



SHOCKEY CONSULTING SERVICES, LLC.
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & THE CORONA VIRUS
March 13, 2020

We've been receiving calls this week about whether to continue with in-person community engagement activities, such as workshops and public meetings, during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

We suggest that you modify, postpone, or cancel in-person public events for the safety and well-being of your event staff, participants, and the community. Our recommendations are based on the size and duration of events, demographics of the participants, complexity of the event, and type of on-site services and activities your event may offer. In general, based upon information provided by the CDC and public health professionals, we are recommending the following actions for **March 13 – April 15**:

- Postpone all public meetings to slow the curve of the outbreak.
- Postpone all meetings that consist of 20 or more people in one room (i.e. project staff team meetings, steering committee meetings, elected official/staff workshops). If a meeting or workshop must be held, one option to consider is splitting the participants into smaller rooms with less than 20 participants per room and connecting the participants using technology.

Following April 15, depending upon the status of the cases in your community (red, orange, or yellow), consider holding public meetings both online and organized in a way that the public can participate in smaller groups of 20 either at different times of the day or in separate rooms with no more than 20 people in each room. To determine the current status of your community's cases, use the resources offered by the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**, **World Health Organization (WHO)**, **Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC)** and the **U.S. State Department**. For U.S. locations with any known cases or exposure, include the city and county department of public health and local medical services up to the start date of the event.

Stay informed about the local COVID-19 situation.

Get [up-to-date information](#) about local COVID-19 activity from public health officials.

Should you determine the need to postpone or cancel your events, do the following:

- **Update everyone in your communication chain about when your events will occur if postponed or canceled.**
- **Let potential event participants know using multiple communications methods:** social media, press release, website posting, posting at location, set up a prerecorded phone message. Offer them an electronic method to give their input that would have been provided in person.

Should you decide to proceed with meetings, we recommend you:

- **Distribute health messages about COVID-19 to event staff and participants.** Continue to promote everyday preventive actions. Offer resources to event staff and participants that provide reliable COVID-19 information. Address the potential fear and anxiety that may result from rumors or misinformation. *Note: Use culturally appropriate messages, materials, and resources. Example flyers are available at the CDC website.*
- **Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies to event staff and participants.** Ensure that your events have supplies for event staff and participants, such as hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, disposable facemasks, cleaners, and disinfectants. Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects with detergent and water prior to disinfection, especially surfaces that are visibly dirty. For disinfection, review this list of [products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims](#), maintained by the American Chemistry Council Center for Biocide Chemistries (CBC). Follow the manufacturer's instructions for all cleaning and disinfection products.

- **Publish “Stay Healthy—Know Before You Go” Tips.** Alert potential event participants about “How to prevent the spread of coronavirus” and “What to do to avoid exposure to coronavirus while traveling to and from your event.” Also include frequently updated health tips during the event.
- **Consider alternatives for staff and participants who are at high risk for complications from COVID-19.** Currently, older adults and persons with underlying health conditions are considered to be at increased risk for severe illness and complications from COVID-19. Reassign duties for high-risk staff to have minimal contact with other persons. People in high-risk groups should consult with their healthcare provider about attending large events. Provide other methods for providing input to people who are unable to attend because they are at high risk.
- **Implement flexible staff attendance and sick-leave policies (if possible).** Require staff to stay home if they are sick or caring for a sick household member. Allow staff to work from home when possible. Notify staff when you plan to implement [COVID-19 leave policies](#). Provide instructions about how and when to safely return to work.
Note: Consider asking staff who are experiencing [COVID-19 symptoms](#) to avoid contact with others and to seek medical advice.
- **Develop an onsite crisis response plan to handle an outbreak of any illness during the event.** Establish procedures to help sick staff or participants leave the event as soon as possible. If any staff member or participant becomes sick at your event, separate them from others as soon as possible. Provide them with clean, [disposable facemasks](#) to wear, if available. Work with the local public health department and nearby hospitals to care for those who become sick. If needed, contact emergency services for those who need emergency care. Public transportation, shared rides, and taxis should be avoided for sick persons, and disposable facemasks should be worn by persons who are sick at all times when in a vehicle. Read more about [preventing the spread of COVID-19 if someone is sick](#). *Note: Providing a sick staff member or event participant with a disposable facemask to wear does **not** replace the need for that person to leave as soon as possible, stay home, and seek medical advice. Wearing a disposable facemask in the workplace or while participating in a large event is not a sufficient infection control measure.*

LINKS:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/index.html>

World Health Organization (WHO), <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC),
<https://www.osac.gov/Content/Report/99344e8b-14f5-484a-9cd3-17e37efd1f46>

U.S. State Department:

<https://travel.state.gov/content/travel/en/traveladvisories/ea/covid-19-information.html>

Up to date information: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

Products with EPA-approved emerging viral pathogens claims

<https://www.americanchemistry.com/Novel-Coronavirus-Fighting-Products-List.pdf>

COVID-19 leave policies:

https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/guidance-business-response.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Fspecific-groups%2Fguidance-business-response.html

COVID-19 symptoms: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/symptoms.html>

Disposable facemasks: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/pdfs/UnderstandDifferenceInfographic-508.pdf>

Preventing the Spread of COVID-19 if someone is sick:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/about/steps-when-sick.html>