

COVID-19 EXHIBITOR GUIDANCE: PLANNING YOUR BOOTH FOR A SAFE AND SECURE RETURN TO EVENTS

INTRODUCTION

Our event would only take place in a situation where the risk of COVID-19 transmission is not considered to be very high, i.e. the transmission rate is significantly low, and that the Government has permitted business activities of this nature to resume with some controls as suggested within this document.

The challenge faced by all industries as a result of COVID-19 is purely one of Health and Safety. What you are trying to avoid is the spread of the disease and exhibitors need to attempt to aid in that by decreasing the risks of transmission from one person to another. The main transmission route is airborne, and this gives us our greatest challenge from the resulting physical distancing requirements. Other routes are through surface contact and person-to-person contact – both can be mitigated quite successfully through hand washing and other simple hygiene measures and protocols. We request that you approach your plans and measures from a Risk Assessment basis - as you would do for all other Health & Safety risks.

Thinking about planning your participation and the measures you need to take can be understandably daunting. We have spent a lot of time thinking through the challenges and have provided the guidance below which falls in line with government guidance for the safe return to events.

As is usual, each and every exhibitor has a different challenge - dependent on the products they exhibit, their booth size, their booking type, and the way they want to run their booth. As a result, we are unable in this guide to give specific solutions for everything. Instead, we have listed the things that you should consider and bear in mind when thinking about your booth and your time at the event.

Of course, however, we are always available to you individually for any further questions or concerns that you may have.

HEALTH & SAFETY

EMERGENCY SITUATIONS

- Measures and reactions to immediate, life threatening, emergencies (such as Fire or Security Emergencies) take precedence over any COVID-19 controls such as physical distancing measures and one-way systems. Such measures are not applicable during an emergency situation.

RISK ASSESSMENT

- You will need to carry out a Risk Assessment, as usual, which will now also need to consider transmission of COVID-19 as a new risk and the control measures you will be implementing to minimise this risk. This could be a separate document or be included within the Risk Assessment section in the Booth Information form submissions.

WELFARE

- Welfare facilities will be provided within the venue as usual, with any relevant new procedures in place and communicated to all parties to ensure all risks to health are minimised. Please ensure that your staff are familiar with the details.

GENERAL VENUE AND EVENT MEASURES

ACCESS

- Event arrival, access and registration procedures for exhibitors, contractors and visitors are being considered and planned by the event organizer and venue. As much as is possible, this process will be contactless and to enable this we ask that you **make sure you and all of your staff have registered prior to coming onsite. Please print off your event badges and bring them with you to the event** to minimise interactions and queuing at the entrances. Where staff are in frequent close contact with large numbers of people they will be positioned behind screens and/or issued with the necessary PPE.
- The event organizer will maximise the number of access points to the event where practical, considering required entry processes.
- We are working closely with the venue to introduce systems for security checks which work as closely as possible within current guidance. In some instances, guards may operate from within fixed protected positions and, where not, will be supplied with the necessary PPE.
- You and your teams can register for your exhibitor badges via the link within your online exhibitor portal. Please ensure all of your staff have registered before the event and print off their badges and bring them to the event when they come. Please ensure that they have the required accreditation displayed whenever they are within the event space.

AIR QUALITY

- We will liaise with venues to ensure the best possible hall ventilation services.

CLEANING AND HYGIENE

- Hand washing and hand sanitizer facilities together with general hygiene routines signage will be provided by the venue and event organizers within the public areas and high traffic areas (such as restrooms, registration catering areas, show features etc).
- You may wish to add general hygiene routines information to your booth signage.

CODE OF CONDUCT

- Minimise personal greetings such as handshakes, hugs, and high fives.
- Follow any instructions and communication provided on signage, by event staff and fellow exhibitors.
- Face coverings are recommended for non-vaccinated attendees indoors.

INTERACTION POINTS

- On-site service desks, registration help points, information points and other facilities are being reviewed and will be protected by screens/barriers where possible. Physical distancing protocols will also apply. Circumstances are under constant review and any other necessary precautions/systems will be communicated to you prior to the event via the show website, emails, and the exhibitor portal.
- In some circumstances phone numbers will be available for problem reporting and we ask that all exhibitors try to put in all orders pre-event to minimise onsite queuing at the service centre.

ONE-WAY SYSTEMS

- The venue is currently working on systems for safely moving around their facilities. Guidance will be provided in these areas.
- Dependent on crowd density expectations and gangway widths, one-way systems may be introduced in certain gangways or across the event. Where these are in place, the system will be clearly indicated. Please ensure your teams abide by these requirements.

QUEUING

- Any areas where queuing is required around the venue will be managed with signage, rope and post/tensator barriers where applicable.

BOOTH DESIGN

It is important to consider the layout and design of your booth to ensure that you can both undertake the construction of your booth (for space only exhibitors, and for the set-up tasks undertaken by pipe and drape exhibitors) and interact with visitors in a safe and controlled manner. For example, assess the complexity of your build or booth merchandising to reduce onsite workers/deliveries and reduce the range of products on display to maximise floorspace.

ACCESSIBILITY

- Ensure any changes to your booth layout take into account reasonable adjustments for those who need them, including people with disabilities.

BUILD UP & BREAKDOWN

- Please make sure to pre-order all of the services that you will require (electrical, furniture, booth extras, internet, carpet etc) prior to coming onsite. All contractors will be sending less people to site to aid with physical distancing measures so waiting times for late onsite orders could be substantial.
- Consider ways to reduce the complexity of your Build-up and Breakdown activities in order to minimise the number of people required and the amount of time spent building and dismantling the booth.
- The Site Rules for the event can be found within the portal as usual. We will let you know if these change at all in the run up to the event. It is your responsibility to communicate these rules to all your staff, contractors, and suppliers.
- **All exhibitors will be asked to pre-register before arriving on-site** and agree that if they are showing COVID-19 symptoms or feeling unwell on the day of the event that they do not come.
- Face coverings are recommended for non-vaccinated attendees indoors.

CUSTOMER INTERACTIONS AND PRODUCT DISPLAY POINTS

- Consider the use of screens/barriers for any staff who come into most frequent contact with customers where they can be based and protected e.g. Reception, Info Points or Meeting spaces. This will be dependent on booth size and complexity of your booth design requirement.
- The use of the event data capture opportunities will allow you to scan someone's badge from an App on your phone, allowing contactless exchange of details.
- If possible, consider ways of displaying your product in such a way that they do not need to be handled.
- If it is vital that customers handle your products, consider supplying hand sanitiser and/or disposable gloves when the visitor enters your booth. Also consider your cleaning routines for all surfaces and products, as gloves do not mitigate the risk of cross contamination.
- Users wearing gloves should be mindful that they should still avoid touching their face.
- Consider if you need to bring your whole range and whether or not you can show some of your products digitally or virtually - speak to the AV contractor to see what digital solutions can be offered, use of screens, plasmas, virtual displays etc.
- Consider the type of furniture you have on your booth – hard surface chairs which can be cleaned between use would be preferable to those that are material based.
- For items such as working machinery, ensure safe working and physical distance from the operator and the machinery itself.

HOSPITALITY/GENERAL SEATING AREAS

- Consider reducing or removing general seating areas on your booth where people would be likely to congregate. Surfaces and furniture within any seating areas should be cleaned frequently.
- Where necessary ensure adequate space between seats. Consider screens/barriers on tables to mitigate seating arrangements below physical distancing guidelines.
- Please contact the official furniture supplier for details of potential solutions available.

MEETING SPACES

- Any meeting areas on your booth will need to be assessed and appropriate distancing measures implemented; consider the use of separation screens in situations where you intend to sit and talk with customers and colleagues face to face. Screens may allow more meetings to happen in smaller areas.
- To ensure good air circulation, meeting rooms should not be designed as closed rooms with closed ceilings.
- Make sure you have a pre-agreed system in place to manage your meeting spaces.
- If you have one-to-one meeting spaces, the spaces themselves may have to be cleaned after each meeting.
- Face coverings are recommended for non-vaccinated attendees indoors.

SIGNAGE AND COMMUNICATION

- Consider what signage you may need to remind staff and customers on your booth to follow physical distancing guidelines and other hygiene measures e.g. floor stickers, tape or paint to mark areas to help people keep to a relevant distance, signage to identify what cleaning measures you are taking in order that they feel comfortable coming onto your booth. General codes of conduct will be communicated to all personnel pre-event and on arrival at the event via signage.
- You may also wish to communicate the measures you are taking within the invitations you send out to your customers prior to the event as well. Be open to answering questions about this as people are likely to have different concerns from your own.

PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Before finalising your design define the maximum number of people (staff and customers) that you can safely have on your booth at any one time.
- Consider the design and layout of your booth to allow staff to work further apart from each other wherever possible.

BOOTH ACCESS AND VISITOR FLOW

- If you have concerns about visitor density on your booth you will need to consider regulating access and visitor movement - for example: restricting access to open sides using ropes and posts, creating staff only areas on larger booths to separate your team from visitors, or having a restricted area for meetings away from crowds. You may be able to regulate visitors to smaller booths in person rather than utilising physical barriers.
- Regulating access will allow you to manage visitor density and behaviour on your booth but ensure you consider the potential for congestion at access points and take reasonable steps to prevent overcrowding.
- Consider any arrival and welcoming procedures you will be putting in place and ensure that, where possible, this is a contactless process and any reception team, on larger booths, are suitably distanced or protected as required.
- Please remember that your booth design should allow for you to comfortably hold conversations and meetings and product demonstrations with your customers, within your space, without the need for them to dwell in the gangways and create pinch points.
- Please do not allow queues to build up on the gangways outside your booth.
- On larger booths, where access is less restricted, think about designing your booth to incorporate a one-way flow with separate entry and exit points if practical. Where this is not possible, consider alternative mitigation measures such as floor markings and screening options.

BOOTH ACTIVITY

This section covers all of the tasks you will be undertaking during a build-up and breakdown – whether it be a space only build, or smaller pipe and drape booth.

BUILD-UP AND BREAKDOWN

- When planning your Build-up and Breakdown construction activities consider back-to-back or side-to-side working (rather than face-to-face) wherever possible. Where staff are required to work in close proximity, examine options such as temporary or mobile screening.
- Consider activities that take place away from your booth itself. Advise your staff to follow any requirements publicised onsite when off your booth area (e.g. physical distancing requirements around restrooms, badge collection areas, catering facilities, loading areas, gangways etc).
- Throughout the Build-up and Breakdown periods, congestion is best mitigated by scheduling the tasks to be completed in such a way that the minimum number of people are required at any one time.
- Wherever possible, use the same pairs of people for moving loads where more than one is needed.
- Try to avoid passing goods, products, tools or materials from hand to hand.
- Consider how your goods are to be transported and then how they are going to be moved when onsite. Where possible, ship in such a way that people can move the items whilst working within physical distancing guidelines. Where this is not possible, consider use of PPE and any other relevant mitigation measures that may be required.
- Surface transmission risks can be mitigated relatively easily by adopting good and regular hand cleansing routines.
- Try to minimise using passenger lifts and use the stairs wherever possible. Try to reduce the amount of times you need to use the goods lifts to take booth build material/product to your booth space. Also consider the amount of people needed to do this
- Physical distancing cannot always be achieved (e.g. where footing a ladder is required) so other mitigation measures should be considered in these circumstances, such as the amount of time the activity can continue for, or the wearing of suitable PPE.

PROMOTIONAL LITERATURE, PRIZES AND GIVEAWAYS

- You should consider not supplying any sort of 'giveaways' including samples or promotional gifts at this stage unless, of course, you have considered the hygiene around this process.
- Consider supplying information digitally or virtually to your visitors instead of hard copy brochures and catalogues.

DATA CAPTURE

- Data capture systems are a vital part of minimising physical contact whilst allowing you to interact with visitors – familiarise yourself with the options available and plan how you can use them to best effect on your booth. For example:
 - Register interest points for new business customers who cannot get onto your booth.
 - Scan a visitor's badge from an app on your phone. This allows you to, without contact, quickly capture the details of customers that you are meeting or cannot service immediately.
 - Enabling contactless ordering systems.

INTERACTION WITH CUSTOMERS

- Consider how you will interact with your customers. Is it vital that you talk to every member of their team? Do you need to accompany them on a tour of your products? If so, consider measures that may mitigate any risks e.g. adequate space or any PPE options.
- Wherever practical, ensure that staff interactions with visitors are contactless.
- Can you provide information to your customers digitally either in advance, whilst they attend your booth, or as a visit follow up in order to reduce the activity time?
- Where screens are not practical, you may need to consider other risk mitigation measures, such as reducing time spent with an individual, face visors (although these must be thoroughly sanitised between use by different users) etc.

ON-BOOTH HOSPITALITY

- On-booth catering services are permitted – all food and beverage consumption must be ordered directly with the event caterers. Information can be found on the exhibitor portal.
- Please do not offer shared bowls of snacks/treats unless they are individually wrapped.

MEETINGS

- It is recommended that exhibitors arrange as many meetings in advance of the event as possible and spread these times throughout the course of the event/day.
- Allow for an adequate break between every meeting to air the meeting space and clean all surfaces.
- Encourage your visitors to attend meetings on the traditionally less busy days where possible.
- Look out for opportunities that may be provided by the event organizer to meet with any buyers who are unable to attend - for example if international travel is restricted.
- Limit the length of meetings to 15 minutes or less wherever possible.
- Use pre-scheduled meeting and matchmaking opportunities.

PRODUCT DEMONSTRATIONS

- Product demonstrations can attract crowds and it is recommended that such activities are strictly limited to essential demonstrations only.
- If a demonstration (on the basis of demonstrating to more than two people) of your product is vital, you will need to manage and monitor your audience to ensure that over-crowding does not occur, gangways are kept clear and physical interactions are minimised.
- Consider increasing the number of demonstrations throughout the day, with a controlled and reduced viewing capacity at any one time.
- As an alternative, consider offering a virtual demo/walk through instead.

ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPACE ONLY BOOTHS

- Add all relevant instructions to the site rules that you prepare for your booth construction phase.
- Consider the size/location of any break areas or staff rooms within your booth space where relevant and ensure that your staff are aware of the rules and procedures that apply in these areas.
- When implementing restricted access to your booth, consider the visual appeal and customer experience, for example, building in a product display or branding opportunity rather than a functional but blank wall.
- Within the Build-up and Breakdown period you may or may not require a one-way system on your booth - this will depend on your booth size and complexity of build, consult your booth builder and have a plan in place to ensure your staff can interact safely with the build team.
- Do not arrange for all of your construction materials, stock and supplies to be delivered at the same time, unless this can be stored throughout Build-up within the confines of your booth. Similarly, please confine all tasks within the booth construction phase to within your booth boundaries once your floor/floor covering has been laid. It will be more important than ever to keep the gangways clear of goods and construction work to allow physical distancing measures to be observed.
- If you do need to deliver everything/anything prior to being able to accept it all on to your booth area, please contact the official event freight supplier to discuss opportunities for storage within an onsite staging area.
- Consider the time that you need to arrive. Only the largest booths, with the most work to complete, need to be waiting to come into the halls when the doors open at 8am on the first day of the build-up.
- If possible, allow your booth contractors enough time to complete their build before your teams arrive onsite.
- Booth construction progress updates/production meetings could be held digitally in certain circumstances as an alternative to physically monitoring progress on the booth.
- Breakdown speeds are likely to be slower due to these new concerns. Do you really need to be the first booth out of the hall, or could you delay your breakdown activities for an hour or two?

BOOTH HYGIENE & CLEANING

You will be responsible for the hygiene measures required on your booth. Hand washing facilities will be available at the venue, and hand sanitizer facilities will be provided by the venue and event organizers within the public areas and high traffic areas (such as restrooms, registration, catering areas, show features etc). You may wish to complement this more locally by providing hand sanitizers on your booth or any other measures you feel appropriate.

CLEANING REGIME

- Good housekeeping is already an essential consideration and a deeper clean of all spaces should be undertaken at the end of each day. Please remember you are responsible for this.
- In the event of a known or suspected case of COVID-19 on your booth, support will be provided by the event organizer who will guide you through the necessary steps you will need to take, including cleaning assistance from the venue cleaning team. Further details of this will be available closer to the event.
- Implement a thorough and frequent cleaning regime of objects and equipment, these could include: products, display surfaces, high frequency touchpoints (e.g. shelves, handrails, door handles), data capture devices and other booth resources, as well as tools and trolleys during the Build-up and Breakdown period. Consider what materials you may need to provide to do this and your systems for ensuring this is done. Make sure there are adequate disposal arrangements for cleaning products.
- Consider the equipment your teams will need on-site and avoid the need for sharing where possible. Where sharing cannot be avoided, consider your cleaning routines around this. Please remember any PPE you are supplying should not be shared between individuals without thorough cleaning. Consider the locations more likely to be touched (e.g. handrails and door handles) and ensure a regular cleaning regime
- If you decide to provide disposable gloves when customers enter your booth, ensure that they are mindful that they should still avoid touching their face and ensure you have an adequate disposal system.
- A cleaning log positioned in a prominent location on your booth may be a useful way to capture and demonstrate the cleaning regime you have put in place.

HAND SANITIZER

- Please provide anti-bacterial hand sanitizer on your booth and encourage use by everybody – particularly if touching surfaces or handling products.
- Ensure that your staff are aware of the booth policy and can communicate it effectively to your visitors.

PPE

- Consider the use of PPE across all phases of the event as part of your risk assessment and provide it as necessary within your booth space. Remember that individual pieces of PPE should not be used by multiple people without adequate cleaning in between.
- PPE is considered as the lowest level of mitigation measures which should only be considered if the risk cannot be managed through preventative measures such as physical distancing and hygiene regimes etc.
- Face coverings are recommended for non-vaccinated attendees indoors.
- It is important to use face coverings and gloves properly and wash or sanitize your hands before putting them on and taking them off.

WASTE DISPOSAL

- Contact the venue cleaning team if you require additional waste disposal services. Information is provided in the exhibitor portal.

STAFF WELFARE

Staff welfare is a key consideration during these times, and it is important that your staff be aware of the measures you are taking and the required procedures to enable them to work safely and confidently on your booth.

ACCOMMODATION

- Ensure that you are aware of any measures your proposed accommodation/hotel recommends and pass this information onto your team.

BRIEFINGS

- Brief your team about the control measures you, as well as the venue and the event organizers are implementing in advance of them coming on-site in order to help them feel comfortable about the ways in which the risks have been reduced, and to ensure they understand what is required and expected of them.
- Arrange for on-booth briefings for your team to be held in advance of the show, digitally, or given to smaller groups in order to maintain physical distancing guidelines.
- Remember to detail your control measures on any site rules you are issuing to your teams, contractors and suppliers who will be on your booth during the Build-up and Breakdown period. You must tell them of any measures you are taking that impact them, or procedures they will need to adhere to.
- Consider briefing your team to deal with customers who may have special needs in a different way - for example briefing them verbally upon arrival should they have visual impairments
- Give someone within your booth team responsibility for ensuring adherence to your control measures.
- Add any signage to your booth/ and to help remind staff and visitors about physical distancing/respecting other people's personal space and encourage hand washing.

BREAKS

- Consider splitting your booth team into different but consistent shift teams, so you can stagger staff break times to avoid peak times for venue facilities and reduce pressure on any on-booth facility.
- Encourage staff to take breaks outside of the venue following physical distance guidelines.
- Avoiding catering points, especially at key periods during the day (lunchtime etc), as this will allow the venue to deal more quickly and effectively with the visitors. Ask your booth staff to buy anything they need from the catering points in the morning or later in the afternoons if possible.

PERSONAL HYGIENE

- Employers should support their workers in using face coverings safely if they choose to wear one. This means telling workers:
 - Wash your hands thoroughly with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitiser before putting a face covering on, and after removing it.
 - When wearing a face covering, avoid touching your face or face covering, as you could contaminate them with germs from your hands.
 - Change your face covering if it becomes damp or if you've touched it.
 - Continue to wash your hands regularly.
 - Change and wash your face covering daily.
 - If the material is washable, wash in line with manufacturer's instructions. If it's not washable, dispose of it carefully in your usual waste.
 - Practice physical distancing wherever possible.

SYMPTOMS / TRACK & TRACING

- We are confident the measures that we, the venue and the exhibitors will be putting in place will make our event as low risk as possible.
- Ensure you and your staff give accurate information throughout the registration process in order for effective track and trace.
- The relevant local authorities will contact you if there's a need to update you regarding track and trace.
- Ensure you and your staff are familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19 as well as the local government advice on what action should take if you develop symptoms before going on site for the event.

- If you or any staff member present symptoms of COVID-19 on arrival at the venue, please be advised you will not be allowed to enter the event.
- In the event of a known or suspected case of COVID-19 on your booth, contact the event organizer straight away who will guide you through the necessary steps you will need to take.
- Ensure you and your staff are familiar with the symptoms of COVID-19 as well as the latest advice on what action you should take if you develop any of these symptoms before going on-site for the event: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>
- The procedures you should follow if someone on your booth develops any of these symptoms on-site will be communicated to you in advance of the event.

TRAVEL TO/FROM THE VENUE

- Transport arrangements to and from the venue should be considered by yourselves in advance of the event.

VULNERABILITIES

- It may be difficult for you to assist with visitors' vulnerabilities, as not all vulnerabilities can be easily seen, and you may not have the ability or resource to assist. However, do try to ensure you have given your own staff the opportunity to let you know if there are any individual requirements they may have, as you would normally do, and try to accommodate any requirements a visitor alerts you to.

Please use this in conjunction with event specific guidance in your exhibitor portal.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to get in touch with your operations contact:

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