



graduations and commencements

scope: Awarding of a diploma or academic degree

Graduation and commencement participants and organizers must either implement the following mandatory requirements or must not take place.

Mandatory Requirements:

Participants and organizers must strictly adhere to the physical distancing guidelines, enhanced cleaning and disinfection practices, and enhanced workplace safety practices provided in the “Guidelines for All Business Sectors” document. They must also adhere to the following additional requirements:

- ✓ Post signage at the entrance that states that no one with a fever or symptoms of COVID-19, a positive diagnostic test for the virus that causes COVID-19 in the prior 10 days, or known exposure to a COVID-19 case in their prior 14 days, is permitted in the establishment.
- ✓ Post signage at the entrance of all indoor areas stating that persons must wear a mask in accordance with Executive Order 72.
- ✓ Post signage to provide public health reminders regarding physical distancing, gatherings, options for [high risk individuals](#), and staying home if sick (samples at bottom of this document).
- ✓ The total number of persons for indoor venues cannot exceed the lesser of 30 percent of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy, if applicable, or 500 persons. The total number of persons for outdoor venues cannot exceed the lesser of 30 percent of the lowest occupancy load on the certificate of occupancy, if applicable, or 5,000 persons.
- ✓ If no occupancy load has been determined, a ratio of 40 sq ft per person shall be used to determine occupancy limits – only square footage that is likely to be accessed may

be included. A 100,000 sq ft outdoor venue, for example, would have an occupancy load of 2,500 - of which no more than 30% (750 persons) shall be permitted.

- ✓ All parties seated together within six feet are limited to no more than 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors.
- ✓ Develop a plan for communicating to all attendees of the event.
- ✓ All persons must wear masks over their nose and mouth in accordance with Section II of Executive order 72.
- ✓ Eliminate sales of food and beverage. Water may be provided.
- ✓ Do not include side events in order to reduce the areas in which groups will congregate. These are events associated with but located outside of the formal gathering location, such as souvenir stations, gaming areas, tailgating, and designated food truck areas.
- ✓ Eliminate social congregation before, during, or after the event.
- ✓ Events that cannot implement crowd control and restrictions on occupancy limitations and physical distancing cannot take place.
- ✓ All shared items must be cleaned and disinfected between uses. Establish protocols for limited shared objects that may not be cleaned or disinfected between uses, such as diplomas.
- ✓ Require ten feet of physical distancing between parties. This includes handshakes, hugs, and other physical interactions.
- ✓ If live musicians are performing, they must remain at least ten feet from other persons and wear a mask.
- ✓ Ten feet of physical distance must be maintained between all performers and other persons.
- ✓ Reconfigure seating areas to allow appropriate feet of physical distance between individuals by eliminating and closing select tables or seating areas, or by spreading them out to allow for adequate spacing.
- ✓ Queue lines, including those for entrance and exit, should follow physical distancing guidelines, allowing for six feet of separation between parties.

- ✓ Create a guest flow plan of modified queue lines into and within the facility. Determine areas likely to become bottlenecks or pinch points and adjust guest flow accordingly.
- ✓ Install visible markers for queue lines that separate people by six feet of physical distance. Sample markers are available in the [VDH Business Toolkit](#).
- ✓ Create and display physical distancing communication tools, including static signs, kiosks, audio announcements, or video announcements. Signage should include the requirement to wear masks at all times and to maintain appropriate physical distance between people who do not reside in the same Family, as defined in Executive Order 72. Sample signage is available in the [VDH Business Toolkit](#).
- ✓ Ensure facility exits are configured to reduce the occurrence of bottlenecks and large gatherings.
- ✓ Where possible, install plexiglass barriers in front of commonly used point-of-sale or guest service stations.
- ✓ Promote frequent and thorough hand washing, including by providing a place to wash hands. If soap and running water are not immediately available, provide hand sanitizers. Additional hand hygiene requirements for Virginia employees and employers can be found in the Department of Labor and Industry's [Final Permanent Standard for Infectious Disease Prevention of the SARS-CoV-2 Virus that Causes COVID-19](#). Further hand hygiene guidance can be found on the [CDC website](#). A CDC training video is available here: <https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/videos.html>.
- ✓ Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of high contact areas and hard surfaces, including check out stations and payment pads, store entrance push/pull pads, door knobs/handles, dining tables/chairs, light switches, handrails, restrooms, guest lockers, floors, and equipment. Follow CDC Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfection and use an EPA-approved disinfectant to clean. For high contact areas (e.g., in both public and staff areas), routinely disinfect surfaces at least every 2 hours.

Best Practices:

In addition to the requirements provided above, establishments are encouraged to utilize the following best practices to the extent they are feasible:

- ✓ Stagger entrance and exit times. Create a guest flow plan. Use separate doors to enter and exit.

- ✓ Sanitizing wipes should be made available throughout the facility for guests to use on high-touch surfaces.
- ✓ Determine appropriate guest capacity levels for each facility to ensure compliance with physical distancing requirements, taking into account facility size, layout, and operational needs.
- ✓ Employers should remain cognizant of the potential for outdoor staff to experience overheating or breathing difficulties caused by using masks. When developing staff schedules, implement additional short breaks to increase the frequency with which staff can cool off indoors.

Resources to print and display:

[CDC Symptoms English](#)

[Spanish CDC Symptoms](#)

[CDC Printable Flyer English](#)

[CDC Printable Flyer Spanish](#)

[CDC Printable Flyer Chinese](#)

[CDC Printable Flyer Korean](#)

[CDC Printable Flyer Vietnamese](#)

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