Novel Coronavirus: Events, Public Gatherings, and Schools Guidance

Updated March 31, 2020

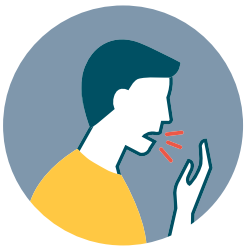
Background:

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a respiratory disease caused by a new virus strain that can spread from person to person, causing severe illness including pneumonia in some people.

Symptoms can appear 2 to 14 days after exposure to the virus. The most common symptoms reported are:

Fever

Cough



Fatigue

Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing

Purpose of Guidance:

The purpose of this document is to provide guidance for social and public gatherings in Nebraska with respect to the guidelines issued on March 16, 2020 by the White House and extended on March 29, 2020. These guidelines limit such gatherings to 10 people or less through at least April 30, 2020 in order to limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Therefore, the guidance applies to the time period of **March 16, 2020 to April 30, 2020**. Additional guidance is provided for school closures.

Events include concerts, festivals, conferences, worship services, sporting and other such events.

These recommendations are intended for organizers and staff responsible for planning events with numerous people in attendance (more than 10 people).

One critically important way to slow the spread of respiratory viral infections, like COVID-19, is to reduce close contact (**increasing social distancing**).

For the period from March 16 – April 30, 2020, it is critical that:

- Social gatherings be limited to 10 or less people.
- Scheduled events will need to be modified, cancelled, or postponed.

If the event can be modified consider:

- Televising the event
- Teleconferences/videoconferences
- Postponing to a later date.

This guidance applies to all previously planned social gatherings including church services, funerals, weddings, parades, and festivals.

The 10-person guidance applies to establishments such as gyms and theaters. These establishments should use common sense when following the guideline. The purpose is to socially distance people (spacing them more than 6 feet apart) and to avoid congregating them in enclosed spaces.

Childcare centers should also work to follow the 10-person guidance. Again, these establishments should use common sense when applying the guideline with the goal of reducing class sizes and increasing space between children.

Retailers like pharmacies, grocery stores, and home improvement stores are not expected to limit their establishments to 10 people or less. Generally, customers of these businesses are not in close proximity to one another. Again, retailers should use common sense to set up queues that keep customers spread out as much as possible.

Restaurants and bars must limit to 10 people, and they are strongly encouraged to move to drive-thru / takeout only through the end of April. These establishments should practice social distancing—seating customers apart from one another—whenever possible. We continue to monitor the public health situation, and restaurants should watch closely for updates.

For the latest school operations guidance, please visit the Nebraska Department of Education's website here: https://www.education.ne.gov/press_release/nebraska-offers-guidance-to-schools-regarding-covid-19/

A State Directed Health Measure (DHM) has been issued for a number of counties. For the most up-to-date DHMs by county visit **http://dhhs.ne.gov/Pages/Coronavirus**.

This document updates the guidance previously issued 3/16/20 at 1:03PM.