



NAVIGATING THE **NEW** MEETINGS LANDSCAPE

A Guide to Face-to-Face Meetings and Events After the Pandemic Shutdown

F2F First Steps

Humans have a primal need for social connection. A need that will never be fully satisfied through the virtual world.

That much is true, but what is not understood is where we are at in this pandemic and when we can meet face-to-face again.

At the time of this writing, the virus has proven to be stubborn, with many U.S. states that thought they had “flattened the curve” seeing the trendlines rising back up.

Amidst all of this uncertainty, many destinations are cautiously moving toward opening back up, or already have. In this eHandbook, we aim to provide you with the resources you need to protect the safety of both your attendees and the organizations you plan for.

We hope you enjoy it, and also realize this



Tyler Davidson

Vice President & Chief Content Director
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is all still a work in progress, so check back in with us to get the latest info.

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Big Sky Resort

Big Sky Resort, located in southwest Montana near Yellowstone National Park, is a bucket list location for meeting planners and attendees alike. The Yellowstone Conference Center boasts over 55,000 square feet of meeting and function space suitable for everything from intimate gatherings to international summits.

The dedicated sales and catering teams are ready to assist with planning your event from start to finish. Big Sky Resort offers lodging to accommodate over 2,000 attendees, in-house catering and special event design. Additionally, our in-house audiovisual team provides world-class sound and production services, including Hybrid meeting

options. Make your event truly memorable with custom attendee amenities.

Year after year, our survey data shows meetings hosted in Big Sky have up to a 10% increase in registration numbers due to the demand of the location. The combination of Montana hospitality and exceptional facilities will make you think twice about considering another location in the future.

The summer in Big Sky offers adventure-based activities including ziplines, hiking, wildlife viewing, whitewater rafting and blue ribbon fly-fishing. The winter is home to the Biggest Skiing in America, averaging one acre of terrain, per skier, each day.

Post-Shutdown Features

The safety of all guests, team members and the community remains a top priority at Big Sky Resort. A comprehensive overview of practices can be found at www.bigskyresort.com/safetypractices.

Additionally, each group will receive a custom safety plan that includes social distancing room diagramming, safety practices during catered events, and best practices for meetings from start to finish. A sample

plan can be found at www.bigskyresort.com/group-safety.

Each group over 50 requires approval from the local health department, which Big Sky Resort will submit on your behalf. Approved plan examples can be provided by a sales manager.

For limited-time specials, visit www.bigskyresort.com/group-specials.

Facility/Destination Highlights

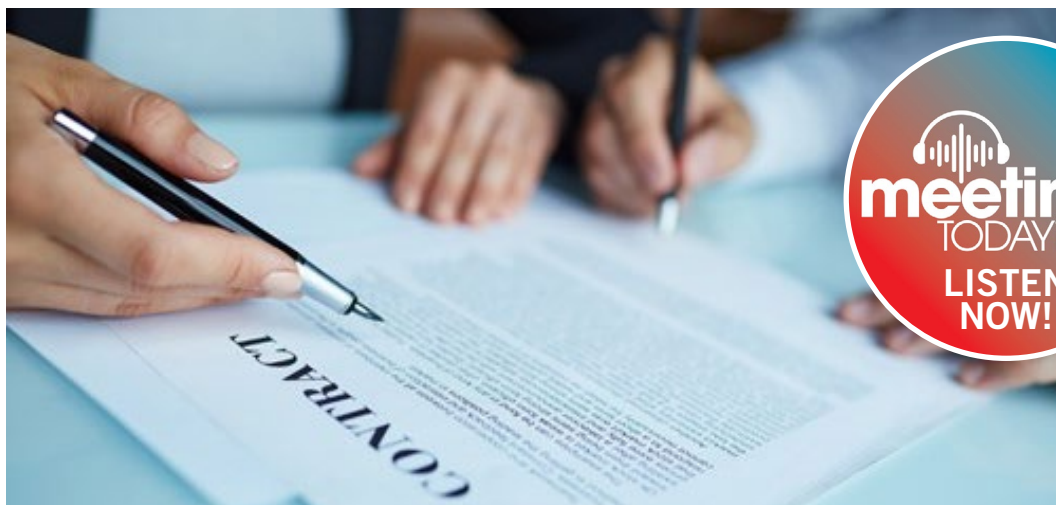
Big Sky Resort is located in the town of Big Sky, Montana, and is positioned between Bozeman and West Yellowstone. Destination guests will find the Bozeman/Yellowstone International Airport a convenient location with over 17 direct flight cities servicing the location.

After a 45-mile drive through the scenic Gallatin Canyon, guests arrive into Big Sky, a year-round playground. There are over 49 restaurants in Big Sky, shopping, art galleries, a movie theater and countless guided adventures.

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Essential Contract Clauses and Concerns for Post-Shutdown Meetings and Events

By Joshua L. Grimes and Tyler Davidson

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, legal issues in the meetings industry primarily centered around cancellation, attrition and what became the moving target of force majeure.

Now, with face-to-face meetings taking baby steps to resuming, meeting and event planners need to cover their organizations and ensure the safety of attendees by including key contract clauses in an environment that lacks definition.

Key elements of a “COVID contract provision” could deal with items such as cleaning protocols; the right to cancel if government-required measures make it so restrictive that your meeting can’t go

forward; and indemnification.

Meetings Today Vice President & Chief Content Director Tyler Davidson interviewed leading meetings industry attorney Joshua L. Grimes for a podcast about what planners need to know as the industry gets back on its feet and people starting meeting again.

Following are some key excerpts from that podcast:

Tyler Davidson: What sort of legal issues should meeting planners be aware of in this new environment?

Joshua L. Grimes: What I suggest is creating kind of a new provision in your contract

that we can call a COVID-19 provision. And this might be for a meeting contract for the next two years, because I'm hoping that we'll have a vaccine or some other cure for COVID within two years.

Within a few months before the start of the meeting, the hotel should give the group a list of changes to the hotel's facilities and services that are necessary or appropriate due to COVID. And that list should be updated as appropriate.

So, if you're in a place that has social distancing, if networking events or open bars are prohibited, that would be a change to the facility's services. If the spa can't be open, if a buffet isn't allowed or there's a particular way you need to do food service, that's something the hotel should tell the group about several months in advance so the group can be prepared.

The group then has to consider if these changes that the hotel is putting in place work for the group, in which case they can have a conversation with the hotel about how they're going to work.

But if they're not going to work—suppose it's a meeting where it's essential that exhibitors network with the attendee and there can't be networking—then the group should have options to cancel without liability.

The second part of this is about health

practices and safety practices. Your clause should require that the hotel should implement protocols and best practices to protect the health of the group attendees and staff in accordance with various government rules and the hotel's own statement of safety practices, and best practices in the community where the hotel is located if those are different

This can also mean testing hotel employees and guests as they come onto the property every day; orientating people to see if they have symptoms; and excluding people not affiliated from areas that are reserved from group use.

If the hotel's cleaning protocols don't

include separating the group from other guests at the hotel, maybe you need to add to it. If the group feels they need more strenuous cleaning, you add to it.

In addition, if local government recommendations are stronger than the hotel's practices, I would recommend

that the duty of care requires that you do whatever the government suggests if it's more stringent than what the hotel plans to put in place on their own.

Tyler: Are there any other issues that planners should be looking out for right now?

Joshua: Take a look at your force majeure clause, because we've learned an incredi-

To hear the full podcast,
click below:



ble amount about force majeure in the last few months. One, is that force majeure is looked at very narrowly. So if your clause doesn't include cancellation for diseases—you have words like disease, pandemic, things like that—then it probably, if it ever went to court, would not be upheld because you specifically need to mention things like disease.

Another thing I would look at is, does your clause say statute or law? Does it say government regulation? If it says things like that, it needs to be broader, because some governments don't issue statutes for things like COVID.

So, I recommend people use words like “government advisories,” “recommendations,” “mandates,” “laws,” “statutes” and “orders.”

And you also need to specify which governments: federal, state, local and foreign government, if you've got international attendees; that's something you need to look at very carefully.

Another thing is when do we determine if a force majeure exists? This has been a real a point of contention, many properties have argued that this decision should be made based on certainty on what conditions are going to be on the meeting date.

The challenge there is that many attendees make their plans to attend—they buy their airfare, they do other things—months in advance. So groups [that] need to cancel, they want to do it maybe 90 days in

advance. If they have international attendees, maybe even further.

So, your force majeure clause should allow a determination to be made maybe 90, 120 days in advance.

One other thing to mention with force majeure is you may want to think about alternatives to cancellation.

So, some groups right now have said, if we're signing a contract today, if force majeure circumstances exist, the group can go forward with a reduced meeting with attrition waived, where you can reschedule to new dates without paying any damages.

So there may be other alternatives you may want to work in your clause.



Joshua L. Grimes
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Joshua L. Grimes, Esq., of Grimes Law Offices, LLC, is a noted expert in legal issues relating to the meeting and hospitality industries. He may be reached at grimesj@grimeslaw.org or 215.529.8700. The statements in this article are general opinions offered for educational purposes, and do not constitute legal advice. Those seeking legal advice should contact a competent attorney of their choosing.

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Ideas are inspired by nature and nurtured by unexpected sophistication in Missoula, where three rivers and seven wilderness areas come together. Hospitality, technology and amenities are all top notch in this incredible meetings destination. Pulsating with big-city arts, culture, music and culinary scenes, Missoula is ideal for corporate events, retreats, conferences and conventions.

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Destination Missoula

Nestled in the heart of the northern Rockies of Western Montana, Missoula is the perfect location to combine business and relaxation.

The “Garden City,” nicknamed for its lush landscape and forested surroundings, offers mountain views from every angle and state-of-the-art meeting facilities. While praised as an outdoor adventure hub, Missoula has also been dubbed the cultural center of Montana and provides unexpected sophistication.

Some might call it unique, quirky or hip. Others will experience it as serene, welcoming and replete with natural beauty. You might find it vibrant, active and

pulsating with places to go and things to do. The beauty of Missoula is that it is all these things and more.

You can think of Missoula as a little city or a big town, with approximately 117,000 people calling the area home. Off the banks of the Clark Fork River, there’s a vibrant downtown packed with boutiques, spas, restaurants, cafes and art galleries. Throw in a man-made river wave for surfers, a carousel and play park, endless trails for walking and biking, and a riverside park known for its events, festivals and fairs, and you quickly realize that downtown is indeed a dynamic place. And that’s just the beginning.

Smart. Safe. Ready.

Missoula was quick to take aggressive steps toward stopping the spread of COVID-19, and is committed to maintaining health and safety precautions in order to protect the community while at the same time welcoming visitors and supporting local businesses.

People are urged to heed all safety protocols, but also highly encouraged to explore

the city and enjoy all the restaurants, boutiques, galleries and open spaces Missoula has to offer on top of the seemingly endless opportunities for outdoor recreation.

Missoula has no shortage of fresh mountain air and wide-open spaces, allowing community members and visitors alike the ability to come together and get work done while keeping one another safe.

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Both accommodating and inspiring, Missoula is a no-brainer meeting destination.

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downtown.

With the Missoula International Airport located only 5.6 miles from downtown Missoula and providing direct flights to 13 major markets, it's easy and convenient to meet in Missoula.

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COURTESY OF HILTON

How Hotels and Resorts Plan to Keep Guests and Employees Safe

By Sarah Kloepple

In April 2020, Wynn Las Vegas unveiled one of, if not the, first hotel reopening plans amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. In it, the public was able to see myriad health, sanitation and infection prevention measures that the property planned to implement in order to keep guests and employees safe.

Wynn executives worked for months with leading public health professionals to curate the plan, and it ended up being a much-needed blueprint for other hotels and meeting facilities to offer similar transparency when welcoming back guests.

When guests do return to hotels and meetings, it won't be hard to spot the new normal.

Nearly all health and sanitation reopen-

ing plans from the different companies below include increased frequency of cleaning and disinfecting rooms and public areas as well as providing additional safety training and personal protective equipment to employees.

They differ in other strategies, including some who are implementing new technologies (thermal cameras, UV light) and two chains that plan to appoint "Hygiene Managers" or "Hygiene Officers" at each property.

Below, we break down what you need to know about each plan.

Accor

Accor has launched not only an initiative

to ensure enhanced safety and sanitation with [ALL Stay Well](#), but has also established an initiative with protocols and procedures specifically for meetings and events, [ALL Meet Well](#). Here are highlights from both of those initiatives:

ALL Stay Well

- Mandatory screening for all guests and employees, which may include a **temperature check**.
- **Masks** provided to all guests and worn by all employees.
- **Increased cleaning and disinfecting frequency**, with continued use of EPA-registered disinfecting chemicals.
- **Cleaning time sheets** displayed.
- **Welcome letter** communicating cleaning procedures, amenities available upon request and protocols in public spaces.
- A welcome greeter to manage queues to promote **physical distancing**.
- **Hand sanitizer** stations in key areas throughout hotel.
- No **housekeeping service** while guest is in room.

ALL Meet Well

- **Flexible cancellation** for all meeting- and event-related room reservations in 2020.
- Mandatory screening for all attendees, which may include a **temperature check**.
- Gloved and masked welcome greeter offering **hand sanitizer** and **masks** upon arrival.

- Larger aisles and directional signage for **one-way aisles**.
- All setups will allow **six feet between chairs**.
- **Increased outdoor and private spaces** available for meetings and events.
- Eliminate all **buffets and self-serve** options.
- Provide **F&B options** that include self-contained vessels for service, or all items either wrapped individually or served individually with a cover on each plate.

Omni Hotels & Resorts

Omni Hotels & Resorts launched the Omni Safe & Clean initiative to update and enhance the company's cleaning guidelines and to implement new processes and procedures to protect guests' and employees' health and safety. The initiative includes:

- Conducting **health screenings and temperature checks for employees** before they begin their shift. Once cleared, they will receive a sticker to wear that reads "I'm Cool," so guests know the employee is healthy and permitted to work.
- **PPE and hygiene best practices** training for employees.
- Placing **signage** at properties that detail proper hygiene practices such as hand-washing and physical distancing reminders.
- **Increasing the frequency of the sanita-**

tion of high-touch surfaces such as the front desk counter, guest room keys, elevator buttons and door handles.

- Placing **hand sanitizer stations** throughout properties.
- **Redefining space capacities** in high-traffic areas.
- **Updating seating capacities** and room sets in meeting and event spaces.

Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts

Luxury hospitality chain Four Seasons collaborated with Johns Hopkins Medicine International—the global division of Johns Hopkins Medicine—to create its new health and safety program, **Lead With Care**, and to provide ongoing guidance as the COVID-19 pandemic evolves.

The program will be reviewed and validated by Johns Hopkins Medicine experts and implemented at Four Seasons properties around the world. Protocols in the Lead With Care program include:

- Appointing a **Hygiene Officer** at each property.
- Disinfecting guest rooms daily with EPA-approved products and performing **blacklight inspections**.
- **Cleaning public areas hourly**, with extra attention on high-traffic areas such as front desk counters and public restroom.
- **Exploring such new technologies** such as electrostatic sprayers, ozone technology for air purification and UV technology.
- Placing “**Lead With Care Kits**” in each

guest room to provide masks, hand sanitizer and sanitation wipes.

- Embedding **physical distancing** measures.
- Possibly operating restaurants and bars with **reduced capacity**.
- **Training employees** on Lead With Care procedures.

Rosen Hotels & Resorts

Operated by independent hotelier Harris Rosen, Rosen Hotels & Resorts utilized experts from its RosenCare healthcare program—established in 1991 as Rosen’s self-funded associate healthcare program—to create the company’s COVID-19 response plan. Protocols comprising the plan for the company’s eight Orlando properties include:

- Ensuring **physical distancing** by implementing space capacity limits, rearranging furniture and using floor decals to promote distancing among guests.
- Using **electrostatic sprayers** with hospital-grade disinfectants when thoroughly sanitizing each guest room.
- Screening hotel employees ahead of each shift with **temperature checks**.
- Increasing the amount of **hand sanitizer** that’s easily accessible through the hotels.
- **Posting reminders** from the CDC’s guidelines on hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes, etc.
- Placing **clear protective barriers** at the front desk to separate guests and hotel employees.

Marriott

Marriott created the **Marriott Global Cleanliness Council**, staffed by some of the company's senior leaders as well as food science and infectious disease experts.

The goal is to “develop the next level of global hospitality cleanliness standards, norms and behaviors that are designed to minimize risk and enhance safety for consumers and Marriott associates alike,” according to the global hotel giant.

Changes rolling out in Marriott properties include:

- Guest rooms and public areas will be sanitized with **electrostatic sprayers with hospital-grade disinfectant**.



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- Marriott is testing **ultraviolet light technology** for sanitizing keys for guests and devices shared by employees.
- **Furniture will be removed or rearranged** to allow more space for physical distancing.
- **Hand sanitizer** will be placed at en-

trances, reception, elevator banks and fitness and meeting spaces.

- Marriott is also working to make **masks and gloves** available to employees.

Hilton

Hilton developed **Hilton CleanStay with Lysol protection**, a program where the hotel chain has partnered with RB, the maker of Lysol and Dettol, and consulted with **Mayo Clinic** to develop its new standards of cleanliness and disinfection in its properties around the world. RB and Mayo Clinic will advise Hilton hotels on cleaning protocols, training and education programs and quality assurance.

The program is still in development, but new standards **under consideration** include:

- Placing a **room seal on doors** to let guests know that their room has not been accessed since being thoroughly cleaned.



COURTESY OF HILTON

- Applying **extra disinfection** of the most frequently touched guest room areas, including light switches, door handles, TV remotes, thermostats, etc.
- **Decluttering** by removing pen, paper and the guest directory, and supplementing with a digital replacement or making items available upon request.
- Possibly limiting the number of guests allowed in **fitness centers** at one time and closing them for cleaning multiple times a day.
- Providing **disinfecting wipes** in key high-traffic areas like primary entrances and elevator landings.
- Doubling down on its Digital Key technology for **contactless check-in**. Guests can check in, choose their room and access their room with a digital room key. They can also check out using their mobile devices through the Hilton Honors mobile app at participating hotels.

Hyatt

Hyatt established a **Global Care & Cleanliness Commitment** to build on its existing health and safety protocols. It will include an accreditation process by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council—**GBAC STAR accreditation**—as well as employee training and support resources, and a working group of medical experts and industry professionals.

New plans include:

- By September 2020, appointing trained **Hygiene Managers** at every Hyatt hotel;

an employee who will be responsible for their hotel adhering to the new operational guide and protocols.

- Administering **employee surveys** to gauge their comfort, the hotel's cleanliness, working order, customer service, etc.
- Exploring purification and sanitation device installation in an effort to ensure **enhanced air quality**.
- Implementing **physical distancing** guidelines in public areas.
- Increased frequency of cleaning with **hospital-grade disinfectants** on all high-touch surfaces, guest rooms and shared spaces.



Wynn Las Vegas

Wynn Resorts' reopening health and sanitation plan includes:

- Using **thermal cameras** at entry points to detect if an employee or guest has a temperature of more than 100 degrees F.
- Restaurant tables, slot machines and other physical layouts will be arranged to support **physical distancing** of no

less than six feet apart. Guests will also be advised to distance themselves no less than six feet from those who are not traveling with them.

- **Hand sanitizer** will be at entry points and other areas of contact (reception, lobby, casino floor, meeting and convention spaces, pools, elevator landings, etc.).
- Employees will receive **COVID-19 training** on safety and sanitation protocols.
- No more than **four guests per elevator**.
- Guests will receive an **amenity bag** during check-in that will include masks, hand sanitizer and a COVID-19 awareness card.
- **Disinfecting wipes and spray sanitizer** will be available in each room, subject to availability.

The Venetian Resort

New protocols for the Las Vegas resort include:

- Using **thermal cameras** at every resort entry point—including at the Congress Center and Sands Expo Convention Center—for discreet temperature checks. Those with a temperature at or over 100.4 degrees F will be subject to a secondary screening.
- Guests will receive a **personal care amenity kit** with hand sanitizer, disinfecting wipes, gloves and a personal face mask.
- The resort has a team of 25 **EMTs** available 24 hours a day. One-third of this EMT staff are onsite every day.
- Administering **physical distancing**

guidelines between guests not traveling together as well as restaurant tables and slot machines.

- Exploring **UV light** to disinfect select shipments arriving at the resort and equipment such as bell service carts and luggage.
- Making **hand sanitizer** readily available in high-traffic areas throughout the resort as well as in meetings rooms in use at the Congress Center and the Sands Expo Convention Center.
- Reviewing seating capacities and floor plans on an event-by-event basis.

Stay up to date on the evolving coronavirus situation and its effect on the meetings, events and hospitality industries with this [guide displaying the latest news and analysis](#).



Sarah Kloepple

Content Developer, Destinations and Features

Sarah Kloepple joined Stamats Business Media as a staff writer in August 2018. She is a graduate of the Missouri School of Journalism, where her focus was magazine writing. She's written and edited for numerous publications in her hometown of St. Louis.



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Book a future meeting in Asheville and you may be eligible for incentives you can apply to enhance your Asheville experience!

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Explore Asheville

Situated in the heart of the spectacular Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina, the city of Asheville exudes a unique artistic and cultural spirit, while offering cultural treasures, historic architecture, exciting outdoor adventures and inspiring event venues that empower discovery and creativity.

Elevate your meetings when you bring your next event to the premier Southeast mountain destination.

Asheville is easy to get to, with its convenient location at two major interstates: I-26 and I-40. We are within a 600-mile radius of 50 percent of the country's population. Just 20 minutes from down-

town, Asheville Regional Airport (AVL) offers nonstop flights and easy connections through major U.S. hubs.

When your organization is ready to plan a future meeting, the fully staffed Explore Asheville team can simplify your planning. We want to be your strategic partners, understand your meeting's goals and help you design a unique program.

Contact us to generate a cohesive response from our destination completely tailored to your meeting's needs; provide time-saving services and the Asheville expertise needed particularly in challenging times; and qualify your meeting for eligibility of up to \$5,000 in incentives.

Post-Shutdown Features

Asheville's businesses and community members have taken the Asheville Stay Safe Pledge—a shared commitment to take important precautions to keep each other safe during the coronavirus pandemic. As part of this pledge, businesses have put into place enhanced cleaning and safety protocols, and employees are required to wear masks.

Explore Asheville is ready to roll up our sleeves to support our hospitality community and you, our meeting planner part-

ners. When you are ready to plan a meeting in Asheville, we can help with three new initiatives: 1. We have created Plan-WithPerks.com, a collection of Asheville's meeting planner perk packages from our hotel partners; 2. We have increased our meeting incentive funds, and RFPs sent to Explore Asheville may be eligible for up to \$5,000 in incentives; 3. We have filmed high-quality 3D virtual tours of our major hotel meeting properties and can completely customize your virtual site visit.

Facility/Destination Highlights

Asheville is well positioned for group attendees looking for ease of travel and with safety in mind. Surrounded by the region's highest peaks, national parks, state forests and the famed Blue Ridge Parkway, western North Carolina's fresh mountain air, wide-open spaces and deep cultural connections make it a hidden gem outside densely populated areas—but within a 600-mile radius of 50 percent of the country's population.

Asheville is recognized for its amazing mountain setting, range of memorable attendee experiences and abundance of unique outdoor space. Asheville also tops many lists for its food and craft beverage culture, energizing outdoor recreation, expansive arts and creative wellness opportunities.

From grand resorts and elegant inns to modern boutique properties, Asheville has hotels for a variety of meeting sizes, including the iconic Omni Grove Park Inn and the Biltmore Estate. Recent downtown development includes new meeting hotels: AC Marriott, Cambria Suites, Hilton Curio Collection's Foundry Hotel and the Kimpton Hotel Arras.

Explore Asheville

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Coronavirus Risk Management Tips for Meetings and Events

By Brenda Rivers

The coronavirus pandemic has upended the meetings and conventions industry, especially in the area of risk management and mitigation as organizations are starting to think about, if not plan for, the resumption of face-to-face meetings.

Although we indeed find ourselves in uncertain times, there is a much higher degree of certainty for organizations that arm themselves with a vigilant event risk management strategy.

This vigilance is demonstrated by having a vulnerability assessment for global health emergencies and a duty of care checklist to ensure that the planning team takes all prudent and reasonable steps to keep attendees as safe as possible from

exposure to the virus while participating in your program.

As president of SAFE (Sound Advice for Events), I'm passionate about risk management, and have been training meeting planners for several years on how to develop a risk management strategy for their entire enterprise.

We're emerging from the greatest catastrophe in the last 100 years, but event planners are resilient, optimistic and determined.

The good news is that pandemics and recessions have come and gone, and the meeting and events world will bounce back from COVID-19 stronger and more resilient than ever.

Meeting organizers and planners have a legal, moral and ethical duty to open meetings and events when they are safe. This means they must ensure attendees' health, well-being and safety; and act with watchfulness, attention, caution and prudence to ensure that the highest health and safety standards are instituted.

Key actions for the meetings and events planning team for recovery and rebuilding in a post-shutdown include:

Conduct a vulnerability study in order to assess the current state of the virus in the destination and venue options for your event.

First, download a sample template at www.safelc.com/pandemic vulnerability study.

Continue to monitor your event location via resources offered by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), World Health Organization (WHO), Overseas Security Advisory Council (OSAC) and the U.S. State Department. For U.S. locations with any known cases or exposure, include the city and county department of public health and local medical services up to the start date of the event.

Assess the demographics of your participants.

To identify risk of exposure from international attendees or attendees who have traveled internationally in the previous four weeks, determine where they have traveled

to or originated from.

Develop health and safety data collection on participants that are narrowly tailored to determine if they are health risks for face-to-face meetings. Be aware of HIPPA requirements.

Engage your hotel, convention center and venues.

Collaborate with hotel security, DMCs, local officials, responders and public health providers about crisis plans.

Conduct a pre-event safety discussion that includes understanding their emergency procedures to handle a health emergency during an event. Find any statistics regarding past airborne illnesses in the location. Investigate the current state of preparation for coronavirus with all your event first responders.

Review all contracts for the force majeure clause and any event cancellation insurance.

Examine your contracts and insurance to determine if the "threat of a pandemic" and communicable disease are covered regarding a reason for termination or reduction of your event attendance and attrition.

If not, explore options to change dates or move the location.

Confer with your organization's travel management team.

Communicating with your organization's

travel management team will allow you to integrate travel safety bulletins with the event safety protocol.

Inform your key decision makers.

Organizational stakeholders need to be acutely aware of the risk level and possible financial implications, as well as alternatives to mitigate risk.

Recommend best alternatives.

Factors to consider: health and safety standards of hotels and venues; willingness to participate in your pre-event risk management strategy for the event; virtual and hybrid options; and risk-free registration policy.

Include a risk management policy statement.

This statement must include the considerations of protecting the health of all attendees, including those who have not been vaccinated, have a compromised immune system or who might be feeling sick when they arrive at the event.

Advise your attendees early and often.

Communication of your company's awareness of the potential for coronavirus exposure should be frequent and based on current public health reports and the responsibility for a healthy and hygienic event environment.

Communicate health and safety procedures and expectations of attendees' responsibilities in advance of the event.

Post the health and safety protocol that is required at your event for entry (i.e., temperature checks, virtual and hybrid options, social distancing requirements, food and beverage safety, and contact tracing, if done).

These should be messaged via the event website, attendee email blasts and mobile app, among other communication channels.

Publish “Stay Healthy—Know Before You Go” tips.

Attendees need to be alerted in your event registration process to information that includes “How to prevent the spread of coronavirus” and “What to do to avoid exposure to coronavirus while traveling to and from your event.”

Also include frequently updated health tips in the event mobile app during the event.

Have pre-event discussions on how you will handle an attendee who appears to be sick during the event or participants who do not follow the event safety protocol as directed. (Participants have an obligation to act responsibly.)

Do not leave this to a last-minute reaction by the planning team.

While you might not have a full-blown coronavirus epidemic during the event, you might have an attendee who exhibits symptoms of a cold or flu that will not be easily identified as coronavirus until it is too late to separate them from the group.

Develop an onsite crisis response plan to handle an outbreak of any illness during the event.

Model this crisis response plan after your plan for mitigating a foodborne illness. Include a dedicated response team, know your medical contacts and procedures, and expand your crisis communication plan to include a “panic-driven attack of the flu.”

Include social media channels and rehearsed messaging to keep attendees informed and calm, and the event moving.

Document all of the above in your “risk management playbook.”

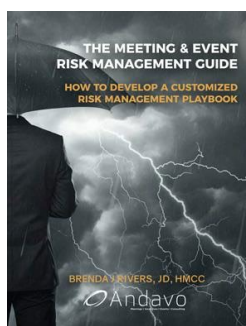
By now, you should have, or be working on, a risk management playbook for your organization.

Include all of this in that plan. If you haven’t started developing a plan, the coronavirus outbreak serves as yet one more reminder that such plans are necessary for the health of your attendees.

Such plans can also eliminate severe financial risks to your organization due to legal liability and negative public perceptions when the unthinkable happens and you are unprepared to react in a logical,

predetermined fashion.

Remember that the meeting planner is not the guarantor of the safety of the attendees, but duty of care does mean that the planner must investigate the risk of coronavirus, advise the attendees of the current state of coronavirus in the location, and provide all the best hygiene and health oversight practices possible at your event.



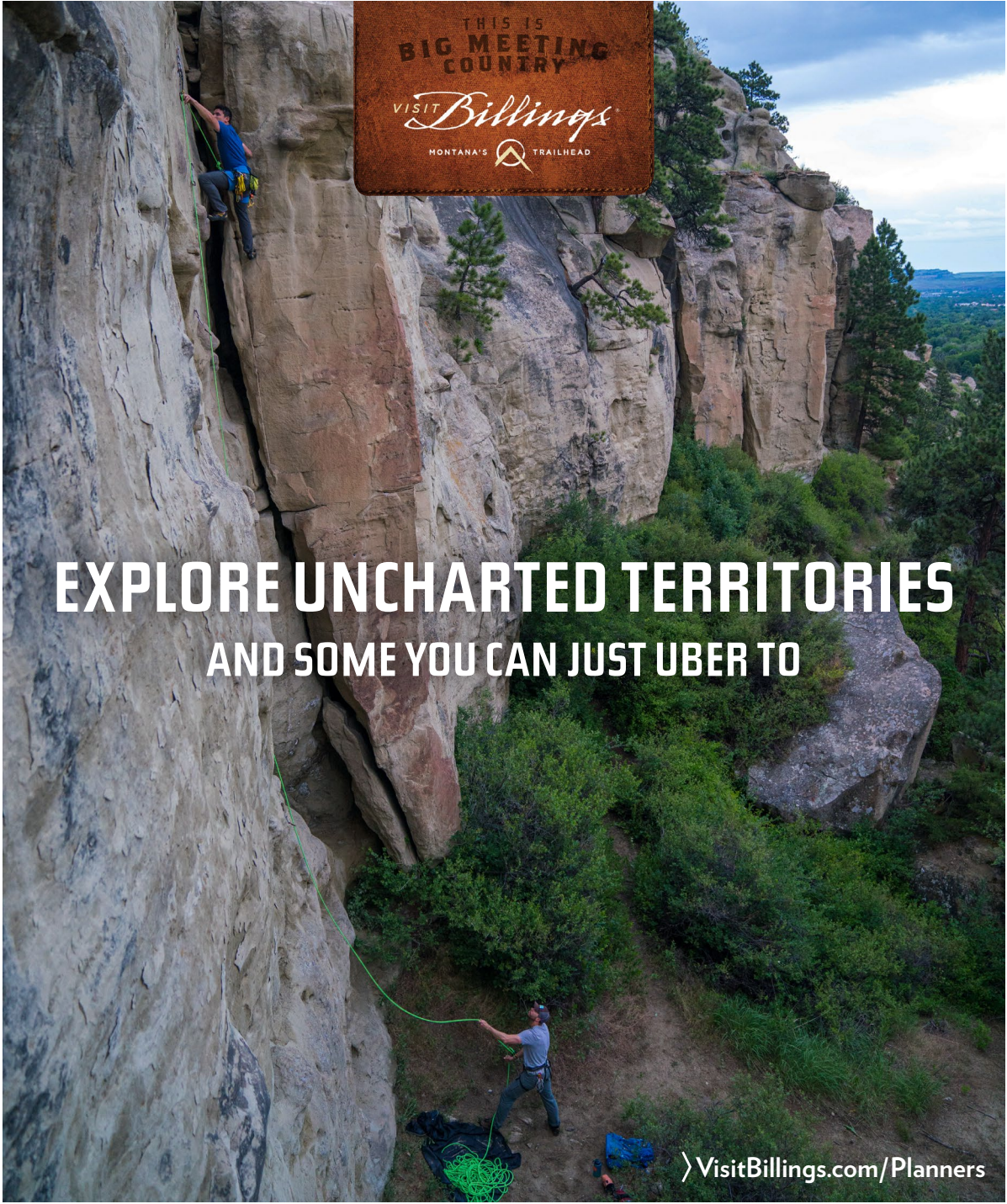
Brenda Rivers is the author of *The Meeting & Event Risk Management Guide*, published by Meetings Today.



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off-agenda options and unique meeting settings. Meet indoors or outside. There is plenty of room at Montana’s Trailhead. Unleash creative spirit, all while social distancing. In the evening, enjoy Western art or catch a performance at the recently renovated, historic Babcock or Alberta Bair theaters.

Want to get outdoors and into wide open spaces? Hike or bike along the trails of the 70 million-year-old sandstone Rimrocks or the legendary Yellowstone River, which is the longest free-flowing river in the lower 48 states.

Billings' Pledge: Open & Safe

Your health and that of your attendees is our priority. From Billings' business community's Open and Safe Pledge and Visit Billings' COVID-19 safety messaging, the Visit Billings team will help you navigate any health or safety concerns. Staff members

work directly with local health officials to ensure you have answers you need to help you execute your conference successfully and safely. Whether attendees plan to fly or drive to Billings, the Visit Billings team is here to help service your group.

Choose Billings

With more than 250,00 square feet of flexible meeting space, it is no wonder Billings is the place to meet. With five conference hotels, 4,500 hotel rooms and a mix of historic and modern venues, including the 10,000-seat First Interstate Arena, choose Billings.

You can also take teambuilding to new heights with several unique offerings. Whether you are rappelling down them or biking on one of the many trails, the beautiful sandstone Rimrocks offer rare teambuilding moments.

Plus, planners can also show attendees the beauty of the Yellowstone River Valley on horseback with Bitter Creek Outfitters. The company offers a fun and friendly environment that will make any conference one to remember.

Billings is where "big city" amenities complement the "big sky" views and Montana experiences with access to major attractions like Yellowstone National Park and Pompeys Pillar National Monument.

Plus, with the Visit Billings team, you will find the inspiration, service and resources needed to make Billings a conference destination. The Visit Billings team cannot wait to host you!

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RESOURCES

COVID-19 is affecting all of us in every aspect of life, and is most likely making your job more difficult in ways many of us may never have imagined. We understand, and we're here to help.

Our team is monitoring the virus, keeping you informed of the news while offering solutions to help keep some sort of normalcy or adapt to the new normal.

Below is a complete list of articles, podcast episodes and other coverage we have created to help you navigate the crisis and do your job easier and better.

We will continue to watch and provide information on the situation and update this page to include all our content.

Articles

[Virtual Teambuilding: How to Keep a Group Connected and Engaged Remotely](#)

[Expert Tips on Transitioning From Live to Virtual Events](#)

[Julie Coker Delays New Job and Forgoes Salary to Help Philly Navigate Covid-19 Crisis](#)

[Key Considerations for Planning a Virtual Association Meeting](#)

[Marriott Launches Rooms for Responders, Providing Free Rooms to Frontline Coronavirus Healthcare Workers](#)

[Las Vegas Properties That Gave Back During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

[Inspiring Stories from the Meetings Industry During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

[Marriott Hotels to Roll Out Next-Level Cleanliness Standards, New Hospitality Norms](#)

[Live Events Community Launches Coalition to Lobby for Coronavirus Aid](#)

[Wynn Las Vegas Unveils Health and Sanitation Plan, Paving Way for Las Vegas Strip to Slowly Reopen](#)

[Las Vegas Rebooks 3 Coronavirus-Postponed Events](#)

[Case Study: 5 Pandemic Safety Tips for High-Level Summits](#)

[COVID-19: Trust, Information, Solidarity and Change](#)

[Travel Industry Suffering Catastrophic Coronavirus Losses](#)

[WHO Coronavirus Press Updates: The Impact on Meetings and Events](#)

[Essential Legal Tips for Event Cancellation and Postponement](#)

[Coronavirus Response: Tradeshow Orgs Launch 'This Show Is Open' Campaign](#)

[A Coronavirus Communication Lesson From the API Community](#)

[Coronavirus Context: Michael Dominguez Shares His View](#)

[10 Coronavirus Crisis Communication Tips](#)

[How to Protect Against Coronavirus](#)

[Coronavirus Risk Management Tips for Meetings and Events](#)

[What Hotels and Resorts Are Doing to Enhance Health and Sanitation Standards](#)

[Coastal Mexico Destinations Set to Reopen: Bridge Gap with Virtual Experiences](#)

[Epic Challenges Ahead: Expert Opinion on the Post-COVID-19 Meetings World](#)

Podcasts

[What Will Hotels and Conferences Look Like Post COVID-19?](#)

[Essential Legal Tips for Event Cancellation and Postponement](#)

[Go LIVE Together Fights for the Live Events Industry](#)

[Industry in Crisis: Roger Dow Details the Travel Industry Economic and Jobs Impact of COVID-19](#)

[Wellness in the Age of Coronavirus](#)

[A Las Vegas Coronavirus Comeback Story](#)

[Live Events Community Launches Coalition to Lobby for Coronavirus Aid](#)

[WHO Coronavirus Press Updates: The Impact on Meetings and Events](#)

[Pro Tips for Working and Managing From Home During the Coronavirus Crisis](#)

[The Weekly Wrap: Coronavirus Risk Management and More](#)

[Coronavirus Cancellation and Attrition Liability Must-Knows](#)

[Working From Home Now? A Therapist's Advice on Maintaining Healthy Family Relationships](#)

[The Weekly Wrap: Coronavirus Rocks the Travel World. Here's How You Can Protect Your Meetings Attendees and Organization](#)

[Navigate the COVID-19 Pandemic Via This Free Meetings Industry Video Panel Discussion](#)

On-Demand Webinars

[The New Normal for Facilities](#)

[Panel Discussion: COVID-19 and the Meetings Industry](#)

[Best Practices to Accelerate Your Pivot to Virtual Events](#)

[What You Miss in Selecting and Inspecting Sites Can Hurt You...More Now Than Ever](#)

[Risk Management Primer: How to Protect Your Attendees and Organization From Disaster](#)

[Planner and Hotel Sales Relationships and Expectations in a Post-COVID-19 World](#)

[Designing Events for an Insecure World](#)

[Hybrid Events: What You Need to Know Now](#)

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