

Guidance for Large Gatherings and COVID-19

City of Hamilton Public Health Services

March 13, 2020

This guidance is intended for organizers and attendees of large gatherings or community events in the City of Hamilton. It is based on what is currently known about COVID-19, and will be updated as additional information becomes available.

A large gathering is an event with a number of people in close contact for an extended period of time. This includes concerts, festivals, conferences, worship services, cultural and sporting events. The level of risk depends on several factors, including the number of people, participants' health, and activities being undertaken.

Large gatherings can contribute to the transmission of infections, including COVID-19. The potential risks for transmission include increased crowds and restricted points of access/exit which force participants through high touch areas (e.g., doors, elevators). Limited environmental cleaning and the potential for individual health measures (e.g., hand hygiene) may also play a role in transmission risks at large gatherings.

Organizers

In an effort to limit the spread of COVID-19, the Ontario Ministry of Health recommends:

- Cancellation or postponement of all large events and public gatherings (e.g., conferences) of over 250 people
- Contacting public health for guidance with smaller gatherings

When planning social, cultural, or entertainment events, consider using virtual options and refer to the following guidance documents:

- o [Public Health Agency of Canada](#)
- o [World Health Organization](#)

Attendees

In response to Ontario school closures between March 14 through April 5, 2020, please do not send your child to gatherings, including camps, if they are sick.

- Do not attend conferences or other large gatherings if you are a health care worker or employee of a critical infrastructure entity (e.g., police, firefighter, paramedic), or if you would have difficulty being in home isolation for 14 days.
- Do not attend events when you are sick. Stay home, except to get medical care.
- If you do attend large gatherings, be mindful of maintaining a 2 metre distance from others and ensuring that you clean your hands frequently with soap and water, or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.