APS COVID safety guidelines for events

A guide for APS Colleges, Branches, Member Groups and Teams
Background

The world of events might be a little different, but we still have the mission of creating truly memorable experiences for all APS members. We place the utmost importance on the safety and wellbeing of our members, attendees and employees. We have introduced these guidelines to help reduce the risk associated with the presence of COVID-19 that are in line with government advice and the requirements of local health authorities.

Your responsibility when running events

Although the APS has provided an overview in this document and will conduct regular reviews and updates, it is the responsibility of each individual event organizer within the APS and its Colleges, Branches or member groups who is ultimately responsible for ensuring they are fully aware of the requirements and restrictions for the location in which their event is being held. Should breaches occur for any event held by a member group, the APS Board will be advised and the individuals will be held responsible and accountable for any breaches.

What is COVID-19

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is a respiratory infectious disease that is caused by a newly discovered form of coronavirus.

What are the symptoms?

Symptoms include:

- fever
- coughing
- sore throat
- shortness of breath

If you are sick and think you might have COVID-19, check your symptoms using healthdirect's Coronavirus (COVID-19) Symptom Checker.
How is COVID-19 spread?
According to health.gov.au, the most likely way someone will catch the virus is by breathing in micro-droplets a person close to them has released by sneezing, coughing or just exhaling. A person can, however, also catch it via the hand-to-face pathway: touching a surface where live virus material is present, then touching their mouth, nose or eyes. Infection of COVID-19 is highest from people with symptoms. Spread of COVID-19 before symptoms appear is less common. The Australian Government health alert including the current status of the virus can be found here.

We can all help slow the spread of COVID-19 in Australia. To protect others you can:

- practice good hygiene
- practice physical distancing
- follow the limits for public gatherings
- understand how to isolate if you need to

Vaccination requirements
The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) has recommended mandatory vaccinations for all workers in health care settings as a condition of work. Further, AHPPC recommends the first dose of a TGA approved COVID-19 vaccine by 30 October 2021 and a second dose by 15 December 2021.

The state and territory governments are going through the process of mandating the COVID-19 vaccine for workers across different industries and settings. This includes health care workers.

The mandates are evolving, including who is required to have a vaccine and the dates by which first and second doses must be received. APS members should familiarise themselves with, and keep abreast of, these mandates via the Fair Work website. This outlines the COVID-19 vaccinations legislation and public health orders for each state and territory.

The APS has determined that in-person events run by the APS and its Colleges, Branches, Interest Groups and other member groups must be held in accordance with a COVID Safe plan, including the requirement for all attendees, presenters, and staff to be fully vaccinated. The APS understands and respects the right of individuals who choose to not be vaccinated or who prefer not to disclose their vaccination status and offers a wide range of virtual and on-line education and events to suit every career stage.

Each state and territory has not only vaccination recommendations and mandates for health care workers but also for small, medium and large gatherings as well as venues. Each venue may also have its own version of vaccination requirements in place. As the APS hosts and supports events across the country, our first approach will be to implement a nation-wide policy. This is being done to make the process of understanding and explaining the requirements to attendees as easy as possible for all member groups. This also ensures that everyone who attends an APS event, encounters the same requirements no matter where they attend an event.

APS COVID Safety for in-person events
Current as at 23 November 2021 To be reviewed December 2021
We understand that the requirements are changing at a rapid rate and while this is the current approach, the APS will continue to monitor requirements in each state and territory and also listen to feedback from our members. We appreciate your understanding that this is an evolving process. Our primary focus is to make this as easy as possible for the many members who freely give of their time, knowledge and passion to deliver events.

Masks
As of November 2021, each state and territory Government has implemented its own requirements regarding the wearing of masks. The below information provides an outline of the current requirements and will be reviewed regularly.

You must adhere to the mask requirements of the state in which the in-person element/s of the event is being held. Please note that penalties apply if you do not comply with a health direction. While the below guidelines are provided, it is the responsibility of the individual to check and comply with government health directions. The APS can not be held liable or responsible for individual penalties issued while attending an APS event.

ACT
Face masks are to be carried at all times. All individuals aged 12 years and over must wear a face mask upon leaving home when in indoor areas, including in workplaces. A person may remove their face mask in an indoor space in the following situations:

- when consuming food, drink or medicine.
- when communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing and visibility of the mouth is essential for communication.
- when at work and the nature of the work means that wearing a face mask creates a risk to health and safety.
- if asked to remove a face mask to ascertain identity (eg if asked by a police officer).
- when undertaking vigorous exercise.
- when performing essential work in an indoor space, but only when:
  - in an office where no other people are present; OR
  - when sitting or standing at a workstation in an office; AND
  - 1.5 metres away from any other person.

As soon as a person is no longer alone or is moving, they must wear a face mask.
NSW
All people in NSW over the age of 12 are required to wear a face mask:

- in an indoor area of premises other than a place of residence
- in an indoor area on common property for residential premises
- at a public transport waiting area
- in a vehicle or vessel being used to provide a public transport service
- working at a hospitality venue and dealing directly with members of the public
- on a domestic commercial aircraft, including when the aircraft is flying above NSW.

A person can remove their face mask if they are:

- eating or drinking
- communicating with another person who is deaf or hard of hearing
- at work, and
  - the nature of the work makes the wearing of a fitted face covering a risk to the person's, or another persons' health and safety
  - where clear enunciation or visibility of a person’s mouth is essential
  - where the work is in an indoor area and no other person is in the area
- in an office building and
  - they are fully vaccinated
  - they are not in the part of the building that is a retail premises, hospitality venue, or an indoor recreation facility
- asked to remove their mask for identity purposes
- in an emergency situation
- providing goods and services and the person needs to remove their mask to provide those goods or services properly
- doing exercise outside, in a gym or in a gym class
- in a dance class
- at a correctional centre, place of custody, or hospital (as a patient)
- a resident at an aged care facility
- a guest in a hotel/motel and in their room
- in the process of getting married
- in a vehicle alone or with another person from their household.

You need to wear your face mask again as soon as the reason for taking it off has ended.
QLD
While in Qld, face masks must be carried at all times. For an APS event, we recommend masks be worn when entering, exiting and when walking around the interior of an event space, unless a safe distance of 1.5 meters can be maintained. Masks can be removed when seated, provided the safe distance of 1.5 meters is applied and they can be removed when eating and drinking.

In the circumstances where a venue has differing requirements, you are required to adhere to the venue or Government directions.

VIC
Anyone 12 years and over must wear a fitted face mask indoors (other than at their home) including on public transport, unless a lawful exception applies. Masks are also to be worn outdoors, where physical distancing can’t be maintained. You must carry a mask with you at all times unless you have a lawful reason not to.

NT
It is mandatory for masks to be work at major NT airports and while on board an aircraft. It is recommended that you take extra precautions and wear a mask in public if you:

- have any symptoms and are seeking medical advice
- are going to get tested.

TAS
From 18 September 2021, masks are required to be worn at any event that has more than 1000 people in attendance, regardless of whether the event is seated or unseated, indoors or outdoors. If you are attending an event you must wear a mask, including while queuing, entering or exiting from the event.

At events of less than 1000 people, it is recommended that masks be worn where safe physical distancing cannot be maintained. We ask that attendees carry a mask at all times.

WA
Currently in WA Wearing a face mask is mandatory:

- at an airport or on aircraft
- transporting a person under quarantine — via a private or hired car, ride-share vehicle or taxi

For APS events, we recommend that you carry a face mask at all times and wear this when safe social distancing isn’t possible.
COVID event plans – government requirements

ACT
All event organisers in the ACT are required to develop a COVID Safety Plan for each of their events. The COVID Safety Plan must be in writing and produced on request by compliance and enforcement officers.

To assist, COVID safe event guidance material and a COVID safe event checklist have been developed to provide critical information to event organisers.

The ACT Government does not require the use of a standard template for event organisers to use in developing their COVID Safety Plan. The plan must be able to be produced on request by a compliance or enforcement officer.

NSW
If you are planning an event that is allowed to proceed under the current rules, you must complete and comply with a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

COVID-19 Safety Plans are comprehensive checklists designed by NSW Health and approved by the Chief Health Officer. The plans provide clear directions on how businesses and organisations should fulfil their obligations under public health orders to minimise risk of transmission of COVID-19.

For a full list of venues and activities that require a COVID Safety Plan see the current public health order. Businesses and organisations not listed in the order are encouraged to complete a COVID-19 Safety Plan voluntarily.

QLD
Events must operate in accordance with the Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction. The requirements for events depend on whether the event is indoors or outdoors and whether patrons will be dancing at the event.

VIC
If your business event is able to run in the current restrictions, most will be small enough to run under the general COVIDSafe Settings outlined in the Industry Guide. If your event is complex or you have more than 1,000 attendees – you may need to run your event under the Public Events Framework. See the rules for organising public events in Victoria.

Business events can be held in various settings or spaces – from meeting rooms in hotels, museums, restaurants and cafes, to dedicated conference facilities and larger venues including showgrounds, sporting stadiums and racetracks.

Business events must adhere to the COVIDSafe Settings that apply to the venue where the event is to be held. Work with your venue to understand the Industry Guide and which rules may apply.

Different COVIDSafe Settings may apply in different parts of Victoria.
TAS
The Tasmanian Government has established an Events Framework to help event organisers to identify and manage the risk of COVID-19 for a range of event and activity types in a diverse range of settings. It sets out the process for working with government to deliver a COVID-19 safe event under the current Public Health Directions.

Events are assessed under the Events Framework according to their size, type, complexity and associated risk factors. Public health oversight is applied to events according to a three-tiered system.

As an event organiser, you need to be familiar with the Events Framework and make sure your event meets its requirements.

NT
The Northern Territory has guidelines for events taking place both inside and outside a major population centre. The below are the guidelines for events inside a major population centre. Please use the links in the resources section to find more information on event requirements outside of a major population centre.

Less than 500
Events less than 500 in attendance located inside major population centre do not require completion of a checklist or safety plan, however the physical distancing and hygiene principles should still be considered and implemented.

More than 500 people
Events with 500 to 1000 people in attendance inside a major population centre do require completion of a checklist or safety plan, COVID-19 Small Event Checklist Further to this the organiser of the event must appoint a COVID-19 Safety Supervisor and display a QR code or alternate method of checking in.

More than 1000 people
Events with 1000 or more people in attendance located inside a major population centre must submit a COVID-19 Event Safety Plan and receive formal approval from the Chief Health Officer prior to the event proceeding. Further to this the organiser of the event must appoint a COVID-19 Safety Supervisor and display a QR code or alternate method of checking in.

Please submit your plan for assessment two weeks prior to the planned event. The Department of Health may not be able to assess plans submitted outside of this timeframe.
WA
Under the easing of restrictions, the COVID Event Plan approval process has been simplified. Please note, these Guidelines only apply to those gatherings which involve more than 500 patrons and are formally defined as an Event in the Directions.

Key changes include:

- no patron cap on events
- all event formats permitted
- events with 2,500 patrons or less must complete a COVID Event Checklist
- events with more than 2,500 patrons must complete a COVID Event Plan.

It remains mandatory to register your event with the Department of Health and facilitate the collection of contact register information for all patrons in attendance. Your COVID Event Plan or Checklist will need to be submitted to the relevant local government in which the event is being held, along with all other documentation required for an application to hold a public event, within the required timeframe.

A local government may wish to comment on the document as part of the normal event application approval process. COVID Event Plans for those events involving more than 5,000 patrons will need to be provided to the Department of Health a minimum of 4 weeks prior to the event, for our records.

Number of attendees and physical distancing
The information in the document on the following two pages is correct as of 8 November 2021. We highly recommend checking local restrictions before confirming a venue for any in-person events. A central source of information can be found by visiting Business Events Australia’s COVID-19 Meeting & Event Restrictions guidelines.
## COVID-19 MEETING & EVENT RESTRICTIONS

Updated 8 November 2021
View the state/territory websites for the most up-to-date information and for further details.

### DESTINATION
- **South Australia - Adelaide**
  - The total number of people at a place must not exceed 3 people per 4sqm indoor and outdoor spaces
  - No maximum capacity restrictions for indoor meetings provided there is a COVID Safe Plan and an average of 3 people per 4sqm (75%)
  - 1 person per 2sqm for non-seated activities
  - For events of 1,000+ people a COVID Management Plan is required
  - Seated consumption only
  - COVID marshal required for events

- **Queensland - Brisbane, The Gold Coast & Cairns**
  - 1 person per 2sqm of usable space.
  - 1 person per 2sqm for both indoor and outdoor events
  - Indoor venues – seated ticketed venues 100% capacity with mandatory masks
  - 1500+ people outdoors and 500+ indoors require a COVID Safe Event Plan approved by the local Public Health Unit
  - Open Stadiums – 100% seated capacity with COVID Safe Checklist

- **Australian Capital Territory - Canberra**
  - 1 person per 4sqm indoors
  - 1 person per 2sqm outdoors
  - 1 person per 4sqm for each indoor space, and 1 person per 2sqm for each outdoor space, up to 300 people, whichever is lesser
  - Events greater than 300 people must submit their COVID Safety Plan to ACT Health for review
  - Only seated consumption permitted

- **Northern Territory - Darwin, Alice Springs & Uluru**
  - No maximum capacity restrictions however, there are compliance approvals required based on the size of the event; and a recommendation for 1.5sqm physical distance
  - >600 people – must consider physical distancing and hygiene principles
  - 500-1000 people – must complete COVID-19 safety checklist; may be required to comply with additional legislative requirements, seek advice from the Local Environmental Health Office

### FURTHER INFORMATION
- **Adelaide Convention Bureau** - adelaideconvention.com.au/COVIDSAFE
- **Adelaide Convention Centre** - adelaidecc.com.au/covid
- **QLD State Government** - covid19.qld.gov.au
- **COVID-Safe Events** - covid19.qld.gov.au
- **Brisbane Convention & Exhibition Centre** - Safe Event Guideline
- **Destination Gold Coast** - destinategoldcoast.com/covid-19
- **Gold Coast Convention & Exhibition Centre** - gccec.com.au
- **Business Events Cairns & Great Barrier Reef** - businesseventscairns.org.au
- **Cairns Convention Centre** - cairnsconvention.com.au
- **Queensland Government** - Industry Framework COVID safe events
- **ACT State Government** - covid19.act.gov.au
- **Canberra Convention Centre** - ncc.com.au/covid-19
- **Canberra Convention Bureau** - canberraconvention.com.au
- **NT State Government** - coronavirus.nt.gov.au
- **NT Business Events** - tourismnt.com.au/covid19
- **Darwin Convention Centre** - darwincconvention.com.au
# COVID-19 Meeting & Event Restrictions

**Updated 8 November 2021**
View the state/territory websites for the most up-to-date information and for further details.

- **1000+ people** - must submit a COVID-19 Event Safety Plan for approval from the Chief Health Officer

## Tasmania - Hobart
- Up to 2000 people (indoor, seated) / 1000 people (outdoor, seated) with 1 person per 2sqm (whichever is lesser) through the Framework for COVID-19 Safe Events and Activities
- All venues must allow an average of 2sqm per person
- Maximum number includes staff, volunteers and children
- Standing and drinking alcohol and/or dancing is permitted in premises with a liquor licence or liquor permit up to a maximum of 1000 people in indoor spaces and 5000 people in outdoor spaces, within current density requirements.
- Hobart Convention & Exhibition Centre - [hccorganichancellor.com](http://hccorganichancellor.com)

## Victoria - Melbourne
- 1 person per 4sqm indoors
- 1 person per 2sqm outdoors
- 1 person per 4sqm indoors with no capacity limits
- 1 person per 2sqm outdoors, with 500-person capacity
- 75% capacity limit or 1 person per 4sqm up to 1000 people for indoor seated venues. 1 person per 4sqm for non-seated indoor venues with no capacity limits.
- Outdoor events will be permitted with 1 person per 2sqm with limit of 5,000 persons

## Western Australia - Perth
- Venues can operate at 100% capacity, without 1 person per 2sqm rule
- Major events of all kinds can resume with no limits on size or crowds
- If 2sqm is greater than 500 people, the greater option will be permitted for events with a COVID Event Plan
- Business Events Perth - [businesseventsperth.com](http://businesseventsperth.com)
- Perth Convention & Exhibition Centre - [pcce.com.au](http://pcce.com.au)

## New South Wales - Sydney
- Rules only apply to fully vaccinated people in NSW
- Capacity restrictions of 1 person per 2sqm indoors and outdoors
- All event facilities reopen with 1 person per 2sqm or 100% fixed seated capacity

---

*Capacity and gathering restrictions are correct at the time of publishing and are intended to provide a high-level overview of the varying restrictions across Australia. Visit the State/Territory websites provided to access the most up-to-date information and for further details.*
Contactless registration
When hosting an APS event, wherever possible, organisers are to utilize contactless registration. This can be managed in several ways including:

Self-registration
If traditional pre-printed name badges or lanyards are required, they are to printed with the attendee name only to ensure compliance with Australian and GDPR privacy requirements. Name badges are to be positioned in alphabetical order by surname for delegates to retrieve, rather than being found and handed over by a staff member.

QR codes:
For large events, including those managed by the APS events team, including conferences, attendees may be able to check in at an event by scanning a personalised QR code, emailed to them prior to the event or contained within a conference app. After checking in at the event via a registration terminal, a name badge will be printed for each attendee which the attendee can then attach to a self-collected lanyard.

Contact tracing
Prior to your event, you are required to liaise with the venue to determine if your event requires its own contact tracing QR code or if it is suitable to use the venues.

Hygiene
Environmental hygiene
APS event organisers are to work closely with venues to ensure adherence to hygiene and government protocols are in place. This may include:

- contactless sanitization stations
- regular COVIDSafe cleaning of public thorough-fares and public spaces including bathrooms
- clearly signed capacity restrictions
- Government signage on hygiene best practices

You may wish to use the Safe Work Australia cleaning checklist as a guide.

Personal hygiene
Key to slowing the spread of COVID-19 is through the practice of good personal hygiene including:

- wash your hands often with soap and water. This includes before and after eating and after going to the toilet
- use alcohol-based hand sanitisers when you can’t use soap and water
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- clean and disinfect surfaces you use often such as benchtops, desks and doorknobs
- clean and disinfect objects you use often such as mobile phones, keys, wallets and work passes
- increase the amount of fresh air by opening windows or changing air conditioning
There is limited evidence that alcohol-free hand rubs are effective against COVID-19. Experts recommend the use of alcohol-based hand sanitisers. A link to the Safe Work Australia Health & Hygiene checklist can be found in the resource section of this document.

Prior to your event

In your communication to attendees prior to your in-person event, it is recommended that you:

- Require staff and attendees to stay home if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, including:
  - sudden loss of taste or smell
  - fever
  - cough
  - tiredness
  - sore throat
  - headache
  - aches and pains
  - diarrhea
  - a rash on the skin or discoloration of fingers or toes
  - red or irritated eyes
  - difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  - chest pain
  - loss of speech or mobility, or confusion
- Clearly communicate COVID safety guidelines for your particular event including:
  - vaccination requirements
  - mask requirements
  - physical distancing requirements
  - contract tracing that will be in use
  - Links to appropriate websites
  - Advise on sanitation measures at the venue

When determining the number of staff required to deliver your event, it is recommended that you designate at least one person to monitor physical distancing, face mask requirements and to check vaccination certifications. Should you, your volunteers or staff not be comfortable undertaking this role, your event budget will need to cover the cost of engaging security personnel for this role

Meet with your venue the morning of or day before your event to:
  - ensure all relevant signage and sanitization measures are in place
  - review their COVID safety plan
  - ensure they have an isolation location in case of an attendee showing COVID symptoms

Ensure you have:
- submitted all appropriate government forms for your event
- Identified the closest hospital in case of an emergency
- all emergency and usual contact details for every attendee for contract tracing
On arrival
For event organisers:

- Conduct a walk-through of the venue with the appropriate staff to ensure that:
  - Sanitisation stations are set up
  - Signage can be easily found, seen and read by attendees
  - Contract tracing has been set at all entry doors
  - You know who to contact in case of an emergency
  - Physical distancing floor signage has been placed – where appropriate
- Ensure you follow physical distancing at all times
- Have enough space on registration tables/desks/booths to allow attendees to safely physical distance when collecting name badges
- Brief all event supporters, staff and volunteers on your COVID safety measures

During the event

- Ensure all attendees have checked into the venue
- Monitor physical distancing is being followed
- Ensure masks are worn where and when required
- Conduct random checks for vaccination certificates
- Monitor sanitization stations and ask venue to replace where low
- Monitor cleaning of venue
- Follow and implement all government regulations that are currently in place

After the event

In the circumstances where an attendee displayed symptoms at the event or following the event, the event organisation must communicate with the applicable state government health officials, who will implement contact tracing.

Where the event organiser is a member, member group or external party, they are also to advise the APS events and/or membership team immediately. The APS will implement appropriate communication protocols.

Food service safety

The event organiser is to work closely with venues to ensure that COVID safe food service standards are in place. This may include:

- How food is served i.e. no buffet, food boxes
- Changes to available seating for physical distancing
- Increased cleaning and sanitization
- Increased signage
- Contactless service
- Food safety plans and record keeping
Supplier management
Should the APS or any of its member groups, in the duty of organizing an event with an in-person element, engage with suppliers such as caterers, audio visual, theming, entertainment, venues or others, they are to ensure that each supplier has:

- appropriate pandemic cancellation and attrition clauses
- current COVID-19 safety procedures in place
- venues are to also have COVIDSafe operating plans including:
  - procedures for attendees
  - capacity management
  - contract tracing systems in place
  - hygiene safety
  - food and beverage safety
  - compliance with all government vaccination directions
  - compliance with all government COVID operating directions including those relating to social distancing and masks
Resources and references

Meeting and event restrictions by state and territory

Vaccination
COVID-19 vaccination requirements for health care workers | APS (psychology.org.au)

Government food safety resources
State government resources in the field of food safety can be found below:

- Australian and New Zealand Food Standards Authority
- Victoria
- New South Wales
- Queensland
- Northern Territory
- Western Australia
- South Australia

Australian government COVID health alerts

Hygiene

Guidelines for wearing masks

COVID event plans
• ACT - COVID safe events - COVID-19 (act.gov.au)
• TAS - https://www.eventstasmania.com/covid-19_safe_events_and_activities