



# Best Practices to Prevent COVID-19 Guidance for Hosting Halloween Events

For the latest version of this guidance, please check [ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/bestpractices](https://ph.lacounty.gov/acd/ncorona2019/bestpractices)

## Updates:

10/7/2021: Updated to discourage the use of bounce houses and other enclosed inflatables for Halloween celebrations.

This guide has suggestions about how to reduce the risk of COVID-19 while hosting Halloween events. Luckily, many Halloween activities can be held outside and mask wearing is part of the holiday, but there are still risks given the ongoing community transmission of COVID-19 and the widespread presence of the very infectious Delta variant.

Per published reports, factors that increase the risk of infection, including transmission to people more than 6 feet away, include:

- **Enclosed spaces with inadequate ventilation or air handling** that allow for build-up of exhaled respiratory fluids, especially very fine droplets and aerosol particles, in the air space.
- **Increased exhalation of respiratory fluids** that can occur when an infectious person is engaged in physical exertion or raises their voice (e.g., exercising, shouting, singing).
- **Prolonged exposure** to these conditions.

In general, outdoor Halloween activities where there is ample space and ventilation, such as outdoor costume parties, pumpkin patch visits, outdoor ghost tours, or hayrides are safer than crowded indoor events such as haunted houses tours, indoor costume parties, or spooky indoor performances.

Below is a summary of requirements and best practices for businesses and venues that host Halloween events to enhance safety for their workers, customers, and communities, and lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission within their establishments. In addition to this information, please remember:

- Businesses and venues that host Mega Events (indoor events with more than 1,000 attendees or outdoor events with more than 10,000 attendees) must follow the [Health Officer Order](#) requirements for Mega Events.
- Businesses and venues that serve food and beverages should follow DPH Best Practice Guidance for [Food and Beverage Services](#). Nightclubs, bars, lounges, breweries, wineries and distilleries must additionally follow the [Health Officer requirements](#) for these businesses.

## Follow mask rules for employees and attendees

- ✓ **Follow mask rules for the employees and attendees:** All persons attending indoor and outdoor Mega Events are required to bring and wear masks, regardless of vaccination status, except while **actively** eating and drinking in designated areas. Attendees must also wear masks at outdoor events when they enter indoor areas, such as restrooms, restaurants, retail



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shops, concourses, or concession stands, even if the event is not large enough to be considered a Mega Event.

- ✓ **Costume masks are not a substitute for a COVID-19 face mask.** Be vigilant about customers wearing masks and, if employees are dressed in costume, consider ways to make their face mask part of their costume. Costume masks should not be worn over a face mask as it may make breathing more difficult.
- **Use your online outlets and [signage](#) at the entry to your business** to explain your Halloween business COVID-19 policies, including the requirement that everyone must wear a facemask mask (not costume mask) while indoors on your premises and the message that visitors must not enter the premises if sick or symptomatic.

## Screen attendees

- ✓ **Screen guests, staff, performers, and crew for symptoms<sup>1</sup>** before they attend the event and ask them not to attend if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are under isolation or quarantine orders.
- ✓ **Consider requiring all guests to be either fully vaccinated<sup>2</sup>** against COVID-19 or to have had a negative COVID-19 test within 72 hours of attending your indoor event.
- ✓ **Post [signage](#)** to remind everyone who enters your establishment (including customers, vendors and delivery people) that they should NOT enter if they have symptoms of COVID-19 or if they are under isolation or quarantine orders.

## Reduce crowding

- ✓ **Implement policies and practices that support physical distancing:** Whenever possible, take steps to reduce crowding and enable employees and customers to physically distance from each other – generally at least 6 feet of distance (about 2 arm lengths) is recommended, although this is not a guarantee of safety, especially in enclosed or poorly ventilated spaces.
- ✓ **Avoid the use of attractions such as bounce houses** and other enclosed inflatables. Bounce houses increase the likelihood of crowding, make it difficult for children to keep their masks on, and allow for the build-up of exhaled particles in an enclosed area.
- ✓ **Establish procedures to prevent crowding** among persons waiting to enter or exit your event and designate staff to help attendees move through the event space.

<sup>1</sup> Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after being exposed to the virus and may include: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath/difficulty breathing, new loss of taste or smell, fatigue, runny or stuffy nose, muscle or body aches, headache, sore throat, nausea or vomiting, or diarrhea. This list does not include all possible symptoms of COVID-19. Some people with COVID-19 never get symptoms. Visit [ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare](https://ph.lacounty.gov/covidcare) to learn more about what to do if you are sick.

<sup>2</sup> You are considered fully vaccinated against COVID-19 two (2) weeks after: the second dose of a Pfizer or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, a single dose of Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine or you finished the series of a COVID-19 vaccine that has been listed for emergency use by the World Health Organization. See [fully vaccinated](#) web page for more information. If it is less than 2 weeks after your second or only dose, you do not have enough protection from the COVID-19 virus. It takes time for your body to build immunity. Continue to take prevention steps until 2 weeks have passed.

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- ✓ Use tape, signs, or other visual cues such as decals or colored tape on the floor, placed six feet apart, to guide customers about where to stand to avoid crowding and to encourage distancing where lines may form.
- ✓ Consider using strategies such as timed ticketing for Halloween attractions such as haunted houses, ghost tours, and hayrides, or limit your venue capacity if you are hosting a Halloween party or performance.
- ✓ If possible, maintain or expand your outdoor capacity to enable more guests to eat and socialize outside where ventilation is better.

### Serving food and beverages

- ✓ Follow [DPH Food and Beverage Service recommendations](#) if you serve food or beverages at your event.
- ✓ **Dining outdoors is best**, especially for customers who are not fully vaccinated against COVID-19.
- ✓ **If dining indoors**, it is recommended that you reserve indoor spaces as much as possible for persons that provide verification that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19. Seat those who are not verified as being fully vaccinated in an outdoor service area whenever possible.
- ✓ Have a separate area in your venue for drinking and dining to minimize mixing of people who are wearing masks continuously and those who are removing their masks while they are actively eating or drinking. Diners must be sitting or standing in a stationary place or in their ticketed seat while eating or drinking.
- ✓ **If handing out candy or party favors**, set up a station with individually packaged bags so customers can grab and go. If possible, offer several stations where customers can pick up candy to reduce crowding.

### Hosting a safe trick-or-treat

- ✓ Some businesses, such as indoor malls and downtown shopping districts like to host trick-or-treat events to encourage families to visit. **If possible, set up trick-or-treat events outside.**
- ✓ Treats should be limited to commercially packaged non-perishable treats.
- ✓ Set up a station with individually packaged bags so trick-or-treaters can grab and go at each stop. If possible, offer several stations at your site where trick-or-treaters can pick up candy to reduce crowding.
- ✓ If staff help give out treats, make sure they wear a face mask, even if outside.
- ✓ Help reduce crowding by providing visual guides, so trick-or-treaters know how to move through your station and to their next destination.

### Support handwashing

- ✓ Offer hand sanitizer at the entry of your facility with signage promoting use.

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- ✓ Place handwashing stations or hand sanitizer at entry and outside communal bathrooms with signage promoting use. Employees handling food are required to wash their hands as outlined in the CRFC.
- ✓ Posters in multiple languages that [remind people to wash or sanitize their hands](#) and show [how to wash their hands](#) are available in the [signage section](#) of the [Best Practices for Businesses and Employers](#) webpage.

## Ventilate

- ✓ If your event is held indoors, make sure your building's HVAC system is in good, working order.
- ✓ **Maximize ventilation.** Options include installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building's air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.
- ✓ When weather and working conditions allow, increase fresh outdoor air by opening windows and doors. Consider using fans to increase the effectiveness of open windows – position window fans to blow air outward, not inward.
- ✓ Decrease occupancy in areas where outdoor ventilation cannot be increased. Consider use of carbon dioxide monitors to monitor the effectiveness of your ventilation in more densely occupied indoor spaces.
- ✓ If your event is held indoors and has performers that will generate aerosols (such as singers or musicians playing wind or brass instruments) take the following steps:
  - ✓ Assess the direction of the air flow in the room to determine where the air is exiting the room. In buildings with HVAC systems, this will be the air-return vents; if doors or windows are open, check the direction that the air is flowing.
  - ✓ During performances (including rehearsals), position aerosol-generating performers closer to the locations where the air is exiting the room.
- ✓ Keep your background music volume low so that customers and employees do not have to talk loudly to be heard.
- ✓ See State [Interim guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#).

## Communicate

- ✓ Post [signage](#) so that customers who are entering your venue are aware of your Halloween COVID-19 safety policies, including the requirement that all customers must wear a face mask while indoors except when actively eating and drinking.
- ✓ Assign staff to remind attendees that they must wear a face mask at all times when indoors or in all areas of the venue when attending an outdoor Mega Event, except when they are actively eating or drinking, as specified above.

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- ✓ Use advanced registration as much as possible for your event so you know how many people will attend. Advanced registration can also help you to convey your COVID-19 safety plans to guests before they attend.
- ✓ Use your online platforms to communicate your Halloween COVID-19 safety policies to the public, including the requirement that all attendees must wear a face mask while indoors or when attending an outdoor Mega Event.

