

ADDRESSING CORONAVIRUS (SARS-COV-2) IN THE CONFERENCE AND EVENTS INDUSTRY

HEALTH AND SAFETY PROTOCOL

OBJECT

This Protocol contains specific guidelines on health and safety issues to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2 in programming and organising events such as conferences, awards ceremonies, official dinners, corporate dinners, professional gatherings, symposia, corporate events etc.

In addition, it is noted that event organisers should be constantly informed and observe all guidelines issued by the Ministry of Health on the protection of public health.

At this point in time, the epidemiological picture in Cyprus regarding the new coronavirus (SARS-CoV2) is positive but the risk of focal resurgence is always present, as well as the possibility of a new epidemic wave. The easing of measures that started on 04/05/2020, should be closely monitored in cooperation with all the competent actors involved, having always in mind the personal and collective safety of the citizens.

One of the main objectives is to safeguard public health, as well as the safe return to the country's productive chain of those working in the professional events industry. Safety procedures and protocols are necessary for the resumption of all these activities. The top priority is to ensure that employees, clients and visitors have sufficient confidence in the professional events industry to allow the relaunching of businesses, hosting safely private events.

Participants should remain seated throughout the event except when they move around the area and during cocktails.

The maximum capacity of the venue depends on its area calculated in square meters: 3 sqm per person for indoor areas and 2 sqm per person for outdoor areas, and the distance between seats should be 0.5 m in all directions. Provided that this distance should not apply to people living together.

It is clarified that during breaks and cocktails, the number of participants/guests should not exceed 50 persons per service station, in order to maintain the necessary control. Drinks and food should be exclusively served by the venue's staff in an area (indoor/outdoor) with 2 sqm available per person, i.e. 100 sqm per 50 persons.

In case service is offered to participants who are seated, the provisions of the catering establishments protocol shall apply.

These specific measures may be relaxed or/and lifted according to the epidemiological conditions and the Decrees of the Minister of Health or/and revised guidelines.

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1. GUIDELINES TO EVENTS PLANNERS BEFORE HOSTING AN EVENT / CONFERENCE / OFFICIAL DINNER / AWARDS CEREMONY

- 1.1. The planner is obliged to hand over the list of participants / guests for each event / conference / official dinner / awards ceremony for tracing purposes. There will be a sitting arrangement for tracing purposes. The list will be kept for at least 3 months.
- 1.2. The planner is obliged to send the guidelines and precautionary measures to be observed throughout the event to all participants / guests.

2. PREPARATION OF THE VENUE

- 2.1. Marking of the plan views using new capacity diagrams based on square meters and the maximum number of people allowed;
- 2.2. Marking of the disinfection stations on the venue's plan view;
- 2.3. The equipment and venue should be cleaned and disinfected according to the cleaning and disinfection guidelines of the Ministry of Health published on <https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/press/pc.pdf>;
- 2.4. Marking of the movement of people (depending on the venue's architectural design). The movement of people shall be regulated in such a way to avoid overcrowding and reduce the number of people in the same area;
- 2.5. Predefined ENTRANCE - EXIT points at the venue of the event;
- 2.6. Recycling and fresh air inflow in indoor areas. Enhance fresh air inflow. Permanent fresh air inflow in indoor area;
- 2.7. The technical guidelines on the use of air-condition and ventilation systems issued by the Labour Inspection Department of the Ministry of Labour, Welfare and Social Insurance (<https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/pdf/erg31.pdf>) should be applied to all indoor areas;
- 2.8. Keeping natural distances under the guidelines on the capacity of seats which should be marked on the plan view;
- 2.9. The event organisers shall be responsible for the maintenance of the distancing between different groups of participants (1 meter).

2.10 TOILETS

Use cleaners for sanitary facilities, spray and ventilate the area frequently and regularly (before, throughout and after the event).

Place markings of distancing measures and hygiene rules.

Supply toilets with liquid soap, single use disposable paper towels and antiseptic alcoholic solution (containing at least 60% of alcohol) for the hands.

Use foot pedal waste bins.

Toilets should have paper towels for drying hands.

The required distancing of 2 meters should be strictly observed outside the toilet entrance using floor stickers and a guard if necessary, to ensure the distancing of 2 meters between individuals and the maximum number of persons using the toilets. The maximum number of persons inside the toilets should not exceed one person per 8 m², in order to avoid overcrowding.

In particular, as to the ventilation of public toilets in indoor areas where an artificial ventilation system is installed: if possible, ensure artificial ventilation of the toilets on an ongoing basis 24 hours a day and avoid opening the windows to achieve the correct direction of air flow. Keep the windows open in public toilets without an artificial ventilation system.

Toilets and the surfaces of these sanitary facilities should be cleaned and disinfected regularly with cleaning solutions according to the sanitary protocol of the Ministry of Health.

2.11. Arrangement of seats:

For indoor and outdoor areas, the minimum distance between seats should be 0.5 m. Any person who addresses the event should maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from the nearest participant.

3. STAFF

- 3.1.** Separate employees into stable groups to avoid overcrowding and facilitate tracing.
- 3.2.** The managers of the venue should provide written guidelines to and train the staff on the spreading of COVID-19 in order to know and be able to recognise the symptoms of COVID-19 in time. The aim is to be able to seek appropriate medical assistance and clinical testing and minimise the infection risk for both the public and the staff.
- 3.4.** Employees who either come into contact with the public or work in an area where they may come into contact with the public should:
 - I. wear a mask. Employees should wear a mask and observe the following instructions:
 1. Wear the appropriate mask. It is noted that face shields cannot replace the mask and should be worn only with a mask;
 2. Place it correctly on your face and cover your nose and mouth as described in the relevant document of the Ministry of Health and of the Press and Information Office available on the following website: https://www.pio.gov.cy/coronavirus/pdf/a3_mask_greek_web_pio.pdf
 3. Change the mask regularly to avoid the development of microbes (Staphylococcus etc.) (especially when it gets wet). After removing the mask hand hygiene should be performed.
 - II. Contactless body temperature measurement should be performed before entering the workplace.
- 3.5.** Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth to reduce the risk of COVID-19;
- 3.6.** Avoid speaking and perform social distancing. Employees serving the public should limit, to the extent possible, their conversation with the guests and keep it to the minimum required;
- 3.7.** If you cough or sneeze cover your nose and mouth with a tissue or cough or sneeze into your elbow. The used tissue should be disposed of in a waste bin.
- 3.8.** Wash your hands regularly with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Dry your hands carefully with single-use disposable paper towels which should be disposed of in a waste bin. You should wash your hands after coming into contact with respiratory secretions and after using the toilet. It is noted that gloves do not replace hand washing.

- 3.9.** Employees with symptoms of respiratory infection should not go to work until symptoms are gone;
- 3.10.** Employees should wear a mask according to the following instructions:
 - 3.10.1.** Wear the appropriate mask.
 - 3.10.2.** Place it correctly on your face and cover your nose and mouth.
 - 3.10.3.** Change the mask regularly to avoid the development of microbes (Staphylococcus etc.) (especially when it gets wet). After removing the mask hand hygiene should be performed.

In any case, the managers of the venue shall keep a record with the names of the employees and their days of work. Moreover, the same details should be kept for every person who may perform another work at the venue as external partner (e.g. maintenance workers, technicians etc.)

4. REGISTRATION OF PARTICIPANTS

- 4.1.** The time of registration shall be extended depending in the final number of participants / guests and all participants shall be informed in advance by sms or email for the duration of registration and the sitting arrangement.
- 4.2.** Guidelines on the precautionary measures should be displayed in the area.
- 4.3.** The entrance of the venue should have a hand sanitising station, a body temperature measurement station and single-use masks.
- 4.4.** Use special dividers were needed (delimitation chains to correctly and orderly guid the participants)
- 4.5.** Continuous counting of participants by the organisers to correctly observe the precautionary measures.
- 4.6.** Organisers should check whether the participants observe the distance of 1 meter between them;
- 4.7.** There will be one registration point for every 50 participants /guests. For instance, conferences with 200 participants should have 4 registration points. Plexiglass dividers should be used.
- 4.8.** A hand sanitising station should be placed at the exit of the conference venue.
- 4.9.** During registrations, the distancing measures should be observed according to the protocol.

In conferences /events held indoors, it is advised that participants over the age of 12 should wear a mask throughout their stay in the venue.

5. CONFERENCE / EVENT

- 5.1.** The following measures should be observed at the venue of the event:

Hand sanitizing stations should be placed all over the place.

Announcements will be made before the opening of the conference and during the breaks on the precautionary measures to be observed by the participants.

6. COFFEE BREAKS – COCKTAIL RECEPTION – RECEPTION

- 6.1.** Disinfectant liquid should be placed all over the place;

- 6.2.** Predetermine break areas per 50 persons. The participants shall be informed during registration of the break area of their group (50 persons). The participants should wear a badge with different colour to better separate the participants for coffee breaks.

Drinks and food should be exclusively served by the venue's staff.

The service should be performed in an area (indoors/outdoors) with 2 sqm available per person.

In case service is offered to participants who are seated, the provisions of the catering establishments protocol shall apply.

- 6.3.** Regulate the entry to and exit from the coffee break or buffet area, e.g. call people to go to the buffet per group.
- 6.4.** Have a second buffet if this is necessary for faster service according to the number of participants and the duration of the break.
- 6.5.** The buffet area shall strictly comply with the decrees of the Minister of Health to avoid overcrowding and safe distance should be maintained between the participants themselves, between the participants and the employees and between the employees themselves.

6.6. Organising your buffet

- Place hand sanitisers and single-use disposable gloves for your guests at the beginning of the buffet line;

- Make sure that the hand sanitising station is properly used by the participants at the entrance of the buffet area before coming into contact with the equipment and foodstuff. However, it is recommended that the food from the buffet be served by the catering personnel which shall observe the required personal protection measures (mask) and strict hygiene rules. The objective is to avoid contact with the plate after being touched by the participant;

- The buffet area shall be separate in a visible and sufficient way;

Regulate the entry to and exit from the buffet area, e.g. call people to go to the buffet per table and at the buffet a distance of 2 meters should be maintained between persons from 2 different tables. The other participants should remain seated;

- The buffet area shall strictly comply with the decrees of the Minister of Health to avoid overcrowding and safe distance should be maintained between the participants themselves, between the participants and the employees and between the employees themselves.

- In case participants want more food from the buffet this will be served by the employees who shall wear a mask and observe strict personal hygiene rules.

Provide serving means to reduce the time each person spends at the buffet or use special protective divider between the participant and the food (e.g. Plexiglass) or the participants should wear a mask when they serve themselves.

- As to the areas where coffee, tea or juice is served, additional similar areas should be created if possible and it is recommended to use contactless self-service stations. Otherwise, a hand sanitising station should be placed next to each device.

- The quick service should be facilitated to reduce the contact with food or tools such as tongs by offering ready-made portions or food and drinks that are easily self-served. An illustrative example is the portioned bread or individual buns.

- It is recommended to portion products and food and take into account the environmental aspect when using portioning or rapping materials.

- Tongs are a crucial feature. They may be used by the serving personnel only, or, where there is no service available by the personnel the food should be served in individual dishes which the participant will take with him or if the common use of tongs cannot be avoided by the participants, a hand sanitizing station should be placed

nearby to the participants can sanitise their hands before handling the tongs. However, the management of the venue should replace the tongs regularly. The participants should be prevented from serving themselves from the buffet with a dish already used.

7. PARTNERS

- 7.1.** Contactless body temperature measurement should be performed before entering the workplace.
- 7.2.** Entry – exit control of the partners to observe the distancing measures and the maximum number of persons at the venue.
- 7.3.** Use of the appropriate hand disinfectants. Masks and gloves should be used where deemed necessary.