

# WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool

Version 3 – 16 June 2022

*Instructions for authorities and event organizers on how to use the tool planning mass gatherings*

The content of this WHO Mass Gatherings COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool has been updated to reflect the latest evidence on COVID-19 and mass gatherings as well as feedback from users.

This revision of the risk assessment tool was developed and reviewed by the WHO research and evidence and considerations such as improved diagnostics, vaccines, and other interventions. The tool includes: 1. Assessment Overview; 2. Decision Tree; 3. Risk Evaluation; 4. Risk Mitigation; 5. Risk Communication; 6. Review Sign Off. A list of abbreviations is provided at the end of the tool.

Version 1 was published on 20 March 2020 under the title "Mass Gathering risk assessment tool for COVID-19: WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool - Generic Events". This is the third

**WHO recommends that the decision-making process related to holding, modifying or cancelling mass gatherings should be based on a risk-based approach.** Importantly, it should be reminded that gatherings should not be cancelled when precautionary measures are properly applied, zero risk does not exist. Routine risk assessment is essential to prevent the amplification of the COVID-19 cases connected to a mass gathering. In view of the current situation, it is recommended for host countries authorities and event organizers to assess the specific risk of COVID-19 for each mass gathering.

## Overview of the WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool

There are three pillars to the WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool:

1. Risk Evaluation
2. Risk Mitigation
3. Risk Communication

## How To Complete the WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool:

This risk assessment tool must be completed in this Excel spreadsheet (see following instructions):

1. Instructions (this tab) - provides general overview of the WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool
  2. Assessment Overview - form to outline mass gathering name, host country, region, date, and type of event
  3. Decision Tree - flowchart with an overview of the risk assessment process.
  4. Risk Evaluation - assessment of risk factors of mass gathering event, provides a risk score
  5. Risk Mitigation - assessment of mitigation measures to be implemented to reduce the risk of COVID-19
  6. Decision Matrix - uses the total COVID-19 risk evaluation score (Tab 4. Risk Evaluation) to determine the level of risk and the corresponding mitigation measures
  7. Risk Communication - details the importance of clearly communicating your plan for the event's Risk Communication and Community Engagement and Infodemic Management
  8. Review Sign Off - page for risk assessment reviewers to provide additional comments and sign off
- Instructions for use of the individual components are provided in the respective tabs.

## Reference Documents

This risk assessment tool should be used in conjunction with:

- Holding gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO Policy brief (2 August 2021) <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/343211> and <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-during-the-current-covid-19-pandemic-who-policy-brief-2-august-2021>
- Key planning recommendations for mass gatherings in the context of the current COVID-19 pandemic, WHO Academy.

To accurately provide answers to the following Risk Evaluation questions and Risk Mitigation recommendations, host country authorities and MG organizers should reference the data from the latest COVID-19 situation reports, if available.

Mass gathering risk assessment must be conducted with input from local and national authorities (emergency management and response, transport, safety and security, law enforcement, etc.). Risk Mitigation and Risk Communication tabs respectively may use vague language such as "**significant**", "**frequent**", or "**high proportion**", in the context of the local health care system, among others. Mass gathering event organizers should use this language to ensure the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and the capacity of the local health care system.

For the **Overall risk of further spread of COVID-19** for a mass gathering to be determined, the following factors should be considered:

- **Epidemiological factors:** the current epidemiological situation of the COVID-19 pandemic in the host country
- **Health system factors:** the Public Health and Social Measures (PHSM) that are in place in the host country
- **Individual factors:** the geographical distribution and number of mass gatherings in the host country
- **Venue factors:** the context of the mass gathering and characteristics of the venue

It should also be noted that risk assessment is a cyclical process, as demonstrated in the International Standard for Risk Management - ISO31000 (<https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#iso:code:31000>) assessment process: Risk Evaluation, Risk Mitigation and Risk Communication. Recommendations should be communicated throughout the planning and operational phases of a mass gathering. As the figure shows, risk assessment is a cyclical process and should be repeated during the pandemic and local epidemiological situation.

Communication and Consultation



It is important to remember that while mitigation measures can decrease the risk of COVID-19 spread, more information, refer to: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/considerations-for-planning-mass-gatherings>

The role of WHO is to provide rational and science-based public health guidance on how to plan mass gatherings safely for event organizers and other stakeholders to use when planning. It is for event organizers and public health authorities to make an informed decision on whether to proceed and on the best arrangements to decrease any associated risk of COVID-19 spread.

There is no defined threshold for the numbers of attendees to qualify an event as a mass gathering. Events are brought together for a defined period of time, which can amplify transmission of COVID-19. This applies to small- and medium-sized events as well as larger/mass gatherings. However, it is for event organizers on public health risks, WHO does not conduct (or own) risk assessments. Decisions on postponing or cancelling mass gatherings. These decisions remain with Member States.

If event organizers are looking for technical support for the planning of a mass gathering, they should contact WHO Country Offices or Country Offices.

# Risk Assessment Tool – Generic Events

## Mass gatherings during the COVID-19 pandemic

It has been updated to reflect new World Health Organization (WHO) technical guidance and new evidence on both

the COVID-19 pandemic. The tool was developed by the WHO Mass Gathering Technical Expert Group with input from WHO area-specific technical teams and includes new information on COVID-19 variants of concern and ventilation considerations. The expanded tool includes eight tabs: 1. Instructions; 2. Risk Assessment Matrix; 3. Risk Communication; 4. Risk Mitigation; 5. Risk Mitigation Score; 6. Risk Mitigation Strategy; 7. Risk Communication; and 8. Reviewer Sign Off. There is also an additional tab with a glossary and

additional information. The tool was published on 10 July 2020 under the title "WHO update of the "WHO Mass Gathering COVID-19 Risk Assessment Tool - Generic Events".

**Planning, postponing or cancelling gatherings of any size in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic should rely on a risk assessment. Risk assessments should never be left unmanaged or poorly managed, regardless of their size and type and level of associated risk. Even when planning for mass gatherings includes conducting dynamic risk assessments to determine the overall risk of the event, during the current COVID-19 pandemic, WHO has developed this risk assessment tool for mass gatherings for use by event organizers to assess the COVID-19 transmission associated with the event.**

Access:

The tool consists of eight tabs. Scores are automatically calculated there. The tabs for this excel tool are as follows:

1. Instructions (Tab 1. Instructions)

2. Risk Assessment Matrix (Tab 2. Risk Assessment Matrix)

3. Risk Mitigation Score (Tab 3. Risk Mitigation Score)

4. Risk Mitigation Strategy (Tab 4. Risk Mitigation Strategy)

5. Risk Mitigation (Tab 5. Risk Mitigation)

6. Risk Communication (Tab 6. Risk Communication)

7. Reviewer Sign Off (Tab 7. Reviewer Sign Off)

8. Glossary (Tab 8. Glossary)

2021) available on the WHO website (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/holding-gatherings-during-the-handle/10665/343409>)

COVID-19 outbreak. Interim guidance (4 November 2021) available on the WHO website (<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/interim-guidance-on-holding-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>) and in the WHO COVID-19 app for

Mitigation statements, event organizers must be knowledgeable about the current state of the COVID-19 globally. Daily global COVID-19 situation reports provided by WHO (<https://covid19.who.int/>) as well as national COVID-

national public health authorities and event organizers, as well as with input from multi-sectoral stakeholders (including law enforcement or military, if applicable). Experts with knowledge in mass gatherings, risk assessment, epidemiology, and public health should be engaged from the initial stages of event planning. Questions and Statements in the Risk Evaluation and Assessment, or "high proportion". Specific definitions are not provided for such criteria because multiple factors may influence the risk, including the accepted risk level in the host country, the capability to respond to potential outbreaks and the resources available. Event organizers should work with the local and national public health authorities when answering risk questions with the host country. The capacity of the health system is taken into account.

Determined, factors under consideration include:

*9 pandemic and known transmission scenarios*

*2 currently in place or feasible in the host community and the capacity of the local health care system*

*g participants, and their individual risk profile dynamics*

*venue/venues that may influence the risk of COVID-19 spread*

in the figure below. This figure has been adapted from the risk assessment process outlined by the ISO 31000 standard (<https://www.iso.org/standard/62646.html>) to align with WHO's recommended three pillars of the mass gatherings risk assessment process: recording and reporting on the key findings of the risk assessment; communicating and consulting on decisions to participants and event staff; and monitoring and reviewing the risk assessment results must continuously occur. In dynamic risk assessments, the dynamic risk assessment process should account for changing information in the COVID-19



of amplification of COVID-19 cases, they can not completely eliminate the threat.

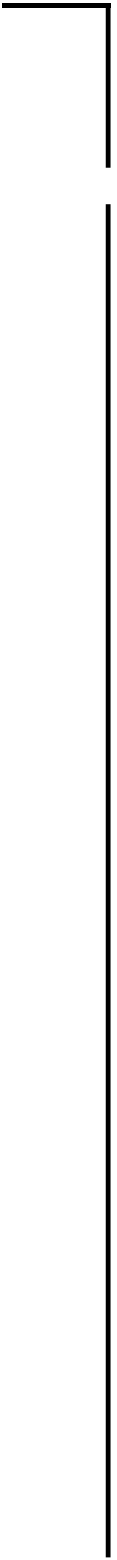
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[ons-in-adjusting-public-health-and-social-measures-in-the-context-of-covid-19-interim-guidance](#)

and facilitate its implementation by Member States. WHO develops technical guidance to facilitate delivering planning events in the context of COVID-19 pandemic. The purpose of using a risk-based approach is to enable whether the event under consideration should be restricted, modified, postponed, canceled or proceeded with

a mass gathering. In the context of COVID-19, mass gatherings are events with a high density of individuals COVID-19, and place additional strain on a healthcare system. This COVID-19 risk assessment tool can be used should be noted that while WHO may provide advice and technical guidance to host countries and event for the event. WHO has no mandate to take, enforce or sanction decisions related to holding, modifying, dates and event organizers.

nering, they are encouraged to seek advice from local public health authorities, WHO headquarters, Regional



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