

TOP 10 FOCUS AREAS & BEST PRACTICES

For Event Planning Post Pandemic in Dubois County, Indiana

Presented by DC Event Task Force: A Collaboration of Dubois County Entities & Re-Open Dubois County Committee

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00. INTRODUCTION

The “new normal” gets complicated in a hurry. This document has been compiled to help uncomplicate the process of hosting an event as much as possible.

This document has been prepared to be used as a resource only. These “TOP 10...” are not laws or requirements per se – just best practices. Each individual event / organization must take it upon themselves to ensure they are following all state mandates and follow the advice from their individual attorneys / legal councils. The COVID-19 virus and other viruses present an ever-evolving landscape; therefore, any new regulations established by local or federal governments supersede any guidelines presented within.

Be aware that even if the planning group follows all details and suggestions of this and other re-opening recommendations, there is no guarantee of an illness-free event. A government directive legally allowing you to reopen does not mean you can do so safely. However, the law may help you think through your organization’s procedures in a very close way.

Careful decision-making is necessary because even well-intentional safety measures have potentially significant unintended consequences. You may even consider proactively postponing or canceling where you cannot effectively activate emergency plans without exposing workers and patrons to greater risk of transmission.

01. THE LEGALITIES: Risk Assessment, Insurance, and Event Liabilities

Risk Assessment:

The decision to proceed with a mass gathering or to restrict, modify, postpone, or cancel the event should be based on a thorough risk assessment. Event planners should undertake such an assessment in partnership with local, state and/or national public health authorities.

A comprehensive risk assessment should be undertaken at the beginning of the planning phase, reviewed regularly during planning, and updated immediately before the handover to the operational phase.

The risk assessment should include input from the public health authority and take into account the security assessment for the event.

As much as we all are eager to get back to work, the decision when and how to re-open must be driven by a realistic assessment of one’s ability to resume operations safely.

Also, what are the risks of “public perception” if the event is allowed to go on as usual or even with some modifications? Be sure to take that into account as well.

Insurance:

If your planning committee agrees that the event is allowed to go forward in some manner, it is imperative to discuss liabilities with your general liability insurance provider. Establish that you have proper insurance coverage to handle the current circumstances.

Event Liabilities & Other Legalities:

A myriad of legal issues may arise as events and venues re-open during a pandemic.

To begin, if someone does claim they got sick attending or working at your venue or event, here is some basic law:

The legal name for a claim of personal injury or wrongful death is a “tort.” In a tort case, the injured party has the burden to prove four elements: (1) they were owed a **duty of care** by defendants; (2) there was a breach of that duty; (3) that breach was the cause of (4) plaintiff’s damages.

Duty of Care. Taking steps discussed in this Reopening Guide to mitigate the risk of illness, and documenting how you arrived at your conclusions and enforced your new health policies, will be compelling evidence that you did not breach your duty to provide reasonably healthy and safe premises under these challenging circumstances.

Proximate Cause. Any claim that someone got sick at a particular venue or event will face a significant causation problem. Given all the people with whom we have contact when we leave our homes, all the surfaces we touch, all the aerosols from other people that we unknowingly breathe in, as well as the incubation period for COVID-19, it will be difficult for most victims to isolate one contact as the source of illness while excluding all others as possibilities.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 should create a new social contract between event and venue operators and the people who work at and attend them. Because event workers and patrons all have a duty to behave reasonably under these circumstances, everyone should promise to maintain social distancing and engage in sanitary practices suitable for a pandemic, rather than doing only enough to keep their job or avoid getting ejected. Likewise, even if there is relatively little risk of losing a lawsuit based on negligent sanitary practices, event and venue operators should implement robust health and safety measures, because they will save lives and help reopen more events.

You should consult your attorney about your individual situation.

02. LIMIT & CALCULATING CAPACITY: Maintain Social Distance Protocols

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends practicing social distancing by maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet between people outside your home, not gathering in groups, and avoiding crowded places and mass gatherings. These recommendations might affect the decision for whether occupancy could resume operations safely.

Method for calculating social distancing occupant load:

One way of converting the CDC's 6-foot separation criteria to occupant load is to simply calculate the area of a circle with a radius of 3 feet (since two people with 3 feet each equals 6 feet of separation), which is equal to approximately 29 square feet per person. This represents a minimum approach with some resources stating more square footage to further social distance. The more space allowance for individuals to social distance the better.

Take this number into account for capacity limitations that could be enforceable through staffing for free events or limiting ticket purchases.

Additional security / floating staff members to further enforce social distances encouraged.

A breakdown of outdoor seating vs. venues with indoor seating is outlined next.

Outdoor Seating

- Attendees who live together may sit in the same 6-foot space.
- For a general admission event, attendees are required to provide their own chair. No blankets, tents, or tarps allowed.
- The stage needs to be properly marked/roped off to ensure enough space between the audience and stage. Standing or mosh-style concerts are not permitted.
- Attendees will not be able to loiter in spaces other than the space that occupies their chair.

(section continued on next page)

Venues with Seating:

Reduce capacity for social distancing. Calculate the distance between rows and the size of each seat and take them into account to handle both advance reservations and walk-in traffic.

Advance Reservations

To make the process easier, a venue may determine to separate the venue into 4-person, 3-person, and 2-person party sizes, with the majority of 2-person party sizes taken into account. Most parties will be able to separate to fit the 2-person or 3-person party size. Count the available seats that this separation would leave and limit to selling that amount of tickets for advance reservations.

Another option, or in addition to separating the venue in seat clusters, maximize capacity for advanced reservations through having a contact phone number or email for interested parties to reserve the number of seats that they wish to purchase for their party. Parties that come together from the same “home” do not have to be socially distanced. The person in charge of handling these calls / emails would use a schematic to place the parties in advance and then send a link to accept online payments or personally take the person’s payment information.

At the Venue

Allow for an earlier time for doors to be open in order to spread out guest arrivals.

Post occupancy numbers for each room / section that should be maintained. Limit those specific capacity numbers through staffing.

Require or encourage the wearing of masks until patrons arrive at their seating that is 6 ft away from other parties. Masks should be encouraged/required at any time the guest leaves their seating cluster.

Scheduled egress after the event from back to front to further reduce risks of exposure.

Parking Procedures

Assess the parking procedures at your specific venue or event. If deemed appropriate, eliminate some spaces in order to practice social distancing.

03. SCREENING PATRONS

Advance Reservations (if Possible):

Ask the following specific screening questions before the purchase of tickets:

- **Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 14 days?**
- **Are you experiencing a cough, chills, muscle aches, shortness of breath, or sore throat?**
- **Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours**
- **Have you had new loss of taste or smell?**
- **Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?**

Email individuals on the day(s) leading up to the event requesting him/her to stay away if they develop any of the above symptoms.

Have an easy cancellation policy in place in case a patron is showing any signs / symptoms.

At the Event:

Before entrance and in a discrete manner, take the temperature of each patron or use infrared technology to screen patrons that have elevated temperatures. Normal temperature should not exceed 99.5 degrees Fahrenheit. Implement a denial of entry of any individual that exhibits a temperature of 99.5 F or higher.

Ask the following specific screening questions before entering the event (if prior screening is not possible):

- **Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 within the last 14 days?**
- **Are you experiencing a cough, chills, muscle aches, shortness of breath, or sore throat?**
- **Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?**
- **Have you had new loss of taste or smell?**
- **Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?**

****IMPORTANT** Direct anyone who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines.**

04. CROWD CONTROL

Voluntary compliance with social distancing rules is expected, not enforced by law, at events. Should an attendee feel uncomfortable, they should speak to a staffed volunteer.

Staffing

Have extra volunteers / floating staff to reminding patrons to social distance. *More information on staffing is provided in the next section.*

Spread Out Offerings

Give plenty of room between booth vendors, rides, or other offerings. Allow plenty of room for lines to be spaced out appropriately. According to the [IAFE Fair Contingency Planning](#), "Queue lines must be set up to control distancing and must either be a straight line or an "L" (no serpentine). Some examples: ticket purchase, restrooms, food stands, grandstand entry, security (bag check, etc.), carnival rides, merchandise sales."

Carnival Rides & Games

Be sure to keep in mind the rows or multiple seat cluster that a specific ride has in place and allow for distancing when placing patrons on the ride. Use enhanced cleaning and disinfecting protocols on all rides and games for all touchpoints.

05. EVENT STAFF / VOLUNTEERS

Terminology: For this section, "staff" will include any and all individuals both paid and those that are non-paid volunteers for your event.

Recommendation for all events: elect an event coordinator and have this individual be involved in all aspects of the planning and execution of the event. In addition, this person should act as your liaison between you, your staff, patrons, and if necessary, the law enforcement.

General staffing: Events that occur throughout the year show a recommended ratio for staff to patron at 1 to 35; this allows for good circulation and coverage. Although during a worldwide pandemic ratio numbers have not been found, so use good judgement.

Advanced protocols

Staff Screening

Take temperatures of all staff before the start of shifts. Do not allow any staff to work if he/she exhibits a temperature at 99.5 F or higher or answers “yes” to any of the screening questions covered in the “03. Screening Patrons” section.

Take special precautions in allowing individuals over the age of 65 or that have any underlying health conditions to volunteer.

Provide Staff and Guests with PPE Procedures

Plan to supply proper PPE for each staff member. Have event staff wear masks or some kind of barrier between them and any other individual. Keep in mind that frequent breaks for staff/volunteers or shortened shift times are recommended for mask removal and proper hand washing and sanitization.

Put in plastic barriers when appropriate to protect staff and others.

When appropriate, have staff wear gloves. Be sure to keep in mind that long term use of gloves is not helpful as the virus can still be spread easily from the gloves to other touchpoints. Instead, consider hand sanitizer for each staffing area. Gloves must be worn when handling ready-to-eat food.

Communicate Expectations

Communicate with staff prior to the event so they understand all procedures and what is expected of them.

Check-In/Entry: Staff at this location should feel comfortable asking patrons questions regarding their health and properly taking their temperature. Must feel confident in turning away people, if necessary.

Remind staff that they have a personal duty to behave reasonably under these circumstances to help lessen the spread of the COVID-19, as well as other viruses. Reinforce engagement of sanitary practices suitable for a pandemic.

Additional procedures for your staff can be found on pages 5-8 of this resource guide: [Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#)

06. SANITATION: Limit the spread

Increase Cleaning:

Reduce touchpoints, create touchless ingress/egress, and disinfect surfaces frequently. Before the event and at multiple intervals, wipe down all surfaces with disinfectant.

Be sure to capture a procedure for restrooms and other popular areas that are impossible to eliminate all touchpoints.

Provide sanitation stations, antibacterial solutions, and/or wipes:

Increase the supply of sanitation stations, especially at entrances, exits, food areas, and near restrooms.

Spread out tables and benches and have sanitization wipes nearby for patrons, so that individuals can take their own control in providing themselves with a clean environment.

07. SIGNAGE RECOMMENDATIONS

Seek legal advice for disclaimer verbiage recommendations. Add this disclaimer to your website and online ticket website. If you have phone sales, make sure customer service reps articulate the disclaimer.

In addition, seek legal advice regarding where to place your disclaimers and how many signs you may need to enforce spacing.

Provide messaging throughout the event grounds for all expected visitor behavior, social distancing, handwashing, risks of failure to comply (i.e. ejection from grounds), etc.

Provide areas with lines / crowds with some type of visual cue on where to stand to practice a 6 ft social distancing space between the individuals before them in line. Examples of these type of cues can be found in many supermarkets, gas stations, and other retail spaces. Take additional stock of the measures that these types of businesses are implementing and see if these measures are possible for your event to duplicate.

08. GENERAL OPERATIONS: Approval Requirements, Permits, & More

Before holding an event legally, specific requirements, permits, and approvals are necessary.

Emergency Action (Or Response) Plan

Emergency action plans predetermine actions that will be taken before and during the event in response to an emergency or otherwise hazardous condition. These actions will be taken by organizers, management, personnel, and attendees.

Work with your local city offices to develop your own emergency action plan. Your plan will need to be shared with multiple agencies through getting the proper permits needed to host any event.

Here is an emergency action plan template provided by the Dubois County Emergency Management Agency: [EMERGENCY ACTION PLAN TEMPLATE](#)

Recommendation of 30 days prior (and at least 7 days prior) to the event, turn in a copy of your plan to the Dubois County Emergency Management Agency, using the following contact information:

Tammy Humbert, Director
Dubois County Emergency Management Agency
602 Main Street
Jasper IN 47546
Phone: 812-482-2202
Email: tjhumbert@duboiscountyin.org
Website: https://www.duboiscountyin.org/departments/emergency_management/

Local Health Authorities

Actively work with local health authorities. Before any event, contact the Dubois County Health Department via phone at 812-481-7050 or email at dchealth@duboiscountyin.org.

Food Permits

Event coordinators must register their event at least 14 days prior to the event start date if any food is planning to be served. Use this link for all information regarding food permits for Dubois County:

[Dubois County Health Department Food Permits](#)

Public Health Procedures

In addition to food permits, the health department will help you make sure your event is safe and help you adopt necessary procedures.

Discuss with them their recommendations for on-site first aid kits and other medical devices.

Amusement and Entertainment Permits

Recommendation of 30 days prior (and at least 7 days prior) to the event, turn in your Amusement and Entertainment Permit. It is extremely important that the owner of the property or the operator of the event applies for the amusement entertainment permit well in advance of the first planned event so that the necessary life safety inspections of the venue can be performed to protect public safety.

Amusement and Entertainment Permits are required for events at a variety of locations and venues. Some of the most common kinds of places that require amusement entertainment permits are places where the following kinds of events occur: concerts and other shows, amusement rides, movies, and dances. You will need to upload an electronic copy of the floor plan of the event / facility, so ensure you have this readily available before the application process.

Information on this permit can be found here: [Indiana Amusement & Entertainment Permit](#)

If you have questions regarding the Entertainment permits, please contact IDHS Amusement and Entertainment Staff at CodePermits@dhs.in.gov. If there is a need to contact a representative immediately, our Dubois County's area Code Official is Carl Deel:

Carl D. Deel CFI CBI CPE Certified Code Official Code Enforcement
Fire & Building Safety Division
Indiana Department of Homeland Security
302 W Washington Street Room E 241
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Cell:317-417-3698
Email:cdeel@dhs.in.gov
Web: www.in.gov/dhs

Board of Public Works Approval

If you are using public property, you will need to gain the proper approval beforehand from the local Board of Public Works. Most meetings only take place once a month, so plan accordingly in order to gain approval for your event in plenty of time. At least a week before the given Board of Public Works Meeting, you will need to contact them to get the event on their meeting agenda.

[Jasper Board of Public Works & Safety / Application & Guidelines Document](#), 812-482-4255
(2nd and 4th Tuesday of every month)

[Huntingburg Board of Public Works & Safety](#), (812) 683-2211
(1st Thursday of every month)

[Ferdinand Town Council](#), (812) 367-2280
(3rd Tuesday of every month)

[Dubois County Commissioners](#), (812) 481-7045

The IAFE Fair Contingency Planning had the following things to consider:

Every bullet item is a “What if” scenario. For each you should ask: Would we do this? Can we do this?

*On-site first aid/medical facility must have adequate PPE

*On-site first aid/medical facility to be designed to eliminate “waiting room”

*On-site first aid/medical facility to have at least one isolation care room

*Buses and/or trolleys used for transportation on grounds or from satellite parking limited to 50% capacity and distancing protocols in place, such as markings on available seats

*Buses and/or trolleys used for transportation on grounds or from satellite parking have additional cleaning/disinfecting protocols between cycles of ridership

*50/50 raffle type activities (i.e. with walk-arounds and cash) are not allowed

*Tables and benches spaced farther apart; tables with chairs should have fewer chairs per table.

Have you ordered your events’ operational/custodial supplies? If they can be procured, can your budget afford them?

09. CREATIVE BRAINSTORMING: Think Outside The Box

Unleash your planning committee’s creativity in finding solutions that lessen touchpoints and eliminates close contact with other individuals.

Look closely at the flow of patrons – are there certain areas that are the most popular? For those areas, can you make it so they are easily accessed without having to go through less popular areas first?

Is there a way to achieve the organization goals that lessen touchpoints and contact? Such as, can food vendors have a drop off zone or drive-thru option?

Can the event be completely reimaged? For example, many large concerts are becoming “Drive-in” Concerts with Garth Brooks, Alan Jackson, and others hosting these different types of entertainment events.

Host a brainstorming session with your most creative-minded individuals and see what type of ideas come about! Be sure to encourage all ideas as even ideas without a lot of merit could get the conversation off to a good start.

10. Communication for Confidence: Messaging & Public Relations

Especially in this current climate, communication is key. Build trust for your organization by being as transparent as possible. Recommendations for your communication strategy:

Designate a team or one person to handle media inquiries – Ensure that your event has a singular message and is answering all questions consistently.

Create a press release and talking points – Include your safety procedures in your press release. Create talking points for media to ensure that all important aspects of your event are covered.

Responding to reactions on social media – Be sure to respond to any comments/questions on social media that need clarification.

Create an FAQ – Create a list of questions you expect to be asked by attendees and media. Post to your website and include with press release.

Sample FAQ

What is your capacity? How is it determined?

We are following the state guidelines. It is monitored by ticket sales.

How are you enforcing spacing?

We are following state guidelines. Signage will be placed to remind patrons.

What happens if the virus has been traced to your event?

Safety is our number one priority. We have a plan and have been working with the local health department.

What are the possibilities that your event may be cancelled?

We are following the governor's guidelines. If the state guidelines change, attendees will receive refunds.

What happens if it is discovered that an attendee has a temperature above 99.5 F degrees when they are screened at the entry gate?

Our trained staff will discretely handle the matter. A second reading will be administered. The individual will be asked to leave if it is above 99.5 F degrees and will not be admitted. They will receive a refund if they have tickets.

XX. CLOSING & RESOURCES

Through reading of these “Top 10...,” we hope to leave your organization with a good strategy to judge how best your event / organization should move forward. This document does not presume to offer medical guidance or opinions. The suggestions / best practices outlined in this document are developed through consideration of reputable authorities’ protocols.

If at any time questions should arise, here are some resources for your organization:

Health Information

- [Dubois County Health Department, \(812\) 481-7050, dchealth@duboiscountyin.org](mailto:dchealth@duboiscountyin.org)
- [Dubois County Emergency Management Agency, \(812\) 482-2202](tel:8124822202)
- [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention – Pandemic Preparedness](#)
- [World Health Organization – Country and Technical Guidance](#)

Event Guidance Contacts

- [Visit Dubois County, Inc., \(812\) 482-9115, info@visitduboiscounty.com](mailto:info@visitduboiscounty.com)
- [Jasper Chamber of Commerce, \(812\) 482-6866, chamber@jasperin.org](mailto:chamber@jasperin.org)
- [Dubois County Chamber of Commerce, \(812\) 827-4095, duboiscountychamberofcommerce@gmail.com](mailto:duboiscountychamberofcommerce@gmail.com)

Additional Resources

- [Together We Thrive Dubois County Campaign](#)
- [Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#)
- [IAFE Fair Contingency Planning](#)
- [Additional Documents](#)