

Notes from Hamilton County Attractions re. Input for COVID-19 Re-Opening Strategy

Overall Concerns for All Venues in Conversation with the Hamilton County Health Department

- Sourcing and paying for masks or PPE to meet demand
 - Are consumers provided masks by the venues or must they bring their own?
- Sourcing and paying for thermal thermometers
- Sourcing and paying for hand-washing stations and disinfectants
- Social distancing seating would require venues to give up one-third to more than one-half of their ticket sales which makes it financially unviable (e.g. more expensive to open than to remain closed due to the income vs. revenue); this is especially true for indoor theater venues.

Youth Sports/Outdoor Sports Venues

The youth sports economy provides one of the first opportunities to carefully bring visitors back to Indiana as adaptations can be made to support social distancing and a re-opening. This is especially true for outdoor venues and diamond sports where contact between players is more minimal. Field and indoor court sports would be more of a challenge.

Youth sports is critically important to the state of Indiana's economy – driving hundreds of thousands of visitors to central Indiana and the state each year along with millions of dollars in taxes from income, sales, lodging, food and beverage activities.

Even a small state-supported incentive fund could incentivize rights-holders to retain their business this summer and early fall and immediately provide a return on that investment to state revenue streams. The fear is these event producers themselves will go under and long-term future business will be jeopardized along with 2020 events.

Specific suggestions for best practices at outdoor field and diamond sports could include:

- No bench seating – don't utilize dugouts but implement a more rigorous distancing system using things like temporary tenting with a maximum number of players in each area and ensuring those tents are away from spectators and separate from each other. Sourcing would be difficult, although teams often have pop-up tents and could be asked to provide them.
- Masks required by everyone with a proper disposal system.
- External spectator areas lined or barricaded to demonstrate distancing for families who would instead watch from outside the fence in their own chairs rather than on bleachers. Limit spectators to 2 family members per player.
- Cashless/touchless entry systems.
- Touchless thermal screening for employees, players and visitors. Rules would need to be established as to what happens if a spectator or player fails the test. Coaches would need to agree to comply with the rules.
- Sneeze guards and masks for concession workers, umpires and other front-line workers.
- Restroom attendants clean hourly; everyone is asked to hand sanitize prior to entering a stall and wash hands and sanitize after leaving a stall.
- Barricade tape installed manage crowds and maximum crowd capacity established, which might mean fewer spectators allowed.
- Additional hand-washing/sanitization stations if available.

Golf Courses

Most golf courses have already implemented social distancing guidelines and are limiting play. Assist them with better language.

Indoor Entertainment Venues

Again, indoor venues would need to make financial decisions based on ticket sales and concert availability due to shortened touring seasons. For indoor theater-seating venues such as the Center for the Performing Arts, a percent of its capacity is in boxed seats and could easily accommodate social distancing.

For all venues, social distancing requires reducing capacity by at least 50%. Programs would be implemented to allow for staggered audience seating with distancing in mind (e.g. no climbing over people to get to your seat). For indoor cabaret-seating venues, capacity would need to be cut in half both by the number of tables as well as the number of seats at each table.

- Diagraming seat sales to minimize impact and distance (e.g. a 1,000-seat venue becomes a 333-seat venue).
- Masks required by everyone.
- Cashless entry systems.
- Touchless thermal screening for employees, players and visitors.
- Restroom attendants with supplies sanitizing after each use (e.g. wipe down toilets and sink handles).
- Sneeze guards and masks for food service and seating attendants.

To stress, even with these accommodations it is doubtful any indoor venue could realistically open until it can support audience capacities of at least 75% especially since costs due to COVID19 will likely increase.

Waterparks

There are many open questions in regard to waterparks and COVID19 that cannot currently be answered. Still, the following ideas have been explored as possible options, although financially it is doubtful if any has real viability and the risk may be too greater to open these venues:

- Limiting attendance with a reservation system with staggered entry times and maximum length of stay per visitor.
- Do not offer concessions or significantly limit the menu to minimize food preparations, relying more so on pre-packaged food.
- Implement a midday hard closure for deep cleaning.
- Remove deck chairs, requiring people to bring their own or use their towels, since it would be difficult to clean after each use.
- Eliminate the learn-to-swim programs until well into phase 2 or phase 3, due to the high level of contact between instructors and the kids.
- Touchless thermal screening for employees and visitors. Rules would need to be established as to what happens if someone fails the test and the public would need to be informed.
- Restroom attendants clean hourly; everyone is asked to hand sanitize prior to entering a stall and wash hands and sanitize after leaving a stall.

Other items of concern specific to waterparks include:

- The ability for visitors and/or staff to wear masks in an aquatic environment.
- Maintaining social distancing at entrance or concessions lines.
- Comfort level of visitors coming to a facility that is known to be crowded in a typical season.
- Limited discretionary income of visitors to afford using the facility as frequently as in past years, if at all.
- Contact with cash, which is known to be dirty in the best of circumstances.

Outdoor Entertainment Venues/Music Festivals/Special Events

There is skepticism that large venues can make a short season financially and technically viable with national touring acts. Many artists have postponed or cancelled tours as the expense of developing a show in light of reduced ticket sale dates and special seating sales. However, all outdoor music venues could adapt -- in some cases -- to practice social distancing if concert financial metrics allowed for reduced crowd sizes. Practices such as:

- Sell seats to minimize impact and distance (e.g. a 10,000-seat venue becomes a 3,333-seat venue).
- Masks required by everyone.
- Reduce events with lawn seating by introducing zones where members of the same party can interact but allow for spacing in between groups.
- Cashless entry systems.
- Touchless thermal screening for employees, players and visitors.
- Sneeze guards and masks for concession workers and seating attendants.
- Restroom attendants clean hourly; everyone is asked to hand sanitize prior to entering a stall and wash hands and sanitize after leaving a stall.
- Barricades and fencing to manage crowds and maximum crowd capacity established, which might mean fewer spectators allowed.
- Additional hand-washing/sanitization stations.
- Limit alcohol sales. (Drunk people will be bad at social distancing.)
- Consider allowing personal food in the gate to limit concessions needs.
- Limited gate/admission at festivals.
- Presale tickets only.
- Timed entries to avoid overcrowding at entrances.
- Exhibitors must have sanitizing lotion.
- Reconsider any free non-ticketed events for 2020.

Banquet/Event Facilities

Most national hotel chains are working with their national offices to understand how to respond to COVID19 concerns. Already, hotels have put into place special sanitation practices and more work is being done to understand how to manage banquets, weddings and other events of more than 50. Per person space limitations would need to be introduced and many groups could not be accommodated. All other suggestions above for restrooms, masks/sneeze guards, etc.

Indoor/Outdoor Museums and Arts Centers

Some museums have explored implementing timed tours to allow visitors to enjoy exhibits with staggered departure times to minimize crowds and spread out visitation. Children's or family play areas that emphasize touch activities would likely be closed or used for demonstrations by a staff member with smaller spectator groups and social distancing standing required. Many programs could be adapted to reduce social contact. Arts classes could be adapted for social distancing with reduced student loads. Arts galleries could support limited entry for openings. Because weather will likely be good until October in Indiana, adaptations to spread people out would not be difficult.

Programs that provide for experiences such as train or wagon rides could also be reduced in size and food service methods changed for those that provide meals. Hours could be adjusted to allow for some recovery of crowd capacity. In addition:

- Masks required for everyone.
- Cashless entry systems.
- Touchless thermal screening for employees, players and visitors.

- Sneeze guards and masks for concession workers.
- Restroom attendants with supplies sanitizing after each use (e.g. wipe down toilets and sink handles).
- Tapes to manage crowds and maximum crowd capacity established, which might mean fewer spectators allowed.
- Additional hand-washing/sanitization stations.

Other Miscellaneous Venues

Horse-back riding, archery or tree-top adventure venues could easily adapt by limiting capacity, staggering departures and spacing family clusters to promote social distancing. Many of the same requirements (e.g. masks for all, temperature checks) could also be implemented along with restroom sanitation.

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