

TIPS FOR COVID-19: SAFE GRADUATION CEREMONIES



In the 2019/2020 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic presented numerous challenges to districts and nearly all aspects of school and education had to be altered to protect staff

and students from contracting the virus. From stay at home orders, to socially distanced modified in person learning, the 2019/2020 school year looked different than any ever before and graduation ceremonies were no exception.

Districts were faced with the daunting task of how to hold graduation ceremonies for students, while also following county and state protocols for stopping the spread of COVID-19. From mailing home diplomas, to virtual graduations, to socially distanced ceremonies and drive-ins at race tracks, graduation was dealt with differently throughout the state. As the 2020/2021 graduations are quickly approaching, it is important for districts to build a graduation plan that will follow local and state COVID-19 protocols while also taking into account all other health and safety concerns, regardless of what type of ceremony is planned.

Consider the following when planning COVID-19 safe graduation ceremonies:

- Type of graduation that will be held (virtual, drive-in, drive-thru, in-person, etc.)
- Current state and county regulations regarding COVID-19 (these are constantly changing and require consistent monitoring)
- Number of people that will need to be accommodated while adhering to an occupancy capacity limit
- Who is designated as point of contact
- Districts must communicate in writing to all graduates and any attendees that if they are feeling ill or have symptoms of COVID-19, they should not attend
- Control measures for maximum occupancy based on current county and state regulations
- Attendees must pre-register for the event
- All attendees should self-screen prior to attending (or screening should be conducted at the event)
- Location, parking, ADA accessibility
- Hazard inspection to ensure safety of venue
- Bleacher/seat inspection and maintenance
- County/state social distancing guidelines
- Requirement and enforcement of face coverings
- Speakers may remove masks during their speeches as long as they are at least six feet from any other person
- There must be barriers added to create 12 feet of space from focal point (i.e. stage/speaker area) to any attendees (graduates/guests)
- Limit personal contact and/or exchanging of materials such as diplomas
- Limit attendees to one household unit
- Clearly mark seating to ensure each household unit remains six feet apart
- Orderly entrance and exit plan, include markings on ground to assist with this process

Keenan's Loss Control services promote safety awareness, and assist in the identification of conditions which may pose a risk of injury. We do not suggest that following our recommendations will eliminate all risk of injury or will result in improved loss experience.

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- Parking and trained parking attendants
- Weather considerations - make modifications as needed
- Adequate security, training staff on possible threats and response, review district EOP
- Communication devices for staff
- Venue must be cleaned and disinfected prior to and after the event
- If multiple ceremonies are planned, ensure two hours between ceremonies to limit exposures between groups

In-Person Ceremonies:

- In-person ceremonies may not be possible due to current COVID-19 restrictions, regulations, concerns – all other options should be considered to prevent and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Drive-In/Drive-Thru Ceremonies:

- Ensure location can accommodate the number of cars required
- Students should remain in their cars with members of their households only
- Map out flow of traffic and assign traffic attendants (ensure proper social distancing and face coverings)
- District may consider allowing students to exit cars one at a time for a socially distanced photo, ensure procedures are in place for organized method
- These ceremonies may be conducted in school parking lots, drive-in movie theaters, stadium parking lots, other large parking lots, race tracks, etc.

- Contact account manager regarding insurance coverage concerns or questions
- Students and families without vehicles will require other socially distanced accommodations
- Based on graduating class size, multiple ceremonies may be necessary

Virtual Ceremonies:

- Ensure all students will have access to the virtual ceremony; this may require providing devices/ internet for students and families as needed
- Check with IT department regarding virtual security; ensure there is proper protection in place to prevent hacking or other types of interruptions
- Provide viewing instructions to all students and families
- Consider having graduates and other speakers send in videos of their speeches to be included in ceremony; all submitted material should be reviewed by administration before being included

Additional Information:

- Check your county and local guidance as they may be more restrictive
- For additional information and more detailed guidance, please visit the California Department of Public Health's (CDPH) COVID-19 Guidance for Graduations [link](#), the current CDPH Outdoor Seated Live Events and Performances Guidance [link](#), and the Industry Guidance to Reduce Risk website [link](#)
- The links provided are current as of the publication of this document. As the COVID-19 environment is constantly changing, be sure to check often for updates

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