



GUIDANCE FOR SMALL TEMPORARY DINING STRUCTURES¹

Depending on the level of severity of COVID19 in an area, indoor access to bars and restaurants may be prohibited, because insufficiently ventilated or disinfected spaces will increase the risk of COVID19 transmission. One option that may be permitted by authorities is outdoor dining in temporary structures. Such structures are intended to be partially or fully enclosed in order to isolate the occupants from outdoor conditions and reduce risk of COVID19 transmission compared to being indoors, yet provide more environmental isolation than being completely outdoors. Structure types may include tents, domes or portable buildings. The following guidance is provided to support provision of seating for food and beverage establishments to self-formed parties that meet local restrictions on gatherings and not for large events or seating expansions using temporary dining structures:

- All applicable regulations, codes, standards and manufacturer instructions should be followed. This guidance is not intended to reduce the stringency of any such requirements.
- Applicable public health authority guidance (such as [CDC recommendations](#)) should be followed.
- Only one booking/party of diners should be allowed per structure.
- No substantial food preparation or cooking should take place inside the structure. Exceptions may be made for short-duration table-side preparations.
- Staff should wear masks or appropriate Personal Protective Equipment when inside the structure
- Mechanical ventilation with outdoor air of at least 25 cfm (12 l/s) per person based on maximum occupancy should be provided to the structure. This is intended to reduce risk of infection and is a greater air flow rate than usually required by ventilation requirements for dining areas based on acceptable indoor air quality.
- When the mechanical ventilation is insufficient or a higher degree of protection is desired, [portable air cleaners](#) should also be provided.
- A combined heating/cooling and ventilation system may be used if the equipment is rated for that purpose. Unvented combustion should not be used to provide heat.
- When possible, a supply ventilation system using a MERV-13 or better filter should be installed to protect occupants from intake of contaminated outdoor air. This should be done even if there is no recirculation of indoor air.
- After a party has left, the structure should be sanitized following guidance from [CDC](#) or other public health authorities. See also other ASHRAE guidance on [Filtration and Disinfection](#).
- Between occupancies, the air in the space should be flushed out with equivalent clean air using at least 3 volumes of such air.

HVAC&R systems play an important role in minimizing the spread of harmful pathogens, and ASHRAE is ready to provide [technical resources](#) and [answer questions](#).

For further assistance, please contact GovAffairs@ashrae.org. *The information above is provided as a service to the public. While every effort is made to provide accurate and reliable information, this is advisory, and is provided for informational purposes only. They are not intended and should not be relied upon as official statements of ASHRAE.*

¹ ASHRAE is a global professional society of over 55,000 members committed to serve humanity by advancing the arts and sciences of heating, ventilation, air conditioning, refrigeration and their allied fields. ASHRAE has established a Task Force to help deploy technical resources to address the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic and possible future epidemics as it relates to the effects of heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) systems on disease transmission.

Please be aware that each building, each set of occupants and each HVAC system is different. Please consult the full ASHRAE guidance for all building types for further detail and caveats; consider reaching out to HVAC design professionals when detailed analysis of your specific building, your circumstances and your HVAC equipment might be helpful.