

Public Health Order 2020-17 FAQ

How is this order different from the previous order?

The protocols are identical to the five previous orders, and are set to expire at 11:59 p.m. on Jan. 19, 2021, unless otherwise extended, rescinded, or modified. The mask requirement for both the City and County is extended through Jan. 19 with these Orders.

When does this order take effect?

This order is effective beginning at 12 a.m. on Dec. 23, 2020.

When will this order expire?

This order will expire at 11:59 p.m. on Jan. 19, 2021, unless extended, rescinded or modified prior to such expiration.

What are the overall COVID-19 protocols?

- Face masks must be worn by those over the age of 10 when social distancing cannot be maintained. This applies to both within Columbia city limits and within Boone County.
- Maintain social distance from those outside your household at all times.
- To increase safety and maximize social distancing within the establishment, all businesses are strongly encouraged to operate at a capacity less than otherwise permitted. Businesses are also encouraged to provide services remotely or in a manner maximizing social distancing such as curbside, pickup, delivery, etc.
- Entertainment venues, bars, and restaurants serving alcohol must close by 10:30 p.m.
- Restaurants and bars must maintain social distancing between tables. No more than 10 people may be seated at a table. Patrons must be seated at all times; the exceptions are when entering/exiting the business or visiting a restroom facility. When not seated, patrons must wear a face mask.
- Sporting events are limited to 100 spectators or less. Athletes must remain in stable groups of 50.
- Any large group gathering or event held at a business or institution open to the public is limited to 50% occupancy or 100 people, whichever is less. This includes events in hotels, conference/event centers, places of worship, etc.
- All public and private gatherings not described within the Orders are limited to 20 people or fewer. Face masks must be worn and social distancing maintained at all times at all gatherings.

What restrictions do bars and restaurants have?

Restaurants and bars serving alcohol shall close no later than 10:30 p.m. Restaurants that do not serve alcohol are not required to close at 10:30 p.m. Restaurants and bars serving alcohol may conduct curbside pickup and delivery of food items after 10:30 p.m. All such venues are permitted to operate with no occupancy limitations; provided, however, groups of patrons shall

be limited to a maximum of ten (10) persons per table and social distancing requirements between tables/groups of patrons are observed.

With the exception of carry-out services, there shall be no standing bar, counter or buffet service. All patrons are required to be seated at all times when not entering/exiting the business or visiting a restroom. A face mask must be worn at establishments inside Columbia and within Boone County any time patrons are not seated.

What are the restrictions at entertainment venues?

Entertainment venues are required to close at 10:30 p.m. Entertainment venues can continue to operate with 100 people or less, provided an operational plan has been submitted to PHHS. In addition, they must meet the following requirements:

- Dance floors at entertainment venues shall be closed for dancing. Owners may repurpose the dance floor for table seating or other authorized uses if approved by PHHS in an Operational Plan.
- All food and beverage at an entertainment venue must be consumed while seated.
- Table seating shall be limited to a maximum of ten (10) people per table. Tables must be socially distanced.
- Any person at an entertainment venue who is not seated must comply with Face Mask Requirements.

What are the restrictions for gatherings?

All public and private gatherings not described within this Order are limited to 20 people or less. Social distancing and face mask requirements must be observed at all gatherings. Any large group gathering or event held at a business or institution open to the public is limited to 50% occupancy or 100 people, whichever is less. This includes events in hotels, conference/event centers, places of worship, etc.

What defines a gathering?

A gathering is a group of people from different households coming together for a specific purpose. Under this Order, any gathering that is held outside of a place of business (i.e. in a private residence, in a park, in an unstaffed event space, etc.) is subject to the gathering limitations as specified in Section 1.14 of the Order.

As an example, if you would like to host a birthday party for your friend at the neighborhood park and you plan on inviting more than 20 individuals, you will need to submit an operational plan for approval by PHHS. However, no plan would need to be submitted if you were to have 20 or less total people attend the party, or if you planned to host the party in a staffed event space.

Regardless of where the gathering is held or how many people are in attendance, social distancing and masking requirements must be maintained at all times.

What are large gatherings?

According to the CDC, examples of large events and mass gatherings include conferences, festivals, parades, concerts, sporting events, weddings and other types of assemblies.

What defines an event center?

An event center is a large indoor space which the owner or operator allows to be utilized for occasional events held by individuals or organizations. The owner or operator of an event center is required to ensure the capacity limitations in the health order are not exceeded and that social distancing and masking requirements are maintained by organizers and participants of any event using the event center. These requirements are detailed in the Health Order under Sections 1.03, 1.04 and 1.05.

What if I have an event planned that is over 20 individuals?

If an event is planned that is **not** held within a place of business or institution open to the public, then the number of attendees is limited to 20 individuals. Some examples would include neighborhood block parties, fundraising events, or other social gatherings that are not held on event center property or place of business that typically holds social events.

What is an Operational Plan?

An Operational Plan describes the nature of the activity and outlines how the entity will meet social distancing requirements, disinfect high touch areas, collect information for contact tracing purposes, and otherwise take steps to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Operational Plans can be submitted to PHHS on this online form: <https://forms.gle/PxGzJzTizR2vtWui7>

Operational Plans must meet the goals of the order to limit the spread of COVID-19 and must be submitted 14 days before any special event or activity.

Approval of a plan does not guarantee that the plan will not be suspended, revoked or required to be modified by the applicant if deemed necessary.

What is the process for approving an Operational Plan?

All operational plans are submitted to PHHS. A team of public health professionals review all plans and provide feedback/ask for clarification on any areas that need more specific information. All plans are reviewed to ensure that all health and safety requirements will be met. Approval of a plan does not guarantee that the plan will not be suspended, revoked or required to be modified by the applicant if deemed necessary.

What if I had already submitted or gotten approval for an Operational Plan?

All plans that have been approved by PHHS are still valid and will not require re-evaluation. All plans that have been submitted but not yet reviewed will be subject to the updated Public Health Order.

What are the limitations for sporting events?

Spectators at sporting events are limited to 100 individuals. Additionally, all athletes in sporting events must maintain stable groups of 50 individuals. Any organization seeking to exceed these restrictions may submit an Operational Plan for review and approval by PHHS. More information can be found under the Guidance tab on como.gov/coronavirus.

What if a business is not doing what they should to keep employees and customers safe?

To report noncompliance with the public health order, call 573.874.CITY (2489) or email City@CoMo.gov.

Why are businesses being encouraged to further reduce their occupancy?

While this order does not change occupancy for all businesses, we are imploring every sector of our community to do all they can to help lower transmission rates in Boone County. All business establishments are strongly encouraged to operate at a capacity less than otherwise permitted to allow for more social distancing within the establishment. Businesses are also encouraged to provide services remotely or in a manner maximizing social distancing such as curbside, pickup, delivery, etc.

How will this order be enforced?

Enforcement will be based on findings of routine inspections and following up on complaints. Failure to comply with this order is punishable by fine, imprisonment or both.

Additionally, bars, restaurants and other food establishments that do not comply with the Orders are considered to be in violation of the food code and may require the establishment to discontinue operations and remain closed until an Operational Plan is submitted and approved by PHHS as stated in section 1.20.

It is recommended that any person who has been convicted of a violation of the mask mandate portion of this Order be sentenced to pay a fine which does not exceed fifteen dollars (\$15.00) for an individual and one hundred dollars (\$100.00) for a business or nonprofit entity of any kind, with each violation being a separate offense.

If I'm currently working from home, should I continue doing so?

Employees who are able to work from home should continue to work from home. Special considerations should be given to employees who fall in the high-risk category.

What can I do as the customer to stay safe when visiting a business?

The best way to keep yourself and others safe is to stay at home as much as possible. This will limit your potential exposure to others and the virus that causes COVID-19. Order and pay online or over the phone when possible. Utilize contact-free delivery or curbside pickup when possible. Remember to wash your hands after touching surfaces, especially before touching your face.

I have a question that isn't covered by this FAQ. How can I get an answer?

We encourage everyone to review the Order in its entirety. If that does not resolve your question, please email Coronavirus@CoMo.gov for general questions. If you are a business with questions about operating requirements, please email BusinessGuidance@CoMo.gov.