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| COVID-19 Public Events Framework |
| Last updated – 21 December 2021 |



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# Purpose and Context

The purpose of the COVID-19 Public Events Framework (Framework) is to guide event organisers and venue operators to operate above and beyond what is permitted under the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria).](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register)

The Framework sets rules for indoor venues and events with 30,000 or more attendees organising a public event including:

* + COVID-19 vaccination verification
  + QR Code Check in obligations
  + COVIDSafe Measures

**If you are a venue or event operating with less than 30,000 attendees, this Framework does not apply to you** and you may operate your public event or venue under the requirements of the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) that apply to your venue, event or activity type.

The [pandemic orders](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) are the primary set of rules governing the behaviour of people and businesses as part of *Victoria’s Roadmap to Deliver the National Plan* (the Roadmap)

This Framework sets out:

* the approval process for indoor venues (including stadia) and events of 30,000 or more attendees to operate above the Pandemic (Open Premises) Order and
* the requirements for outdoor events of 30,000 or more attendees to operate under the Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria).

The Framework has been updated on 21 December 2021 and is now only applicable to indoor venues (including stadia) and events with 30,000 or more attendees.

This Framework should be read in conjunction with the [Victorian Guidelines for Planning Safe Public Events](https://www.police.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2019-05/Guidelines-for-Public-Events2018.pdf) (2018). Event organisers and venue operators are still required to engage with and obtain the necessary approvals from other federal, state and local government bodies.

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 [pandemic orders in force](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register), which all events must comply with.

# In-scope Venues and Events

## Definition of a public event

The [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) contains the definition of a public event, and provides details of controls related to public and private gatherings at different types of venues and event sites, including venues that may ordinarily hold events as part of their business-as-usual operations. The features of the public events definition are:

**‘An eligible 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.’**

## Indoor Events and Venues with 30,000 or more attendees

Indoor events and venues proposing to host 30,000 attendees or more must submit their COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan for review through the Framework approval pathway. The inclusion of density limits is not required.

## Outdoor Events with 30,000 or more attendees

Outdoor events with 30,000 or more attendees may operate under the requirements of the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register). These events are required to publish their COVIDSafe Event/Venue Plan on their website (sensitive information is permitted to be removed), however, their plans do not need to be submitted to government for review or registration.

## Public Gatherings

Public gatherings are events that are held in public places where the event organisers **do not have exclusive control over the space** – such as Christmas carols, New Year’s Eve fireworks, street parades or organised sports events on public roads. These events are free and non-ticketed, enabling any member of public to walk up and participate, therefore are not required to monitor the vaccination status of spectators and the public.

However, staff and attendees **must** be fully vaccinated to access areas the event organisers have control over – such as starting corrals at mass participation sporting events.

If an event organiser anticipates an outdoor public gathering of 30,000 or more attendees they may operate under the requirements of the [pandemic orders in force](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register). These events should publish their COVIDSafe Event Plan on their website (sensitive information is permitted to be removed). However, their plans do not need to be submitted to government for review or registration.

# Out of scope

A workplace or personal gathering permitted under the [pandemic orders in force](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) is not considered a public event.

Therefore, the Framework **does not** apply to the following:

* a public gathering in a public place (e.g. a picnic in a park)
* a business meeting
* a market where there is only retail activities occurring. Where there are activities outside of retail (eg. Rides, entertainment) this falls within scope.
* a school, TAFE 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
* protests

The [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order and Pandemic (Movement and Gathering) Order](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) continue to apply to these gatherings.

# COVIDSafe Planning

This document refers to two types of plans.

## COVIDSafe Plan

Every Victorian business with on-site operations must have a current [COVIDSafe Plan](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan). They also must stay up to date with restrictions and public health advice.

## COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan

Venues and events with 30,000 or more attendees are required to operate in accordance with a COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan documenting how they will implement the the public health requirements for holding large public events in Victoria.

A COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan will only be required by events that are proposing to hold 30,000 attendees or more:

* Indoor venues with 30,000 or more attendees – operators are required to submit their COVIDSafe Venue Plan for once off government review and approval.
* Outdoor events with 30,000 or more attendees – event organisers are required to publish their COVIDSafe Event Plan on their website (sensitive content is permitted to be removed) and do not need submit their plan for government review.

A COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan is a tailored and comprehensive plan that must be specific to the activity, venue or event. The plan sets out how the public event will be managed to reduce the risk of transmission of COVID-19 amongst attendees and staff, based on the six criteria detailed in section 7.1 COVIDSafe Vene/Event Plan Approval Process.

Venue operators that host multiple similar events and wish to operate with 30,000 or more attendees can submit one COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan for once off government review and approval. Venue operators do not need to submit a COVIDSafe Venue/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 the venue.

# Operating a public event or venue

Public events and venues with less than 30,000 attendees may operate under the requirements of the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register). The [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) lists common event venues and facility types and includes COVIDSafe Measures and other requirements.

Event organisers or venue operators are no longer required to seek approval from the Victorian Government to run their event or venue and must operate within what the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) permits. This document can be used to guide you but you are not required to submit or register your plan.

Outdoor events with 30,000 attendees or more may operate under the requirements of the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register). These events are required to publish their COVIDSafe Event Plan on their website (sensitive information is permitted to be removed), however, their plans do not need to be submitted to government for review.

For guidance with creating a COVIDSafe Plan, please visit [www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan](http://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan) for the most up-to-date information.

## Revision of the Public Events Framework under the Roadmap

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| **Criteria** | **Public Events operational under the** [**Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)**](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) | **Indoor Venues and Events with 30,000 or more attendees** | |
| **Date** | Phase D | | |
| **Threshold** | Venues and events with less than 30,000 attendees | Indoor Venues and Events with 30,000 or more attendees |
| **COVID-19 Vaccination Status and Record Keeping** | Mandatory use of the Services Victoria app for check in on entry with verification of COVID-19 vaccination status.    *All attendees must be fully vaccinated, or under 12 years and 2 months, or hold a valid medical exemption. All attendees must show proof of their vaccination status when requested.*  All staff, contractors and industry participants at public events must be fully vaccinated in line with the requirements of [pandemic orders in force](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register). | | |
| **Capacity** | Events and venues to operate in line with the [[Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer) in place in each setting. | Indoor Venues and Events with 30,000 or more attendees will register their COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan for review through the Public Events Framework approval pathway. | |
| **Zoning** | Not required | Not required | |
| **COVID Marshals** | Operate under the [[[Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer).](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer) | In line with the broader economy, COVID Check In Marshal(s) required to verify attendee COVID-19 vaccination status.  COVID Marshal(s) may be utilised to monitor and control attendee congestion at entrance/exit points and that COVIDSafe Measures are maintained. | |
| **Registrations and COVIDSafe Event and Venue Plans** | Operate under the  [[[Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer).](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer)    Businesses are required to complete a [COVIDSafe Plan](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covidsafe-plan) but are not required to submit the plans to government. | Indoor Venues and Indoor Events with 30,000 or more attendees will register their COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan for review through the Public Events Framework approval pathway.  Outdoor Events with 30,000 or more attendees must publish their COVIDSafe Event Plan online (sensitive content permitted to be removed) but are not required to submit their plan for approval. | |
| *Dancefloors, free-standing, general admission and camping events permitted in line with the*  [[Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/directions-issued-by-victorias-chief-health-officer). | | | |

# Governing bodies

## Public Health Advisory Panel

The Public Health Advisory Panel is a committee comprising Department of Health (DH) representatives from Intelligence, Case, Contact and Outbreak Management; COVID-19 Strategy and Policy; Data, Intelligence, Modelling and Epidemiology; and COVID-19 Response branches.

The panel meets regularly and is accountable for:

* Reviewing COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plans to determine if the appropriate public health risk controls are planned for the event or venue
* Providing a recommendation to the Chief Health Officer outlining if the event or venue’s public health risk controls are sufficient and the rationale for the recommendation
* Providing advice to the Chief Health Officer on updates to the Framework and related guidance materials.

## Government endorsement

Government will endorse the COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plans, based on the Chief Health Officer’s advice.

## Alignment to the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)*

In line with the amendments to the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act (2008)*, in force from 15 December 2021, the Framework approval pathway process has been revised.

In relation to the Framework, the decision maker of exemptions under the [Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria)](https://www.health.vic.gov.au/covid-19/pandemic-order-register) is still the Chief Health Officer or the Deputy Chief Health Officer.

Pandemic orders can be made to prohibit or regulate public or private gatherings and the carrying on of activities, businesses or undertakings in a pandemic management area. The Minister may, at any time on or after the making of a pandemic declaration, make any order (a pandemic order) that the Minister believes is reasonably necessary to protect public health.

Before making a pandemic order, the Minister must request the advice of the Chief Health Officer in relation to the serious risk to public health posed by the disease and the public health measures that the Chief Health Officer considers are necessary to address this risk. In making a pandemic order, the Minister must have regard to the advice of the Chief Health Officer (which may be given orally or in writing) about the matters referred to and may have regard to any other matter the Minister considers relevant including, but not limited to, social and economic matters. The Minister may consult any other person the Minister considers appropriate before making a pandemic order.

The Chief Health Officer may, for the purpose of eliminating or reducing the serious risk to public health, authorise authorised officers to exercise any of the public health risk powers and the pandemic management powers.

# Review Process for Indoor Venues and Events with 30,000 or more attendees

## COVIDSafe Venue/Event Plan Approval Process

*Note - this approval process is designed to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as Occupational Health & Safety requirements or the Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria), which all businesses (including event organisers and venue operators) must comply with.*

**Implementation**

**Assessment**

1. Submit Plan

2. Initial review

3. Assess Plan

4. Outcome

5. Implement

* Responsible party (event, venue or organiser) implements plan as approved
* Compliance checks randomly undertaken to ensure the COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan is being followed
* Event organiser or venue operator may be instructed to address issues of non-compliance immediatelyal prodesigned to supplement, not replace, other Victorian laws and regulations, such as Occupational Health & Safety requirements or the Pandemic (Open Premises) Order (Victoria), which all businesses (including event organisers and venue managers) must comply with.
* Event organiser or venue operator provided with written confirmation of the outcome by DJPR
* Event organiser or venue operator publishes COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan on website or social media (sensitive information can be removed prior to publication)
* Confirm indoor event or venue is proposing to host 30,000 or more attendees
* Event organiser or venue operator submits a COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan to the Public Events Team of DJPR
* DH specialists evaluate plan against evaluation criteria detailed in section 7.2
* Further information or alterations to the plan may be requested of the event organiser or venue operator
* The COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan will undergo scrutiny from the Public Health Advisory Panel
* Chief Health Officer approves based on the the recommendations of the Public Health Advisory Panel
* Government will endorse if/how the event can proceed

## Evaluation criteria

A COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan must address six key areas that aim to reduce the risk of transmission in a public place, event or venue.

These key areas will be assessed within each COVIDSafe Venue or Event Plan.

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

*Note: Staff includes employees, industry participants, contractors and volunteers.*

1. **Record Keeping** - Electronic record keeping through the [Service Victoria app](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/about-free-service-victoria-qr-code-app) is **mandatory** for all public events and venues. Venue operators and event organisers must have a method of capturing the details for each individual at the venue or event, including attendees, participants, performers, staff, delivery drivers, etc.

QR code signage should be displayed at point of sale or service so that attendees can check in with the Service Vic app and QR Code as they enter the venue or event site.

*Note: Record Keeping requirements for attendees may not need to be monitored at large public gatherings in undefined public spaces, for example parades or fireworks displays (refer to Section 2.4).*

1. **COVID-19 Vaccination status** - All attendees, staff and industry participants **must** be fully vaccinated, or under 12 years and 2 months, or hold a valid medical exemption. COVID-19 vaccination status must be verified by a [COVID Check-in Marshal](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/covid-check-in-marshals) through the [Service Victoria app](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/about-free-service-victoria-qr-code-app) or other [eligible proof of vaccination documentation](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checking-customers-vaccination-status).

*Note: COVID-19 Vaccination requirements for attendees may not need to be monitored at large public gatherings in undefined public spaces, for example parades or fireworks displays.*

1. **Communications** – Venue operators and event organisers should communicate to staff and attendees key public health messaging before and during the event. This may include reminders to stay home if you are unwell, have [tested positive for COVID-19](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/checklist-cases) or if you are required to be in self-isolation or quarantine.
2. **Crowd management** – Venue operators and event organisers should implement clear protocols such as [signage](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/signs-posters-and-templates) to communicate COVIDSafe measures and procedures onsite, maintaining physical distancing in common areas, recommendation of face coverings (masks) in points of congestion and encouraging general COVIDSafe behaviours.

Venue operators and event organisers should also consider management of points of congestion that cover all aspects of the attendee journey, including as they enter the venue, where and how they will be seated, movement throughout the event, and how they exit the venue. COVID Marshal(s) may be utilised to monitor and control attendee congestion at entrance/exit points and that COVIDSafe Measures are maintained.

1. **Cleaning and Hygiene** – Venue operators and event organisers **must** take steps to ensure that event areas are cleaned on a regular basis. This includes cleaning frequently touched surfaces, such as toilets and handrails (at least twice a day) and cleaning surfaces that are visibly soiled. Hand sanitiser and cleaning facilities should be available for staff and attendees. Where a venue operator or event organiser is providing tours, equipment must be thoroughly cleaned between users.
2. **Staff safety** – Staff should be provided with appropriate training and guidance on how to use masks and other Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). Staff **must** carry face coverings (masks) and wear them [as required under the pandemic orders in force](https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/face-masks-when-wear-face-mask).

# 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.

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