



Interim Guidance for Fall-Related Events (September 14, 2020)

Guidelines for Fall Events: Any scenario in which people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. This includes fall-related events in North Carolina such as outdoor activities at farms, pumpkin patches, haunted houses/trails, and agritourism events. Organizers of fall-related events should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission. The guidance below will help organizers reduce the spread of COVID-19 in their communities.

Please note that some of the traditional types of fall-related events and activities are closed per Executive Order No. 163 based on high risk of exposure and spread of COVID-19. Specifically, Section 8 of Executive Order No. 163 provides orders of closures for entertainment facilities, including but not limited to movie theaters, amusement parks, gaming facilities, and tour buses, tour trains, or other scenic transportation. In addition, the Executive Order provides that entertainment areas – which includes any amusement device - within open establishments must be closed.

Based on Executive Order 163, the following activities must remain closed through Phase 2.5:

Indoor Haunted Houses	Train Rides (conducted for amusement purposes only)	Mechanical or Structural Rides and Mechanically Operated Carousels
Fair-Type Games and Gaming Activities	Hayrides (conducted for amusement purposes only)	

Further, Section 8 of Executive Order No. 163 states that events such as parades, fairs, and festivals must adhere to the Mass Gatherings limits

This guidance covers the following topics:

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations
- Communications and Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

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[Social distancing](#) is an important tool to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing (“physical distancing”) means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms’ length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings. Phase 2.5 includes several requirements and recommendations to support social distancing in spaces where the public may gather.

Fall-related events are **required** to:

- Limit occupancy as follows:
 - For pumpkin patches, apple orchards, animal attractions, and retail areas: limit to 50% of stated fire capacity or 12 people per 1,000 square feet if there is not a fire code number AND ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6-foot separation between groups other than those in their household.
 - For corn mazes or outdoor haunted trails, people cannot cluster in groups larger than the current mass gathering limit. Monitor to allow people in as others exit during peak times AND ensure sufficient social distancing with at least 6-foot separation between groups other than those in their household.
 - All other group activities such as tours, receptions or parties are subject to the mass gathering limits.
- Post the reduced “Emergency Maximum Capacity” in a conspicuous place. [Sign templates](#) are available in English and Spanish on NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- Post signage at the main entrance that reminds people to stay 6 feet apart.
 - [NC DHHS Know Your Ws](#) provides [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Combined English and Spanish](#) versions of the “Wait” flyer.
- Clearly provide 6 feet floor markings in waiting areas, animal viewing areas, check-out lines, and other areas where people may congregate or wait.
- Follow the [DHHS Interim Guidance for Restaurants](#) for reopening restaurants or concession stands. Bars must remain closed.

It is recommended that fall-related events:

- Close giant slides, bounce houses, and jumping pillows to reduce opportunities for people to gather and come in close contact with each other. If open, ensure individuals wait at least 6 ft apart before their turn and ensure proper cleaning and disinfection.
- Utilize self-check-in or place barrier/partition between ticket/check in areas and customers.
- Clearly mark designated entry and exit points to the extent possible.
- Close all common seating areas, lounge areas, and other areas that promote individuals gathering in groups.
- Develop reservation times to the extent possible to help limit wait times and lines.
- Develop and use systems that allow for online, email, or phone transactions.
- Discontinue use of drinking directly from water fountains and provide disposable cups or labeled water bottles for individuals when using any water fountains. Touchless water filling stations may be used.

Cloth Face Coverings

There is growing evidence that wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially because people may be infected with the virus and not know it.

Fall-related events are **required** to:

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- Have all employees wear a face covering when they are or may be within six (6) feet of another person, unless the worker states that an exception applies.
- Have all patrons wear a face covering when they are inside the establishment, unless customer states that an exception applies.
- Visit NC DHHS [COVID-19 response site](#) for more information about the face covering [guidance](#) and access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

It is recommended that fall-related events:

- Provide cloth face coverings for employees and ask them to properly launder using hot water and a high heat dryer between uses.
- Provide disposable face coverings to customers to wear while in the establishment.

Cleaning and Hygiene

Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of transmission.

Fall-related events are **required** to:

- Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for staff and individuals. Require handwashing of staff immediately upon reporting to work, after contact with individuals, after performing cleaning and disinfecting activities, and frequently throughout the day.
- Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance, and any other areas throughout premises as needed.
- Perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., doors, doorknobs, rails, lockers, dressing areas, front counter) with an [EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2](#) (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increase disinfection during peak times or high customer density times.

It is recommended that fall-related events:

- Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at all sinks.
- Remove soft surfaces and items difficult to disinfect in areas to the extent possible.
- Provide tissues for proper cough and sneeze hygiene.

Monitoring for Symptoms

Conducting regular screening for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Staff should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home. More information on [how to monitor for symptoms](#) is available from the CDC.

Fall-related events are **required** to:

- Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop. Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home or to their healthcare provider.

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- Conduct daily [symptom](#) screening (standard interview questionnaire [English](#) | [Spanish](#)) of employees at entrance to workplace with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to [isolate](#).
- Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who are symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as [Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms](#) flyers (English - [Color](#), [Black & White](#); Spanish - [Color](#), [Black & White](#)).

It is recommended that fall-related events:

- Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:
 - Requiring employees to staying home if sick.
 - Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
 - Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:
 - No fever for at least 24 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND
 - Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
 - At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms

***A test-based strategy is no longer recommended to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.**
- [Per CDC guidelines](#), if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.
- Require symptomatic employees to wear masks until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedure should be implemented by designated personnel following [CDC guidelines](#) once sick employee leaves.
- Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463)

Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Information on who is at higher risk for severe disease is available from the [CDC](#) and [NCDHHS](#).

It is recommended that fall-related events:

- Designate a specific time for persons at higher risk to access the event, activity, or facility without the general population (such as early morning, or late afternoon).
- Enable staff to self-identify as high risk for severe disease and reassign work to minimize their contact with customers and other employees.

Combatting Misinformation

Help ensure that the information your staff is getting is coming directly from reliable resources. Use resources from a trusted source like the [CDC](#) or [NCDHHS](#) to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

It is recommended that fall-related events:

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- ❑ Provide workers with education about COVID-19 strategies, using methods like videos, webinars, or FAQs. Some reliable sources include [NC DHHS COVID-19](#), [Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates](#), [NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources](#)
- ❑ Promote informational helplines like 211 and Hope4NC and other Wellness Resources.
- ❑ Put up signs and posters, such as those found [Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash](#) and those found [Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19](#).

Water and Ventilation Systems

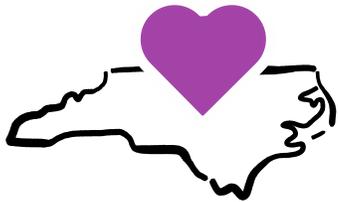
Reduced use of water and ventilations systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other bacteria from stagnant or standing water.

Before opening, it is recommended that fall-related events:

- ❑ Follow the CDC's [Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown](#) or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
- ❑ Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

Additional Resources

- NC DHHS: [North Carolina COVID-19](#)
- CDC: [Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers](#)
- CDC: [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#)
- CDC: [Reopening Guidance](#)
- EPA: [Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2](#)
- FDA: [Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)
- HHS/OSHA: [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#)
- U.S. Department of Homeland Security: [Guidance on the Essential Critical Infrastructure Workforce](#)



#StayStrongNC

**Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.**

Learn more at nc.gov/covid19.



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