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### **INTRODUCTION**

The recommendations set forth in the following pages are specific to the reopening of community festivals and special events in South Carolina and are intended for use by event planners, local officials, participating vendors, entertainers and other personnel working with the planning and execution of these events. Attendees of community festivals and other special events should follow the personal health and safety guidelines issued by the CDC and SCDHEC as well as local health authorities and specific guidelines provided by the event they attend. These recommendations are not intended for private gatherings like weddings, conventions, conferences, reunions, or athletic tournaments.

Festivals and special events, for the purposes of these recommendations, are defined as planned, public gatherings with in primarily outdoor temporary or permanent venues. While some recommendations here may be beneficial, indoor event venues are encouraged to reference the AccelerateSC [Guidelines & Resources for Reopening & Operating Attractions](#).

These recommendations have been kept deliberately broad because of the varied size, footprint, and scope of community festivals and special events in SC intended to be represented. Federal, state and local guidelines and regulations are changing and evolving frequently. Anyone planning a public event should consult the current CDC guideline, state guidelines (Governor, AccelerateSC, SCDHEC, etc), as well as their local current guidelines (city, county, town, municipality) from the local health department, fire marshal, police, councils, etc.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

Above any and all other recommendations stated in the following pages, consideration of your event's ability to adequately adjust to changing social distancing guidance as well as attendee, volunteer, and staff safety should remain the priority. If, because of size, scope, location, community infection rates, historical attendance or any other planning influence, you are not able to adhere to the most basic, current social distancing and personal safety guidance, event postponement or cancellation is recommended.

If recommendations included herein may cause disruption to an event's standard operational or financial plans, it may be advisable to postpone the event until such precautions are not necessary.

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### **ATTENDEE SAFETY**

Community festivals and events, like all other industries returning to work, should monitor and adjust to the “phased-in” approach many communities are implementing. Crowd capacity and the ability to control the number of attendees within your festival or event site has a direct impact on the immediate safety of attendees. Careful consideration of current [CDC social distancing recommendations](#) should also guide operational adjustments for your event.

- **ATTENDEE EXPECTATIONS**

A reasonable assumption for anyone attending or working at a community festival or event is that they will be in proximity of large crowds and will be exposed to a large amount of touch points that could expose them to COVID-19 or any other viral disease. Events should create their own set of attendee expectations and clearly communicate these pre-event as well as repeating these expectations often to possible attendees. These questions should be considered when developing your unique set of attendee expectations:

- Do you expect your attendees to wear face coverings?
- Are face coverings required while within festival grounds or just for entry?
- Do you expect attendees to adhere to current social distancing and remain 6’ apart while in the festival or event site?
- Do you expect front of house vendors to follow your guidelines when interacting and serving attendees?
- Can you enforce expectations?
- Can you adequately communicate these expectations?
- Can your event adapt quickly to new guidance from health authorizes?

### **VOLUNTEER, STAFF & CONTRACTOR SAFETY**

Guidance from the [Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#), issued 5/11/20, which includes measures for social distancing, “work teams”, hand washing and sanitation, face coverings and other PPE, temperature screenings, and etiquette, can be a primary guide to develop event specific safety plans. Additional considerations may include:

- Policies for sick or symptomatic staff, volunteers, or contracted vendors
- Liability waivers and compliance agreements
- Providing safety “work kits” that could include disposable mask, individual hand sanitizer, and disposable gloves (training on proper use of PPE may be needed)
- Clearly communicated expectations of safety protocols (example: it is recommended hand washing occur at a minimum of every hour. It is expected all staff, is to wear a mask while on the event site)

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### **INGRESS & EGRESS**

Controlled ingress and egress are critical during initial reopening of community festivals and events. Ingress/egress points will vary greatly dependent upon unique footprints, but several standard considerations will apply to many events.

- Strong considerations to gated entry are highly encouraged. Many community events are free and open to the public, however, this greatly limits an event's ability to control crowd capacities, and enforce any new safety guidelines.
  - Events should assess and determine their appropriate capacities with assistance from local fire marshals based on current CDC guidelines on physical distancing.
  - Events that cannot adequately control crowd capacities should consider postponing or cancelling.
- Gated points of entry should consider all possible touch points, including, but not limited to: temporary barricades, tickets, wristbands, hand stamps, ID checks, bag searches, check-in tables, metal detectors, etc.
  - Consider ways to move all admission procedures to online, virtual or touchless procedures
  - Consider how you record admission to control capacity
  - Consider the speed at which attendees can be safely granted entry and how to maintain proper social distancing while waiting in lines
  - Prioritize advanced, cashless, admission sales possibly offering significant savings
  - Consider implementing a no bag or clear bag policy to eliminate bag checks
  - Create one-way ingress/egress points
  - Create "pedestrian flow" within event sites

### **FRONT OF HOUSE VENDORS**

Events should either solicit from Point of Sale (POS) vendors, food & beverage and merchandise, a thorough safety plan or develop and require a compliance agreement to include individual protocols for sanitation and safety prior to arrival on-site, detailing how vendor operations and staff will adhere to your policies, as well as CDC and local health guidance.

Event specific protocols should be developed and communicated with all vendors in advance and include clear expectations. Contactless POS procedures should be the highly encouraged option if not required. The use of Google Pay, Apple Pay, Venmo, Paypal and other cashless options will require use hotspots, wifi, or broadband.

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- **FOOD & BEVERAGE**
  - It is always recommended to know and follow SCDHEC regulations for providing any food and beverage at festivals and special events, including SCDHEC COVID-19 specific guidance.
  - It is recommended to minimize touch points where and when possible
  - Use of canned or plastic bottle beverages, alcohol and non-alcoholic, is recommended over draft/fountain served beverages
  - Designate a money handler separate who would not handle food or beverage product
  - Space vendors throughout your site to eliminate food and beverage gathering points
  - Eliminate food and beverage seating unless your footprint allows for proper table and seating spacing and you provide sanitation and cleaning attendants of tables and chairs
  - Condiments should be served with food orders or only at attendees' request, in disposable single-use packages. Open condiment service buffets should not be used.
  - Utensils should be disposable in nature and provided to attendees individually. Straws, stirrers, napkins and cutlery dispensers should not be used.
  - Follow ingress/egress protocols and have clearly designated entry and exit points.  
Food and beverage samplings are discouraged at this time.
  
- **ARTS, CRAFTS & MERCHANDISE**
  - It is recommended to minimize touch points where and when possible.
  - Determine event standards for touch/non-touch policies on merchandise.
  - Any point of sale should offer cashless/touchless options.
  - Develop and communicate all expectations to POS vendors for protocols when interacting with attendees.
  - Properly space POS vendors and have displayed "maximum occupancy" signage for designated space.
  - Follow ingress/egress protocols and have clearly designated entry and exit points.

### **BACK OF HOUSE VENDORS**

- **AMUSEMENTS** (petting zoos, inflatables, mechanical)

Amusements are by their very nature a high-touch point, interactive element to community festivals and special events. Event planners should know and

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understand standard [SC Labor, Licensing Regulation](#) codes and regulations.

Additionally, planners should refer to [accelerateSC Guidelines & Resources for Reopening & Operating Attractions](#) specific guidance on Amusement Park Rides & Go-Kart Tracks. The [International Association of Fairs & Expositions](#) also has numerous resources and COVID-19 specific [Move Forward](#) document and guidelines.

- Interactive petting zoos and agricultural education activities should follow [SCDA](#) guidance.
- Capacity, spacing, enhanced cleaning, types of rides, consideration of any interactive games
- ENTERTAINMENT (roving, interactive, musical)

The [SC Arts Alliance Reopening Guide & Workbook](#) offers some entertainment specific guidance. All interactive entertainment (face painting, balloon making, etc) is discouraged at this time.

- PRODUCTION CREWS & CONTRACTED SERVICES

Contracted production crews for sound, stage, lighting, video, etc should also reference the [SC Arts Alliance Reopening Guide & Workbook](#) and follow the recommendations specific to the operations of technical gear. Other contracted services like fireworks, sanitation, or policing, should develop policies with their contractor to ensure safe execution of services.

### **RESTROOMS & SANITATION**

- An increase in waste is a likely consequence of more sanitary practices. It is recommended to dispose of trash more regularly, ensuring waste and recycle bins do not exceed capacity.
- Work with your sanitation contractor/service provider to estimate the number of restroom and trash receptacles needed for new sanitary standards.
- Have signage to keep record of when restrooms are cleaned, clearly displayed for users.
- Restroom attendants are highly recommended to maintain clean surfaces in and around portable or permanent restrooms. Special attention should be paid to door handles and locks, hand blowers, and sink faucets for regular sanitation.

### **PARADES**

Parades draw large group gatherings in close proximity to one another and should return at a later date.

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### **COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS**

#### **Before your event:**

- Your attendees want information, and silence always fuels rumors. Be proactive and consistent in your communication. Let your audience know that you are working on a plan to host your event using recommended guidelines. Establish a position (even if it means canceling) and make sure that you are using all channels available to you to get that message out: website, social media, local news, etc.
- Consider “Know Before You Go” communication in advance of your event. Share plans to support required physical distancing as well as enhanced cleaning and safety measures.
- Make sure your staff and volunteers are all using the same consistent messaging. Offer training or fast facts for board members, event organizers and volunteers to use.
- When marketing your event, emphasize the measures you are taking to keep your attendees healthy and safe, spotlight event offerings instead of touting crowd size, avoid images of people helping themselves to food/sampling/close contact, etc.
- Communicate frequently with your vendors to ensure check-in/check-out changes are understood, health and safety requirements are followed, and encourage them to arrive on time/early to get through any screening areas
- Tell the truth and be realistic. Prospective attendees want to see facts, not speculation, and they will see through forced positivity. Keep your messaging tight, to the point, and factual at all times.
- Explain the why. COVID-19 has had a worldwide impact, and most attendees will be understanding of event organizers struggling with the difficult decision to hold or cancel a festival or special event. If the decision is not made for you by local health authorities, and you believe the risk in your area is too great to hold your event safely, communicate that. If you believe the risk is manageable and that the industry would lose sales, revenue, momentum, opportunity, etc. if your event cancels, communicate that too.
- Be authentic. It’s important to remind your audience that you are concerned about the wellbeing and livelihood of your community. Be sure to consult with your legal team regarding the appropriate language to use when canceling your event.
- Be responsive. Make sure to respond to all inquiries about your event. Remember, silence breeds rumor.
- Be timely. Don’t wait to communicate (even if your event is months away)! Update your website regularly as new information becomes available. Consider centralizing your updates on one blog post or landing page. Don’t delete your old updates, just date them and keep the newest information at the top. Update your social media channels frequently. Make sure your messaging is well-timed.

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- Promote messaging ahead of time that discourages people who are sick or have been around someone who is sick from attending your event. Consider a mass email, text alerts, social media promotion, and be mindful of this in your press interviews.
- Identify and address potential language, cultural, or disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to your attendees. The information you share should be easily understood, written in plain language, and be culturally appropriate for your prospective attendees.

### **At your event**

- Identify a place that can be used to isolate staff or volunteers who may become ill at your event. Communicate the location of this area with your staff and volunteers.

### **City/County Official Communication**

- Meet with your emergency operations teams (police, fire, EMS) at your venues to discuss your emergency plan and determine how attractions/vendors/entertainment/demonstrations might be impacted by recommended guideline implementation at your event. Work together to develop a plan that addresses scenarios you might encounter during a COVID-19 outbreak.
- Clearly identify the roles of your community partners and officials within your event. Consider who has the decision-making authority and contact your local public health department for a copy of their outbreak response and mitigation plan for your community.

### **Signage**

- Plan and deploy an escalated awareness campaign promoting and illustrating actions the event is taking to best ensure a clean and safe environment and experience.
- Signage should be visible, clear, can be physical or digital displays, and should use culturally appropriate messaging and materials.
- You are strongly encouraged to use ADA-compliant signs and consider audiences with language barriers if your event draws an international crowd.
- All signage should promote the daily practice of everyday preventive actions:
  - If you are unwell, you need to return home.
  - Cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw the tissue into a proper trash collector.
  - Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Additional signage throughout the festival should be specific to the policies/guidelines you are implementing:

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- Will you require face coverings/masks at your festival? If so, will you regulate what kind?
- Will you enforce social distancing and what does that look like?
- Will you take temperatures at ingress/egress points?
- Will you require cashless transactions?
- What does your sanitation plan look like?
- Will you remind people to use trash receptacles appropriately?
- Vendors should be required to have visible signage discouraging sampling and the over-handling of products.
- Restrooms, handwashing, and sanitizer stations should be marked with highly visible signage.

### **INSURANCE**

Community festivals and special events should maintain adequate insurance for their unique event. Consultation with your insurance agent should be an initial and primary duty of the planner.

### **REFERENCES & RESOURCES**

[Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#)

[AccelerateSC](#)

[Guidelines & Resources for Reopening & Operating Attractions](#)

Centers of Disease Control (CDC)

[CDC Social Distancing Guidelines](#)

[CDC Gatherings and Community Events](#)

SC Department of Health & Environmental Control

[SCDHEC Regulation 61-21 for Retail Food Establishments](#), section 9-9, page 167

[SCDHEC COVID-19 Food Safety Operations and Re-opening Toolkit](#)

[SC Arts Alliance Reopening Guide & Workbook](#)

SC Department of Agriculture

[SCDA Guidelines for Farmers Markets During the COVID-19 Outbreak](#)

[SC Festivals & Events Association](#)

[Main Street SC](#)

[International Festivals & Events Association](#)

[Main Street America](#)





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**DISCLAIMER:** The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes and to help you make informed decisions. Notwithstanding any and all Federal and State requirements, re-opening and resuming activities are at your own discretion.

Although all information in this document is provided in good faith, we make no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the adequacy or completeness of these guidelines.

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