

This document provides guidance and information to decrease the spread of COVID-19 among people who attend in-person recovery meetings that are independent of Recovery Centers. Meetings offered by Recovery Centers should follow the COVID-19 prevention guidance provided by that facility. This document is adapted from the American Society of Addiction Medicine's [Considerations for Small Group Meetings with Proper Physical Distancing](#) and is informed by Vermont Department of Health and Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) guidance.

## Prior to Meeting

Infection control is a shared responsibility among recovery group leaders, planners and participants, who should work collaboratively to decrease the spread of COVID-19. **When physical distancing recommendations are in effect, recovery group meetings should be offered remotely.** However, this document provides COVID-19 prevention guidance to organizers and participants that are *not* able to hold meetings remotely. This guidance can help reduce, but not eliminate, the risk of COVID-19 infection for organizers and participants.

**IMPORTANT:** All attendees should be made aware that if they are attending an in-person meeting, their contact information will need to be documented in a contact tracing log in case [contact tracing](#) needs to occur. People that wish to remain anonymous should be assigned a unique identifier that the organizer will be able to use to contact them, if contact tracing is required. The contact tracing log should be stored in a secure location that only the organizer has access to. If a case of COVID-19 was infectious when they attended a meeting, an assigned contact tracer from the Vermont Department of Health will work with that person and the meeting organizer to identify any close contacts among meeting attendees to provide appropriate guidance.

## Preparing and Managing the Space

- Follow [ACCD guidelines for social clubs](#). Recovery meetings may operate under the requirements set by ACCD.
- As much as possible, meetings should be scheduled at times that will not lead to overcrowding as participants arrive at site entryways and exits.
- Arrange chairs, sofas and other seating in the meeting space to allow at least 6 feet of space between any two participants.
- As much as possible, limit entry to the meeting space to participants and group facilitators.
- Group participants should comply with site guidance concerning occupancy limits in restrooms and in common areas, including smoking areas, near the meeting room or space.

## Participant Health Screenings

Participants should be notified that they should **not** attend the group if:

- They have any [symptoms](#) of COVID-19.
  - If they have symptoms, they should stay home and contact their health care provider to determine if testing is necessary. If they do not have a health care provider, they can call 2-1-1.
- They have tested positive for COVID-19.
  - If they have tested positive, they should [isolate](#) until they have [recovered](#) and can end isolation.
- They have been in [close contact](#) with someone sick with COVID-19, traveled out of the state, or gathered with another household.
  - If any of the above conditions apply, they should [quarantine](#).

If a participant has any of the following symptoms, they might have an illness they can spread to others. Participants should be asked to screen for symptoms prior to a meeting. Group leaders should post symptom lists at entrances to ensure participants know the requirements. Some buildings may also require a symptom screening prior to entry.

- Fever (100.4 F or higher)
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Muscle pain or aches
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

*Note: For participants with chronic conditions, some of the symptoms listed above may be part of their usual or baseline health status. Symptoms that represent a change from usual or baseline health are of concern.*

## Measures for Infection Control During a Meeting

- All group participants will wear [face masks](#) at all times in the group and in moving through the site in which the group takes place.
- Care should be taken to direct participants through the building in the most direct way possible.
- Consider the use of floor markings or one-way directional arrows if possible, to minimize contact in hallways.

- All group participants should sign in using their own pens or using a pen that is sanitized between users, or electronically using personal devices or devices that are sanitized between users.
- Avoid serving or sharing food or drink within the meeting.
- Hand sanitizer (the CDC recommends an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol), tissues, and no-touch trash cans with lids should be available at or near the entrance and exits of the facility.
- One volunteer should be chosen to handle the donation basket. If possible, the basket should be stationary.
- If sobriety tokens are used, the person handing them out should be gloved.
- Meeting organizers can reference the [CDC's Events and Gatherings Readiness Planning tool](#) to help protect staff, volunteers, and attendees limit the spread of COVID-19.

## Closing the Meeting

All participants should be encouraged to wash or sanitize their hands prior to leaving the meeting. Be careful to maintain distance while waiting to wash hands and avoid congregating while waiting.

At the end of each meeting, clean and disinfect the area using a [disinfectant effective against COVID-19](#).

Consider creating a cleaning list of all commonly touched surfaces and items to ensure they are cleaned at the end of each meeting including (but not limited to):

- Chairs
- Tables
- Door handles
- Bathroom handles
- Light switches
- Faucets
- Pens, clipboards or other writing instruments touched during the meeting, etc.