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| COVID-19 Public Events Framework |
| Last updated – 7 December 2020 |



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# Purpose

The purpose of the COVID-19 Public Events Framework (Framework) is to guide event organisers and venues that wish to operate above and beyond what is permitted under the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) from the Chief Health Officer and/or do not have a COVIDSafe Plan.

The purpose of the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) is to restrict the operation of event businesses and undertakings in Victoria to address the serious public health risk posed by COVID-19. The [Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria)](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19) are the primary set of rules governing the behavior of people and businesses as part of Victoria’s roadmap to reopening, as is updated in each step of the roadmap. If you are a venue with a COVIDSafe Plan in place and can operate events at your business in line with the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) this framework does not apply to you.

This Framework sets out the process for working with government to confirm what capacity arrangements your venue or event is permitted, and potentially other health control measures, above and beyond the Directions.

Public events are assessed under the Framework according to their scale, complexity and associated risk factors. A three-tiered system is used to ensure the appropriate level of public health oversight is applied to public events.

**Tier 1:** Highly complex and involves more than 5,000 attendees

**Tier 2:** Moderately complex and involves between 1,000 – 5,000 attendees

**Tier 3:** Low complexity and involves fewer than 1,000 attendees (and not already covered by a venue or business’s existing COVIDSafe Plan)

The Framework sets rules for organising a public event above what is allowed in the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) as we move into a COVIDSafe Summer, including:

* + Indoor / outdoor settings
	+ Limits on the number of people attending the event
	+ Density requirements
	+ COVID safety requirements

Approval to conduct public events is subject to change, in accordance with public health requirements and is guided by the epidemiological conditions in Victoria and other states, and the broader easing of restrictions outlined in Victoria’s roadmap to reopening.

This framework should be read in conjunction with the Victorian Guidelines for Planning Safe Public Events (2018). Event organisers are still required to engage with and obtain the necessary approvals from other federal, state and local government bodies.

# Context

As we progress along Victoria’s roadmap for reopening, improvements in epidemiological conditions will enable Victorians to progressively gather in larger numbers and attend organised events. However, it is important to remember that public gatherings are a high-risk activity and therefore need to be very carefully planned.

By their nature, public events involve gatherings within a defined space, often high density, and include a broad range of activities, such as service of food and beverages and entertainment. The proximity and movement of people at events represent a high risk related to transmission of COVID-19. It is critical that these risks are managed by event organisers seeking to conduct events.

The Framework and other public events guidelines are designed to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as [Occupational Health & Safety](https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/occupational-health-and-safety-act-and-regulations) requirements or the [Restricted Activity Directions](https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19) (Victoria) which all events must comply with. Furthermore, they should be tailored to meet the unique context of an event, to ensure that every event participant, from volunteers through to attendees, are protected from the risk of transmission and can safely enjoy all that Victorian events have to offer.

# COVID Safe Planning

This document refers to three types of plans.

**COVIDSafe Plan**

Every Victorian business with on-site operations must have a COVIDSafe Plan, which is updated regularly. They also must stay up to date with restrictions and public health advice.

Some higher-risk industries or workplaces have additional requirements of employers and employees. The events industry is a higher-risk industry.

Government has set up the Framework and the COVIDSafe Event Plan and Checklist for businesses to understand and address the risks involved in hosting an event.

**COVIDSafe Event Plan**

The COVIDSafe Event Plan outlines the public health requirements for holding a mid to high risk public event in Victoria. These are categorised into Tier 1 and Tier 2. Tier 1 and 2 events are moderate to highly complex events that involve more than 1,000 attendees.

Organisers of Tier 1 and 2 public events are required to submit a COVIDSafe Event Plan for review and approval by the Victorian Government. The plan must be approved for your event to go ahead.

**COVIDSafe Event Checklist**

The COVIDSafe Event Checklist is an online self-assessment guidance tool.The COVIDSafe Event Checklist is only relevant for events classified as Tier 3. This is for events that are of low complexity and involve fewer than 1,000 attendees. If you are hosting a Tier 3 event and your business or organisation does not have a COVIDSafe Plan that covers the event as part of your regular business, you will need to go online and fill out a COVIDSafe Event Checklist.

# 4 Definition of a public event

The Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) contain the definition of a public event, and provide details of controls related to public and private gatherings at different types of venues, including venues that may ordinarily hold events as part of their business-as-usual operations. The features of the public events definition are:

**‘A public event is an organised public gathering for a common purpose which is conducted on a one-off or periodic basis, open to members of the public, publicly announced or advertised, and may be subject to specific licence, approvals or permits.’**

There will be many venues that host multiple similar events as part of a regular season or business activities. Some examples include weekly sporting events, nightly theatre performances, trade shows at business venues and exhibitions in galleries. While these are public events, they can be approved with a COVIDSafe Plan for the venue itself and will be discussed below at 6.2 under ‘venues.’

**Out of scope**

A public event is not a workplace or personal gathering that is permitted under the Stay Safe Directions (Victoria) and Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria).

This includes, for example:

* A public gathering in a public place with fewer than 100 people (e.g. a picnic in a park)
* a business meeting
* a regular farmers market
* a school or university gathering within venue limits
* a private gathering, such as a wedding, funeral or end of life activity or
* a routine religious gathering or ceremony

The Stay Safe Directions (Victoria) and Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) continue to apply to these gatherings. Please check the Directions to see if your event is permitted within these limitations. If it is not, you will need to submit a proposal under the Framework.

# 5 Attendee limits and density requirements

The phased resumption of public events, including attendee limits and density requirements for various venue types, is aligned with Victoria’s roadmap for reopening. It reflects the epidemiological conditions in Victoria and other states, along with national and international advice for managing the public health risk associated with mass gatherings.

As Victoria progresses through the steps in the roadmap for reopening, the Public Events Framework allows for larger gatherings of people at public events. The first two phases allow for seated events and progressively move to larger standing and roaming events in the later stages. Each outdoor and indoor setting has its own capacity limits, with the total attendees per event limited in each phase.

The full details are outlined in Attachment 1 of this document.

**Major events**

Major events that are of significant value to Victoria from cultural, economic or government investment perspective, may be assessed for an exemption from the attendee limits and density requirements set out in the COVID-19 Public Events Framework.

Major events must be of significant interstate and international interest, deliver substantial wider economic benefits to Victoria and profile Victoria extensively on an international platform.

Major events will need to follow the Tier 1 event approval process, however they will undergo more rigorous public health planning and assessment, before being considered by the Public Health Advisory Panel, the Chief Health Officer and Major Events Taskforce.

The final decision regarding whether the event can proceed will be made by the Chief Health Officer. Additional risk controls may need to be implemented before the event can proceed with a higher attendee limit.

Major event organisers should contact the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR) to commence early engagement and planning at COVIDSafeEvents@ecodev.vic.gov.au.

# 6 Seeking approval to operate a public event

Public events must comply with the requirements of the COVID-19 Public Events Framework, including the attendee limits and density requirements. Depending on the scale and risk involved in running the public event, the event organiser must seek approval from the Victorian Government to run the event.

The Victorian Government has established a review process to ensure public event organisers consider the appropriate infection prevention controls and public health advice as part of planning and delivery of the event.

## 6.1 Tiered approach for assessing public events

Public events will be assessed according to their scale, complexity and associated risk factors. A three-tiered system will be used to ensure the appropriate level of public health oversight is applied to public events.

**Tier 1:** Highly complex and involves more than 5,000 attendees

* needs government approval for a COVIDSafe Event Plan

**Tier 2:** Moderately complex and involves between 1,000 – 5,000 attendees

* needs government approval for a COVIDSafe Event Plan

**Tier 3:** Involves fewer than 1,000 attendees

* if your business or organisation already has an industry COVIDSafe Plan, you can operate your event within the permissions of the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) and under your COVIDSafe Plan
* if your business or organisation does not have a COVIDSafe Plan you will need to fill out and submit a COVIDSafe Event Checklist, and your event will still need to operate within the permissions of the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria)

The tiered approach is outlined in more detail in section 7.

## 6.2 Venues

Venues that host multiple similar events and want to operate at numbers above what is permitted in the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria), can submit one COVIDSafe Event Plan for government assessment (e.g. theatres, convention centres, sporting and racing venues).

Venues do not need to submit a COVIDSafe Event Plan for each individual event or show. These plans will need to be detailed enough to cover all the different shows or events that happen within your venue. However, you will need to submit a new plan if your venue is operating a different type of one-off event or if you would like to increase your capacity limit.

For example, if you are a racing club and you have an approved plan for your venue but are hosting a one-off music event you would need to submit a new COVIDSafe Event Plan for that event.

It is at the discretion of the venue or the event organiser who should submit the COVIDSafe Event Plan. However, a COVIDSafe Event Plan must be approved before you host your event. It is best to work together to develop a plan. If you are an event organiser, please check with your venue to see if they already have an agreed plan in place before you start.

All venues operating at numbers within what is permitted in the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) must have a COVIDSafe Plan.

## 6.3 Submission process

Each event organiser must complete and submit a COVIDSafe Event Plan if they are operating a Tier 1 or Tier 2 event.

Tier 3 events must upload a COVIDSafe Event Checklist if they do not have a COVIDSafe Plan. Even if you have a COVIDSafe Plan, Tier 3 event organisers are strongly encouraged to refer to the sections detailed in the COVIDSafe Event Checklist to ensure they are providing best-practice risk-mitigation measures specific to events.

The Victorian Government’s Coronavirus website includes [a form to upload COVIDSafe Event Plans and Checklists](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/register-your-public-event).

## Please note, this approval process is designed to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as Occupational Health & Safety requirements or the Chief Health Officer Directions, which all events must comply with.

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## 6.4 Timelines for public event assessment

A COVIDSafe Event Plan or COVIDSafe Event Checklist manages a high-risk activity, and the Victorian Government must be certain that the event can proceed safely.

* A COVIDSafe Event Plan for Tier 1 events must be submitted for review and approval at least 8-10 weeks prior to the event commencement.
* A COVIDSafe Event Plan for Tier 2 events must be submitted for review and approval at least 4-6 weeks prior to the event commencement.
* A COVIDSafe Event Checklist must be uploaded at least 1 week prior to the event commencement.

Early engagement between event organisers and government officials will help support adequate and appropriate COVIDSafe planning.

It is the event organiser’s obligation to meet expectations of the public events assessment. Where the event organiser doesn’t provide sufficient information and timely follow up of requests their event may not be approved.



# 7 Tier 1 & Tier 2 – approval process

## 7.1 What is a COVIDSafe Event Plan and when do I need one?

Every Victorian business with on-site operations must have a COVIDSafe Plan, which is updated regularly. They also must stay up to date with restrictions and public health advice.

Some higher-risk industries or workplaces have additional requirements of employers and employees. The events industry is a higher-risk industry. Government has set up the Framework and the COVIDSafe Event Plan and Checklist for businesses to understand and address the risks involved in hosting an event.

Any event with more than 1,000 patrons must be considered under the Framework and needs a COVIDSafe Event Plan.

A **COVIDSafe Event Plan** is a tailored and comprehensive plan that must be specific to the activity or venue. The plan sets out how the public event will be managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 amongst attendees and workers.

The COVIDSafe Event Plan goes through a government review and approval process and is ultimately endorsed by the CHO. Further guidance on the evaluation and approval process for a COVIDSafe Event Plan is summarised on Page 10.

Further guidance on the key areas to address in a COVIDSafe Event Plan and the template is available on the Victorian Government’s Coronavirus website.

## 7.2 COVIDSafe Event Plan – evaluation process

**Assessment**

I**mplementation**

**5. Implement**

**4. Outcome**

**3. Assess Plan**

**2. Initial review**

**1. Submit Plan**

* Responsible party (event venue or organiser) implements plan as approved
* Random compliance checks undertaken to ensure the COVIDSafe Event Plan is being followed
* Event organiser may be instructed to address issues of non-compliance immediately
* Confirm event complies with Public Events Framework attendee limits and density requirements
* Confirm event Tier using the online self-assessment tool
* Prepare and formally submit a COVIDSafe Event Plan
* DHHS specialists evaluate plan against infection control criteria
* Further information or alterations to the plan may be requested of the event organiser
* Event organiser provided with written confirmation of the outcome
* Event organiser publishes COVIDSafe Event Plan on website or social media (sensitive information can be removed prior to publication)
* COVIDSafe Event Plan must be resubmitted if there are material changes to the event’s operations
* The COVIDSafe Event Plan will undergo scrutiny from the Public Health Advisory Panel and Chief Health Officer
* The Major Events Taskforce will make final decision if/how the event can proceed

**Public Health Advisory Panel**

The Public Health Advisory Panel is a cross departmental committee with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Department of Jobs, Precincts and Regions (DJPR), including expertise in public health, infectious diseases and infection prevention and control.

The panel will meet regularly and is accountable for:

* Reviewing COVIDSafe Event Plans to determine if the appropriate public health risk controls are planned for the event
* Providing a recommendation to the Chief Health Officer outlining if the event’s public health risk controls are sufficient and the rationale for the recommendation
* Providing advice on exemptions relating to events to the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) to the Chief Health Officer
* Providing advice to the Chief Health Officer on updates to the Framework and related guidance materials.

**Major Events Taskforce**

The Major Events Taskforce plays a central role in supporting the COVIDSafe resumption of large-scale sports, cultural, business and community events.

The Major Events Taskforce, comprising the Treasurer, the Minister for Tourism, Sport and Major Events and the Minister for Health, the Minister for Police and Emergency Services, will note the Chief Health Officer’s advice and factor in other considerations before providing approval.

The Chief Health Officer retains veto powers for all public events to ensure the appropriate alignment with the broader COVID-19 public health strategy and directions.

## 7.3 Evaluation criteria – COVIDSafe Event Plan

A COVIDSafe Event Plan must address five key areas that aim to reduce the risk of transmission in a public place/event.

These key areas will be assessed within each COVIDSafe Event Plan, along with the current epidemiological conditions and other related factors.

A more detailed explanation of the five key criteria and sub-categories to be considered is available on the Victorian Government’s Coronavirus website.

1. **Oversight and administration**
	* Events must have an appropriate governance structure that incorporates communication of intent to all event authorities, detail of key people involved and key processes to plan and deliver COVIDSafe events.
	* All workers and attendees must receive clear communication on expectations prior to the event. This should include physical distancing requirements, hygiene requirements, key health messages and event safety policies in clear and simple language.
	* Strategies for record keeping must be implemented by event organisers that capture each person who attends the venue. Where possible, multiple record keeping methods should be considered and implemented as a fail-safe if someone is diagnosed COVID positive. Adequate record keeping for up to 28 days must be maintained for all event attendees.
2. **Attendee Management**
* Physical distancing strategies must be considered when planning the event, and provisions must be made to ensure physical distancing is always maintained throughout the event.
* All workers and attendees must be screened for symptoms of COVID-19 before the event.
* For events that require first aid, medical and/or in-event health services, plans that incorporate the management of suspected COVID-19 cases must be created and integrated into the overall First Aid plan.
* Event plans should consider how co-mingling and congregation areas can be prevented, particularly in areas where alcohol is consumed.
1. **Cleaning and hygiene**
	* A regular and thorough cleaning schedule must be implemented before, during and after the event with high traffic areas such as toilets and frequently touched objects such as door handles, counters and railings regularly disinfected.
	* Adequate provisions must be made for hand washing and hand sanitation, and facilities must be readily available and maintained throughout the event.
2. **Workers, vendors and contractors**
	* All event workers, vendors contractors and subcontractors must be trained in the appropriate COVID-19 protocols and procures and have suitable access to personal protective equipment and training. This includes food workers, catering workers, cleaning workers, security and volunteers.
3. **Operational Spaces**
	* All operational spaces such as public transport hubs, ticket offices, training facilities, toilets, retail spaces, seating areas, stages, front of house areas and back of house areas are considered and included in the COVIDSafe Event plan, and comply with measures for physical distancing, hand hygiene, general cleanliness and other COVIDSafe requirements.

# 8 Tier 3 – approval process

## 8.1 What is a COVIDSafe Event Checklist?

An event organiser that wants to host an event of under 1,000 people needs to fill out a COVIDSafe Event Checklist if the venue itself does not have a COVIDSafe Plan in place. This will mostly be used by event organiser who want to hold one-off events. For example, a one-off festival with 700 attendees.

The COVIDSafe Event Checklist outlines the public health requirements for holding a COVIDSafe event in Victoria. It enables event organisers to consider and implement controls to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

A copy of the COVIDSafe Events Checklist is available on the Victorian Government’s Coronavirus website.

## 8.2 COVIDSafe Event Checklist – evaluation process

**Planning**

I**mplementation**

**3. Implement**

**2. Outcome**

**1. Upload Checklist**

* Confirm event complies with the Restricted Activity Directions (Victoria) in terms of attendee limits and density requirements
* Prepare and upload a COVIDSafe Event Checklist
* Publish COVIDSafe Event Checklist on website or social media
* COVIDSafe Event Checklist must be reuploaded if there are material changes to the event’s operations
* Implement plan as approved
* Random compliance checks undertaken to ensure the COVIDSafe Event Checklist is being followed
* Event organiser may be instructed to address issues of non-compliance immediately

# Legal terms

**Liability and indemnity**

You control and accept sole responsibility, risk and liability for all aspects of your public event.  You must conduct your own investigations, assessments and interpretations and seek independent professional advice on all aspects of your public event.

The State of Victoria does not control and accepts no liability for your public event nor for any loss, damage, injury or death in connection with your public event, including (without limitation), any change to requirements for your public event or the cancellation or postponement of your public event.

You will indemnify the State of Victoria against any liability to or claims by a third party for any loss, damage, injury or death in connection with your public event, including (without limitation), the cancellation or postponement of your public event.

**Consultation, review, assessment and approval process**

To the extent permitted by law, the State of Victoria excludes liability for any loss, damage, injury or death caused by use of or reliance on any consultation, review, assessment or approval process in connection with your public event.

The State of Victoria may amend or withdraw from the consultation, review, assessment or approval process at any time without notice.

The State of Victoria may amend or withdraw any consultation, review, assessment or approval at any time without notice.

You will not be relieved from compliance with any of your obligations at law as a result of:

* any consultation, review, assessment, or approval (or failure to consult, review, assess, or approve) or any other act or omission by the State of Victoria in connection with your public event (including, without limitation, any failure by the State of Victoria to detect any errors, inaccuracies, mistakes, non-compliances or omissions in connection with your public event)
* your implementation of and compliance with the Plan for your public event.

**Purpose/use of document**

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# Attachment 1 – Public Events attendee limits and density requirements

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Public event phase 1** | **Public event phase 2** | **Public event phase 3** |
| **Criteria for moving forward in phases**  | From 11:59pm on 6 December[current phase] | Gradual easing of restrictions on a 14 day basis subject to public health advice  | Gradual easing of restrictions on a 14 day basis subject to public health advice |
| **Venue requirements**Note – limits on attendee numbers include children older than 12 months, but do not include the workers required to run the event. Venues can host multiple sessions on the one day, or be run over multiple days. If there are multiple separate sessions in a day, then limits refer to the maximum people allowed in any given session. Cleaning must be undertaken between sessions in accordance with the DHHS cleaning guidance. | Tier 1 and Tier 2 events at indoor and outdoor seated venues75% of the venue’s seating capacity, up to a maximum of 5,000 people seated.Density quotient of one person per two square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas. QR codes must be used for these events. Allocated seated events only. Free-standing (general admission) events not permitted.Tier 3 eventsFor indoor and outdoor events or performances with fewer than 1,000 people, the Directions permit some standing and roaming. This includes venues that are hosting events – e.g. theatres, galleries. Density quotient of one person per two square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas. QR codes must be used for these events. | Tier 1 and Tier 2 events at indoor and outdoor seated venues75% of the venue’s seating capacity, up to a maximum of 25,000 people seated.Density quotient of one person per two square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas. QR codes must be used for these events.Allocated seated events only. Free-standing (general admission) events not permitted.Tier 3 eventsFor indoor and outdoor events or performances with fewer than 1,000 people, the Directions permit some standing and roaming. This includes venues that are hosting events – e.g. theatres, galleries. Density quotient of one person per two square metres applies to non-fixed seated areas – e.g. grassed areas. QR codes must be used for these events. | Gradual return of up to 100% of the venue’s seated capacity.Gradual return of free-standing events. |
| **Requirements from public event organisers** COVIDSafe Event Plan submitted for review and approval for Tier 1 and Tier 2 eventsCOVIDSafe Plan already in place for the business or venue, and if not a COVIDSafe Event Checklist must be uploaded and published online for Tier 3 events |

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