

Organising COVID Smart events



Event organisers are responsible for hosting a COVID Smart Event. It is a requirement that all event organisers in the ACT have a COVID Safety plan in place which identifies and seeks to minimise the risks posed by COVID-19.

A COVID Safety plan must be in writing and available to be produced on request by compliance and enforcement officers.

This COVID Smart Event guidance document is intended to provide supporting guidance to event organisers and is not intended to be a complete or comprehensive guide to the coordination and delivery of events in the ACT. By addressing the items outlined in the checklist (Attachment A), events will be satisfying the requirements under the Public Health Direction for a COVID Safety Plan.

Calculating numbers at events

The number of attendees is calculated based on the total number of persons attending per day.

For example:

- » a multi-day event that is held over 3 days at 500 attendees per day will be considered as an event of 500 attendees
- » a multi-session event that has 3 sessions on the same day of 500 attendees per session will be considered an event of 1,500 attendees.
- » a general entry event (for example markets, fêtes and expos) where the event has 500 attendees per hour, over 4 hours will be considered an event of 2,000 attendees.

Submitting a notification

Events of over 5,000 attendees (excluding staff and volunteers) are required to notify ACT Health and submit a COVID Safety Plan for review.

Notification can be made via this [online form](#) (available on the [COVID Smart events page](#))

Documentation required to be submitted includes:

1. Details of event, including date, time, anticipated attendance and more.
2. Event specific COVID Safety plan (you can use the COVID Safety Plan checklist at Attachment A to develop your plan).

Note: If hosting your event in a venue that is also required to have a COVID Safety Plan in place, your plan must be consistent with the venue's plan.

ACT Health requests that event organisers allow up to 3 weeks for the review process to be completed wherever possible.

If your event is straight forward, you can expect a response within 10 working days.

Your notification and submission will be reviewed, and ACT Health will contact you to confirm that the review has been completed and to work through any concerns identified.

Attachment A

COVID Smart event planning checklist

Event organisers are responsible for considering how they can implement each section of the Checklist and what measures they need to put in place to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission for patrons and staff.

Please fill out your COVID-19 risk mitigation measures in the boxes under each heading.

Core considerations for COVID Smart at events:

1. Management of attendees and key event activities
2. Physical distancing
3. Hygiene measures
4. Cleaning and ventilation
5. COVID Smart messaging
6. Manage illness on site and screening
7. COVID marshals and COVID safety officers
8. Staff and event contractors and/or vendors

Event Details

Event Name: GAMMACON Canberra 2022

Event Location: National Convention Centre

Number of attendees: Up to 7000

Date/s of Event: 23-24 July 2022

Please provide a detailed overview / agenda of your event:

We are a pop culture festival that involves pop culture themed stage acts, guests who do panels and talks, a free to play video games area, a free to play table top games area, cosplay with a cosplay competition and display, we also offer a market place for vendors to sell their wares we have artist alley which is mostly hand crafted good similar to market stalls and the expo floor which is booth style stalls mostly selling comics and pop culture merchandise.

✓ 1. Management of attendees and key event activities

Event organisers should consider their own policy for managing event attendees before and during the event. They should consider how event activities that could be considered 'high risk' due to inability to physically distance and the use of shared equipment, would be managed and the risk mitigation measures that can be put in place.

Consider your policy on cancellations to allow customers to cancel due to COVID-19 factors such as being unwell, requirement to isolate or quarantine or waiting for COVID-19 test results.

Considerations:

- » What will happen if people are sick or impacted by COVID-19, and cannot attend? Consider whether you will refund the purchase price of tickets due to COVID-19 factors?
- » Consider the demographics of the patrons expected to attend the event.
- » Consider the flow of pedestrian traffic and how to minimise the effect of potential choke points.
- » Consider how to manage activities which do not permit appropriate physical distancing and put in place additional measures to reduce transmission risk.
- » Consider activities which may result in high touch point areas (for example, amusement rides). Consider putting in place additional cleaning of high touch points and providing extra hand sanitiser for patron use during activities.

Our tickets are supplied via Moshtix and all have a clause if an attendee is displaying any COVID symptoms that they are not to attend and a refund can be obtained.

We will have free to move for our attendees with capacity limits for areas to be monitored by COVID safety officers.

All travelers coming interstate or international will be complying with the current test and isolation requirements.

We have removed 2 days of extra time in the venue and moved to a different facility since running in 2019.

We have a demographic ranging 16-60 with our majority being 20-40.



2. Physical distancing

Encourage physical distancing of 1.5 metres by marking areas where attendees may queue or congregate.

Have strategies in place to manage any large gatherings that may occur within the event site, such as at the entrance/exit points, amenities or around stall holders. If possible, set up separate exit and entry points and separate order and collection points to minimise congestion.

Considerations:

- » What is the layout of your event? What consideration has been made to encourage physical distancing? Where will you place floor markers and signage as well as other controls to promote physical distancing requirements?
- » How will your event staff encourage people to observe physical distancing of 1.5 metres?
- » How will you manage areas of potential congestion, for example ingress and egress, food/ beverage outlets, and toilet facilities?
- » Will you stagger entry and exit?

We have aisles with clear markings at the ends of capacity for each area at the entry ways at our sanitising stations.

There will be moving COVID safety officers as well as stationary to help divert traffic and lower congestion.

There will be markings on the ground for 1.5m spacing at areas with high traffic.

There is also security on hand to help if required for removal of patrons not complying.

There will be additional signage around the venue reminding patrons to physically distance themselves.

Private Security will be hired as additional measures or staffing, including the night component of the event where alcohol is served.



3. Hygiene Measures

Provide alcohol-based hand sanitiser at key points around your event site, including at the entrance. Encourage staff and attendees to utilise hand sanitiser regularly. Ensure bathrooms are well stocked with hand soap and paper towels or hand dryers.

While mask wearing requirements have eased, the Canberra community is strongly encouraged to continue to wear a face mask when entering public indoor settings, where it could be difficult to maintain appropriate physical distancing.

Event organisers should also consider what mask wearing policies they may want to implement, for both employees and attendees. This is particularly important for events that employ staff with customer-facing roles and for those that are likely to be interacting with vulnerable members of our community

Considerations:

- » At what locations around the event site will you have hygiene stations?
- » Who will be responsible for ensuring hand sanitisers are available and refilled when required and checking bathrooms are well stocked?
- » Do you have sufficient, independent hand washing facilities?
- » How will you remind patrons, staff and volunteers of the need to practice good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette?
- » Have event organisers considered mask wearing policies for staff and/or attendees?

There will be a total of 30 sanitising stations positioned at entry to the building, rooms, exhibition aisles, toilets, and cafeteria lines.

Our dedicated COVID safety officers will keep on ensuring these are refilled as required.

There will be signs around to remind patrons to practice good hand hygiene.

We will provide free disposable masks to those in attendance.

✓ 4. Cleaning and ventilation

Events should implement a cleaning plan. Consideration should be given to the frequency of cleaning and sanitising of high touchpoint surfaces (food and beverage facilities, EFT machines, door handles, tablets, chairs, bathrooms, etc). Cleaning tips and the type of sanitisers for workplaces can be found on the [Safe Work Australia website](#).

In indoor areas, encourage natural ventilation by keeping windows and doors open wherever possible.

Considerations:

- » What measures are in place for regular venue cleaning and disinfecting, particularly for high touch areas, including doors, chairs, bathrooms and toilets, handrails and food and drink facilities before, during and after the event?
- » Do you require designated staff for frequent cleaning? Is there a contracted cleaning company or will this be undertaken by existing staff? Are staff trained in infection control?
- » How will you ensure cleanliness and hygiene standards are maintained?

The National Convention Centre has contracted cleaners that are well versed in current health standards and will be regularly cleaning high contact surfaces.



5. COVID Smart messaging

Event organisers should proactively communicate COVID Smart messaging to attendees, workers and contractors that is in line with the current ACT Health advice.

If events are pre-registered or ticketed, consider communicating with attendees prior to the event the COVID Safety measures that will be in place. Encourage attendees to stay at home if they are unwell.

Place signs at entry points instructing attendees and staff not to enter the event site if they are unwell (see [Resources for businesses](#) on the [Business Hub website](#)).

Anyone experiencing symptoms of COVID-19 should be encouraged to not attend and seek testing.

Considerations:

- » How will you proactively communicate public health messaging with attendees prior to, and during the event to inform them of their safety obligations and expected covid smart behaviours during the event?
- » Who is responsible for issuing communications to stakeholders and patrons?
- » Consider how you will encourage staff not to attend work if they are unwell?

We will be emailing out a reminder 2 days before the event to all attendees to remind them if they have any symptoms to please not attend and to contact Moshtix for a refund or if a volunteer to advise they cannot participate.

Communications will come from the executive committee as well as Ashley Constable who will be the COVID Safety Manager for the weekend.

✓ 6. Manage illness on site and screening

Consider how staff and patrons will be managed if they present with symptoms of COVID-19 and ensure that all staff understand processes in place to manage attendees who present with illness.

Considerations:

- » What is your plan to manage attendees who present with illness?
- » Do staff know what to do if an event participant or staff member presents to them with symptoms?
- » How will you encourage measures that reduce risk of transmission such as wearing of masks, physical distancing and hand hygiene?
- » What advice will you provide to attendees requested to leave the event immediately if any symptoms of illness develop?

Everyone attending will be advised 48 hours prior and anyone at the door displaying symptoms will be turned away, there will also be signs to be read on way into the venue to remind all.

All staff are versed on this and will be provided with prior training.

Sign posting and floor walking COVID officers will ensure the risk of transmission is mitigated.

Anyone asked to leave will be advised to test immediately and to please contact us if return a positive result so we can email attendees.

✓ 7. COVID marshals and COVID Safety officers

Event organisers should consider whether COVID marshals and/or COVID Safety officers are needed to support the implementation of COVID Safety plans. These roles may be more relevant for larger events. It is strongly advised that security officers should not be asked to take on the role of COVID Safety marshal or COVID Safety officer if either of these roles are required.

A COVID marshal or COVID Safety officer can be a volunteer or a staff member and should be easily recognised (for example, lanyard, badge, coloured shirt, hat, hi-vis vest). They should be fully trained on the contents of the event's COVID Safety Plan.

COVID marshals and/or COVID Safety officers should be tasked with ensuring implementation of the event COVID Safety plan. This may include, encouraging physical distancing in areas prone to crowding, managing queues, monitoring and maintaining sanitiser and hand soap stock levels and providing advice and guidance to staff and volunteers.

Considerations:

- » Consider whether you require COVID Marshals and COVID Safety officers at your event and if so how you will engage these individuals.
- » What roles and responsibilities will be assigned to these roles, if they are required? COVID Marshals and/or COVID Safety officers should be trained on their tasks and roles and also be provided the authority to take action.
- » How will the COVID Marshals and/or COVID Safety officers be identified? (e.g. through appropriate clothing/vests)

There will be a COVID Marshal : Ashley Constable

As well as there will be 10 COVID safety officers fully versed in the requirements and responsibilities with each being designated an area to solely stay in rather than moving into different rooms.

All officers will be wearing pink HiVis vests to be readily identifiable.



8. Staff and event contractors/vendors

Ensure event staff, contractors, and vendors are properly trained and have access to information relating to the COVID Safety measures in place at your event.

Considerations:

- » Has the event's COVID Safety plan been shared with all relevant stakeholders?
- » Are your staff and event contractors appropriately trained and across the event's COVID Safety plan?
- » Do you need staff to undertake infection control training of contractors? The Australian Government Department of Health offers online [Infection Control Training](#) which can be accessed by anyone
- » Staff can undertake the free nationally accredited COVID-19 infection control training which is now available to help ACT businesses to be COVID-19 Smart.
- » What checks do you have in place to make sure the event vendors and contractors follow COVID Smart practices?
- » Will you request that vendors and contractors supply their COVID Safety plans to you?

A copy of the COVID safe plan will be disclosed to all vendors at least 1 month in advance with all volunteers being given COVID training in orientation to ensure all volunteers are trained the same.

There will be monitoring officers throughout the entire event to advise patrons if required to leave.

All vendors will be monitored by the COVID safety officers who will report back to Ashley Constable for any compliance issues.

Assessing a COVID-19 Exposure in the Workplace or during an Event

Organisers may also wish to plan for how they will assess a COVID-19 exposure during an event and include this information in their COVID Safety Plan. This is particularly relevant for multi day events and staff exposures, noting that staff members are required to advise their employer of their diagnosis if they attended the workplace during their infectious period.

The ACT Government has developed guidance material to support workplaces and businesses to understand how best to respond to a COVID-19 exposure in their business or workplace.

A COVID-19 Workplace Exposure Assessment Tool has also been developed to assist businesses to ensure that they can appropriately respond to an exposure and mitigate any risk of further COVID-19 transmission.

The Assessment Tool is designed to be used when responding to an exposure in the workplace, but it may also assist in planning to decrease potential impacts of exposures at events if they occur. Further information can be found on the [COVID-19 website](#).

Key Contacts:

- » Access Canberra Event and Business Coordination Team ACEvents@act.gov.au
- » Event Exemptions Team – Office of the Chief Health Officer covidexemptions.events@act.go.au

Resources

- » ACT Government's COVID-19 website covid19.act.gov.au
- » COVID Smart events covid19.act.gov.au/restrictions/covid-safe-events
- » Safe Work Australia safeworkAustralia.gov.au
- » Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC) Statement health.gov.au/news/australian-health-protection-principal-committee-ahppc-statement-on-very-high-risk-social-environments
- » ACT Government Business Hub act.gov.au/business

Accessibility

If you have difficulty reading a standard printed document and would like an alternative format, please phone **13 22 81**.

If English is not your first language and you need the Translating and Interpreting Service (TIS), please call **13 14 50**.

For further accessibility information, visit: health.act.gov.au/accessibility