

THINKING AHEAD...

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CONSIDERATIONS FOR FRATERNITIES AND SORORITIES

HOSTING EVENTS DURING COVID-19

Organizations can help protect members, guests and employees and slow the spread of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19). As such, fraternities and sororities can determine, in collaboration with [state and local health officials](#), institutions of higher education and the national/international organization whether and how to implement these considerations while adjusting to meet the unique needs and circumstances of their university and local community. Implementation should be guided by what is feasible, practical, acceptable, and tailored to the needs of each organization.

COVID-19 is thought to [spread](#) mainly by respiratory droplets released when people talk, cough, or sneeze. It is thought that the virus may spread to hands from a contaminated surface and then to the nose or mouth, causing infection. Therefore, personal prevention practices (such as [handwashing](#), [staying home when sick](#)) and environmental prevention practices (such as [cleaning and disinfection](#)) are important principles that are covered in this document. Fortunately, there are a number of actions that fraternity and sorority leaders can take to help lower the risk of COVID-19 exposure and spread.

"Events" is a broad term used to include meetings, recruitment/intake, events with alcohol, new member activities, etc.

Before hosting events:

Be aware of **state or local regulatory agency policies** related to group gatherings to determine which type of event can be held.

Be aware of **university guidelines or policies** related to group gatherings to determine if events can be held and which type of events (meetings, socials, philanthropy events, etc.)

Be aware of **national/international organizational rules or guidelines** related to group gatherings to determine which type of events can be held (meetings, socials, philanthropy events, etc.)

Be aware of **any local housing corporation rules or guidelines** related to group gatherings to determine which type of events can be held in the facility.

If organizations are allowed to host events, this resource will assist you in creating a safe environment.

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

- Designate an officer to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns. All members should know who this person is and how to contact them.
- Officer should be aware of state and local rules and guidelines, university guidelines and policies and national/international organization rules or guidelines.

Events and Gatherings

- Pursue virtual group events, gatherings, or meetings, if possible, and promote social distancing of at least 6 feet between people if events are held.
- Limit group size to the extent possible.
- Consider hosting the event outside.
- Complete any paperwork (event registration/notification) required by the university or organization.
- Implement the event following the risk management policy of the institution, department, or international/national organization.
- Maintain a tracking system for any events when outside guests attend.
- Encourage or require attendees to wear masks.
- Consider providing masks for attendees.
- Ensure soap and hand sanitizer are readily available.
- Consider taking the temperature of attendees before they enter.

Promoting Behaviors that Reduce Spread

- Actively encourage members, members, employees, etc. who have been sick with COVID-19 [symptoms](#), tested positive for COVID-19, or have been potentially [exposed](#) to someone with COVID-19 (either through [community-related exposure](#) or [international travel](#)) to follow CDC guidance to [self-isolate or stay home](#).

Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette

- Recommend and reinforce [handwashing](#) with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Encourage students, faculty, and staff to cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or use the inside of your elbow. Used tissues should be thrown in the trash and hands washed immediately with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
 - If soap and water are not readily available, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.
- Ensure availability and access to supplies that promote healthy hygiene practices (e.g., touchless hand sanitizer stations by building doorways; handwashing stations positioned near high touch areas).

Masks

- Recommend and reinforce use of [masks](#) among students, faculty, and staff both on and off campus. Many people with COVID-19 are asymptomatic or have only mild symptoms, thus people may not recognize they are infected. The use of masks to prevent spread of respiratory droplets by the wearer is an important mitigation strategy to help prevent the spread of COVID-19. [Masks](#) are not personal protective equipment (PPE) (e.g., N95 respirators) intended for use by healthcare workers. Masks should be worn in public settings whenever possible, even when social distancing. People should be reminded frequently not to touch their masks and to [wash their hands](#) often. Information should be provided to all students, faculty, and staff on [proper use, removal, and washing of masks](#).
- Masks should **not** be placed on:
 - Babies and children younger than 2 years old
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance

- For people with sensory, cognitive, or behavioral issues for whom wearing masks could be difficult, [adaptations and alternatives](#) to prevent against spread of COVID-19 should be considered.
- People who are deaf or hard of hearing may be unable to wear a mask if the ear loops of the mask interferes with the use of hearing aids. Those who care for or interact with a person who is hearing impaired may be unable to wear masks if the person they are interacting with relies on lipreading to communicate. This may be particularly relevant for faculty or staff teaching or working with students who may be deaf or hard of hearing. In this situation, consider using a clear face covering. If a [clear face covering](#) isn't available, consider using written communication or closed captioning and decrease background noise to make communication easier while wearing a mask.

Adequate Supplies

- Support [healthy hygiene](#) behaviors by providing adequate supplies, including soap, hand sanitizer containing at least 60 percent alcohol, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch/foot pedal trash cans.

Signs and Messages

- Post [signs](#) in highly visible locations (e.g., building entrances, restrooms, dining areas) that [promote everyday protective measures](#) and describe how to [stop the spread](#) of germs (such as by [properly washing hands](#) and [properly wearing a cloth face cover](#)).
- Include messages (for example, [videos](#)) about behaviors that prevent spread of COVID-19 when communicating with members.
- Find freely available CDC print and digital resources on CDC's [communications resources](#) main page.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Develop a schedule for increased, routine cleaning and disinfection.
- [Clean and disinfect](#) frequently touched surfaces (e.g., door handles, sink handles, drinking fountains, grab bars, hand railings, bathroom stalls, dining hall tables) within facilities at least daily or between use as much as possible. Use of shared objects (e.g., lab equipment, computer equipment, desks) should be limited when possible, or cleaned between use.
- Ensure [safe and correct use](#) and storage of [cleaners and disinfectants](#), including storing products securely. Use products that meet [EPA disinfection criteria](#).
- Encourage members to keep their personal items (e.g., cell phones, other electronics) and personal work and living spaces clean. Encourage members to use disinfectant wipes to wipe down shared space and other shared objects and surfaces before use.
- Ensure there is adequate ventilation when using cleaning products to prevent members, guests or employees from inhaling toxic fumes.
- Provide hand sanitizer or hand washing stations near high touch areas and at entrances/exits to buildings.

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk (e.g., risk of falling, triggering asthma symptoms).

Water Systems

- To minimize the risk of [Legionnaires' disease](#) and other diseases associated with water, [take steps](#) to ensure that all water systems and features (e.g., sink faucets, drinking fountains, decorative fountains) are safe to use after a prolonged facility shutdown. Drinking fountains should be cleaned and disinfected, but encourage members, guests and employees to bring their own water to minimize use and touching of water fountains.

Modified Layouts

- Space seating at least 6 feet apart when feasible.
- Host smaller meetings in larger rooms.
- Provide adequate distance between individuals.

Physical Barriers and Guides

- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, particularly in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.

Communal Spaces

- Close shared spaces such as dining halls, game rooms, exercise rooms, and lounges if possible; otherwise, stagger use and restrict the number of people allowed in at one time to ensure everyone can stay at least 6 feet apart, and [clean and disinfect](#) between use.
- Add physical barriers, such as plastic flexible screens, between bathroom sinks and between beds especially when they cannot be at least 6 feet apart.
- For more information on communal spaces (e.g., laundry rooms, shared bathrooms and recreation areas) follow [CDC's guidance for Shared or Congregate Housing](#).

Food

- Provide grab-and-go options for meals. If a group dining room is typically used, if possible, serve individually plated meals (versus buffet or any self-serve stations).
- Ensure students do not share food or utensils to include the safety of students with food allergies. Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, trays). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that staff handle all non-disposable food service items and equipment with gloves and that those items are washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Staff should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service
- When possible, create options that allow members and guests to eat meals outdoors, while maintaining social distance (at least 6 feet apart) as much as possible, instead of in a communal dining).
- If food is offered at any event, have pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee instead of providing a buffet or family-style service. Review [considerations for events and gatherings](#) for additional information about planning and holding events and gatherings that include food service.
- Provide tissues and no-touch or foot-pedal disposal containers.

Source: Information in this resource adapted from "Considerations for Institutes of Higher Education" developed by the CDC.
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/colleges-universities/considerations.html>

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