Maryland

Social Gathering Limit

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SOCIAL GATHERING LIMIT

What changed with the new Executive Order on June 10?

There is no longer a limit on social gatherings, subject to directives issued by the Secretary of Health in relation to any activity permitted under the Order or any business, organization, establishment, or facility that is permitted by the Order to be open to the general public.

What does the new Secretary of Health Directive and Order Regarding Community, Recreational, Leisure, Cultural and Sporting Gatherings and Events do?

The Directive describes the actions the Secretary is authorizing and ordering to prevent and control the ongoing transmission of COVID-19 within the State. Specifically, the Order and Directive address the following activities:

- All adult sports and events
- Youth sports
- Live performances and conventions

Why are there still some limits on gatherings such as live performances at theaters?

Live performances with fixed seating are particularly challenging, because it is often difficult to prevent people (who are not household members) from sitting close enough to each other to prevent unintended exposure to COVID-19.

Larger mass gatherings with spectators, particularly in concert venues and stadiums, are still not allowed at this time, while we observe the impacts of the current reopenings on the amount of COVID-19 transmission across the State.

Does this affect social gatherings (parties, etc.) at private residences?

Social gatherings in private residences are not regulated and may be held. However, we still recommend taking all precautions to avoid COVID-19 exposure, including the following:

- Encourage your guests to socially distance, wear facial coverings where possible, and practice hand hygiene and cough/sneeze hygiene.
- Ask your guests not to attend if they or a family member is ill with what could be COVID-19.
- Do not hold gatherings if anyone in the household is in isolation for suspected COVID-19 or because they were told they had exposure to COVID-19.

What is the status of social gatherings in public spaces (parks, etc.)?

Social gatherings in public spaces that do not require a permit are allowed, but should still closely follow CDC and MDH guidance regarding COVID-19 prevention:

- Encourage participants to socially distance, wear facial coverings where possible, and practice hand hygiene and cough/sneeze hygiene.
- Participants should not attend if they or a family member is ill with what could be COVID-19, or if they have been exposed to COVID-19.

What is the status of permitted events?

Permitted events may be allowed, depending on the jurisdiction. Local officials may decide whether to allow events depending on the amount of local transmission of COVID-19, the size and nature of the event, and other factors. All events should follow CDC and MDH guidance regarding COVID-19 prevention.

Are theaters, concert halls, amphitheaters and other similar venues at which live performances take place open to the public?

If the live performance takes place at a theater, concert hall, amphitheater or other similar venues, it would not be permitted to be open to the public.

What is the status of concerts, shows, and any other community, recreational, leisure and cultural gatherings?

These gatherings would be permitted as long as they do not take place in a theater, concert hall, amphitheater or other similar venues at which live performances take place. Additional restrictions may apply depending on where the gathering takes place.

This does not affect parades, festivals and other outdoor events, which are now permitted.

Can professional sporting events be held with spectators?

No. All adult sports may resume as activities, but are not open to spectators or the general public. Outdoor sports open as of 5:00 P.M. on June 12, 2020; indoor sports open as of 5:00 P.M. on June 19, 2020.

Adult sports include professional, major and minor leagues, semi-professional, amateur, and recreational sports.

Can amateur sporting events be held with spectators?

No. All adult sports may resume as activities, but are not open to spectators or the general public. Outdoor sports open as of 5:00 P.M. on June 12, 2020; indoor sports open as of 5:00 P.M. on June 19, 2020.

For more information go to open.maryland.gov/backtobusiness

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Adult sports include professional, major and minor leagues, semi-professional, amateur, and recreational sports.

High school and college athletics may resume sports activities, but are also not open to spectators or the general public. We recommend for high school and college contact sports that play should be modified to safely increase distance by following CDC guidance.

Can family members attend sporting events where their children are participating?

Yes. Parents and family may spectate at youth sports gatherings and events.

Can weddings and funerals be held at this time? With what, if any, restrictions?

Weddings and funerals can be held. Restrictions will be based on the venue. Events held inside a religious facility must abide by the occupancy restrictions defined in the executive order. Religious facilities of all faiths shall comply with social distancing guidance published by the CDC and MDH and may not exceed 50 percent of their maximum occupancy at any time. The maximum occupancy load is set in a certificate by a local fire code official or in applicable laws, regulations, and permits. Outdoor services are strongly encouraged and religious leaders are urged to do everything possible to keep their congregants safe, and particularly to protect the elderly and vulnerable within their congregations.

The capacity restrictions for weddings, funerals and receptions elsewhere are determined by where the events take place.

- Events held within a licensed food service establishment must comply with all occupancy and face covering requirements as defined by the executive order.
- Events held at other specific businesses listed in the executive order with capacity and face covering restrictions must comply with those restrictions.
- If the venue is not specifically listed with restrictions in the executive order, there is no occupancy or face covering requirement. However, all venues are strongly recommended to follow the most current guidance from CDC and MDH regarding social distancing, including, without limitation, avoidance of large gathering and crowded places.
- Outdoor ceremonies and receptions do not have capacity restrictions unless they are held at a facility that is subject to them (e.g., an outdoor pool at a hotel).
- Events held at an individual's home do not have capacity restrictions.
- The Local Health Officer may issue such directives or orders as may be necessary to monitor, prevent, reduce the spread of, and suppress COVID-19 with respect to the use of outdoor space and/or requiring any businesses, organizations, establishments, or facilities to close or modify their operations.

Note: Please check with your local jurisdiction, which may have more restrictive public health guidance in place.

All Executive Orders still in effect must be complied with. See most up to date orders here: governor.maryland.gov/covid-19-pandemic-orders-and-guidance.