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Guidelines

Guidelines for Marriage Halls and Marquees Reopening During COVID 19





Objective

To provide guidelines to the public health professionals, event organizers, owner of the of the wedding halls/marquees and general public for the reopening of marriage halls/marquees during COVID 19 epidemic.

Rationale

Public gathering is a potential risk for the COVID-19 infection and community transmission in the area. The wedding events during COVID 19 epidemic should be organized while taking care of the precautions and SOPs pertaining to gatherings to avoid the chances of spread.

Guiding Principles

- **The size of venue for wedding event or gathering should be determined based on local safety regulations under the guidance of local health authorities while keeping view of the local transmission of the infection.**
- Evidence of isolated cases or limited community transmission with no evidence of exposure in large communal settings should be considered to have wedding gatherings with **the number of guests not exceeding the below given criteria.** However, in case of Sustained transmission with high likelihood or confirmed exposure within communal settings and potential for rapid increase in cases, large scale, uncontrolled community transmission, at communal settings the small gatherings are to be considered.
- Outdoor wedding events should be encouraged in which number of the guests must not exceed 500 individuals with 6 feet social distancing.
- Upper limits for the Indoor wedding events must not exceed 300 guests
- The event timing should be restricted to 2 hours with closure evening timing at 10 PM
- All guests should wear a Mask and marriage hall authorities should keep a check over it.

Wedding Hall Space Criteria

- Each marriage hall is mandatorily required to display the seating/gathering capacity of their halls at their entrance/reception as well as for district administration to monitor adherence
- In wedding gathering (Indoor or outdoor) to accommodate the individual with 6 feet apart social distancing following hall/marquee space criteria in square feet should be considered as reference;

Social Distancing Space-6 Feet Apart		
Number of People	Space Required (Square Feet)	Area in feet
300	10,800	103 x 102
250	9,000	95 x 95
200	7,200	85 x 85
150	5400	73 x 74
100	3,600	60 x 60
50	1,800	43 x 42
25	900	30 x 30



Seating arrangements with 6 feet apart social distancing

The estimated seating arrangement according to the social distancing of 6 feet apart pertains to providing 36 square feet to one individual (normal values are 6 square feet per person). Block off rows or sections of seating to space people at least 6 feet apart. The number of rows must be calculated according to the social distancing limits on each side of the table.

Outdoor gatherings and seating must be encouraged for the wedding events (keeping in view the season for the outdoor gathering i.e. Dengue season)

Indicative numbers and seating arrangements as per criteria of social distancing is given below for the round and the rectangular tables, while the actual layout must be decided at each hall/facility level:

Shape and Size of Table (Round)	6 Feet Social Distancing Seating Required	Normal Seating Requirement
36 inches	0	Seats 3 – 5 Adults
48 inches	1	Seats 6 – 8 Adults
60 inches	2	Seats 8 – 10 Adults
72 inches	3	Seats 10 – 12 adults

Shape and Size of Table (Rectangular)	6 Feet Social Distancing Seating Required	Normal Seating Requirement
8 feet x 30-inch Rectangle/Banquet	2	Seats 8 – 10 Adult
6 feet x 30-inch Rectangle/Banquet	1	Seats 6 – 8 Adults
6 feet x 30-inch Rectangle/Banquet	2	Seats 6 – 8 children

Guidelines for the Wedding Events

General Measures:

- **Employees and attendees to stay at home:** if, tested positive for COVID-19 or suspected with symptoms.
- **Hand Hygiene and Respiratory Etiquette;** during the event wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds and use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- **Cloth Face Coverings/Face masks** should be mandatory
- **Social distancing** of 6 feet to be maintained at all places
- **Traditional Greetings** (hand shaking, hugging etc. be discouraged); **bride / groom parents and owner** of the venue to ensure it.
- **Adequate PPEs and Supplies during wedding Event:** including soap, water, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible), and no-touch trash cans should



- be made available in general. *Each guest to be given a face mask and mini sanitizer at entrance for use by the organizers.*
- **Sign posting and Messages-** Post signs in highly visible locations (e.g., at entrances, in restrooms) that promote everyday protective measures.
- **Traditional Greetings (hand shaking, hugging etc.) to be discouraged** in the ceremony. Bride/Groom parents and owners of wedding halls should ensure such precautions

Measures Before and During Wedding Event

Recognize sign and symptoms-Thermal screening

- Conduct daily health checks (e.g., temperature screening and/or symptom checking) of all staff members
- In High risk areas in consultation with local health authority COVID 19 testing of staff may be performed periodically.
- The Wedding attendees should have a thermal and symptoms-based screening at the entrance of the Wedding hall.

Modified Layouts

- Limit attendance or seating capacity with 6 feet apart to allow for social distancing or host smaller wedding events in larger rooms.
- Use multiple entrances and exits and discourage crowded waiting areas.
- Eliminate lines or queues at the entrance and exit doors if possible or encourage people to stay at least 6 feet apart
- Prioritize outdoor activities where social distancing can be maintained as much as possible.

Cleaning and Disinfection

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces before, during and after the wedding event
- Clean and disinfect event buses, vans, and vehicle
- Avoid sharing cellphones, camera and other devices unless disinfected.
- Avoid use of carpets and Mats in the marriage halls.

Physical Barriers and Guides

- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors or sidewalks and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times (e.g., guides for creating one-way routes)
- Install physical barriers, such as sneeze guards and partitions, in areas where it is difficult for individuals to remain at least 6 feet apart.

Communal Spaces

- Stagger use of shared indoor spaces such as dining halls, and lounges as much as possible and clean and disinfect them frequently before and after the use.
- Encourage hand wash and hand sanitization before and after the use of the dining halls.

Food Service

- There is no evidence that COVID-19 is spread by food. However, people sharing utensils and congregating around food service areas can pose a risk.



- If a group dining room is used, serve individually plated meals or grab-and-go options, and hold activities in separate areas.
- Ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, and drink stations. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee, if not possible the dinner must be served to the individual tables with all standard hygienic measures.
- Individuals should wash their hands after directly handling used food service items.

Restrooms

- Do not allow lines or crowds to form near the restroom without maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. It may be helpful to post signs or markers to help attendees maintain the appropriate social distance.
- Ensure that restrooms are operational, cleaned and disinfected regularly, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, stall doors, doorknobs, countertops, diaper changing tables, and light switches

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible for example, by opening windows and doors.
- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses

Maintaining Healthy Operations

Wedding Event organizers and staff should consider implementing several strategies to maintain healthy operations.

Regulatory Awareness- the marriage hall authorities should be aware of the Federal or Provincial regulatory policies related to group gatherings

Designated COVID-19 Point of Contact

- Designate an administrator or manger to be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and contact and collaborate with the local health authorities as needed
- The designated point of contact to keep abreast of local “sentinel” testing protocols and coordinate with public health authorities for this purpose.
- The wedding hall mangers are advised to retain the names and contact details of all wedding attendees and staff for at least 15 days. This will help public health authorities to contact trace people who may have been exposed to COVID-19 or if one or more members become ill shortly after the event.



Note: The above recommendations are being regularly reviewed by the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination and will be updated based on the international recommendations and best practices.

The Ministry acknowledges the contribution of Dr. Urooj Aqeel and HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH team to compile these guidelines

Reference

- i. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>
- ii. How large a gathering is too large during the coronavirus pandemic? <https://www.sciencenews.org/article/coronavirus-covid19-social-gathering-size-math-pandem>

For more information, please contact:

HSA/ HPSIU/ NIH, PM National Health Complex, Islamabad

<http://covid.gov.pk/>

<http://nhsrc.gov.pk/>

<https://www.facebook.com/NHSRCOfficial>

<http://www.hsa.edu.pk/>

<https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial>

<https://www.nih.org.pk/>

<https://www.youtube.com/NHSRC-PK>