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Guidelines for organizing MICE events to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) according to the organizational safety measures or COVID Free Setting (Declining Stage)

By Ministry of Public Health and
Thailand Convention and Exhibition Bureau (Public Organization)

Introduction

The Royal Thai Government has announced the measures for organizing activities, such as meetings, seminars, trade shows, exhibitions, and special events in hotels, exhibition centers, convention centers, exhibition venues, and special events venues. These measures are under Article 9 of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration B.E. 2548 (A.D. 2005) (No. 37), which specify details of each activity in each area to comply with the specified organizational safety measures. Details are provided in the table below:

Activities/Locations	Maximum and strict control zones	Maximum control zones	Control zones	Close-surveillance zones	Surveillance zones and Blue (tourism pilot) zones
Exhibition center, convention center or exhibition venue including similar places in shopping malls and hotels.	Can organize meetings up to 500 people and set up suitable area size to prevent overcrowded.	Can organize meetings, sports events, trade shows (no food tasting), not more than 500 people according to the size of the area.	Can organize exhibitions (able to provide food tasting), other events, and promotional activities in department stores, not more than 1,000 people.	Can organize events as appropriate.	

The list of provinces in Thailand separated by level of COVID-19 situation includes the maximum control zones, the control zones, the close-surveillance zones, and the tourism pilot zones, according to the Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA)'s order as shown in the figure below.¹

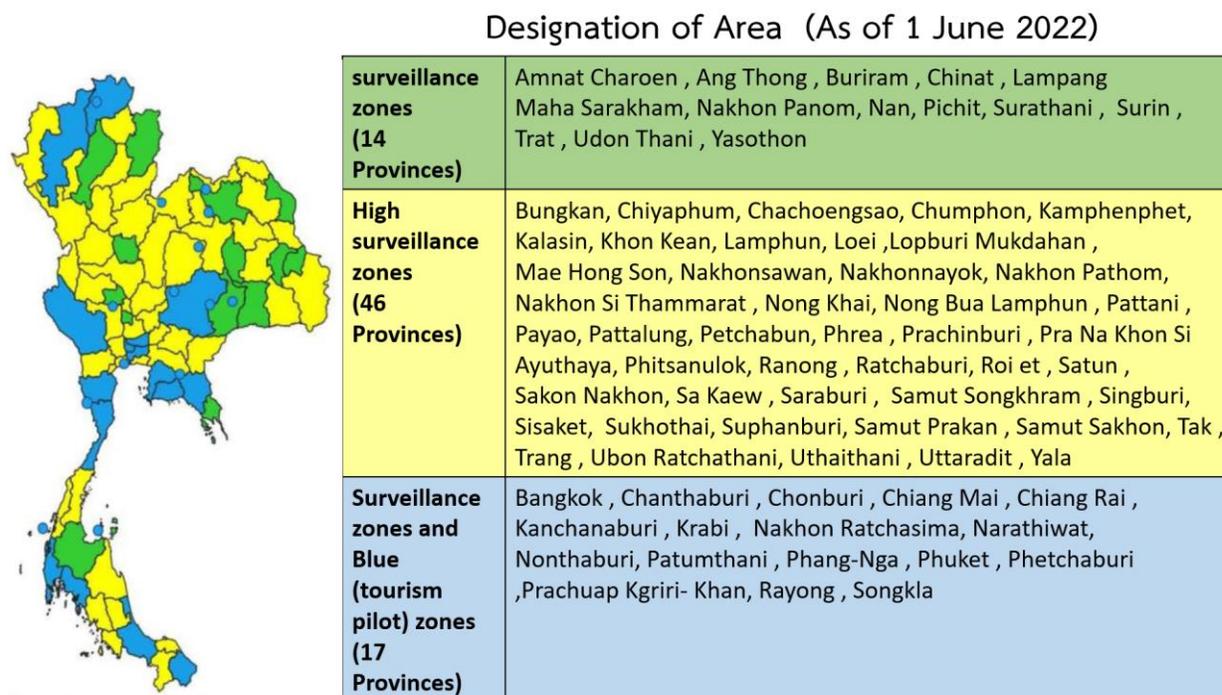


Fig. 1: COVID-19 Zoning areas in Thailand (from 1 June 2022)

Nowadays, the Covid-19 situation is improving and new cases are lower than expected. Covid-19 enter declining stage. Therefore, the preventive measures have been relaxed to enable entrepreneurs to carry out economic and social activities closer to normal. However, the important measures, especially hygiene measures have been maintained.

¹ Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration (CCSA)'s Order No. 10/2565 on the pandemic areas designated as the control zones, the close-surveillance zones and the tourism pilot zones according to the regulations issued under Section 9 of the Emergency Decree on Public Administration in Emergency Situations B.E. 2548 (A.D. 2005).

Details of guidelines for organizing events according to organizational safety measures in declining stage are as follows:

1. Meeting / Seminar

Meetings, organized by individual professionals in a closed building at convention centers, hotels, or government offices, with large numbers and diverse groups of people, an opportunity for close contact, long duration of the meeting, and travelling of the participants or employees may pose a risk. Therefore, organizers are advised to follow the guidelines for organizing meetings according to the organizational safety measures (COVID free setting). There are three components as follows:

✚ COVID free Environment

Preparation

- Establishments or organizers conduct self-assessment via Thai Stop COVID plus and get the certificate.

1. Hygiene and Safety

1.1 Cleaning

- 1) Clean common touch surfaces such as tables, chairs, and common touch areas, e.g., doorknobs, elevator buttons, escalators, microphones, and partition, every 2 hours before and after a meeting or in an appropriate.²
- 2) Clean the toilets, especially around the toilet bowl, toilet flush, handrails, doorknobs, sinks, and faucets every 1-2 hours or in an appropriate.
- 3) Provide adequate storage containers with a tight lid. Each type of waste must be separated and disposed of hygienically every day.
- 4) Provide a handwashing station with soap and water or enough alcohol gel at suitable areas to be used conveniently.
- 5) Use technology to support information for meetings, seminars, instead of using printed documents to reduce the exposure.
- 6) food and beverage management should follow hygiene measures.

² Department of Health advice on guidelines for cleaning, destroying and disinfecting during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in B.E. 2564 (A.D. 2021).

1.2 Communication and Risk Management

- 1) Assign a responsible person(s) to inspect and monitor the activities in order to comply with the prescribed measures.
- 2) Communicate the measures to the participants and staff before and during the meeting.
- 3) Prepare an incident response plan. Assign a responsible person(s), and rehearse the plan.

2. Distancing

- 1) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between seats, tables, aisles, registration points and snack and drink bars.
- 2) Maintain a distance of at least 1-2 meter between the stage or the speaker and the audience.
- 3) Set clear and sufficient entrances and exits.
- 4) Consider reduce crowd congestion by
 - (1) holding hybrid meetings to reduce crowd congestion.
 - (2) providing the pre-registration or online registration.

3. Ventilation

- 1) Provide good ventilation inside the venue.
- 2) Open the doors and windows after the meeting for additional natural ventilation.
- 3) Clean the air conditioning system every 3 - 6 months.
- 4) The toilets should have a good ventilation system, or a ventilation fan should be used for the entire service time.



COVID Free Personnel

Organizers and venues such as hotels, exhibition centers, convention centers or exhibition venues including similar places in shopping malls must implement measures as follows:

1. Ensure that all staff are fully vaccinated according to the criteria. or there must be evidence of a history of infection in the past 1 - 3 months; **and**
2. Risk screening for staff and keep records. If there is any risk, should be screened with ATK and have a “Not Detected” before the event starts.

3. comply with Universal Prevention measures such as

- Wear mask
- Avoid eating together.
- Assign the responsible person for strictly monitoring the implementation of the DMHTA measures.

 **COVID Free Customer**

- 1) comply with the Universal Prevention measures and venue regulations such as
 - Wear cloth masks or medical masks for the entire time at an event.
 - Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol gel frequently, or every time after touching shared objects.
 - Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from other people.
- 2) In the case of foreign travelers attending the meeting, they must comply with the immigration measures prescribed by the government.

2. Trade show and Exhibition

Organizing trade shows in an exhibition center or venue is linked to multiple industrial clusters. There are activities related to displaying products/goods at the exhibition center where people from different areas and professions are gathered in a convention center or a hotel. There are various sizes of exhibitions, and these activities gather many people from different groups. There is a chance of crowd congestion and close contact, including frequently touched surfaces such as escalator handrails, elevator buttons, doorknobs, toilets, etc., can pose a risk.

Therefore, organizers should follow the guidelines for organizing trade shows or exhibitions based on the organizational safety measures (COVID free setting) with 3 components as follows:

 **COVID Free Environment**

Preparation

- Establishments or organizers conduct self-assessment via Thai Stop COVID Double plus and get the certificate.

1. Hygiene and Safety

1.1 Cleaning

- 1) Clean common touched surfaces such as tables, chairs, microphones before and after use. Clean common contact points such as doorknobs, elevator buttons, and escalators every 1-2 hours, or in an appropriate.
- 2) Clean the toilets, especially around the toilet bowl, toilet flush, handrails, doorknobs, sinks, and faucets every hour or in an appropriate.
- 3) Provide adequate waste containers with a tight lid. Each type of waste must be separated and disposed of hygienically every day.
- 4) Provide a handwashing station with soap and water or enough alcohol gel at suitable areas to be used conveniently.

1.2 Reducing the exposure

- 1) Provide an online payment platform.
- 2) In the case of business negotiations (B2B), there should be a distribution of business negotiation areas with adequate trading space and a distance of 1 meter between tables and chairs. Provide alcohol gel at the table, reduce device sharing and clean the tables and chairs every time after use.
- 3) In case of product testing, clean the products with alcohol gel after the test every time.
- 4) In the case of food/beverage distribution, hygiene measures must be implemented such as
 - o Ready-to-eat food is kept and sealed in a way that prevents contamination, e.g., cabinets, containers with a tight lid, etc., and has equipment for scooping, picking up, and handling food.
 - o Distribution of food and beverage samples: the samples must be packed in a sealed package to distribute to individual participants and placed where the participants can pick them up by themselves.
 - o Cooking demonstration: exhibitors, chefs, or makers must wear a mask, gloves, and face shield and use the Cooking Shield at all times while cooking. A barrier must be installed at the cooking counter.

1.3.Traveling

- 1) In the case where shuttle buses/cars are provided, there must be one empty seat between each seat. Clean the vehicle before and after use every time, and provide good ventilation.

1.4 Risk Management

- 1) Provide a separate area or room for those who have risks/fever. Contact health care facilities, and prepare a safe referral system.
- 2) Assign a responsible person(s) to direct, inspect, monitor, and the activities in order to comply with the prescribed measures.
- 3) Prepare an incident response plan. Assign a responsible person(s), and rehearse the plan.

2. Distancing

- 1) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between seats, tables, booths, and cashiers.
- 2) Reduce crowd congestion such as
 - (1) Widen the corridor and may consider a one-way route.
 - (2) Provide a pre-register to reserve the queue before attending an event.
 - (3) Arrange the queue for participants to enter an event. Have a control system to limit the number of participants in each time slot.
 - (4) Set up a waiting area while participants are waiting to enter an event.
 - (5) Set clear and sufficient entrances and exits.
 - (6) hold a hybrid event or provide online sales to reduce crowd congestion at the event area.

3. Ventilation

- 1) Provide good ventilation inside the venue.
- 2) Clean the air conditioning system every 3 - 6 months.
- 3) The toilets should have a good ventilation system, or a ventilation fan should be used for the entire service time.

✚ COVID Free Personnel (Organizer, Staff, etc.)

Organizers and all staffs must take measures as follows:

1. Ensure that staff and organizers are fully vaccinated according to the criteria, or there must be evidence of a history of infection in the past 1 - 3 months.
2. Screen risks for staff, suppliers, contractors, if there is any risk, should be screened with ATK and have a “Not Detected” before the event starts.
3. comply with the Universal Prevention such as
 - (1) Wear cloth masks or medical masks throughout the working time.
 - (2) Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol gel frequently, or every time after touching shared objects.
 - (3) Keep distance from other people. Refrain from doing group activities such as eating together.

✚ COVID Free Customer

1. comply with the Universal Prevention such as
 - (1) Wear cloth masks or medical masks for the entire time when visiting an event/exhibition.
 - (2) Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol gel frequently, or every time after touching shared objects.
 - (3) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from other people.
2. In the case of foreign travelers attending the event, they must comply with the immigration measures prescribed by the government
3. Strictly comply with venue regulations.

3. Special events (concerts, music, events, festivals)

Concerts, music, events and festivals are specially organized activities at a particular time and place, both indoors and outdoors. These activities involve a gathering of many people and different groups. There may be close contact, shouting, and the duration of the activities might take a long time. If the activities are organized in the building, and the ventilation is not good, it will increase the risk of spreading the virus. Moreover, the transportation and accommodation of the participants and the staff might increase the risk. Therefore, the organizers should follow the guidelines for organizing events according to the safety measures for organizations (COVID Free Setting), which includes 3 components as follows:

COVID FREE Environment

1. Hygiene and Safety

Preparation

- Establishments or organizers conduct self-assessment via Thai Stop COVID plus and get the certificate.

1.1 Cleaning

- 1) Clean common touch surfaces such as venues, tables, chairs, microphones, and stage equipment before and after use. Clean common contact points such as door handles, handrails, and elevator buttons every 1 - 2 hours or in an appropriate.
- 2) Provide adequate toilets. Clean toilets, especially around the toilet bowl, toilet flush, handrails, doorknobs, sinks, and faucets every 1 - 2 hours. or in an appropriate.
- 3) Provide adequate waste containers with a tight lid. Each type of waste must be separated and disposed of hygienically every day.
- 4) Provide handwashing station with adequate soap and water or alcohol gel at suitable areas to be used conveniently.
- 5) Reducing the exposure **as much as possible such as** provide an e-payment option.
- 6) In a case of food/beverage distribution, hygiene and sanitation measure should be implemented such as
 - o Provide personal dining utensils such as individual set and personal seasonings.
 - o Ready-to-eat food must be packed in containers suitable for food and completely sealed to prevent contamination. The containers must be placed not less than 60 centimeters high from the floor.

1.2 Traveling

- 1) In the case where shuttle buses/cars are provided, there must be one empty seat between each seat. Clean the vehicles before and after use every time, and provide good ventilation.
- 2) Provide travel information that minimizes risks for participants.

1.3 Risk management and Communication

- 1) Provide a separate area or room for those with a history of risk or fever. Contact health care facilities and prepare a safe referral system.
- 2) Communicate and clarify the measures to the organizers, staff, and participants in advance and during the meeting. Inform about the event rules and prohibitions of entering the event if the risk screening criteria are not met.
- 3) Assign a responsible person(s) to direct, inspect, monitor, and supervise the activities in order to comply with the prescribed measures.
- 4) Prepare an incident response plan. Assign a responsible person(s), and rehearse the plan.

2. Distancing

- 1) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meters from the stage and the audience.
In the case of a small size event (such as event area in a department store, press conference), keep a distance of at least 2 meters between the stage and the audience. Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between the musicians, or performers on stage.
- 2) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter between booths, seats, or tables.
- 3) Reduce crowd congestion such as
 - (1) Set clear and sufficient entrances and exits. Widen the corridor and may consider a one-way route.
 - (2) Set up a waiting area while participants are waiting to enter an event.
 - (3) Set up sufficient points to display an event's layout, or have a website or QR Code for participants to access information to reduce crowd congestion at the entrance.
 - (4) Provide sufficient registration points, or pre-/online registration, or a self-check-in system.
 - (5) May arrange LED screens or large monitors, or set up screens at different points for the participants to view the event.
 - (6) Arrange advance ticket sales, or reserve queue in advance.
 - (7) In a case where there are several rounds of event/performance, organizers must set the time limits. Set entrances and exits in each zone to reduce crowd congestion.

3. Ventilation

1) In case of indoor events

- Provide good ventilation inside the venue.
- Clean the air conditioning system every 3 - 6 months, or every 3 months in high-risk areas.
- The toilets should have a good ventilation system, or a ventilation fan should be used for the entire service time.

COVID FREE Personnel

Organizers and venues such as hotels, exhibition centers, or convention centers, including the same kind of place in a shopping mall, and a place for special events, must take measures as follows:

- 1) Ensure that all staff and organizers are fully vaccinated according to the criteria, or there must be evidence of a history of infection in the past 1 - 3 months.
- 2) Risk screening for staff. If there is any risk, if there is any risk, should be screened with ATK and have a “Not Detected” before the event starts.
- 3) Comply Universal Prevention such as
 - (1) Wear cloth masks or medical masks throughout the working time.
 - (2) Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol gel frequently, or every time after touching shared objects.
 - (3) Provide personal items such as microphones, cosmetics, costumes for staff, performers, and musicians.
 - (4) Determine the working area and duration of work for staff, and limit the number of staff to the extent necessary.
 - (5) In a case where there are rooms for performers and/or musicians, there must be at least 1 meter distance between seats and table, and they must wear a mask at all times. Arrange separate meals and provide personal dining utensils.

COVID Free Customer

1. Participants should be fully vaccinated, or have a negative ATK test result, or negative RT-PCR test result within 7 days, or there must be evidence of a history of infection in the past 1 - 3 months.
2. comply with the Universal Prevention measures such as
 - (1) Wear cloth masks or medical masks for the entire time at an event.
 - (2) Wash hands with soap and water or alcohol gel frequently, or every time after touching shared objects.
 - (3) Maintain a distance of at least 1 meter from other people.
3. In the case of foreign travelers attending the event, they must comply with the immigration measures prescribed by the government.
