



CIVIC/CONVENTION CENTER

A MESSAGE FROM THE MANAGER

Who would have guessed we would still be talking about the pandemic one year later?

I am so thankful to our clients who weathered the storm with us and pushed ahead with their events. They persevered despite lower attendance (and perhaps lower revenue), new technology, and a whole host of new protocols to create and enforce. I am also deeply proud of our staff who gave clients confidence to host their events with us and continued to provide great service despite uncertainty and increased duties.

On March 8, 2021, the New Braunfels City Council extended the requirement for staff and attendees to wear masks despite Texas' decision to rescind the requirements in the Texas Open Plan. City Council also increased occupancy to 100%. These decisions are in place at least through April 12, 2021.

To make our venue as safe as possible, we will continue to disinfect rooms and equipment between reservations, clean high touch areas during events, and monitor staff wellness. Hand sanitizer stations remains in place, as well as signage about the mask requirement and hygiene practices.

The rest is up to you. As the event organizer, you'll decide if you want to keep distanced layouts, perform daily health checks, limit occupancy, etc. As your event partner, we will work through them with you and ask that you share those protocols with us so we can best support you.

The purpose of this Guide is to offer options for increased safety during events. None are required by us or the State of Texas – they are completely optional and solely up to you. Some options are from the CDC and local health officials, while others are best practices from a variety of hospitality industry resources.

We are looking forward to seeing and serving you once again.

Mandi L. Scott, CTE

Civic/Convention Center Manager

This is our plan to DELIVER CLEANLINESS & SAFETY:

- Training has been provided to staff and is on-going according to established Safety Protocols and a COVID Cleaning Guide with SOPs
- Daily Health Checks with documented Safety Protocols in case of illness
- Center will deliver a clean and sanitized event space and common areas prior to your reservation and regularly apply a disinfectant to high-touch surfaces in common areas such as restrooms, door handles, water fountains, sanitizing stations, lobby furniture, etc.

March 9, 2021

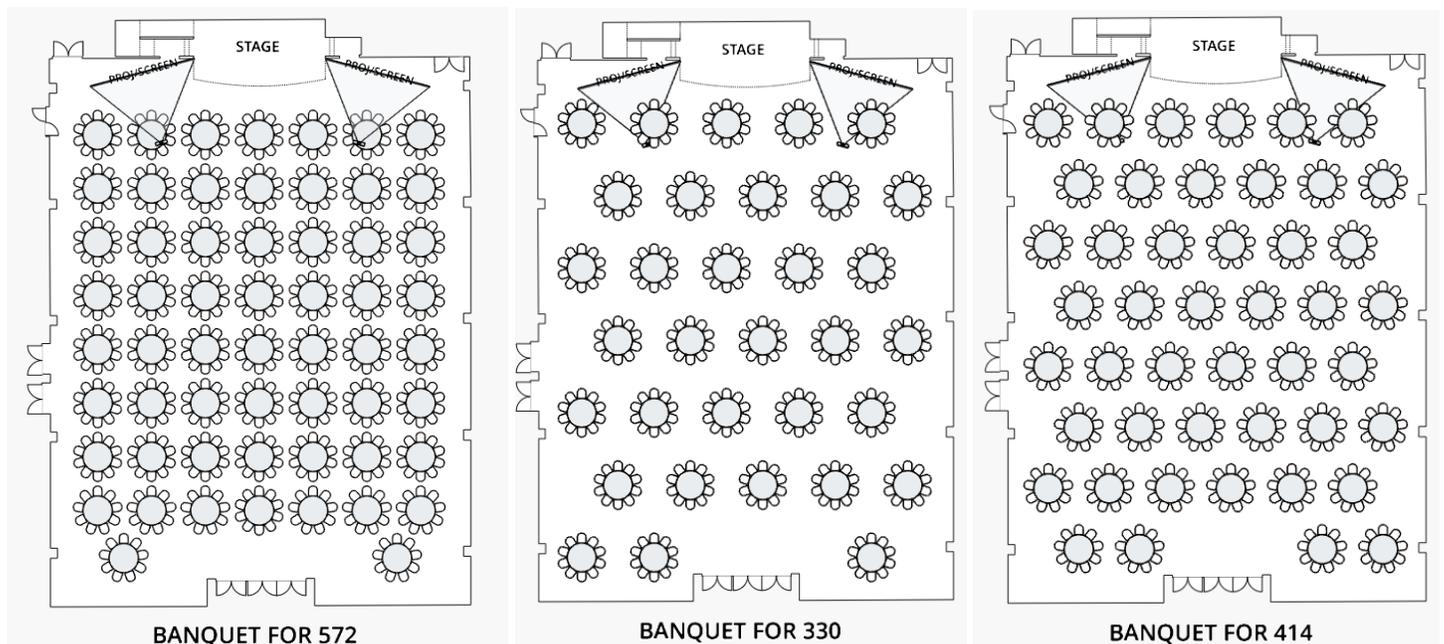
EVENT PLANNING GUIDE WITH COVID-19 CONSIDERATION

- Center will provide access to handwashing areas with soap and water as well as hand sanitizer and disinfectant wipes at various locations inside the venue
- Center does not provide food service and has suspended beverage service until further notice
- Work and break schedules are staggered
- Existing signage at the venue includes:
 - Face covering requirement
 - Good health practices to protect themselves and others including:
 - Advice to wear a mask when 6' distance cannot be maintained
 - Respiratory etiquette
 - Hand washing
 - Physical distancing
 - Direction to stay home if you are sick
 - Advice to avoid touch your eyes, nose, and mouth
 - COVID-19 symptoms
 - Guidance to local public health resources in case testing or treatment is needed
- Clients and attendees are encouraged to wear face masks when 6' distancing cannot be achieved. We ask that Clients provide masks to those that arrive without them or in an emergency for their event staff and attendees
- Center staff will wear masks when interacting with clients and attendees and when a 6' distance from others cannot be maintained. Gloves are voluntary. A limited supply of disposable masks and gloves will be available for use in emergency situations for the public
- Center will deliver a clean and sanitized rental equipment, event space and common areas using a disinfectant sprayer prior to your reservation. Center will apply a disinfectant to high-touch surfaces in common areas such as restrooms, door handles, water fountains, sanitizing stations, lobby furniture, etc. periodically during your event.
- Clients are asked to disinfect any rental equipment from outside vendors before their use
- Once audio/visual has been setup and tested with the Client prior to the event, Center staff will not enter the room during the event so the health of our staff can be maintained. Items inside the rented areas such tables, chairs, microphones, and decor shall be maintained by the Client
- For multi-day reservations, staff will attempt to disinfect areas of your rented room daily when possible. We do not want to unintentionally harm décor or your equipment that may be made of paper or other sensitive material. The disinfecting method for large areas requires the moist disinfectant to remain on the surface for 10 minutes to be effective. Specific areas inside event rooms that will be disinfected daily by staff include door handles and Center's rental equipment
- If food or beverage service was indicated as Yes in your Rental Agreement, Center staff will clean and disinfect your kitchen prior to your arrival on the first rental day. Once the reservation begins, the kitchen shall only be maintained by the Client or their Caterer
- Unused rooms and areas including storage areas will remain locked. For those events that have indicated no food or beverage will be served at their event, kitchens will be not be accessible
- Center will remain locked unless an event is scheduled
- The building will remain locked until one hour prior to each event
- Loading prior to event shall only take place through the loading dock on Castell Avenue
- If the event is the only event in the facility, doors will remain open to the Concourse to increase air flow
- Appointments can be made in advance for tours and planning meetings at 830-221-4011

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OCCUPANCY AND ROOM LAYOUTS ARE UP TO YOU:

- With no restriction by the State of Texas, our occupancy is 100%. But you can limit that number if you like
- While we cannot change our room occupancy signs, you can limit ticket sales or attendance at entry
- The Texas Open Plan (not in effect) required the following guidelines to reduce capacity and create 6' distance:
 - 10 chairs may be placed at each round or rectangle table grouping
 - 10 chairs may be grouped together in a theater or classroom style setting (rows)
 - 6' minimum aisles along walls and between theater rows of seating
 - 9' between banquet seating tables
 - 8' aisles between rows of trade show booths facing each other
- You can choose a layout closer to Building and Fire Code minimums when exits, fire extinguishers, or egress are not blocked. You can see how capacity is affected by table spacing; number of chairs per table also lowers occupancy.



RECOMMENDED SAFETY PROTOCOLS

for client's employees, volunteer, vendors, and attendees

General Health Guidance for Employees from the CDC for work and home:

- Stay home if they are sick, except to get medical care, and to learn [what to do if they are sick](#).
- Inform their supervisor if they have a sick family member at home with COVID-19 and to learn what to do [if someone in their home is sick](#).
- Wash their hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds or to use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available. Inform staff that if their hands are visibly dirty, they should use soap and water over hand sanitizer. Key times for employees to clean their hands include:
 - Before and after work shifts
 - Before and after work breaks
 - After blowing their nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before eating or preparing food
 - After putting on, touching, or removing cloth face coverings

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CDC guidelines to stay healthy at work and home continued

- Avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover their mouth and nose with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or use the inside of their elbow. Throw used tissues into no-touch trash cans and immediately wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Practice routine cleaning and disinfection of frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, and doorknobs. Dirty surfaces can be cleaned with soap and water prior to disinfection.
- Avoid using other staff's phones, desks, offices, or other work tools and equipment, when possible. Clean and disinfect them before and after use.
- Practice physical distancing by avoiding large gatherings and maintaining 6' distance from others when possible.
- Consider having all employees and contractors wear cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, employees and contractors should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks. For employers who choose to require masks, understand that young children and persons who are unable to adjust or remove face coverings should not be regarded as suitable candidates for wearing face coverings. In this case, the decision is up to the individual or their parent, guardian or attendant.

Daily Health Checks

It may be best for event staff and vendors to arrive through the Loading Dock for a Daily Health Check using a touch-free thermometer. Questions may include:

- Do you have a sore throat?
- Do you have a dry, persistent cough?
- Do you have shortness of breath or difficulty breathing?
- Do you have, or have you had, a temperature greater than 100.3F in the last 24 hours?

If a person registers a temperature above 100.3, they should notify you or your event's designated supervisor, then wait two minutes in an air-conditioned space. The supervisor should perform a retest. If two results were above 100.3, the person should leave immediately and await further instruction from the supervisor.

Additionally, if the answer is Yes to any question above, they could be directed to return home.

IF EVENT STAFF OR AN ATTENDEE BECOMES ILL AT THE VENUE, THE STAFF OR ATTENDEE SHALL:

- Notify the designated event supervisor
- Separate themselves from others. *An outdoor area is preferred*
- Seek help if needed and contact emergency services for immediate care (911)
- Apply a clean, disposable mask or tissue if unavailable immediately. *Center has a limited supply*
- Leave and seek medical attention from their healthcare professional for triage/screening
- Call Comal County health officials at 830-221-1120 to assist in triage/screening and testing
- Sick persons should avoid shared rides and taxis

IF EVENT STAFF OR ATTENDEE BECOMES ILL AT THE VENUE, THE CLIENT SHALL:

- Upon receiving a report of illness if in-person, the event supervisor shall:
 - apply a mask immediately
 - maintain a 6' distance
 - offer the individual a disposable mask if they do not have one

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IF EVENT STAFF OR ATTENDEE BECOMES ILL AT THE VENUE, THE **CLIENT SHALL:** *continued*

- Ask the person:
 - Which area of the venue did the person visit?
 - Have they come into close contact with others during their shift or event?
 - Were they in contact for more than 15 minutes?
- Determine which employees or attendees may have been exposed to the virus based on the schedule
- Inform other event workers of their possible exposure to COVID-19 at the venue - that another employee is seeking medical attention and testing for potential COVID-19 - but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).
- Stay in touch with the employee or attendee to determine if the COVID-19 test was positive

Develop Your Communication & Emergency Plan

Some items you might include are:

- Drafted attendee messaging to send prior to and after the event, asking event staff and attendees to wear masks, be aware of safety protocols and safe distancing, encouraging staff and attendees to stay home if sick, have underlying medical conditions or are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, etc.
- Develop flexible refund policies for attendees
- A list of supplies you'll have on hand for your staff, volunteers, and vendors in addition to those the Center is providing including disposable masks, gloves, sanitizer, blank paper, or a list of emergency questions, etc.
- Specific training on cleaning methods and other protocols you have chosen to implement
- Document steps to follow when someone becomes ill during the event
- If you will notify attendees of a positive COVID-19 test result from an attendee known to have attended their event. *Attendee notification is voluntary*
- If so, how will you notify them? *Consider contact tracing and drafting a sample letter in advance*
- If you will continue or suspend the event if there is a report of a recent positive COVID-19 test during your multi-day event. *Clients may consult with Comal County Health Officials to make this decision*
- Contact phone numbers for Comal County health officials: 830-221-1120 and Center staff: 830-643-9209
- Other items specific to your goals and organization

THE FOLLOWING ACTION ITEMS ARE SUGGESTED

These have been listed by the Texas Department of State Health Services and the Center for Disease Control as specific ways to reduce the risk of virus transmission

PRE-EVENT

- Review Center's **Recommended Safety Protocols**. *These will assist you in meeting all recommended Health Protocols for Employees and Event Organizers including training on general health guidelines, daily health checks and what to do if someone becomes ill during the event, as well as your Communication and Emergency Plan*
- Monitor public health data to gain insight for best practices and plan to report suspected illnesses.
- Communicate healthy practices at event entry. *This can be accomplished using Center's existing signage or creating new signage on easels, digital signage using the video walls or room projections screens, or periodic audible announcements.*
- Monitor attendance if you want to limit occupancy. *Ideas include limiting entry to a single entry and doing a physical count of attendees in and out of the room,*



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Suggested Action Items *continued*

- limiting access to the number of chairs provided in the room, physically counting guests using "clickers" or manual method while communicating current attendance with your staff at each entry, holding guests in the concourse or outside prior to room or venue entry, or other method*
- Alternate food and beverage service ideas include:
 - Eliminate standard buffets where food is exposed; consider boxed, covered, or plated meals*
 - If there is a buffet, have food behind a clear barrier with catering staff plating food as desired*
 - Consider individually wrapped portions and/or individual portions at "chef-manned food stations"*
 - One-way food service lines with different entry and exit points*
 - Do not allow pre-set items at tables such as condiments, flatware or food and drink items*
 - Pre-prepare items and use the kitchen for food or beverage preparation – away from the public*
 - Provide bottled water rather than water stations*
 - Use prepackaged disposable silverware*
- Ask volunteers, vendors, and attendees to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer upon entry
- Hold entry or exit doors open for people entering the building
- Disinfect any rental equipment from outside vendors before their use

OTHER OPTIONAL ACTION ITEMS TO CONSIDER

These are concepts and ideas from a variety of hospitality industry organizations and professionals to lower the risk of virus transmission

PRIOR TO, DURING & POST EVENT

- Host a Hybrid or Virtual Event for remote participation – *ask for a copy of our Virtual Event Guide*
- When advertising, use images that show our large space (not crowded photos) – *ask us how we can help*
- Use clear barriers at event check-in or to break up large gatherings – *ask us how we can help*
- When thinking about your room layout, consider more "mix and mingle" type layouts using cocktail tables and standing-only area
- We can remove our soft/porous lobby furniture and avoid using drapery since these items are not easy to sanitize and encourage group gatherings - *let us know if you're interested in this*
- Use outdoor areas as approved by Center to spread out vendors or merchandise sales – *ask us for locations*
- Split up your large attendance into separate rooms – live or recorded images from one room can be shared to all rooms
- When the Entire Facility is rented, use the larger room to spread seating out more, and the smaller room for seating closer together so that attendees have a choice of spacing
- For large events, consider Regional meetings happening simultaneously where speakers are at one location and all other locations are virtual with everyone from that region sitting in a meeting room
- In the event you are contact tracing, consider a plan for it. *Ideas include capturing registration information, a sign-sheet with a required phone or email, pre-event electronic survey, or other method*
- Survey attendees before the event to understand what will make them feel safe. Capturing attendee data through these will assist in contact tracing if needed
- Send a post-event survey to attendees and volunteers to ask about their experience, understand what went right and wrong and determine if anyone feels flu-like symptoms to use for contact tracing if needed



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Other Optional Action Items *continued*

- Arranging for Local Vendors and Keynote Speakers can help reduce required travel. A list of New Braunfels vendors is available on our website, as well as a link to the City of New Braunfels' Speaker Request Form
- Do a venue/event risk assessment with us to identify ways to reduce 'touching and' shared surfaces; also identify high touch or crowded areas that should be closely monitored
- Advance or online ticketing/payment can produce a touch-free event check-in technology with programs such as Eventbrite, etc. using ticket scanners
- Not receiving payment at the event or using a contactless credit card payment device could be helpful
- Consider not providing single-use programs or agendas and use digital programs instead that can be displayed on our projection screens
- Meeting materials and name badges could be mailed to attendees prior to the meeting
- If possible, stagger registration and event times to manage the demand at event entry
- For trade shows, consider assigning move-in times to reduce occupancy at the loading dock
- You might offer more networking time, with longer breaks or intermission so people aren't rushed to the restroom or back to the room, creating lines
- When cleaning a shared microphone between speakers with disinfectant wipes, try using them well in advance so the smell isn't strong for the presenter
- When trying to build attendance, perhaps show how many other people are already doing it (they'll feel comfortable that they're not alone): "over 100 people are already registered!"
- It's okay to say, "I Don't Know." This is new to everyone!
- Engage your vendors as part of your planning team – they will likely have some great ideas
- Be compassionate – every attendee may feel differently about the health risk of being in public
- Overcommunication can help attendees feel you're prepared and be more comfortable attending your event
- If you don't want to move forward with the event, but have a company event or personal celebration coming up, consider using your reservation for one of those
- To keep attendees from cancelling, find something extra to throw in at no charge such as virtual access, discount to the next event, or a special take-away/gift
- Consider linen rental for Center tables as they often worn from heavy use – they may appear unclean to guests
- For large events, and especially trade shows, consider wider aisles, instruct one-way foot traffic, or direct attendees through assigned doors and aisles to maintain separation
- Consider plans for an onsite health professional, especially if you are planning to monitor attendee temperatures
- In breakouts, if possible, rotate speakers through rooms rather than moving attendees
- Consider screening attendees as they enter to ensure they're not experiencing COVID-19 symptoms
- Pulsing Entries might help to avoid overcrowding or congregating in lobbies and concourse: use volunteers to keep people waiting outside until the registration/check-in area inside has dwindled in number
- Pulsing Exits might also avoid overcrowding or congregating in lobbies and concourse: release attendees at tables slowly from the back to front or by table
- Think about having multiple places for attendees to check-in with physical spacing
- Encourage attendees to use recycle bins in venue; if food is served in individual containers for example, the result is much larger volume in regular trash cans, but containers can easily be recycled
- Share your best practices with us and others. Together we can limit the spread of COVID-19!

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ONLINE RESOURCES TO ASSIST YOU IN PLANNING YOUR EVENT

[Open Texas Plan Recommended Employer & Event Organizer Protocols](#)

[Open Texas Plan Restaurant Recommendations](#)

[FAQ'S and Tips for Event Planners from the CDC](#)

[Comal County Public Health Department](#)

[City of New Braunfels – COVID Update page](#)

[Civic/Convention Center – CONNECT page with Local Vendors & Speaker Request Form](#)

[Convention & Visitors Bureau – Meeting Planner Guide](#)