#).
- In general, keep the areas that are not reserved for an indoor gathering closed to participants, unless expressly permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

Can personnel who are not involved in a gathering work on-site while a gathering is taking place?

Yes. Personnel are allowed to work inside the facility while multiple indoor gatherings occur as long as staff follow rules for [the Business Operating Office Facilities Directive](#) and [Stay-Safer-At-Home Order](#).

Can we eat or drink at gatherings?

Yes, in some cases. Limits of the number of people who may gather and eat and drink together at an outdoor gathering are listed in the [BCAT](#).

- Follow the masking and distancing requirement listed in the [BCAT](#).
- Avoid hand-to-mouth contact between different people. Respiratory droplets from one person's mouth can land on the other person's hand, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- As an example, communion rituals could have the priest and participants masked at all times, with the participants receiving communion in the hand and moving away from others to briefly lower their mask to place the sacramental bread on the tongue (see example video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8tg8A5jmP0).
- People from different households should not drink out of the same glass or cup. They also should not share utensils. If glasses, cups, or utensils are shared, they must be cleaned between households, and anyone handling the shared item must also wash or sanitize their hands.
- Self-service food, potlucks, or family-style eating with shared serving plates or drink dispensers are not allowed.

Must we wear masks/ face coverings all the time?

- You must wear masks as specified in the [Face Covering Order](#).
- Proper use of face coverings is even more critical when in higher risk gatherings, such as indoors.
- The [BCAT](#) details instances of settings where masks may be removed. When in an environment where facial coverings are required, there may be essential moments in a ritual or ceremony where they may need to be briefly removed. A person may briefly remove their face covering only if they (1) maintain social distance and do not speak, recite, chant, shout or sing; or (2) isolate themselves from all other people to speak or recite, such as by speaking inside an enclosed chamber or behind a plastic or glass partition or face shield at the required physical distance listed in the BCAT.



What about camping, cookouts, or BBQs?

- Bring your own supplies including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc.
- If camping with people from outside your household, follow all applicable [Isolation and Quarantine guidance](#). For vaccinated individuals see www.sfgdcp.org/lifeaftervaccine.

Can we sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?

Please see the [BCAT](#) for restrictions for singing, speaking, chanting, shouting, or play wind instruments. Also note, that this activity is subject to State restrictions:

- Face coverings and Instrument covers are often required and are always strongly encouraged during these activities. Performers indoors are strongly encouraged to be masked at all times as much as possible including when not performing.
- For wind/brass instruments, Instruments must not be shared among individuals of different households. If relevant to the instrument, performers should use a large, thin, plastic-lined pad on their chest and lap to collect spit.
- Consider using amplifiers to be able to sing, chant, yell, or play wind instruments more quietly, producing fewer respiratory droplets.
- Consider a physical barrier indoors between the performer and others.
- Have performers position themselves so that voices and air exiting from instruments is directed away from Participants (for example, in silhouette).
- Encourage performers to be fully vaccinated or, if not, to get tested for COVID-19 within the 72 hours prior to their performance date. People can get tested by their regular healthcare provider or at CityTestSF (<https://sf.gov/citytestsf>).
- Anyone who sings, chants, shouts, or plays a wind instrument must **maintain at least the minimum distancing requirements** from any other person that are listed in the [BCAT](#).
- Indoor musical activities should take place in a large, well ventilated area (see www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).
- When indoors, minimize the amount of time engaged in these activities.

At a drive-in gathering, can the host sell food and drinks to the audience?

Host may sell food and drinks to audience in a drive-in gathering. DPH recommends that food and drinks be ordered online and delivered directly to the vehicles. In-person purchase and pickup of food and drinks may be allowed if the host can:

- Set up a separate designated space for in-person purchases;
- Use signage and physical barriers (such as tape, ropes, marks) as well as develop a metering system to ensure patrons and Personnel can maintain six feet of physical distancing at all times;
 - A metering system can be as simple as designating time slots for vehicles from different groups to pick up food and drinks.
- Ensure patrons do not eat or drink around the designated space, do not gather or queue outside the designated area, and immediately return to their vehicles after picking up their items.



- Please follow the guidelines outlined in the [Directive 2020-28](#) for key restrictions.

Resources

Useful COVID-19 Resources to keep checking:

- San Francisco guidance: www.sfdcp.org/covid19
- FAQ General Ventilation: www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/FAQ-General-Ventilation.pdf
- San Francisco Health Officer orders: www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp
- Printable resources such as signage: <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Religious Schools for Youth and Daycare Arrangement at House of Worship guidelines:
 - [2020-14-Guidance-Childcare.pdf \(sfdph.org\)](#)
 - [Reopening TK-12 Schools for In-Person Instruction Interim Guidance for School Year 2020-2021 \(sfdph.org\)](#)
- California guidance:
 - <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>
 - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>
- CDC guidance: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/index.html