

Guidance for Schools Planning Graduation Ceremonies

Graduation ceremonies are an important milestone for many school communities, and Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) supports schools finding innovative ways to safely recognize these students' achievements. There are several creative and low-effort options for holding graduation ceremonies that follow requirements under state-wide public health orders. Please see below for an outline of event requirements and approaches to compliance as you plan your ceremonies. As an additional tool to assist in planning, please see TCHD's [Graduation Planning Sheet](#). If ceremonies comply with public health orders and Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment's (CDPHE) event guidance and the guidance below, no formal approval from TCHD is required.

In-Person Graduation

- In-person graduations must follow [indoor](#) or [outdoor](#) events guidance based on the local level [dial capacity limits](#). Please note that CDPHE continues to update guidance as community conditions change. You should plan to implement all current requirements and adjust as changes are made by the state.
- Ensure 6 feet of distancing between individuals from separate households.
- Masks are required at all times for both indoor and outdoor events.
- Event plans must include information on masking and social distancing and should be communicated clearly and often to all participants in advance of and during the ceremony.
- If outdoor space is available, you are strongly encouraged to use that space over indoor spaces. Please note:
 - Outdoor events may host multiple groups of the maximum capacity limit as long as these groups are kept at least 50 feet apart, have separate entrances and exits, and separate facilities such as restrooms.
 - Indoor events are limited to one group, up to the Dial capacity limit, per room. A room is considered 4 complete walls and a door.
- Capacity must be limited to a number that allows for compliance with distancing, masking and all other public health order requirements at all times.
 - Arrivals and Departures must occur in groups no larger than the event capacity limit. For example, under Level Yellow, only one group of 175 people can be dismissed at one time through any particular exit. This may require hosts to stagger arrivals and dismissals.
- Performances that require forced exhalation, like singing and playing wind instruments are strongly discouraged. If your ceremony includes performers, the activity must comply with all requirements for performers. Requirements for performers are contained in [indoor](#) or [outdoor](#) events guidance.
- Individuals at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 should be encouraged to stay home and remote participation should be made available to the greatest extent possible.

- Schools should work with their venue to ensure a flexible cancellation policy is in place and should develop back-up plans in case capacity limits or requirements become more restrictive
- The graduation plan should include an inclusive option for families or students who are unable or do not wish to participate in person.
- If community conditions worsen, alternative ceremony formats such as drive-in or virtual may be required.
- Attendees and hosts must comply with all requirements for events, regardless of vaccination status.
- If you have any questions, need any assistance, would like to pass on innovative approaches you are taking, or have any suggestions for additional guidance, please reach out to TCHD's School Task Force at covidschools@tchd.org