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Additional Guidelines

Marriage Events/Ceremonies During COVID 19

These guidelines supersede previous guidelines issued on the subject on 10 October 2020. These guidelines will be implemented from 20th November 2020 onwards in urban centers (Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Multan, Hyderabad, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Peshawar, Quetta, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Faisalabad, Bahawalpur & Swat)





Objective

To provide guidelines to the public health professionals, event organizers and public for the conduct of marriages and arrangements for marriage events during COVID 19 epidemic.

Rationale

A 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 minimize 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.
- No indoor gatherings are permitted, and only outdoor wedding events are allowed, in which number of the guests must not exceed 300 individuals with mandatory arrangements for seating of each individual at-least 6 feet apart.
- The event timing should be restricted to 2 hours with closure evening timing at 10 PM
- All guests should wear a Mask and marriage event authorities should keep a check over it.
- The event can only be carried out in open space, and if tents are used, they should have mandatory provision of space between the walls and roof of the tent to ensure ventilation; hence reflecting that completely closed marquee designed tents for holding marriage events are not permitted. The marquees/banquette halls built/modified in structure with multiple ventilation windows/open spaces within the side walls are appropriate for the wedding gatherings (as can be seen above in the cover page image)

Wedding Event Space Criteria

- Each marriage event is mandatorily required to display the seating/gathering capacity of their venues at their entrance/reception as well as for district administration to monitor adherence
- In wedding gathering to accommodate the individual with 6 feet apart social distancing following space criteria i.e. area 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
Space criteria i.e. area for an outdoor wedding gathering with 6 feet social distancing.		



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 (Sketch as annexure for events).

Outdoor gatherings and seating are recommended for the wedding events (while keeping in view the precautions for 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 venue:

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

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

Guidelines for the Wedding Events

General Measures:

- **Thermal scanning for all attendees is mandatory at the entrance.**
- **Cloth Face Coverings/Face masks** should be mandatory.
- **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.
- **Social distancing** of 6 feet to be maintained at all places
- **Employees and attendees to stay at home:** if, tested positive for COVID-19 or suspected with symptoms.
- **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 wedding event managers 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 venue.

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

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

- Encourage hand wash and hand sanitization before and after the meals.

Food Service

- Buffets, salad bars, and drink stations are to be avoided wherever possible. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee with all standard hygienic measures.

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



Maintaining Healthy Operations

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

Regulatory Awareness- the marriage event 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 manager 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 event managers 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

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>
- 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://nhsrsc.gov.pk/>

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

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

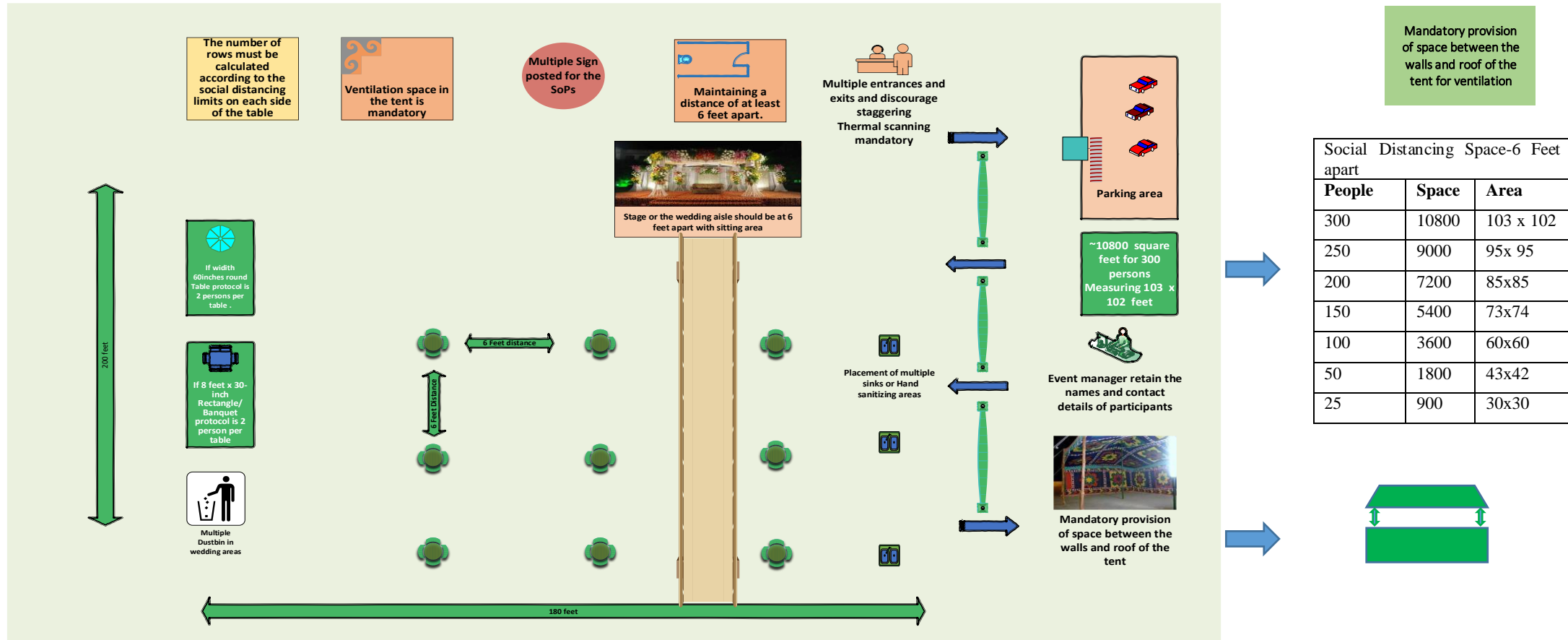
<https://twitter.com/nhsrcofficial>

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

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



Annex. Layout for outdoor wedding events



- Thermal scanning for all attendees is mandatory at the entrance.
- Cloth Face Coverings/Face masks are mandatory.
- Buffet dinner / lunch is to be avoided (lunch box / table services is preferred).
- 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.
- Social distancing of 6 feet to be maintained at all places
- Employees and attendees to stay at home: if, tested positive for COVID-19 or suspected with symptoms.
- No event should last more than 2 hours, whereas cut of time would be 2200 hours / 10 PM.
- Adequate PPEs and Supplies during wedding event: including soap, water, hand sanitizer, paper towels, tissues, disinfectant wipes, cloth face coverings (as feasible). *Each guest to be given a face mask and mini sanitizer at entrance for use by the organizers.*
- Traditional Greetings (hand shaking, hugging etc.) to be discouraged in the ceremony. Bride/ Groom parents and wedding event managers should ensure such precautions.*