



## Tip Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions: Small Outdoor Gatherings

**UPDATED August 26, 2020**

**AUDIENCE:** Hosts and Participants in outdoor gatherings involving people from more than one household. This includes Small Outdoor Meal Gatherings and Small Outdoor Special Gatherings (e.g. celebrations or ceremonies), involving people not all from the same household. Outdoor restaurant dining and outdoor fitness are addressed elsewhere.

**BACKGROUND:** As of June 15, 2020, Health Officer Directive No. 2020-19 authorizes and provides guidance for Small Outdoor Gatherings. This document summarizes tips and frequently asked questions about how to participate in these types of gatherings during COVID-19.

### Summary of Changes to Small Outdoor Gathering Tip sheet and FAQ as of 8/26/2020

- Updated face covering language to reflect children between the ages of two and nine should try and wear a face covering. Children over 10 must wear a face covering.
- Added tips for outdoor activities such as camping, BBQs and cookouts.

### How Many People Can Gather?

- People from different households may come together in a group **totaling** no more than six people for a Meal Gathering. Maintaining six feet apart from those not in your household is not required during a Meal Gathering, but is strongly recommended.
- People from different households may come together in a group **totaling** no more than 12 people for a Special Gathering. The outdoor space used must allow everyone attending to remain at least six feet apart from those not in their household at all times.

### Preventing Transmission of Viruses

- People participating in Gatherings must always wear a Face Covering, except:
  - Remove face covering when eating or drinking;
  - People who have a written exemption from face covering provided by a healthcare provider and;
  - Children two years or younger should not wear a face covering.
- No contact sports (e.g., basketball, football, boxing) or sports with shared equipment (e.g. Frisbee, baseball, playing catch) are permitted among members of different households.
- Do not share objects like sports equipment, utensils, food, reading materials, or religious or spiritual items with persons outside of your household. If an object is of critical importance and must be shared during a Gathering, then after each instance of sharing, clean and sanitize the object and/or the hands of all persons who touch the object.
- Singing, chanting, or shouting are strongly discouraged – whether or not wearing a Face Covering – due to increased risk of spreading the virus during such activities.



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## Preparing for Gatherings

- Review the [Tip Sheet for Safer Interactions During COVID-19 Pandemic](http://www.sfdcp.org/communicable-disease/diseases-a-z/covid19whatsnew/), posted at: [www.sfdcp.org/communicable-disease/diseases-a-z/covid19whatsnew/](http://www.sfdcp.org/communicable-disease/diseases-a-z/covid19whatsnew/).
- Members of vulnerable populations (those over age 60 or with chronic medical conditions) should carefully consider the risks before determining whether to participate.
- Personnel or participants should not attend if feeling ill or experiencing any one of the following symptoms: fever, chills, repeated shaking/shivering, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, feeling unusually weak or fatigued, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain, headache, runny or congested nose, or diarrhea.

## Structuring a Gathering

- Gatherings must be scheduled to last no longer than two hours.
- Gatherings must occur completely outdoors, except to use bathrooms. This may include parks or other spaces where such gatherings are allowed.
- Sunshades, awnings, or similar outdoor structures may be used, but must be completely open on all sides to provide maximum ventilation.
- You may not move between simultaneous Gatherings.
- Minimize the number of Gatherings you attend to not more than two per week.

## Hosting a Gathering

- **Hosts include clubs, faith-based organizations, or other entities. Persons informally organizing a gathering of friends at home or in a park are not required to follow additional rules of Hosts.**
- Hosts must develop, implement, and maintain:
  - A Health and Safety Plan. This must be available for participants, provided to Host Personnel, and posted at the physical entrance of where the Host operates. Please see [Exhibit B of the Health Order 2020-19 on Small Outdoor Gatherings](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp), posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp).
  - A Social Distancing Protocol that includes, among other requirements, a plan to clean and disinfect high touch surfaces such as seating, doors, and other surfaces before each Gathering. See [Appendix A of the Stay Safe at Home Health Order](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp), posted at [www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp](http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp).
- Hosts should consider maintaining for three weeks a list of Personnel and Participants willing to voluntarily provide their names to assist in contact tracing efforts if an attendee develops COVID-19.
- Hosts must provide face coverings, hand sanitizers or handwashing stations, and cleaning supplies to Host Personnel.
- Before hosting a Gathering, the Host must prepare the outdoor space to accommodate attendees and comply with the Social Distancing Protocol. For example, a Host may be required to prepare a plan for safely entering and leaving the space and add physical markings to demonstrate a six-foot distance in areas participants may be congregating.
- Hosts must prohibit Participants from congregating at the end of any Gatherings.
- Hosts can only hold **one** Small Outdoor Gathering at a time unless the Host can ensure the Gatherings will remain separate, such as by placing physical barriers between the Gatherings. If



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more than one Gathering is occurring, the Host must prohibit mingling among Participants from different Gatherings. Host personnel may not move back and forth between Gatherings.

- Hosts may allow Personnel to participate in sequential Gatherings in the same day. If Hosting sequential Gatherings, the Host must also:
  - Ensure at least 20 minutes between gatherings for Participants to leave and Personnel to clean and sanitize all high-touch areas.
  - Ensure Personnel thoroughly wash hands and clean, sanitize, or replace any items or clothing that have come in contact with Participants or different Host Personnel during earlier gatherings.

### Additional Tips for Camping, Cookouts and BBQ's

Summer and fall are when we want to be outside with our friends and family, sharing time camping, at cookouts and BBQ's. How can they be done safely in the time of coronavirus?

- **Come Prepared:** If travelling outside of San Francisco, purchase all food items and fill up with gas before you go, to minimize exposing people in other counties and yourself.
  - Arrive with your own supplies soap, surface disinfectants, hand sanitizer, paper towels and toilet paper.
  - If possible, set up a hand washing station with water, soap, hand sanitizer, etc. in a centralized location.
  - Consider packing a lidded container to dispose of trash and recyclables.
- **Driving there:** If travelling in a car with someone outside of your household, wear face coverings inside the car and whenever you are within six feet of other people outside of your household.
- **14-day self-isolation:** If camping with someone from outside of your household, consider self-isolating for 14 days before and after if you will be in close contact, as defined by the CDC, to minimize risk of transmission.
  - CDC definition of "close contact": Someone who was within six feet of an infected person for at least 15 minutes starting from two days before illness onset (or, for asymptomatic patients, two days prior to specimen collection) until the time the patient is isolated.  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/contact-tracing/contact-tracing-plan/appendix.html#contact>
- **Outdoor Grilling:** Do not share BBQ's or outdoor grilling stations with people outside of your household. Clean all stations frequently.
- **Trails:** When hiking or walking on trails keep a face covering readily available to use when coming within six feet of other people.
- **Leave no Trace! Pack it in, pack it out:** Take trash and recyclables with you if there are no local receptacles or if they are full.

**If you are sick or caring for someone, STAY HOME!**

[CDC GUIDELINES](#)



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## Frequently Asked Questions

### Should we greet one another as usual? Shaking hands, kissing cheeks, etc.?

- Identify how your community may greet one another in ways that reduce any spread of viruses, including COVID-19. For example, provide direction to replace hugs with elbow touches or hand signals like a peace sign or the American Sign Language sign for "I Love You." Greeters at all gatherings should refrain from offering handshakes and "model hospitality with words."

### How can we care for the elderly, those with special health considerations, their caregivers, and other high-risk populations at outdoor gatherings?

- Before the event provide special consideration in communicating risk to vulnerable populations in your community, including older adults and others with access and/or functional needs.
- Assign, or encourage those who attend, to seek out a "buddy" who will check in on and help if they have special needs such as water, seating, shade, or other assistance.

### How can my children play with other children?

- It is important that an adult supervise children's activity at gatherings.
- Children not from the same family unit must maintain social distancing (six feet), and not share toys or athletic equipment.
- Plan ahead for activities that can entertain children and bring enough toys, books, arts and crafts, that children can use within a family unit without sharing with others.

### How do I know how far six feet is to ensure "social distancing"?

- Bring a tape measure, if possible to measure distance between chairs, or other seating assignments, ahead of time.
- If no tape measure is available, six feet is approximately the distance of two long strides. Most chairs are approximately one and a half feet wide and long. The distance between chairs to the sides, in back and in front of chairs should fit four other chairs.

### I am having a gathering of just family. Do we need to follow these rules?

- If you all live together, you must still wear face covering in public, and follow this guidance if you will interact with anyone outside of your household.
- Interactions among members of the same household are not otherwise subject to rules regarding the social distancing, or sharing and touching of objects or each other.

### I'm a host. How do I make sure personnel are not sick when they work?

- Please see SFDPH guidance on [Asking COVID-19 Screening Questions](https://www.sfdcp.org/screen), posted at [www.sfdcp.org/screen](https://www.sfdcp.org/screen).

### What if someone at my gathering tests positive for COVID-19?

- People may be able to transmit the virus 48 hours before they develop symptoms of COVID-19.
- As a Host, please see SFDPH guidance [What to do if Someone at the Workplace Has COVID-19](https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19-positive-workplace), posted at [www.sfdcp.org/covid19-positive-workplace](https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19-positive-workplace).
- A list of Personnel and Participants from the Host will help SFDPH with contact tracing.