



Flanders
State of the Art

CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION IN MEETING LOCATIONS

A GUIDE \ 1 JULY 2020 //

VISITFLANDERS

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INTRODUCTION

We will have to live with coronavirus for quite some time and therefore we will also have to continue taking measures to prevent a further spread or resurgence of the virus. The guide to 'coronavirus prevention in meeting locations' gives meeting locations in Flanders information and tips about how they can safely organise events while coronavirus is present. The health of all people organising or attending a meeting or conference is our main concern. With this guide, we want to help meeting locations to have a smooth and safe reopening after the first wave of COVID-19. However, it may also be helpful to people opening or redesigning a meeting location. This document contains a handy checklist to assess your level of compliance with the safety regulations, as well as inspiring tips and trends.

With this guide, we want to help meeting locations to have a smooth and safe reopening after the first wave of COVID-19.

VISITFLANDERS has developed this guide with the help of advice from a **sounding board** of meeting professionals. We would like to thank Jan Simons (Lamot), Annick Javor (ThorCentral), Inge Janvier & Jil Vanreusel (FMCCA), Heidi Jeuris (ParkInn Leuven), Tamara Weide (Belgian Limburg Convention Bureau), Kathleen Snauwaert (Crowne Plaza Brugge), Alain D'Haese (Easyfairs Belgium) and Peter Decuyper (Event Flanders) for their insights and suggestions.

This guide is part of a professionalisation programme that VISITFLANDERS has set up to improve the professionalism and quality of the meeting sector. It is one of many initiatives aimed at helping Flanders grow into a top international destination for meetings and conferences. Consider the guide as a tool for the continued development and improvement of the quality of your meeting location.



Protocol for reopening the tourism sector basic principles and sheet 2, MICE sector



Checklists for the meeting location





1

FRAMWORK

The mandatory and suggested health measures for meeting locations in Flanders during the coronavirus pandemic are based on the following documents:

1.1 SECURITY COUNCIL DECISIONS & LEGISLATION

The National Security Council has taken measures to prevent the further spread of coronavirus. These measures have been made law in a number of ministerial decrees. On the [website of the National Crisis Centre \(NCCN\)](#), you can find the most up to date information about the general coronavirus guidelines issued by the National Security Council. The measures described in ministerial decrees are enforceable. The meeting locations must apply them.

To help citizens correctly apply and interpret these measures, federal and regional civil servants and cabinet staff (in the federal coordination committee) have converted these legal documents into a list of questions and answers (see www.info-coronavirus.be). This list of questions is not a legal document. Fines may only be imposed based on the ministerial decrees.

1.2 PROTOCOLS

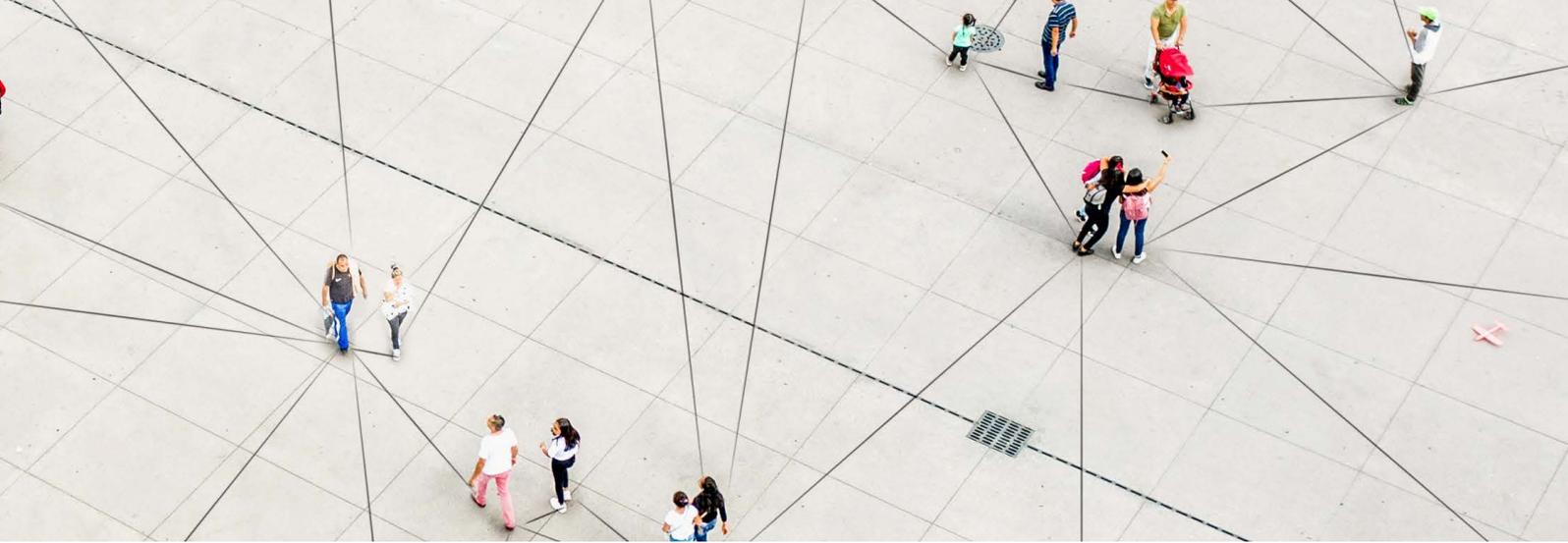
In addition, protocols have been created for various (sub)sectors, such as hospitality, sport, events etc. to help them prepare for a smooth and safe reopening.

- [General guidelines and protocol sheets for the hospitality industry](#)
- [Basic protocol for the cultural sector](#)
- [Protocol for organisers of sports events and competitions](#)
- [Covid Event protocol](#)

As of 9 June 2020, there is also a basic protocol for the entire tourism sector in Belgium, validated by the four competent ministers of Tourism (Mrs Weykmans, Mrs Demir, Mrs De Bue and Mr Vervoort). It contains basic guidelines for the entire sector and information sheets for tourism subsectors, including the meeting industry.

- [Basic protocol for tourism](#)
- [Safety protocols for tourism subsectors](#)





1.3 GUIDE TO 'CORONAVIRUS PREVENTION IN MEETING LOCATIONS'

The guide to 'coronavirus prevention in meeting locations' by VISITFLANDERS is a document for meeting locations; it is intended to **provide helpful advice and to raise awareness**. It explains how you can apply the general health measures to the organisation of a safe event in a meeting location in Flanders and Brussels.

1.4 COVID EVENT RISK MODEL

To assist event organisers and local governments in organising safe events, private and public organisers can test their events for potential COVID-19 safety risks for free using the **Covid Event Risk Model (CERM)**. This model consists of the **Covid Event Scan** and the **Covid Event Protocol**:

- the **Covid Event Scan (CES)** was developed in collaboration with scientific experts, specialised researchers and Subject matter experts to map out the safety risks of every event. The scan is a management model for the organiser of an event and an advisory model for governments. The result is an estimation of whether your event can comply with the set parameters.
- the **COVID Event Protocol** reviews and explains all the questions in the COVID Event Scan and helps you fill in the form.

Please note that local governments can play a role in whether specific events are permitted, and/or may impose certain conditions. They may demand to see a good risk analysis and plan of action before they grant a permit. Governments are largely autonomous in their decision making, which means conditions can vary per municipality. So, make sure you are well informed!

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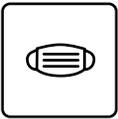
GENERAL PRINCIPLES & GUIDELINES

Below, you will see the general preventative measures and guidelines regarding coronavirus. The location must also comply with other guidelines, such as environmental or fire safety rules.

2.1 BASIC PRINCIPLES

To prevent the transmission of coronavirus, you can take **general preventative measures** with regard to hygiene and social distancing. This is explained in detail below.

2.1.1 HYGIENE



The basic protocol for tourism states:

- the company or association must provide resources for staff and visitors to ensure that the necessary **hand hygiene** can take place;
- **face masks** and other personal protective equipment are strongly advised and should be used if social distancing is impossible due to the nature of an activity;
- for **staff: wear face masks and gloves**, hydroalcoholic gel should be made available;
- **hydroalcoholic gel** should be available for visitors;
- the company or association must take **appropriate hygiene measures** in the workplace and regularly disinfect any materials used;
- **disinfection** of individual and collective equipment that is used several times a day;
- the company or association must ensure there is **good aeration** in the workplace;
- **regularly ventilate** the reception area, circulation areas and collective areas and/or check whether the ventilation system is working properly.



Personal hygiene

Everyone is responsible for complying with **personal hygiene measures**, such as regularly washing their hands, not touching their face, sneezing and coughing in the crook of their arm, etc.

As a meeting location, you can ensure that all persons at the location do their utmost to follow the personal hygiene measures:

- provide materials to allow visitors to carry out proper hand hygiene by:
 - **washing**, preferably with water and liquid hand soap;
 - **drying**, using paper towels or paper on a roll;
 - **disinfecting**, by providing hand gel at locations where handwashing is impossible.

 - provide **sanitising hand gel**:
 - at every entrance and exit;
 - at individual and collective equipment that is used several times a day, such as projectors, coffee machines, automated check-in desks etc....;

 - provide facemasks for all persons at the location for situations when a distance of 1.5 metres (see 2.1.2) cannot be guaranteed.
-



Contact surface hygiene

The risk of viral transmission via contact between people and materials can be reduced by disinfecting contact surfaces; create a disinfection protocol for the cleaning team of your meeting location.

This protocol should contain the following elements:

- an **inventory** of the objects/surfaces that are often used/touched by different people in each space;

 - a **cleaning plan** which establishes who will clean what, the frequency of cleaning and after which actions surfaces must be cleaned;

 - **cleaning** contact surfaces with soap and water and **disinfecting** them with disinfectant. Sometimes this can be done with the same product, depending on the brand/contents;

 - specific attention for individual and collective equipment that is used several times a day and all **'high touch'** surfaces and materials, such as door handles, doors, bannisters, wash basin taps ...
-



Ventilation

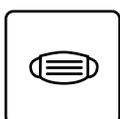
Since you cannot rule out transmission via air, you must consider how you are going to ensure optimal ventilation in the meeting location:



- turn on the ventilation and/or air conditioning at least **two hours before the start** of the event and leave it on until **two hours after the event**. The World Health Organization recommends a frequency of 6 to 12 air changes per hour;
- when using **air conditioning**, turn on the **extraction mode** to prevent air recirculation. In the event of air recirculation, the appliance must be fitted with a HEPA filter. Replace outside air and exhaust air filters according to the maintenance schedule;
- leave the systems running at a **lower speed at night** and when no events are taking place;
- leave the ventilation in the **sanitary facilities** running 24 hours a day, 7 days a week;
- if there is no ventilation system, ensure that the area is **ventilated regularly** by opening windows, shutters, doors etc. This also applies to mechanically ventilated buildings.

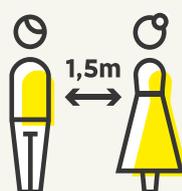
2.1.2 PHYSICAL DISTANCE

Viruses can be transmitted from person to person in places where people gather in closed spaces for long periods of time. Viral transmission can be reduced by minimising the frequency and duration of social interaction and physical contact between individuals..



The basic protocol for tourism states:

- create a layout in the different spaces in such way that visitors can easily move around while keeping a 1.5 metre distance;
- develop a **one-way circulation plan** and place clear signage to guide the visitors;
- when a physical separation is not possible, install a system of **partition walls** or screens (plexiglass or other).



Lay-out and capacity

Before the meeting takes place, meeting locations must have a good overview of the expected number of people and crowd flows. Map out potential problems.

Carry out the following steps:

- **create floor maps** of the entire meeting location, indicating the entrances, (emergency) exits and sanitary facilities. Make a distinction between public and non-public spaces;

- divide the location into **different zones**, so you can take different measures per zone in the crowd management plan (see below);

- calculate the **maximum number of people** per zone, based on the net floor area that is available:
 - car park & access paths to the meeting location;
 - entrances, reception area, corridors, lifts and stairwells;
 - exhibition- & poster area;
 - meeting rooms (plenary & break-out);
 - catering areas;
 - sanitair facilities.Take into account all participants, including staff, suppliers, organisers, exhibitors etc.;

- create **adapted seating plans** for meeting areas, with a maximum capacity for the different layouts (theatre, school style etc.).



Circulation plan

- create a circulation plan which allows for a physical distance of 1.5 metres as much as possible:
 - with routes for different flows of people (participants, staff, suppliers etc.);
 - with as much one-way circulation as possible and as few possible bottlenecks. Try to create one-way routes at the entrances and exits, if necessary, screened off with a fence or rope;
 - with queues and waiting areas. The people flows may exceed the capacity at certain times, for example, during registration at the entrance, at the start or end of a meeting, or at the coffee buffet, etc.;
 - develop solutions so the queue capacity cannot be exceeded.
You can assign different arrival times, and give participants time slots in advance;

- you must provide a basic plan that is discussed with the organiser of each event, as the basis for the crowd management plan..



2.2 GUIDELINES PER GROUP OF PEOPLE PRESENT

There are specific coronavirus **guidelines** for the **different groups of people** involved in an event. These parties are:

- staff members
- suppliers & partners
- organisers & exhibitors
- participants

Below are the guidelines per group. You can easily integrate them into your communication (see 3.2):

2.2.1 STAF



- do not come into work if you are **showing symptoms** or have had symptoms in the past 7 days. You must also stay home if someone in your immediate environment (partner, child etc.) is ill or is showing symptoms (or had in the past 7 days);;
- wear a **mask (mandatory)** if you come into contact with participants, organisers, suppliers etc.;
- **avoid physical contact** with people and keep a distance of 1.5 metres as much as possible;;
- regularly wash or **disinfect your hands** with a hydroalcoholic gel, at least every 30 minutes;
- use as few as possible **materials** that your colleagues also use (phones, keyboards, pens, kitchen towels, cleaning tools, knives etc.). If you must use them, disinfect them before use;
- wash your hands every time you use materials that other people have touched.

For kitchen staff:

- always wear a **chef's hat** or hairnet;
- wear a **mask** if you cannot guarantee a distance of 1.5 metres. You can also use a face shield if necessary, for example in the dishwashing area, to protect against splashes. Please note: face shields are not a replacement for masks;
- preferably only work on **one dish at a time**;
- **frequently change** the towels, washing up materials, chef's clothes etc.

For waiting staff:

- regularly wash and **disinfect** your **hands** and **wear a mask**. You must not under any circumstances clear tables and then immediately serve food without first disinfecting your hands;;
- keep a **strict division** of tables or tasks; either clean and clear tables, or serve, or do kitchen work;
- when serving food, preferably use **disposable gloves**.





2.2.2 SUPPLIERS & PARTNERS

- make an **appointment to deliver** in advance. Delivery times should preferably be planned outside of opening hours. In addition, only one supplier is allowed at once;
- do not deliver if you have **symptoms** or have had symptoms in the past 7 days. You must also stay home if someone in your immediate environment (partner, child etc.) is ill or is showing symptoms (or had in the past 7 days);
- go home immediately if you develop symptoms during the delivery;
- inform the meeting location if you fall ill shortly after the delivery;
- follow strict **prevention measures and agreements**, which have been communicated in advance and indicated on the Information boards and signage;
- do everything you can to maintain a **physical distance** of 1.5 metres. If it is impossible, take extra protection measures, such as wearing a mask etc.;
- do not shake hands;
- using the **sanitary facilities** is permitted;
- respect the rules regarding social distancing and personal hygiene when signing the **delivery notes**;
- wash and disinfect your hands after the delivery and payment;
- **maintenance work** on tap installations, coffee machines, ventilation etc. should take place outside opening hours. Wear a mask and wash or disinfect your hands when you arrive and before you leave;
- use your **own materials** such as a computer, telephone, pen. Disinfect materials and surfaces that you have touched during the work.



2.2.3 ORGANISERS & EXHIBITORS

BEFORE



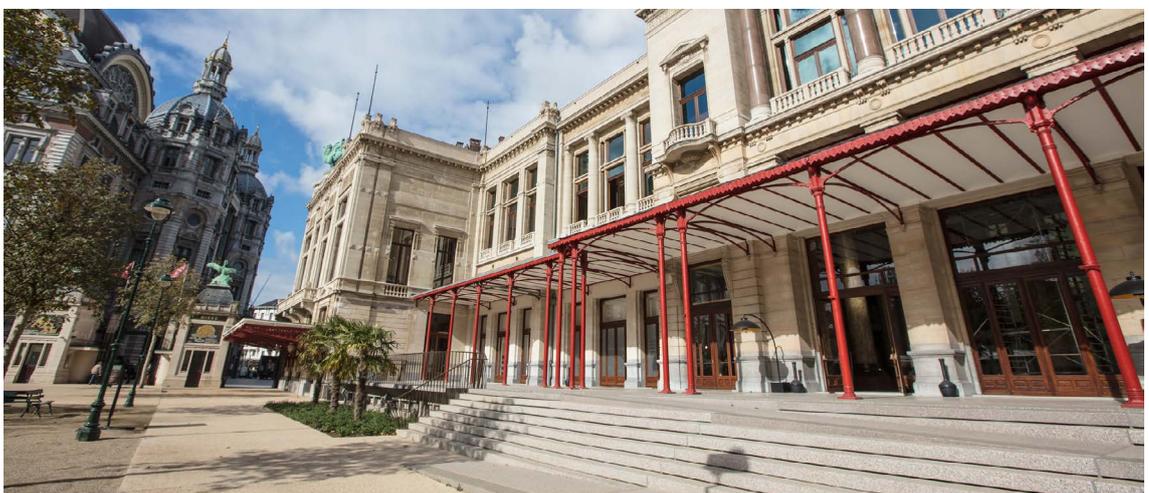
- create an **event script** and share it with the meeting location and all suppliers involved at least one week before the event;
- Create a **time schedule** for the set up and dismantling and the arrival and departure of every supplier;
- ensure that you have the **contact details** of all employees who are responsible for set up and dismantling;
- provide information about **hygiene and social distancing** measures for all suppliers.

DURING SET UP AND DISMANTLING

- ensure that all employees use **personal transport** to travel to the location, if possible;
- carefully follow the **instructions and guidelines** you received in advance from the location;
- keep a 1.5 metre **distance** and do not shake hands;
- ensure that employees bring their **own lunches** or provide packaged lunches at the location; a 1.5 metre distance should be kept while eating together;
- appoint a **safety coordinator** who will monitor compliance with the measures..

DURING THE EVENT

- ensure that all employees use the necessary **personal protective equipment** and apply the adapted hygiene measures;
- indicate the **maximum capacity** of your stand and place signs;
- provide as little **materials** to be handed over **to the visitors** as possible, such as brochures, samples, goody bags, gadgets etc.;
- take the necessary hygiene measures when offering **food at stands**.





2.2.4 PARTICIPANTS

BEFORE

- register in advance; this is mandatory; without prior registration, participation is not possible;
- choose a timeslot, if applicable;
- thoroughly read the confirmation of registration and attached information;
- familiarise yourself with the protocols and guidelines when registering. If changes and/or additions are made, you will be personally informed;
- stay at home if you have symptoms or if you have had symptoms in the past 7 days;
- stay at home if you belong to a risk group: people over the age of 65, people with serious underlying medical conditions (e.g. cardiovascular diseases and immunodeficiency);
- stay at home if someone in your household is ill or is showing symptoms (or had in the past 7 days)..



DURING THE EVENT

- upon arrival, sign in at the **registration desk**;
- disinfect your hands** every time you enter and exit the location;
- respect the **hygiene measures** and guidelines at all times.
- keep a distance** of 1.5 metres as much as possible. If it is impossible, wear a **mask**.



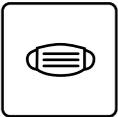
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ORGANISATION A SAFE EVENT

While coronavirus is circulating, you must organise events differently to ensure that they can take place safely. This requires measures with respect to management and services, but also in terms of communication. We explain this in more detail below.

3.1 MANAGEMENT & SERVICES

This section covers general issues regarding management, data & information and specific issues before and during an event that is taking place in your meeting location.



The basic protocol for tourism states::

- appoint a member of staff who is responsible for safety measures and **crisis management**;
- the activities must be organised in a way that **prevents crowding**;
- create **time schedules** so participants do not have to wait;
- there must be **mandatory access control** (both for participants and suppliers), with **(pre-)registration** where possible, with the aim of guaranteeing the maximum visitor numbers, minimum social distance, special routes, contact tracing etc.

3.1.1 GENERAL

Here are the general guidelines:



- do not allow employees to work at the event if they belong to a **risk group** (people over the age of 65 or people with a serious underlying medical condition (e.g. cardiovascular diseases or immunodeficiency));
- provide employees with all the necessary **personal protective equipment**, such as mandatory masks and disposable gloves;
- separate the **sanitary facilities** for staff from the sanitary facilities for visitors if possible;
- make clear agreements about cleaning and disinfecting **work clothing**;



- **provide training** for employees; e.g. on the use of disinfectants, general cleaning, waste removal, visitor management etc.;

- if **symptoms appear during work hours**, send the employee home immediately in a safe manner. Immediately after, disinfect all materials that the employee has frequently touched in the past 3 days;

- insofar as possible, provide a **separate entrance** for deliveries and pick-ups. Preferably plan them outside of the meeting location's opening hours. If they must be done via the main entrance, communicate when this can occur;

- place **floor markings in the delivery zones** to encourage them to keep a safe distance and to indicate routes; if necessary, mark out fixed, clear waiting areas and paths outside;

- build a network of **qualitative and reliable suppliers** that have also set out a health policy.



3.1.2 DATA & INFORMATION

Meeting locations must collect as much data and information as possible to allow them to inform and communicate when needed (see 3.2):

- **monitor the evolution** of the measures issued by the National Security Council, and related protocols. If necessary, adapt your measures (to stricter or looser measures);

- **document** the measures and plans, as evidence that the reopening and organisation of the event is being organised in a responsible manner;

- **report and communicate** the measures taken to governments, participants, organisers and staff;

- make prior **registration mandatory**, in order to guarantee the maximum number of visitors, minimum social distance, special routes, contact tracing;



to enable communication or contact tracing after the event, ensure that:

- you have a single database with the **contact details** of the **organiser**, your **employees and suppliers** who will be present during an event;

- the **organiser** has the contact details of all **participants, exhibitors and suppliers** they have hired, so they can be contacted or traced after the event.



3.1.3 BEFORE

Before an event can take place in a meeting location, the following actions must be taken:

- carry out a risk analysis and determine preventative measures;
- ask the organiser to sign a declaration of commitment;
- create a crisis plan;
- create an event safety manual.

Further details on the various steps can be found below:

RISK ANALYSIS AND PREVENTION MEASURES

Ensure that the organiser carries out a risk analysis:



- use the **COVID Event Scan**² to assess whether and under what conditions the event can take place;
- **assist** less experienced organisers in filling out the scan;
- **evaluate** with the organiser if it is feasible to hold the event in your meeting location and what **extra actions** would be required to allow the event to be held in the most coronavirus-safe way possible;
- remember to take respect **other risk mitigation measures** such as fire safety, evacuation, theft etc.

Create a **crowd management plan**³ with the organiser:

- determine which **entrances, exits and routes** can be used for the attendees;
- consider **different routes** for each type of attendee (employees, organisers, exhibitors, suppliers and participants);
- take into account **sudden crowd flows**, e. g. at the end of a presentation. Determine staggered start and end times, so you can spread crowd flows over time;
- discuss potentially allocating **specific time slots** to participants for entry to the location and the possibility of delivering tickets or badges in advance;
- try to provide additional, **optional queues** in areas where a sense of urgency will be unavoidable, such as at buffets and toilets etc.





DECLARATION OF COMMITMENT FROM ORGANISER

- **inform** the organiser about the procedures and house rules;
- ask the organiser to sign a **declaration of commitment**, in which both parties commit to working towards creating a safe environment;
- in this document, emphasise the **shared responsibility** and determine a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the meeting location, organiser, participants etc.



CRISIS-PLAN

Adapt your existing emergency procedure to the extra measures and create a clear crisis plan with procedures for potential high-risk situations:

- when someone has **symptoms of coronavirus** (fever, respiratory symptoms, coughing, breathing problems, etc.) **upon arrival** at the location, you can **refuse entry**;
- when someone shows **symptoms during the event**, take the following steps:
 - escort the person to an isolation room, and provide them with a mask and gloves if they do not have them already;
 - note down the person's details and the time at which the symptoms became apparent for future contact tracing;
 - inform the person about the next steps and ask if they have a family member, friend or colleague who can wait for them (outside the isolation room);
 - inform the safety coordinator that a person has been taken to the isolation room and activate the correct transport procedure;
 - contact a General Practitioner and describe the symptoms the person currently has;
 - the General Practitioner will provide advice and, if they suspect that the person is infected, they will refer them for a test or potentially perform the test themselves;
 - depending on the outcome, escort the person from the isolation room to the transportation;
 - follow the predetermined route, so there is no risk of infecting other persons or spaces; define an alternative route, if you cannot follow the predetermined route;
 - **inform the accompanying person about the situation and the next steps**;
 - clean and disinfect the isolation area.



EVENT MANUAL

Create an **event safety manual** for the meeting location, which clarifies the measures and procedures per event. It must contain:



- procedures and **house rules** regarding hygiene and social distancing;

 - a floor and **circulation plan** with the maximum capacity per space;

 - the **crisis-plan**;

 - the **programme**, which clearly states the times and areas used;

 - an overview of the **contact persons** with contact details (phone number, email) of:
 - the meeting location;
 - medical services for urgent healthcare services;
 - politie voor handhaving van de orde;
 - fire services and civil protection for emergency services.
-

3.1.4 DURING

The meeting location must provide a briefing, control and monitoring, so an event can take place in the most Corona-safe way possible.

BRIEFING



- provide **employees** (internal and external) and possible **suppliers** with sufficient information about the measures;

 - ensure that the **organiser** also informs their employees, external workers (freelancers, student workers, hosts/hostesses etc.) and subcontractors.
-

CONTROLE & MONITORING



- appoint a **safety manager or coordinator** who will supervise the correct implementation of the measures. Preferably choose someone who is well informed about all the measures;

 - for larger events, consider forming a **safety team** with employees from different departments (such as planning, logistics, waiting staff, kitchen staff, cleaning staff, technical department etc.);

 - consider hiring **security guards or stewards** who will check whether external attendees are adhering to the safety procedures. If you do hire security staff, you must comply with the law of 2 October 2017 on the regulation of private and special security;

 - ensure that the persons tasked with **monitoring** have **clear instructions** and are supplied with the necessary materials, so they can carry out their tasks correctly and safely;
-



- provide **access control** for participants, exhibitors and suppliers;
- **measure the number of people** at the location at regular intervals. You can do this manually with tally counters or quadrant counting, or using mechanical counting methods, such as access gates or optical cameras;
- keep an **event log** in which you register all incidents, including the time and names of the people involved. This may be useful for potential aftercare.

3.1.5 AFTERCARE

If an infection has occurred during the event, aftercare is needed.

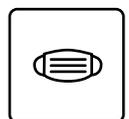
- don't underestimate the **personal impact** on employees, first responders and those affected. Take a **person-centred approach** when communicating with affected people and be clear and transparent in your communication;
- take into account the **possibility of accusation** as an expression of collective emotion. Usually the blame will be placed with the organiser and/or location;
- carry out an **internal evaluation**, so you can adjust the procedures and measures, if necessary.



3.2 COMMUNICATION

The basic protocol for tourism states:

- the company or association must **inform the visitors and employees** about the applicable prevention measures in good time and provide the employees with appropriate training;
- **communicate before and during** the event (e.g. posters, manual etc.) about the safety measures and obligations;
- a **contact person** must be appointed and announced, so visitors and staff members can report potential coronavirus infections to enable contact tracing.



Make sure your **communication** about the measures **at your meeting location** is clear and direct, both before and during the event, and make sure you communicate to the many groups of people involved in the organisation and the people attending the event

- create a **communication plan** based on the information needs of different stakeholders and prepare for potential questions:
 - **direct** communication: straight to the recipient, preferably personalised, via WhatsApp, text message, email, push notifications in the conference app etc.;
 - **indirect** communication via social media, the website, (dynamic) signs, information sheets, posters etc. This form is mainly appropriate for general information and awareness raising, such as general hygiene and social distancing instructions;
 - **internal** communication: via intranet, posters etc.; focus on information about the correct use of disinfectants, general cleaning, waste removal, visitor management for your employees;

- appoint a **spokesperson** to explain the safety policy and discuss it with the persons involved.



TIP 1

try to communicate the measures to the visitor in a **positive way**; use a reassuring and clear tone of voice. The measures are there to keep everyone safe.

TIP 2

for international events, you could potentially provide information about travelling to Belgium, arriving at the airport, transportation to the meeting location etc. [VISITFLANDERS has this type of information available.](#)



3.2.1 BEFORE

Before the event, provide everyone with the following information, adapted to each group such as suppliers and partners, organisers, exhibitors and participants

- the current measures and the specific measures that you are taking at your meeting location;

- who can and cannot come to the meeting location. The following people should stay at home:
 - people in a risk group: people over the age of 65, people with a serious underlying health condition (e.g. a cardiovascular disease or immunodeficiency);
 - people who are ill or had coronavirus symptoms in the past 7 days; also people who have a member of their household (partner, family member) who is/has been ill or is showing/has shown symptoms.





TIP 1

create an **information sheet** per partner; see 2.2. guidelines per group present.

TIP 2

consider creating a **video** that explains how to access the location from the car park to the entrance, to the reception area and to the meeting rooms.

TIP 3

develop pictograms and signs in your **corporate identity** and potentially incorporate your baseline or strategic concept into it; make sure it is recognisable but keep it clear, readable and simple.



3.2.2 DURING

From experience, we know that few visitors read the information provided in advance. It is therefore very important to **provide information and raise awareness** at the location as well. The more targeted your communication, the better they will be informed of the measures that must be adhered to.

- create an **internal communication system**, so everyone can quickly reach each other in real time, for example via an app or WhatsApp. You can use this to communicate changes to procedures, or send warning messages about a potential risk;
- **communicate** the safety measures and obligations that apply at the meeting location via posters, tv screens, flyers, intercom etc.;
- place this information in all areas, **particularly** at the entrance, in foyers and reception areas and in sanitary facilities;
- inform the attendees who they can contact if they have questions;
- ensure that **reception staff** are skilled at welcoming guests in a friendly, spontaneous way and that they know how to correctly inform participants about the measures.



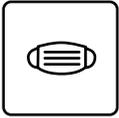
TIP

take the opportunity to position the meeting location as a location that takes its duty of care seriously and is doing everything it can to safeguard health and safety.



4

IN A SAFE MEETING LOCATION



The basic protocol for tourism states:

- the **car park capacity** must be limited to the allowed maximum capacity of the event;
- develop a **one-way circulation** plan and place clear **signage** to guide the visitors;
- create **clear layouts in spaces**, so visitors can easily move around while keeping a 1.5 metre distance;
- when a physical separation is not possible, install a system of **partition walls** or screens (plexiglass or other);
- for **areas with seating**, arrange the space taking the 1.5 metre distance into account;
- **hydroalcoholic gel** should be available for visitors;
- remove all **non-essential items**;
- **tables and chairs** must be disinfected after the guests have left and before new guests are allowed to take their seats.

There are also specific measures for sanitary facilities:

- create a clear plan/**procedure for cleaning** with a schedule and monitoring;
- preferably use **disposable paper towels** or hot air hand dryers, avoid using high-speed hand dryers and towels;
- **regularly ventilate** sanitary facilities and/or check whether the ventilation system is working properly;
- **limit the number of people** permitted in the sanitary facilities so a safe distance of 1.5 metres can be kept;
- the **urinals** must be located 1.5 metres from each other; if not block off every other urinal.





We have converted these measures into checklists per area in the meeting location:

4.1 RECEPTION, CIRCULATION AND PUBLIC AREAS

4.1.1 ENTRANCES AND EXITS, RECEPTION AREA

- if there are no **automatic doors**, the doors should be left open as much as possible during opening hours, or provide **contactless door openers**;
- based on the circulation plan, create **separate entrances and exits** for different types of attendees;
- **emergency exits or other doors** not commonly used can be designated as entrances or exits to spread the attendees flows. Update the (fire) prevention plan to include these changes;
- provide **access control** at every entrance and exit for participants, exhibitors and suppliers:
 - if necessary, place a **temporary structure** in front of the entrance or inside the building;
 - **indicate with signage** that they are approaching the check-in area and clearly mark where visitors can wait;
 - if necessary, **create partitions**. Fixed partitions are better, but this limits the flexibility;
- consider people who are **less mobile**. You can consider creating special paths or entrances;
- preferably provide **automated check-in** or access control, manned by reception staff:
 - when using automated check-in or access control: **disinfect** after every visitor or create a system, such as those used in shops with hand gel and cotton buds;
 - when using personal check-in or access control: install a system of protective walls or screens that separates employees from participants;
- place **hydroalcoholic hand gel** at every entrance and exit, refill it often and make sure it is visible;
- **provide masks** for visitors for situations where it is impossible to keep a 1.5 metre distance;
- provide sufficient **closed bins** that you can open without having to touch them, such as with a pedal or a sensor;
- **place posters** showing the safety measures and obligations that apply.





TIP

VISITFLANDERS and Inter Vlaanderen have created a handy checklist for meeting locations: 'Accessible meetings and conferences: a checklist'. Both organisations offer numerous services to help you optimise your accessibility, such as a guidance programme for meeting locations.

Visit www.toerismevlaanderen.be/toegankelijke-meetings-en-congressen

4.1.2 CLOACKROOM & LOCKERS

Manned cloakrooms and lockers are recommended..

If manned:



- place dividers** between the employee and the visitors;
- assign specific staff members** to this role (wearing masks and gloves) who will move the garments in accordance with a fixed protocol;
- place signs** for people waiting;
- disinfect** the coat racks, hangers, lockers and other materials after every use.

If manned:

- indicate the route** the visitor should take with tape, rope and/or signs and mark out 1.5 metre distances for the queue;
- provide hand sanitiser** and disinfectant for the visitor.



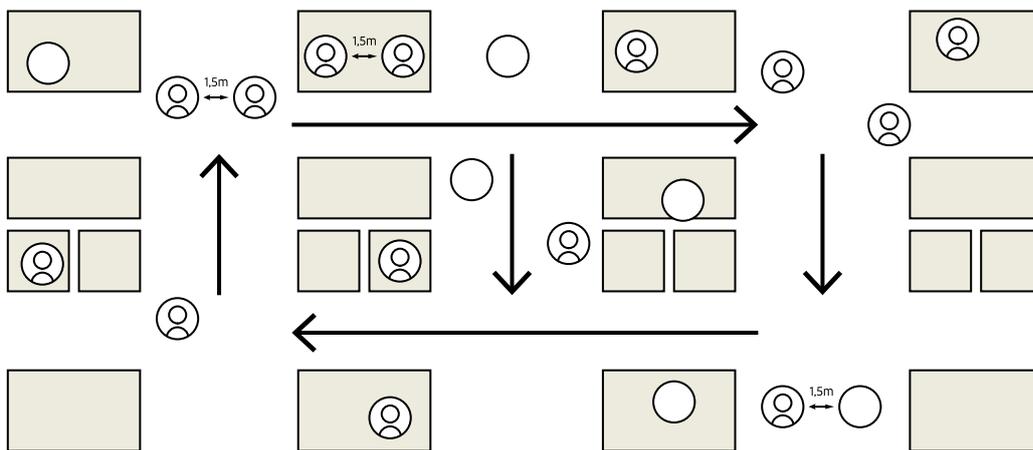
example of signs to indicate the visitor's route and the distance



4.1.3 EXHIBITION AND POSTER AREA

- **adapt the layout** of the rooms and stands to take into account social distancing and the adjusted capacity;
 - provide **clear signage and markings** that indicate the routes and areas where visitors can meet each other, also at the stands;
 - **place sufficient posters** with:
 - **floor plans** of the space that indicate the one-way walking direction;
 - the **safety measures** and obligations that apply;
 - designate **fixed catering points**;
 - provide sufficient **closed bins** that you can open without having to touch them, such as with a pedal or a sensor.
-

example of a floor plan for a trade show



4.1.4 CORRIDORS, STAIRS & LIFTS

- clearly mark the **walking direction** in corridors and stairs, taking social distancing into account;
 - ask attendees to give **priority to less mobile** people;
 - encourage visitors to **take the stairs**;
 - place a sign with the adapted maximum number of people that can enter the lift;
 - place signs and markings for people **waiting** for the lift;
 - provide **hydroalcoholic gel** for visitors;
 - **disinfect regularly** control buttons, stair railings and door handles.
-





example of signs and markings in front of the lift

4.2 MEETING ROOMS

In addition to a plenary session in a large meeting room, workshops, brainstorming sessions and poster sessions may be planned in smaller rooms or break-out rooms.



- set up the meeting area based on an adapted room plan, so sufficient distancing can be put in place;
- ensure that the chairs are not allowed to sit on, are blocked off or indicated;
- place signage and markings in the meeting room for visitors to indicate:
 - walking routes in the meeting room;
 - seating plans;
 - the sequential order for entering and exiting the room;
- place posters with the measures that attendees must respect (in their language) if there is no fixed seating plan;
- if there are no automatic doors, allow the doors to remain open or provide contactless door openers;
- provide hydroalcoholic gel for visitors;

TIP: make sure these stations are clearly visible



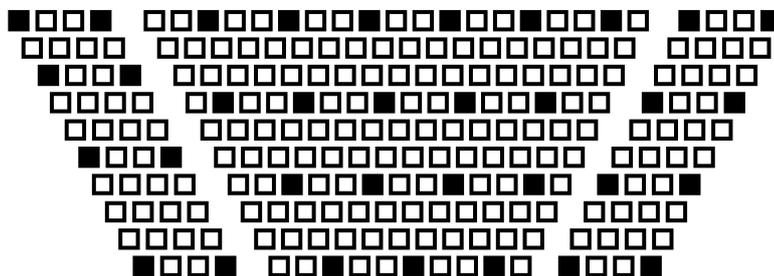
- provide sufficient closed bins that you can open without having to touch them, such as with a pedal or a sensor;
- disinfect furniture and other materials after the visitor has vacated the room and before new visitors enter;
- do not provide stationery or other complimentary items for the visitors, such as notebooks, pens and coins; if you do supply stationery, everything must be thrown away at the end of the meeting or the items must be disinfected.

INSPIRATION

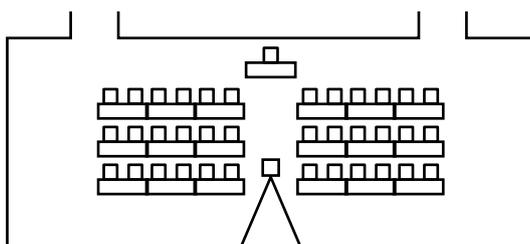
the social distancing rules have resulted in a trend towards a new category of events: hybrid events. At these events, a number of attendees are physically present, while others are attending virtually. You can respond to this as a meeting location by e.g. creating a studio ...



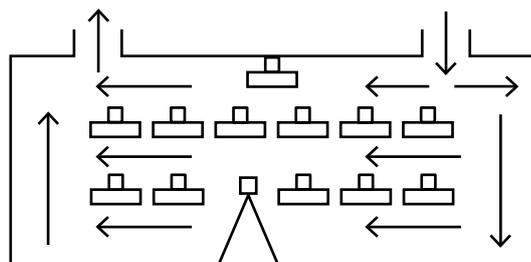
example of adapted seating plan and walking route



room setup before



room setup during Corona with walking direction



4.3 CATERING

During possible catering moments (coffee breaks, lunch, dinner etc.) at a meeting or conference, the health & safety of the participants and staff members must come first.

4.3.1 SERVICE



- provide an **adapted offering** for coffee breaks and lunches, so you can maintain good hygiene and safedistancing;

- preferably provide **individually packaged** food and drinks;

- plan for **staggered timing** of the catering moments and provide several locations where possible;

- plan for **seated coffee breaks and lunches** if possible, with a designated seat for every participant;

- **limit the use of buffets** and self-service:
 - ensure that bulk items are **not readily accessible** to visitors (including cutlery and tableware); provide them individually packaged per visitor;
 - an alternative is to have **staff members serve** the products while maintaining strict hand hygiene and wearing masks;
 - preferably set up **buffets in a different room** to the room where people will be eating; or divide the space with a physical barrier between the serving area and the dining area;
 - if necessary, **place plexiglass barriers** between participants and employees;
 - place signage along the buffets, indicating the **one-way route**, taking into account social distancing;

- have staff members **disinfect drinks machines** and coffee machines after every two visitors or provide staff to operate the machines;

- preferably use **paper tablecloths, placemats and napkins**; when using table linen, you must fully clear the table after every visitor and wash items at 60°C;

- avoid the use of butter jars, salt and pepper shakers, bread baskets, decorative objects on the tables; instead you can provide **individual portions** per visitor;

- provide **sufficient bins** for disposable items; instruct visitors to throw away the packaging, napkins etc. themselves;

- ensure that the tables are cleared by **one designated staff member**, preferably this will be their only task and they will only enter the dishwashing area of the kitchen;

- **wash and rinse** glasses, bags, tableware and cutlery after every use with soap see dishwashing instructions (4.3.2);

- thoroughly **disinfect** tables and chairs after every use.



4.3.2 KITCHEN & DISHWASHING

- ensure that people who do not belong to the team of staff, such as suppliers, organisers, exhibitors etc. do not enter the **kitchen, service areas or warehouses** etc. under any circumstances;

- limit movement in the kitchen as much as possible and ensure that colleagues cross **each other as little as possible**;

- provide sufficient **cleaning and disinfectant products**, in addition to hand sanitising gel, handwash basins with disinfectant soap;

- provide **sufficient kitchen materials**, so it is used as little as possible by multiple colleagues;

- clearly display the **HACCP rules**, instructions for correct handwashing and instructions for correct mask wearing;

- preferably **wash glasses in a machine**; if you wash them by hand, use hot water and detergent, and possibly rinse afterwards with cold, drinkable water;

- pay extra attention to the following points if you cannot wash with **hot water**:
 - keep the dishwasher clean at all times;
 - always use appropriate detergent (according to the instructions from the manufacturer);
 - leave the glasses to soak in the water with detergent for a sufficient length of time;
 - rinse afterwards with drinkable water;

- leave the glasses to **drip dry and dry** them before they are used again;

- preferably do not use a **kitchen towels** to dry them. If you must use a kitchen towel, ensure that you replace it with a fresh one regularly;

- **wash** the towels after every use.



4.4 SANITARY FACILITIES



- **place information** at the entrance regarding the maximum number of people allowed inside;
- **provide guidelines** on how to use the toilets safely and instructions on correct handwashing at the wash basins (in the language of the visitor);
- see if there is a way to open and close the doors without touching them with your hands, e.g. with **contactless** door openers;
- block off every other urinal or install **physical dividers** if necessary;
- provide sufficient **closed bins** that you can open without having to touch them, such as with a pedal or a sensor;
- **clean and disinfect** the sanitary facilities regularly. Close the toilets while they are being cleaned.



TIP

potentially devise a way to indicate and manage the limited capacity, for example with a traffic light system.

4.5 QUARANTINE- & ISOLATION AREA



- designate an area to be used as a **quarantine and isolation area** where people with a suspected coronavirus infection can be moved to and helped;
- provide **masks, gloves** and hand sanitising gel;
- find a way to **indicate** when the room is in use;
- provide a print-out of the **crisis-plan** with the steps to be followed, contact details of a General Practitioner and triage centre;
- provide **writing materials**;
- place **signage and markings** for escorting people to the exit;
- provide sufficient **closed bins** that you can open without having to touch them, such as with a pedal or a sensor.



PROFESSIONALISATION PROGRAMME

VISITFLANDERS puts Flanders on the map as an international top destination for meetings and conferences. To better respond to international expectations, VISITFLANDERS provides the Flemish meeting and conference sector with a professionalisation programme: a combination of quality tools, information, inspiration and education. Under the name, Meet in Flanders Academy, VISITFLANDERS organises training sessions for a wide audience of meeting locations, conference hotels, conference agencies and professional conference organisers etc. Our meeting locations are important 'ambassadors for Flanders' in the international meeting industry.

See www.toerismevlaanderen.be/kwaliteitmeetingindustrie



COLOFON

General information and news from the federal government regarding coronavirus COVID-19
www.info-coronavirus.be/nl/

National Crisis Centre: answers to questions about coronavirus
<https://crisiscentrum.be/nl/news/crisisbeheer/coronavirus-de-antwoorden-op-al-je-vragen>

Good Practice Guidance, addressing Covid-19: requirements for re-opening business events by AIPC, ICCA and UFI
www.iccaworld.org/npps/story.cfm?nppage=2987619

Protocols:

Basic protocol for Tourism

www.toerismevlaanderen.be/sites/toerismevlaanderen.be/files/assets/beelden_website/2020/algemeen%20protocol%20toerisme%20200611.pdf

General guidelines and protocol sheets for the hospitality industry
<https://heropstarthoreca.be/>

Basic protocol for the cultural sector

https://cjsm.be/cultuur/sites/cjsm.cultuur/files/public/200610-basisprotocol_cultuur_20200610_def.pdf

Protocol for organisers of sports events and competitions

www.sport.vlaanderen/media/13780/protocol-voor-sportevenementen.pdf

Covid Event Protocol

<https://covidventriskmodel.be/>



Health and science:

Reliable, digestible medical information about coronavirus infections

www.gezondheidenwetenschap.be/richtlijnen/mers-en-andere-coronavirusinfecties

European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control: Guidelines for the use of non-pharmaceutical measures to delay and mitigate the impact of 2019-nCoV

www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/novel-coronavirus-guidelines-non-pharmaceutical-measures_0.pdf

Advice from the Superior Health Council on the use of passive ventilation systems, mechanical ventilation, air conditioning and filters in environments other than hospitals and care homes in the context of preventing SARS-CoV-2:

<https://www.health.belgium.be/nl/node/37251#anchor-37251>

INFORMATION SOURCES & TEMPLATES

Algemene informatie Corona Covid-19

Dutch www.info-coronavirus.be/nl

French www.info-coronavirus.be/fr

English www.info-coronavirus.be/en

German www.info-coronavirus.be/de

Coronavirus – herken de symptomen

www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Corona-affiche%20A3%20-%20symptomen%20-%20DEF.pdf

Coronavirus – recognise the symptoms

<https://www.integratie-inburgering.be/corona-meertalige-info>

A4 posters 'Wearing face masks'

• www.rodekruis.be/storage/main/procedure-chirurgisch-mondmasker-aff-a4.pdf

• www.attentia.be/sites/default/files/imce/2020-corona-masker-aandoen-nl.pdf

Poster and video on how to prevent infection

Dutch

• www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WVG_Corona_afficheA3_7tips_update.pdf

• www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=8&v=Y-1SuztM1JA&feature=emb_logo

English

covid-19.sciensano.be/sites/default/files/Covid19/20200217_coronavirus_poster_general%20EN.pdf

Five-part set of posters and stickers for a coronavirus-proof reception

<https://www.toerismevlaanderen.be/coronaproof-onthaal>



Working safely during the coronavirus crisis

- <https://werk.belgie.be/nl/themas/coronavirus/veilig-aan-het-werk-tijdens-de-coronacrisis-affiches-en-schemas>
- www.howest.be/covid19werk/#/

Hand hygiene

- www.ubentingoedehanden.be/nl/handhygiene
- www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/sites/default/files/thumbnails/image/Instructies%20handen%20wassen%20met%20water%20en%20zeep_feb2020.jpg

COVID Event Risk Model

<https://covidventriskmodel.be/>

Contact tracing: explanation and documents

- Poster: www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/WVG_Corona_affiche_contactonderzoek_DEF.pdf
- Infographic: www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/sites/default/files/atoms/files/Keten-contactonderzoek-A4-staand-v2.pdf
- Multilingual flyers: www.zorg-en-gezondheid.be/folder-contactonderzoek-bij-covid-19
- Documents: <https://covid-19.sciensano.be/nl/covid-19-gevalsdefinitie-en-testing#accordion8>



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