

Gathering restrictions (updated June 20)

To prevent the spread of COVID-19, there are still rules in place about what is allowed for large gatherings.

When people get closer than two metres (6 feet) apart, and if they share food or drinks, it can *significantly* increase the risk of spread, even when they are outdoors. This is because talking, or laughing can spread droplets that may contain COVID. Sharing food with a common serving spoon or pouring drinks increases surfaces that many people touch, which could have COVID-19. Everyone at a gathering of any kind should maintain the recommended physical distance and observe public health recommendations such as frequent hand-washing and wearing a mask.

There is a limit of 100 people for indoor wedding ceremonies or funeral services. People who live in the same household may sit together, but each household group must space themselves two metres (six feet) apart from the next group. Since people are sitting in one place for these events, there is less social interaction and therefore less risk of transmission.

For outdoor gatherings, there is a limit of 100 people. Outdoor events are considered to have less risk than indoor events, because it is usually easier to maintain distancing. At outdoor events, there are fewer surfaces that can be touched by many people. Air circulation helps to keep droplets from mouths and noses from hanging in the air.

Worship leaders may continue to hold worship services remotely, but can now offer in-person services with no cap on attendance - as long as physical distancing of two metres is maintained between families and household groups. However, congregational singing is a high-risk activity and is discouraged. Consider a soloist or instrumental music instead.

Here are some ways to reduce the risk at gatherings:

- People who have any symptoms: cough, fever, shortness of breath, runny nose or sore throat (even if they appear mild or resemble a cold) should not attend. Encourage anyone with symptoms to get tested and stay home from work or family gatherings until you are feeling better.
- Either reduce the number of people taking part, or change the location to make physical distancing easier.
- You could stagger the time of arrivals and departures from gatherings so that not everyone is there at the same time.
- Make sure there is plenty of access to handwashing stations or alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Have someone be responsible to frequently clean surfaces that are touched often
- Promote practices like coughing and sneezing into your elbow and washing your hands often
- If people 60 years of age or older or those with serious medical conditions are expected to attend, please consider cancelling, or re-scheduling the event. You might explore the possibility of holding the event online, using Zoom or other technology.
- Contact [Alberta Health Services Environmental Public Health](#) before doing any volunteer projects that involve preparing food or collecting donations. These types of activities can spread COVID-19.

Thank you for your co-operation in helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19.