

OSU Extension Planning Guide for In-person Meetings and Events

As we return to in-person Extension activities, the following principles will be used:

- The health and safety of Ohio communities is our priority.
- Transparency is essential – clear expectations must be communicated in a timely manner.
- Be flexible – continue to provide options, including virtual ones, for participation to provide stakeholders and families with a safe environment given their individual circumstances, while maintaining inclusivity and flexibility for all.

We know that concerns about the spread of coronavirus have changed how people interact with each other. Because of this, those who organize meetings and events have a responsibility to take into account the health and safety of attendees. This document provides guidance for how to lead and conduct OSU Extension meetings and events.

General Considerations

As you re-start in-person Extension activities, the following considerations will assist with your planning:

- **Time**
 - Consider limiting the length of meetings and events, particularly those that take place indoors, and how long people will be in contact. Sustained contact provides an increased opportunity for virus transmission.
- **Place**
 - Consider the guidance from local county health departments regarding locations where you will meet, as well as where attendees may be coming from.
- **People**
 - Consider the overall number of attendees and whether this includes individuals, including other individuals in their home, who may be at a higher risk of serious illness if they develop COVID-19. The CDC cautions that gatherings with more than 250 people have a higher risk of coronavirus transmission and the State of Ohio has placed limitations on the size of gatherings.
- **Space**
 - Consider hosting meetings and activities outdoors when possible. Continue to offer options for virtual engagement when individuals request it.
 - Consider the types of interactions that will occur at the event and if contact between attendees can be limited.
 - Maintain 6 feet of distance between individuals whenever feasible.
 - Masks are an effective means of preventing transmission from people who feel fine, but are not showing symptoms and are able to infect others.
 - **We expect face masks to be worn indoors or outdoors during the session.**



Meeting Planning

Meeting Notices

In advance of meetings, it is important to send notices of meetings to clientele and partners that outline expectations for participation. The notice should include the following information:

- State that individuals cannot attend the meeting if they or anyone living in their household is experiencing any of the following symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath and provide an option for individuals to participate virtually.
- Note that physical distancing will be practiced by maintaining 6-foot distance between people.
- We expect face masks will be properly worn during the meeting.
- Encourage participants to bring their own snacks and drinks for the meeting.

Attendance

Take attendance and contact information for those present at the meeting or event by checking off names on a roster or writing the names of any who were not registered. Do not pass around a paper for individuals to sign or have members sign in. This attendance record must be kept in case someone attending the meeting/event contracts COVID-19 and is needed for contact tracing. Attendance records must be kept for at least six months beyond the date of the meeting/event.

Quarantine and Isolation

Any individual (e.g., member, club leader) who develops symptoms of COVID-19, must immediately isolate, seek medical care, and take the following steps:

- Contact the local health district about suspected cases or exposures.
 - Work with local health department to identify potentially infected or exposed individuals to help facilitate effective contact tracing.
- Notify your county OSU Extension professional, who will notify the state Extension office.
 - County office will notify participants per standard protocol for notification of communicable diseases.
 - If the individual who developed symptoms attended an OSU Extension meeting or activity, any ongoing gathering of the longer-term group should stop all in-person activities for 14-days following the exposure, meet only virtually, and notify members of the group to monitor for symptoms.
 - The state Extension office will follow university reporting and contact tracing protocols.

Any individual who or learns he or she has been exposed to an individual (e.g., family member, friend) with COVID-19, must immediately quarantine for 14 days and:

- Attend any ongoing activities virtually while in quarantine.
- Notify your county OSU Extension professional, who will notify the state Extension office.
 - County office will notify individuals per standard protocol for notification of communicable diseases.
 - The state Extension office will follow university reporting protocols.



Physical Space Design

Plan ahead – there are many factors to consider regarding the need for 6-foot physical distancing and the number of people a gathering space can accommodate. Consider the following when choosing meeting/event spaces:

- Can the event take place outside? Open air appears to reduce the risk of spreading airborne illness.
- What is the normal maximum occupancy of the space?
 - To provide 6 feet of physical distance between individuals, the occupancy of meeting spaces must be decreased by half. For example, a space with a posted maximum occupancy of 100 people would need to be adjusted to a maximum of 50 people.
 - If you need to estimate the capacity of a space, allow 30 square feet per person.
- Is there access to a clean restroom for participants, including soap and water for washing hands?
- Set up tables and chairs to provide 6-foot physical distancing; and the moving of chairs is discouraged.
 - If seating is fixed, mark those seats that are off limits (for example, use tape to indicate “don’t sit here” spaces in community rooms or grandstand seating).
- Modified layouts can help attendees keep their distance from others.

Educational Materials

Provide participants with their own copies of educational materials. This means that if you plan to use an activity that requires passing around an item, you should revise the activity. For example, the item should be big enough to be viewed from a distance, or a sample (or picture) will need to be available for each participant.

Food and Drinks at Meetings

Encourage each attendee to bring his or her own drinks and snacks instead of providing shared options at meetings. Potlucks and buffets are highly discouraged.

PPE (Personal Protective Equipment)

Face Masks

Face masks are expected to be worn at all OSU Extension in-person meetings and events. Face masks refer to disposable procedure masks or cloth face coverings, not surgical or N-95 respirators. They should fit snugly around the mouth and nose and be worn appropriately to be effective. Remember – it is possible to have coronavirus but not exhibit any of the typical symptoms and transmit the virus to others. Wearing a face mask is a measure to protect others. Face masks are required at events.

Cloth Face Covering Patterns

There are many ways in which you can make a cloth face covering. The CDC offers several different options to make a cloth mask including a sewn mask, a quick-cut t-shirt mask, and a bandana cloth face covering. These patterns can be found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/how-to-make-cloth-face-covering.html>



Sanitizing Stations and Schedules

All entrance/exit door handles for the meeting location and the doors handles of any accessible restrooms and any other high-touch surfaces should be cleaned and disinfected with an EPA-registered cleaner-disinfectant before and after the meeting.

All tables and chairs should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. Before and after will be defined by the meeting or event:

- Meeting example – if you have a two-hour meeting and individuals sit at the same table and chair for the duration, before is prior to the start of the meeting, after is after the conclusion of the meeting.

If you are unable to find an EPA-registered cleaner-disinfectant, the following bleach solutions may be used:

- 5 tablespoons (1/3 cup) bleach per gallon of water
- **OR** 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Additional tips for cleaning and disinfecting tables and chairs include:

- Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection and confirm the product is not past its expiration date.
 - Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection.
- Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation.
- Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser.
- Wear disposable gloves when handling bleach solutions.
 - Use nitrile gloves rather than latex, as some people have a latex allergy.
- Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute.
- Bleach solutions will be effective for disinfection up to 24 hours.
- Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used.

Practice Good Hygiene

- Wash your hands often, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after touching any frequently used item or surface.
- Avoid touching your face or others in attendance.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of your elbow.
- Provide tissues and make sure there is a wastebasket to dispose of used tissues.
- Provide hand sanitizer that contains at least 70% alcohol at a registration table or at a table near the entrance to the meeting room.

Monitor Your Health

- Be alert for symptoms: fever, cough, shortness of breath.
- Do not attend in-person activities if you or anyone living in your household is experiencing symptoms associated with the coronavirus, or any other communicable illness.
- Follow CDC/ODH guidance if symptoms develop.
- Refer to the *Quarantine and Isolation* instructions on pp. 2-3.



Signage

All in-person OSU Extension meetings and events are required to have the following signs posted. This is to provide clear communication and transparency regarding the measures that Extension is recommending to promote the safety of the community.

Sign	Post Location	Available at
OSU Extension Event Guidelines	Entry and exit doors Registration tables Throughout the space if feasible	OSU UniPrint https://uniprint.osu.edu/covid-19-signage CDC https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc
Sanitizing Stations	At each activity/station	
Hand Washing Poster	Entry to restrooms Above restroom sinks	
Watch Your Step! poster and Where to Stand templates	Entry and exit doors Registration tables Throughout the space if feasible	
How COVID-19 Spreads	Entry and exit doors	

References:

- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html
- www.psav.com/what-we-do/industry-advocacy/meetSAFE
- www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2
- www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/event-planners-and-attendees-faq.html
- www.cvent.com/en/blog/hospitality/safe-meetings-events
- www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/coronavirus-taking-precautions-with-food-at-work.aspx
- www.gensler.com/research-insight/blog/10-considerations-for-transitioning-back-to-work-in-a-post
- www.workdesign.com/2020/04/a-common-sense-guide-for-the-return-to-the-office/

-as of March 2021

