These recommendations replace the guidelines issued on 31 May 2021.

Recommendations on the prevention of coronavirus infections at public events and gatherings and in the use of certain spaces

Purpose of the recommendations

These recommendations describe how to apply the provisions in the Communicable Diseases Act on public events, public gatherings and the use of spaces and premises and gives advice on how to apply the recommendations in practice.

The purpose of these recommendations is to support the organisation of public events and gatherings safely and to give guidance on the safe use of spaces during the COVID-19 epidemic. By complying with the recommendations, infections can be prevented and the number of people exposed to the virus can be reduced. The recommendations are not legally binding.

The principles drawn up by the working group of the Ministry of Education and Culture for organising events in a responsible way can be used to this end and the risk assessment prepared by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare can also be used when organising events and activities and identifying potential risks. Operators and organisers may issue more situation-specific, activity-specific or event-specific recommendations that take account of the decisions made under the Communicable Diseases Act.

It is worth bearing in mind that once the vaccination coverage of the population has risen sufficiently high, grounds for restrictive measures will no longer exist.

Collaboration with authorities at the local level

Make sure to take into account any decisions made by the municipality and the Regional State Administrative Agency related to restrictions on public events and conditions for organising events and using facilities.

Contact the local health authorities to ensure that health security is in place for your event. Under the Communicable Diseases Act, local and regional authorities
responsible for communicable diseases may assist in drawing up guidelines for specific situations. In this context, it is also worth looking into the epidemiological situation in the area from which the participants arrive.

Separate provisions are issued on the obligations that organisers holding events in the capacity of an employer have to protect employees. For those working in public premises, the measures are based on a risk assessment made by the employer. Occupational healthcare supports employers in the risk assessment.

How to reduce the risk of infection when people are in close contact

Statutory obligations and their fulfilment

Operators responsible for managing indoor spaces open to the public or intended for a limited group of customers or participants to spend time in as well as outdoor areas with limited space or functionality intended for the use of customers or participants must give customers and participants guidance on how to minimise the risk of infection when they are in close contact with each other. Customers and participants must use the premises in a spacious way, taking into account the specific characteristics of the activity in question, and, if necessary, the ratio of customers or participants must be maximally restricted in order to maintain sufficient spaciousness.

By keeping a safe distance between people, it is possible to prevent infections effectively, for example. Recommending a face mask for customers, especially indoors, can be considered another good way of reducing risks as an alternative to keeping distance, or when people spend longer periods of time in the same space. The risk of infection is often higher than usual in situations involving strenuous use of voice, for example when singing or cheering, and in team activities and contact sports. In all of these situations and in similar situations, the use of masks and avoiding close contact is more important than elsewhere. Adequate ventilation should also be ensured indoors.

Maintaining a safe distance of a given length in metres is not necessary, but keeping enough of a distance is made easier if each participant has a designated place or seat or if the number of participants is restricted to the extent that the space is not filled to the brim, for example. Safe distancing can also be ensured by having an adequate number of staff members to guide people, by setting up signs to indicate safe distancing and by preventing long queues from forming by making arrangements for how and when participants arrive and assemble. The use of cordonning and ropes, for example, can help guide the public, and guards and security stewards can guide people to move in such a way as to avoid congestion. Opening hours and staggering activities can also be used to ensure adequate distances between customers and parties.
**Obligations imposed by administrative decisions**

Municipalities or Regional State Administrative Agencies may decide to prohibit public gatherings and public events in their area under section 58 of the Communicable Diseases Act. However, such decisions may allow the organisation of events under certain conditions.

**Face masks**

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare provides guidance on possible recommendations for face masks. Further recommendations on the use of masks in different situations may vary by region. [Link to the webpages of the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare](#)

It should be noted that a mask should not be worn if it makes it unreasonably difficult to breathe or if other health-related reasons prevent the use of a mask.

Private service providers or event organisers may require customers to wear a mask to reduce the risk of infection. However, requirements related to non-discrimination must be taken into consideration in these situations. It should be noted that not all people can wear a mask for health reasons.

**Hygiene**

**Statutory obligations**

Operators responsible for managing indoor spaces open to the public or intended for a limited group of customers or participants to spend time in as well as outdoor areas with limited space or functionality intended for the use of customers or participants must make sure customers and participants have the opportunity to clean their hands.

Customers and participants must be given instructions on how to clean their hands and other similar practices to prevent the spread of infections.

**Concrete examples**

Proper practices for coughing and nose-blowing prevent infections. To raise awareness, it is recommended that appropriate information material on the right practices be distributed to both staff members and participants at events as part of the statutory instructions.

Make sure that there is a sufficient supply of hand sanitisers and places to wash hands at each event. Make sure that the WCs work properly and that there is a good supply of soap and paper towels.
Cleaning

Statutory obligations

Operators responsible for managing indoor spaces open to the public or intended for a limited group of customers or participants to spend time in as well as outdoor areas with limited space or functionality intended for the use of customers or participants must make sure that the cleaning of the premises and surfaces is stepped up in addition to other legal provisions on the cleaning of the activities in question.

Concrete examples

It is possible that the coronavirus might also be transmitted through physical contact. However, coronaviruses do not stay on surfaces for long periods of time.

Slightly alkaline all-purpose cleaners should be used when cleaning. Disinfectant can be used to step up cleaning in sanitary facilities. Comply with the guidelines on cleaning issued by the Finnish Institute of Occupational Health. Cleaning guidelines

When cleaning, wipe contact surfaces such as door handles, armrests, worktops and tables, light switches and taps at least once a day, preferably twice a day. In places where there are high numbers of visitors, more frequent cleaning is recommended, for example every two to four hours. Avoid using shared work or study equipment, and they should always be cleaned after each user.

When a coronavirus infection is found in public events or public gatherings

If a COVID-19 infection is diagnosed in someone who has attended a public event or public gathering, it must be established whether any other participants have been exposed. The physician responsible for communicable diseases in the municipality or hospital district is in charge of investigating transmission chains. In accordance with the Communicable Diseases Act, those exposed are traced and quarantined.

The tracing of infection is easier if the organisers of the events or the persons responsible for the activities organised in the premises has the contact information of those who participated in the activities. The Data Protection Ombudsman has issued instructions on the points that should be taken into account when collecting customer contact details for tracing COVID-19 exposure. Data Protection Ombudsman: Frequently asked questions about coronavirus.

By limiting the number of people at public events and public gatherings and by separating the public into different segments, the number of people exposed can be reduced if a COVID-19 infection is detected among a group of people.
Other accountability

The decisions issued by the Regional State Administrative Agencies on restrictions on gatherings do not apply to private events. Private events include all events of a private nature that are not open to the public, such as graduation ceremonies, weddings, funerals, baptisms, birthday parties and private functions.

However, even at these events, it is advisable to follow the general guidelines on hygiene, safe distances and other arrangements that help prevent coronavirus infections. Municipalities and hospital districts may also issue regional recommendations on the organisation of private events, including a recommendation to limit the number of participants in order to reduce the amount of contacts. Based on experiences gained during the pandemic, the risk of infection increases at private events because close contacts tend to last for a long time.

However, if a private event is held in a restaurant, café or other food and beverage service business, the current restrictions and obligations imposed on restaurant operations must be taken into account.

The Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare recommends that a COVID-19 vaccine be taken, except if there is a contraindication for the vaccine. Those who are fully vaccinated (usually two vaccine doses) have a very low risk of developing a serious coronavirus infection. However, during the epidemic even fully vaccinated people are advised to follow the infection control guidelines referred to in these recommendations in public events, public gatherings and public spaces.

LINKS

Regional information

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare: The COVID-19 epidemic: regional situation, recommendations and restrictions

Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare: The COVID-19 epidemic: regional situation, recommendations and restrictions

Restrictions currently in force and due to come into force (Regional State Administrative Agencies)

Regional COVID-19 situation and restrictions by hospital districts (Government)