



Event Preparation Recommendations & Guidelines

MSU Extension has put a process in place to request a waiver to conduct in-person programming following specific guidelines and requirements. As a reminder, waivers will be approved in **extremely rare circumstances** and the majority of educational programming should continue to be provided in a virtual setting.

The MSU Community Compact provides specific expectations of MSU employees regarding face masks, social distancing, social hygiene and related issues. Strict adherence to the Compact is expected of all MSU Extension employees. Failure to follow these expectations may lead to revocation of travel waivers and exception privileges and possible discipline through the HR process.

MSU Extension expectations regarding programming, meetings and events will remain fluid and subject to change at any time based on guidance from Governor Whitmer, President Stanley, available public health data and other relevant factors.

INDOOR EVENT GUIDELINES AS OF 8/7/20

Until further notice, all adult programming, meetings and events must be virtual. In rare circumstances, a detailed request/exception process will be available to consider in-person programming or events with no more than 10 adults (including facilitators/presenters). Factors that will be part of the exception review process include, but are not limited to:

- No exceptions for programs involving food demonstrations.
- Completion of a detailed Qualtrics Survey to initiate and facilitate a careful review by institute and district directors before consideration and sign-off by the MSU Extension director or associate director. You can find the link to the survey here: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Dcv5PDhNCBbL9j
- Strict adherence to the MSU Community Compact and agreement to the Compact by all partner organizations and individual participants.
- All approved gatherings must have an option for “participants” to receive educational information presented virtually or electronically if not attending in-person.
- All staff who receive approval for an in-person gathering must complete required Communicating Through Conflict training prior to in-person programming taking place.
- Outdoor programming, meetings and events have a much higher likelihood of approval than indoor events. For the purposes of this document, “outdoor” is defined as being completely outside with no permanent or temporary structures with a roof or enclosure.
- Decisions regarding exceptions will be informed by local public health recommendations and university guidance.

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OUTDOOR EVENT GUIDELINES AS OF 8/7/20

Through October 31, 2020, exceptions for outdoor meetings/events/programming of up to 25 total participants may be granted if it is associated with an essential industry (e.g., agriculture and agribusiness).

- Instances may not exceed two hours.
- Organizers must seek approval from institute leadership and the district director where the event will take place. Institute leadership will seek consensus from the MSU Extension director or associate director. You can find the link to the survey here: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3Dcv5PDhNCBbL9j
- Approval will be subject to the same request/exception process as outlined for events of no more than 10 people, as shown in Indoor Event Guidelines above, a through g.
- Additional requirements for this exception are subject to change.

The topics below will help you consider how to safely create a plan for an in-person event and prepare you to complete the event waiver survey request. There may be additional topics or conversations related to the specific event submitted that may need to be addressed outside of the guidelines below. Submitting the event waiver survey request DOES NOT automatically approve an in-person event. The event planning should not move forward or promoted until final approval is received.

Registration Considerations

Pre-Registration Recommendations:

1. All participants must register (either through pre-registration or onsite registration).
 - a. Encourage touch-less payment options. Pre-payment by credit card online is the preferred method.
2. Make note of the maximum number of attendees during registration.
3. Pre-registration should include the following statement on marketing materials and registration forms/sites:
 - a. "COVID19 UPDATE: We are planning for an in-person program in _____(month). However, we continue to monitor the evolution of the pandemic and how this might impact the event. We will decide as to whether it is necessary to postpone or change the format of the event prior to EVENT MONTH. This decision will be based on the status of the COVID-19 pandemic and the recommendations/guidelines from MSU, the State of Michigan, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and local Health Department guidance. You will be contacted regarding any changes or updates through the email you use to register."
4. Pre-registration should include the following text as part of the registration process for participants to read and agree to as a condition of attending an in-person event:

As a condition of attending a Michigan State University (MSU) Extension program, all staff, contractors, vendors and participants are required to follow the guidelines below. To learn more, view the [MSU Community Compact](#).



I understand that I am taking personal responsibility in order to protect the health and safety of myself and others. My actions will impact everyone. There is no guarantee that I or others will not become infected by COVID-19. I acknowledge the risks of COVID-19, and I acknowledge that I will do my part to protect myself and others.

I agree that I will follow these requirements while participating in MSU-related or sponsored activities, wherever they may occur:

- **Face Coverings** - I will wear an appropriate face covering over my nose and mouth while I am on MSU property, both indoors and outdoors, unless I am unable to tolerate a face covering for medical reasons.
- **Physical Distancing** - I will maintain 6 feet of distance between myself and others with whom I do not live and did not travel with to the event.
- **Shaking Hands** – I will refrain from shaking hands.
- **Self-Monitoring** – I will monitor myself for flu-like symptoms and will not attend the event if not feeling well. I will also refrain from attending if I have been exposed or test positive for Covid-19.

I agree to follow these guidelines. YES NO

5. During registration, please collect at least first and last name, email, phone number, and an emergency contact, in case something happens onsite or contact tracing is needed.
6. Install physical barriers, if possible, at the registration table to limit exposure. When not possible, plan to clean and disinfect between participants, as much as possible.
7. Consider limiting event attendance to staff and participants who live in the local area (e.g., community, city, town, or county) to reduce risk of spreading the virus from one area to another.

Onsite Recommendations:

1. Setup queue lines with floor markings to indicate social distancing requirements.
2. Have staff hand participants name badges or registration materials and check them in, to eliminate multiple people utilizing pens or touching items. When possible, staff should use disposable gloves. Participant registration materials should not touch or mingle, when possible.
3. Consider mailing all necessary items and making everything digital where participants can download needed items.
4. Offer a hybrid event in order to reduce the number of attendees who participate in person

Logistical Considerations

General Recommendations:

1. If indoors, encourage any organizations that share or use the same venue to also follow these considerations and limit shared use, if possible. In order to have MSU Extension staff present at any in-person event, all partners will need to adhere to the MSU Community Compact.
2. Check with local/county/state health officials to know the local regulations. This would also include any Tribal partners for specific requirements for events held on Tribal lands or locations governed by Tribal partners. You



will also want to check with your hosting venue to determine if they have any requirements.

- a. For example: are temperature or health screenings required before entering a county or to host an in-person event?
3. Ensure there is enough assistance with the event to monitor compliance.
4. Provide a virtual option for others who may not be comfortable attending in person to participate.
 - a. For example: Sharing of pictures / videos and handouts after the event or a live stream option.
5. If the event includes viewing displays or a demonstration, participants must remain socially distanced or it must be done one at a time with sanitization in between viewers.

Social Distancing Recommendations:

1. If possible, employ physical barriers to aid in social distancing.
2. If held indoors, participants should not exceed 10 people (including MSU Extension staff, partners or presenters).
3. All seating should be six feet apart, with preference of participants at individual tables.
4. If seating by rows, alternate seating to aid in social distancing.

Room Setup / Seating Recommendations:

1. When possible, participants should be at individual tables and be at least six feet apart.
2. If round tables must be used, limit the number around the table to 4 at each eight-foot table.
3. Speaker platforms, podiums or lecterns should be set ten feet away from nearest participant.
4. All seating should be six feet apart, with preference of participants at individual tables.
5. Stagger use of shared indoor spaces and clean/disinfect between uses.

Speaker Recommendations:

1. Speaker platforms, podiums or lecterns should be set ten feet away from nearest participant.
2. Speakers must wear an appropriate face covering, unless they are actively speaking. In this case, they must remain at least 10 feet away from participants. This includes MSU Extension staff who are speaking or presenting.
3. Speakers may not share printed handouts. All handouts / materials should be provided by posting online and sharing a link where participants can download or should be given to participants at registration to eliminate multiple touch points.

Restroom Recommendations:

1. Porta Johns or portable bathroom equipment are not recommended.
 - a. Exceptions may be made if there is a plan for sanitization between use and availability for hand washing/sanitizing.
2. Consider limiting the number of participants occupying the restroom at one time.
3. Form pre-determined queues for restroom lines, including floor markings to indicate social distancing locations.
4. Utilize no-touch soap dispensers and towel dispensers where possible.
5. Ensure restrooms are operational with functional toilets.



6. Clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces regularly, including faucets, toilets, stall doors, doorknobs/handles, countertops, and light switches.
7. Include restroom availability in registration materials so participants know what to expect when on-site.

Traffic Flow Recommendations:

1. Provide an abundance of signage explaining procedures .
2. Utilize floor markings, partitions or roped guides to help create a one-way flow of traffic for registration, to/from sessions, bathrooms, etc.
3. Utilize floor markings or other placards to indicate six foot spacing when participants will be standing in line or observing a presentation, when seating is not available.
4. Signage should direct participants where to walk in order to control traffic flows and patterns, providing one-way patterns, when possible.
5. Post signage in highly visible locations.

Food and Beverage Recommendations:

1. No food should be served at events. Participants should be encouraged to bring their own food items should they need them during the event. This should be communicated in the registration materials; no on-site storage of food items should be provided.
2. Bottled water is allowed but must be individually packaged. If served, the water must not be in coolers and must be accessible in ways that eliminate multiple touch points (i.e. put out on tables and spaced apart). Participants should be encouraged to bring their own water for the duration of the event. This should be communicated in the registration materials. No on-site community refilling stations should be provided.

Transportation Recommendations:

Do not provide group transportation (no buses, wagons, golf carts, etc.). Hold everything in one locale with a short walking distance or encourage participants to drive their personal vehicles to each stop.

Inclement Weather Recommendations:

If inclement weather occurs or is imminent, participants should return to their personal vehicles where they can either ride out the weather or if it's safe to do so, drive home. Participants should not gather in common areas, even if social distancing and masks are observed.

Participant Considerations

Participant Recommendations:

1. Participants will adhere to the MSU Community Compact and comply with all instructional signage and placards at the event.
2. All participants will wear an appropriate face covering over their nose and mouth while on MSU property or at an MSU sanctioned event, both indoors and outdoors, unless medical reasons prevent them from doing so.
3. Any MSU employees leading the events will enforce that participants wear appropriate face coverings for the duration of all events, both indoors and outdoors.



4. Have a small supply of PPE available in case a participant forgets.
5. Participants, who did not travel to the event together, must always maintain six feet of distance between themselves and other participants.
6. Participants should refrain from shaking hands.
7. Participants should self-monitor for flu-like symptoms and should not attend the event if not feeling well. In addition, if they have been exposed or have tested positive for Covid-19, they should not attend the event.
8. Provide clear and concise communication regarding all participant requirements during registration and in a reminder email to participants.
9. Have ample signage at the event outlining all requirements.
10. Make announcements at the event that guidelines must be followed, or the event will end immediately.
11. Check with local/county/state health officials to know the local regulations. . This would also include any Tribal partners for specific requirements for events held on Tribal lands or locations governed by Tribal partners. You will also want to check with your hosting venue to determine if they have any requirements.
 - a. For example: are temperature or health screenings required before entering a county or to host an in-person event?

Hand Washing Recommendations:

1. Encourage frequent and thorough handwashing before, during and after the event.
2. Provide hand sanitizer throughout various touch points at the event, including but limited to entrances/exits, registration, restrooms, in each room or stop.
3. Provide access, with adequate soap, for hand washing at sinks within the venue.
4. Utilize disposable towels in place of jet air dryers.
5. Provide appropriate signage of proper hand-washing techniques at all sinks and appropriate signage near all hand sanitizer stations.

Contact Tracing Recommendations:

1. Follow local health guidelines regarding contact tracing and any necessary reporting.
2. All attendees must register and provide at a minimum, their first and last name, email and phone number. They should also be aware this information may be shared as applicable with the local and state health departments, as well as the venue.

Contract Considerations

- ☐ What does the facility contract allow regarding cancellation or rescheduling?
- ☐ Does the contract include a force majeure clause?
- ☐ Does the contract mention pandemic specifically?
- ☐ Does the contract include a joint indemnification clause?
- ☐ Does the contract include statements about moving spaces within the facilities to accommodate for social distancing guidelines and the impact this may have on room fees?



Question to Consider Regarding Budgets

- ☐ Have you communicated that pre-registration and pre-payment is required online?
- ☐ Are you concerned about meeting sponsorship goals?
- ☐ Will your audience participate if there is a fee related to the program?
 - ☐ Is the fee reasonable?
 - ☐ Do you expect participants will be able to pay with credit card online or over the phone?
- ☐ What costs would you still incur if you must change to a virtual format?

Other Questions to Consider

- ☐ Is your target audience in a high-risk category?
- ☐ Will your target audience be allowed to travel, or will they face travel restrictions?
- ☐ Will your target audience have the funds to travel?
- ☐ Can your content be delivered virtually? If not, what in-person experiences are essential to a successful event?

Event Waiver Request Process (Start to Finish)

