

Protocols for In-person Meetings During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Background

The Flathead City-County Board of Health (Board) desires to establish protocols necessary to protect the Board, staff of the Flathead City-County Health Department (staff), and members of the public during in-person meetings.

As of the date of this policy, Governor Gianforte's Executive Order 2-2021 states:

A statewide mask mandate remains in effect, as follows:

1. A face covering that covers the mouth and nose shall be worn at all times in indoor spaces open to the public. Face coverings shall be provided for all employees and volunteers. All points of entry open to the public shall have a clearly visible sign posted stating: "Mask or face covering use required for ages five and older."
2. For any organized outdoor activity where social distancing is not possible or is not observed, a face covering that covers the mouth and nose shall be worn at all times.
3. The following are excluded from the Directive:
 - a. children under the age of five.
 - b. persons consuming food or drinks in an establishment that offers food or drinks for sale;
 - c. persons engaged in an activity that makes wearing a face covering impractical or unsafe, such as strenuous physical exercise or swimming;
 - d. persons seeking to communicate with someone who is hearing impaired;
 - e. persons giving a speech or engaging in an artistic, cultural, musical, or theatrical performance for an audience, provided the audience is separated by at least six feet of distance;
 - f. persons temporarily removing their face covering for identification purposes;
 - g. persons required to remove face coverings for the purpose of receiving medical evaluation, diagnosis, or treatment; and
 - h. persons who have a medical condition precluding the safe wearing of a face covering.
4. Accommodation must be made for those entitled under federal and state disability protections, including the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Montana Human Rights Act, labor laws, or other applicable law.
5. Businesses, other persons responsible for indoor spaces open to the public, and sponsors of organized outdoor activities are entitled to reasonably rely in good faith on the representations of employees, volunteers, contractors, customers, visitors, or members of the public regarding the

applicability of the exceptions in section 3 above. Reasonable, good faith reliance on such representations is an affirmative and complete defense to any enforcement proceedings brought pursuant to this Directive.

Policy

It is the intent of the Board to establish protocols to reduce the transmission of SARS-CoV-2 virus to the greatest extent practicable during in-person meetings. The Board shall specify that certain protocols be established that are the least restrictive possible while ensuring the public's health is maintained. Protocols established by the Board shall be carried out by the Health Officer or their designee.

Protocols

Proper mask use or face covering is required within the facility where the meeting is to be held until persons are seated with appropriate social distancing. Board members, staff, or members of the public who are not seated in the meeting room or at the podium will be required to maintain proper mask or face covering use. A person claiming a condition precluding the safe wearing of a mask or face covering is allowed. While individuals are in common areas such as atriums, hallways, and toilet rooms, the six-foot physical distancing guidance should be met where practicable.

Seating in meeting rooms shall be placed in such a manner to provide at least six feet of physical distance. Wherever possible, seating shall not be placed in such a manner that individuals are not face-to-face unless a reasonable distance greater than six feet can be maintained.

Depending upon the size of the meeting room, individuals integral to the Board's discussion or members of the public wishing to provide comment may be required to wait outside of the meeting room and be beckoned into the room to participate. Members of the public wishing to provide comment during the Board meeting may sign up online or in-person on a form provided. The form will include the person's name as well as contact information.

Meetings will simultaneously be conducted via a web-based video conferencing tool and Board members, staff, and members of the public may participate utilizing that method.

Any person not willing to abide with this policy will be asked to leave the facility. Intentional disruptions of this policy will result in the meeting being adjourned. A new meeting will be scheduled when appropriate accommodations can be made.

This policy will remain in effect in its entirety until modified or rescinded by the Board.

Adopted by the Flathead City-County Board of Health on Jan 27, 2021


Bill Burg, M.B.A., C.P.A., Chair