

THE ROUTE TO REOPENING CARNIVALS

Considerations for Developing a COVID-19 Operating Plan &
Mitigation Strategies

Prepared for Its Members By:



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INTRODUCTION

The health and welfare of carnival employees and guests on the midway is our top priority in re-opening our industry. The procedures and mitigation strategies presented below have been recognized by our industry for protecting carnival employees and guests from potential exposure to COVID-19. By minimizing contacts, promoting social distancing, and increasing cleaning protocols and sanitization, we can welcome guests back to the midway experience.

The principles, considerations, and recommendations outlined within this document include the optimal elements of mitigation plans from amusement parks, carnivals, fairs, and festivals that successfully reopened with operational restrictions during the summer of 2020 following guidance from the CDC alongside state and local health organizations. They are presented to provide approaches for you to consider and build upon in your operating plans as you collaborate with your local partners and their Health Departments in preparation for the 2021 season. Your plan should be adjusted, relaxed and/or eliminated based on current requirements.

WHY CARNIVALS DIFFER FROM OTHER MASS GATHERINGS

Carnivals are uniquely different from other mass gatherings such as concerts, movie theaters, and sporting events in the following ways:

1. Carnivals can manage and reduce capacity by:
 - a. Reducing number of rides, games, and concessions brought to the event
 - b. Widening midway walkways while laying out the lot
 - c. Reconfiguring ride, game, and concession layouts to allow for as many straight or “L” shaped queue lines as possible
 - d. Utilizing employees to control seating positions in rides and at games by directing nonfamily members to sit in every other seat or station.
 - e. Offering ride promotions or pricing discounts during opening hours to draw more guests to less popular times
2. Carnivals operate entirely outside where they are subject to the well-recognized, cleansing effects of the wind and sun.
3. Most carnival attendees travel as a family, which means that they live in the same home and thus do not need to be physically distanced from each other.
4. Potential exposure times between strangers is generally incidental and below recognized minimum threshold levels because carnival guests move freely through the midway and are not sitting in a single location, elbow to elbow, for an extended period of time.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- If a guest or employee is sick with COVID-19, was recently exposed (within 14 days) to someone with COVID-19, or just does not feel well, they should not visit the midway.
- Anyone who is in a high-risk category, as defined by the CDC, should not visit the midway.
- All guests and employees shall wear a cloth face covering in public areas.
- All guests and employees shall practice social distancing protocols in public areas per local regulations.
- Carnivals shall communicate and inform guests and employees of all the new protocols and procedures prior to arrival through employee training, social media, traditional media, and on the website, then upon arrival through signage, flyers, and announcements.
- There should be a designated individual on staff responsible for coordinating COVID-19 policies and procedures with the event producer and local health department.
- The COVID-19 coordinator shall document the execution of all protocols on a daily basis.

GENERAL HEALTH & SAFETY

Considerations should be made for the following:

- Cleaning of the entire midway area – Use commercially available products to spray long lasting sanitation protectant to all surfaces.
- Establish protocols for interim sanitation of all high touch points for each ride, game, or concession.
- Establish increased protocols for sanitizing all public and communal areas, i.e., restrooms, ATMs, ticket purchase/exchange locations, etc. Encourage purchases be made online or in advance.
- Utilize touch-free or contactless payment options where possible. This includes transactions for rides, games, and concessions.
- Provide additional handwashing and/or hand sanitizing stations throughout the midway at entry and exit points, key thoroughfares, attractions, rides, games, food and beverage concessions, and outside restrooms.
- Place protective screens (plexiglass or other hygienic barriers) where there are interactions between employees and guests.
- Establish protocols when an employee or guest exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 when on the midway. Coordinate action with the fair to remove the party from public interaction and provide medical services off the midway.
- Establish pedestrian traffic flow plans to reduce bottlenecks and ensure the ability to maintain social distancing on the fair grounds.
- Increase the number of available restroom and handwashing facilities to alleviate crowding caused by waiting guests.

SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Establish overall capacity limits based on local formulas.
- Limit the number of and capacity of individual rides and games to comply with local regulations for social distancing. Recognize that family members from the same household can be closer together. (Note: If space allows, consider 10-foot distancing when groups are permitted. If you have family units in line next to each other, it is difficult to make social distancing with groups only six feet apart.)
- Implement straight or L lines and indicate local requirements (usually six-foot increments) with signs and ground stickers. Implementation must occur at all queue lines. No switchback or serpentine lines.
- Employees should avoid physically assisting/lifting guests. If a guest needs assistance, ask another family member to help.

FACE MASKS / CLOTH FACE COVERINGS

When social distancing cannot take place, the wearing of face masks or cloth face coverings (covering nose and mouth) provides an additional level of safety for guests and employees and reduces the likelihood of contagious virus droplets transferring from one person to another.

In some locales, the government requires people wear masks/ face coverings in all public places. Be sure you understand these guidelines as they impact your operations

Consider creating “mask/face covering-free” areas where employees and guests can remove their masks for a short period of time to take a break. The designated mask-free areas should be large and open enough to allow people to follow physical distancing guidelines for your area when they are not wearing their masks. Consider clearly identifying and marking these areas so they are easy to find.

Provide staff and guest with information on proper use, removal, and washing of masks.

- Note: Masks should not be placed on:
 - Babies and children younger than 2 years old
 - Anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious
 - Anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the mask without assistance.

INFORMATION SYSTEMS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- Implement public awareness campaign for social media (paid and non-paid), mass media (paid and non-paid), web-based platforms, signs and public address announcements to advise the public of new policies and procedures for their safety.
- Signs with health and hygiene reminders should be visible throughout the midway. The CDC, and many states, have PDF bilingual signs available on their websites. Remind guests about the proper washing of hands. When coughing or sneezing, cover your mouth and nose with a flexed elbow or tissue. Remind guests to practice social distancing in all areas of the midway per local regulation.
- Signs with the following or similar language should be on display: “We have taken enhanced health and safety measures for our guests and employees. You must follow all posted instruction while visiting the midway. An inherent risk of exposure to COVID-19 exists in any public place where people are present. COVID-19 is an extremely contagious disease that can lead to sever illness and death. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, senior citizens and guests with underlying medical conditions are especially vulnerable. By visiting the midway, you voluntarily assume all risks relate to the exposure of COVID-19
- Ensure on-midway cleaning/sanitizing team is highly visible to provide guest reassurance.
- Establish a phone/text number to report problem areas or customer concerns so situations can be promptly remediated.

EMPLOYER / EMPLOYEE RESPONSIBILITIES

There should be a designated individual on staff responsible for coordinating COVID-19 policies and procedures with the event as well as with local Health Departments.

- Each employee's temperature will be checked and logged before work shifts and they will not be allowed to work should they register a fever above 100.4 degrees.
- Implement staff training on COVID-19 to include sanitation procedures for public and personal areas, social distancing requirements, use of PPE, and guest responsibilities.
- Provide specific staff training for protocols on each individual ride, game and concession.
- Staff will be provided cloth protective face coverings, face shields, and other PPE as needed to be worn during all interactions with the public.
- Evaluate employee rotation cycles to keep work teams together to reduce interactions between different groups of employees when possible.
- Monitor absenteeism of employees, cross-train staff, and create a roster of trained back-up staff in order to respond to staffing shortages that may be COVID-19 related.
- Instruct employees to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer at least every 60 minutes and after any of the following: using the restroom, sneezing, touching their face, blowing their nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, eating, drinking, smoking, entering or leaving a guest area, and before and after their shift.
- Discourage workers from using other workers' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment, when possible.
- Organize pre-opening daily outside meetings with staff and key stakeholders to review problem issues and plans to improve the experience and to incorporate customer comments and concerns.
- Staff travel between locations will incorporate safe protocols and will include limiting the number of people per vehicle.
- Implement a policy regarding employees that feel ill or show symptoms of virus or infection, encouraging them to stay home without fear of being punished or losing their jobs. Educate staff on when they can return to work.
- When appropriate, following CDC guidelines, shields and temporary barriers will be used between employees and the public.
- As a general rule, carnival employees should avoid physically assisting/lifting guests. If a guest needs assistance, they will first ask another family member to help. It is understood that carnival employees may still need to physically assist/lift guests in the event of a ride evacuation.
- Remind employees they have a duty to take reasonable care for their own health and safety and to not adversely affect the health and safety of others.

CLEANING & SANITIZING

The CDC defines cleaning, sanitizing, and disinfecting as follows:

- **Cleaning** removes germs, dirt, and impurities from surfaces or objects. Cleaning works by using soap (or detergent) and water to physically remove germs from surfaces. This process does not necessarily kill germs, but by removing them, it lowers their numbers and the risk of spreading infection.
- **Sanitizing** lowers the number of germs on surfaces or objects to a safe level, as judged by public health standards or requirements. This process works by either cleaning or disinfecting surfaces or objects to lower the risk of spreading infection. Disinfecting kills germs on surfaces or objects.
- **Disinfecting** works by using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces or objects. This process does not necessarily clean dirty surfaces or remove germs, but by killing germs on a surface after cleaning, it can further lower the risk of spreading infection.

High touch surfaces should be cleaned throughout the day with an alcohol-based disinfectant. Additionally, surfaces can be sprayed with a water-based photocatalyst Titanium Dioxide solution. It slowly destroys any microorganism that touches the surfaces such as viruses, bacteria, mold, fungi, or any other microorganism for 6 months and lasts for up to 28 days following the photocatalyst sanitizing process. Surfaces can be monitored and measured with an ATP meter to measure microbial contamination. The OABA can provide processes and product that have been used by our members. OABA does not endorse or promote any of these products.

FOOD & GAMES

- Food stands will endeavor to follow the most current CDC and health department guidelines as issued.
- Commonly used areas around food stands will be cleaned and sanitized periodically throughout the day.
- Food stands will separate payment handling employees from food handling employees.
- Open access condiments will be eliminated and replaced with single-use packets or portions available upon request.
- Self-service drink stations will be eliminated.
- Make hand sanitizing stations available.
- Barriers can be erected between food service employees and the public.
- Self-service napkins and cutlery dispensers will be eliminated, and items provided to guests with meals upon request.
- Ask customers and staff to exchange cash or card payments by placing them on a receipt tray or on the counter to avoid direct hand-to-hand contact.
- Minimize contact by handing food items to guests on a tray or with gloved hands.
- Games will be reconfigured whenever possible and/or strategies employed to maintain social distancing and minimize contact.
- Game equipment touched by the public will be wiped after each use.
- Prizes will be sanitized and quarantined before being placed into service in a game and will be kept out of the guest's reach before selecting.
- Social distancing between players not in the same family/group should be implemented.

RESOURCES/REFERENCES

There are several documents available, from multiple sources, that can be viewed in the member section of the OABA website outlining specific plans. The OABA makes these available for reference but does not endorse any such plan.

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