



**Frequently Asked Questions
Senior Centers Planning for Reopening
March 30, 2021**

All Senior Centers planning to reopen should follow the most updated [Executive Orders](#) along with the Senior Center Re-Opening Plan Guidance.

1. Can people take masks off if doing exercise that requires heavy breathing?

Per the [Mask Mandate](#) "masks or cloth facial coverings are not required when someone is engaged in strenuous activity when physical distance of 6 feet can be consistently maintained."

Doing any strenuous activity outside will lower the risk. If people are able to wear a mask that also lowers the risk.

2. Can people do activities like Bridge?

From [CDC's Personal and Social Activities](#) page: "Limit contact with commonly touched surfaces or shared items" "Clean and disinfect commonly touched surfaces and any shared items between uses when feasible."

From CDC's [How COVID-19 Spreads](#) page: "COVID-19 spreads less commonly through contact with contaminated surfaces." "Respiratory droplets can also land on surfaces and objects. It is possible that a person could get COVID-19 by touching a surface or object that has the virus on it and then touching their own mouth, nose or eyes."

There is some risk associated with sharing objects, centers should determine what level of risk fits them.

3. Can people make their own coffee?

Yes. It is recommended to wipe down any frequently touched surfaces between participants.

4. Can we use regular dishes or do we have to use paper products?



From CDC's [Considerations for Community-Based Organizations](#) page: "Use disposable food service items (e.g., utensils, dishes). If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher. Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items."

5. How many people can we transport in a van?

There is no specific limit on how many people can be in a transport van. It is recommended to keep distance between people whenever they are in a van. Even vaccinated individuals when in public spaces should wear a mask and keep distance from others.

6. If I have staff who are hesitant to get the vaccine, is there information I can share with them?

VDH has a two-page document: [Things You Should Know About COVID-19 Vaccines](#).

7. We have classes offered in other locations, such as a church, do these follow the same guidance?

The guidance and recommendations within the Senior Center guidance document is similar to what the Health Department would provide to other organizations or facilities where people from multiple households are gathered together in a public space.

8. What is the guidance for outdoor activities?

From CDC's [Guidance for Wearing Masks](#): "High Intensity Activities - Masks should always be used in public settings, but if you are unable to wear a mask because of difficulty breathing during high intensity activities, choose a location with greater ventilation and air exchange (for instance, outdoors versus indoors) and where you can keep at least 6 feet of distance from others during the activity. If such a location is not available, opt for low-intensity activities such as walking or yoga that allow for mask wearing." "If you are able to wear a mask, remove your mask if it gets moist from sweat and replace it with a clean mask."

9. Can volunteers bring clients with them for grocery shopping?

From CDC's [When You've Been Fully Vaccinated](#) page: "You should still take steps to protect yourself and others in many situations, like wearing a mask, staying at least 6 feet apart from others, and avoiding crowds and poorly ventilated spaces. Take these precautions whenever you are in public."



10. Multiple questions related to the “6 people per dining table” guidance from the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD): Can it be multiple households? Can people be vaccinated or unvaccinated? How is this allowed but activities like playing cards are not? How do we explain this to participants?

See the ACCD’s [Update on New Work Safe Additions to the Be Smart, Stay Safe Order](#) for more details on what is allowed in restaurants. There is no mention of all 6 individuals needing to be from the same household nor is there any mention that all members need to be vaccinated.

Because there is not specific guidance for this sector (Senior Centers) the closest guidance available regarding individuals from multiple households eating together in a public space was the ACCD guidance for restaurants. Centers can choose stricter guidance based on their population to align with risk levels they are comfortable with.

11. Are there screening guidelines related to people having visitors from out of state?

There are no screening guidelines specifically related to people having visitors from out of state.

Asking the questions in the Health Screening section of the guidance will help staff and participants determine if they should not attend the center at this time.

Information from the VDH FAQ: [I am hosting out-of-state visitors. Do I need to quarantine?](#)

12. What do we do if staff/volunteers/participants refuse to be vaccinated? Can we require vaccination? Can we require people to show their vaccine card?

The Health Department is not a regulatory agency. The Health Department and DAIL recommend reaching out to legal counsel regarding requiring vaccination and requiring that participants showing their vaccine card.

13. Is singing without masks allowed?

From CDC’s [How COVID-19 Spreads](#): "When people with COVID-19 cough, sneeze, sing, talk, or breathe they produce respiratory droplets." "Respiratory droplets cause infection when they are inhaled or deposited on mucous membranes, such as those that line the inside of the mouth and nose" "COVID-19 can sometimes be spread by airborne transmission" "There is evidence that under certain conditions, people with COVID-19 seem to have infected others who were more than 6 feet away. These transmissions occurred within enclosed spaces that had inadequate ventilation.



Sometimes the infected person was breathing heavily, for example while singing or exercising."

From the CDC's [guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings](#) singing is listed as a risk factor to consider.

14. Can Bone Builders (exercise program) participants share weights? How do we do this program safely?

See #2 above.

15. Is an art class allowed?

To reduce risk participants should wear a mask, remain at least 6 feet from others, and not share equipment with others.

16. Can you clarify the "1 person per 100 square feet" rule; does this apply to each room or total capacity of the building?

Only calculate space based on what parts of the building are used by participants. Consult ACCD for further guidance on building capacity.

17. Will there be future changes to this square footage rule?

ACCD would be the best entity to check in with about this.

18. Can you exclude people if they refuse to wear a mask?

Masks are governed by the [Executive Order](#).

More information on the [Mask Mandate](#) is available on the ACCD page.

19. What is the maximum number of people allowed in an outdoor gathering?

From the ACCD [sector guidance on outdoor recreation](#): "Limit gatherings of people to as few as possible to ensure physical distancing of six feet or more can occur. All outdoor events must comply with the [special event guidance in the Work Safe memo](#) Large outdoor facilities such as trail networks, beaches, and municipal parks may have more than 150 people in them as long as there is no single gathering or event exceeding 150 people and all guests can maintain six feet of physical distancing between households."