

Size Limits for Events & Gatherings in Philadelphia

On October 6, 2020 [Governor Wolf announced changes](#) in limits on the numbers of persons allowed at events and gatherings in Pennsylvania. In this announcement, he clarified that “any gathering restrictions established by local authorities, such as the ones established in Philadelphia and State College, remain in effect.”

Over the course of the COVID-19 epidemic so far, Philadelphia County has the highest number of cases of COVID-19 infection and the highest per-capita case rate of any county in Pennsylvania. Philadelphia also has more large event venues than any other county. Taking these risks into consideration, the City of Philadelphia will retain more restrictions on the maximum number of participants allowed in events than permitted by the Commonwealth. Philadelphia will, however, follow the same principles that:

1. maximum event sizes are dependent on the size of the space that the event occupies, up to a fixed limit, and
2. indoor events will have lower limits than outdoor events, given the substantially greater risk of COVID-19 spread indoors.

Effective Friday, October 16, 2020, event size limits for Philadelphia are as follows:

Maximum Occupancy Calculator for indoor events:

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Indoor Rate
0-2,000 people	10% of Maximum Occupancy
More than 2,000 people	10% of Maximum Occupancy up to 250 people
No seating or maximum undefined	10 persons per 1000 square feet up to 250 people

Maximum Occupancy Calculator for outdoor events:

Maximum Occupancy	Allowable Outdoor Rate
0-2,000 people	20% of Maximum Occupancy
2,001 - 10,000 people	15% of Maximum Occupancy
Over 10,000 people	15% of Maximum Occupancy up to 7,500 people
No seating or maximum undefined	Above percentage of 67 per 1,000 square feet, up to 7,500

Policies on the application of these limits:

- The Maximum Occupancy is defined by the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) Life Safety Code.
- All persons present in these spaces during the events, including performers and staff, count toward these limits.
- The limits determined by the calculator apply even if they lead to fewer than 25 persons allowed to participate in an event or gathering. For example, an indoor space with a Maximum Occupancy of 150 persons can host a gathering of no more than 15 persons.
- Outdoor events are required to ensure that the number of participants stays below these limits. This means they must control entry into the event space, count the number of persons entering, and refuse entry when the limit is met.
- Venues must follow all [Pennsylvania orders](#) and [guidance](#) to protect the safety of participants. In particular:
 - **Venues must require attendees to wear masks or face coverings and comply with 6-foot social distancing requirements.**
 - **In fixed-seat venues, seats must be taped or blocked off to prevent attendees from sitting fewer than 6 feet from persons in other household groups. In moveable-seat venues, seats must be arranged so that persons in different households remain seated more than 6 feet apart.**
- Venues must also follow all [Philadelphia guidance](#) for COVID-19 safety precautions, including guidance for catered events and social gatherings. Because most COVID-19 spread in Philadelphia appears to be occurring within households and at small social gatherings, **the Philadelphia Department of Public Health still does not recommend that people hold social gatherings of any size.**
- These limits apply to events and gatherings, not the routine operations of businesses. As noted in the Governor’s announcement:

“An event or gathering is defined as a temporary grouping of individuals for defined purposes that takes place over a limited timeframe, such as hours or days, including fairs, festivals, concerts, or shows and groupings that occur within larger, more permanent businesses, such as shows or performances within amusement parks, individual showings of movies, business meetings or conferences, or each party or reception within a multi-room venue. Conversely, groups of people who share a space within a building in the ordinary course of operations, such as in an office building, classroom, production floor or similar regularly occurring operation of a business or organization, are not events or gatherings.”

Examples of how these limits would apply to different venues:

- An indoor theater with a maximum occupancy of 300 persons can have up to 30 persons (10% of 300).
- An indoor sports arena with a maximum capacity of 10,000 can host events with a maximum of 250 persons, including sports participants and staff.
- An outdoor stadium with a maximum capacity of 10,000 can host events with a maximum of 1,500 persons (15% of 10,000), including participants and staff.
- An outdoor event space of 80,000 square feet but no seating can host events with 804 persons (15% x 67 per 1,000 sq. ft. x 80). Event organizers must limit entry to this space (such as with fences) and count to ensure that no more than 804 persons enter the space.