

- I. **SUBJECT:** A Policy for Special Events Permitting During the COVID-19 Pandemic  
**POLICY NUMBER:** MGR-009  
**DATE:** October 5, 2021

II. **Purpose**

This policy establishes the framework for the careful approval of special events permits during the COVID-19 Pandemic as allowed under the [Special Events Ordinance](#).

III. **Duration**

This policy is in effect through January 1, 2023, at which time, the Manager will determine whether to extend the policy or let it lapse. The Manager will notify the Mayor and Commission should there be a need to extend the policy beyond this date.

IV. **Definitions**

- A. Approved permit – A special event application receiving final approvals because the community spread is below the upper limit described in Attachment #1 for the event type. This process occurs no more than 42 days and no less than 7 days from the proposed event date.
- B. Category 1 Event – car-based events, vaccine distribution or public health events, and events that are otherwise protected by the U.S. Constitution.
- C. Category 2 Event – races or rides that require vaccination, or events solely based on private property that require vaccination.
- D. Category 3 Event – events on public property that require vaccination, or socially distanced races or rides.
- E. Category 4 Event – “traditional” races or rides, events solely based on private property that do not require vaccination, or other events where total participation can be legally restricted to less than 500 people.
- F. Category 5 Event – any special event that does not meet the criteria as a Category 1-4 Event.
- G. Community spread – the number of positive PCR cases for COVID-19 per 100,000 individuals recorded over a rolling 14 day period. The metric is derived from the Clarke County data from the [daily COVID-19 status report](#) published by the Georgia Department of Public Health. If these reports become unavailable, staff will utilize other reputable sources such as Northeast Georgia Health District, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, or other publically accessible sources that regularly collect and publish PCR testing results from a variety of test providers. When appropriate, the Central Services Department may use the 7 day case load per 100,000 people at 50% of the event category limit.
- H. PCR test – a diagnostic test for COVID-19 that uses the polymerase chain reaction analysis method to determine if genetic information from the COVID-19 virus is present in a sample.
- I. Socially distanced race or ride – a foot race, bike ride, triathlon, or other similar activity not utilizing motorized equipment, that meets the following criteria:
  - 1. Participants are pre-registered. Walk up registration is not permitted;
  - 2. Masks are used pre and post-race, including in race corrals;
  - 3. Staggered starts for race participants;
  - 4. Water stations use previously prepared water, and are spread out across the event;
  - 5. Any food should be packaged and in grab-to-go format;
  - 6. Vendors and booths are not allowed;
  - 7. There are no designated public viewing areas, including the start/finish lines; and,
  - 8. Award ceremonies are not held on public property.

- J. Special event – any organized activity having as its primary purpose entertainment, recreation and/or education which provides a substantial public and community benefit, such as a festival, celebration, foot or vehicle race, parade, march, rally or assembly, which takes place in whole or in part on a public street, sidewalk or right-of-way, public property or any organized activity that occurs on private property and impacts government services on public rights-of-way.

**V. Permit Issuance and Eligibility**

- A. A special events application may receive its final permit when it has satisfied all traditional permitting criteria and when:
  - 1. Within 42 days of the permitted event, the community spread for Clarke County is less than 75% of the upper limit described in Attachment #1;
  - 2. Within 28 days of the permitted event, the community spread for Clarke County is less than 85% if the upper limit described in Attachment #1;
  - 3. Within 14 days of the permitted event, the community spread for Clarke County or the Northeast Georgia Health District is less than 100% of the upper limit described in Attachment #1; or,
  - 4. Within 7 days of the permitted event, the community spread for Clarke County or the Northeast Georgia Health District is less than 100% of the upper limit described in Attachment #1.
- B. If the community spread fails to meet the metrics outlined in this section ahead of the proposed special event, the event may not receive a permit and it must be canceled or postponed until conditions become safer.

**VI. Vaccination**

- A. Events requiring vaccination of staff, volunteer, and attendees are safer than events that do not include this requirement. As such, events that voluntarily include this provision may qualify for higher permitting tiers if they meet the following requirements:
  - 1. The event sponsor can demonstrate that access to the event can be limited to vaccinated individuals through per-registration, limited access, vaccine checkpoints, and/or other similar measures. These measure must be enforceable while preserving an individual’s constitutional rights and/or access to adjacent private property;
  - 2. The event requires full vaccination of any individual eligible to receive a FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine, including those available under Emergency Use Authorization;
  - 3. Partially vaccinated individuals and individuals representing populations not eligible to receive a FDA-authorized COVID-19 vaccine may attend the event if:
    - a. They provide proof of a negative COVID-19 test (excluding home tests) within 48 hours of the event;
    - b. They are designated by the event staff using a different colored wrist band, sticker, stamp, or other easily identified mark; and,
    - c. They wear a mask for the duration of their time at the event.
  - 4. The event sponsor provides a plan that details how they will promote and enforce the vaccine requirement as a part of the event;
- B. The event sponsor is solely eligible for enforcing event-related vaccine requirements. ACCGov staff, including the Police Department and individuals working after-hours, may not enforce a vaccine requirement.
- C. Should an event sponsor fail to reasonably enforce the voluntary vaccine requirement, they will be ineligible to qualify for special events permit for a Category 2 or Category 3 event for a period of 13 months.

## **VII. Social Distancing Plan**

- A. At the time of application, all special event sponsors are required to submit a social distancing plan that outlines special precautions that will be taken to decrease the likelihood of COVID-19 transmission at the event. This plan will be reviewed by ACCGov staff, who may at their discretion, engage with medical or public safety experts for additional input. At a minimum, a social distancing plan should address:
1. An acknowledgement that event sponsor staff/volunteers/vendors are required to wear masks at the event;
  2. Any measures that will be used to encourage mask wearing by event visitors, including the potential for some large events to distribute masks at no cost to the event patrons;
  3. If and where hand sanitizer will be publically available;
  4. If and how public spaces such as portable restrooms, temporary seating, and/or other similar items will be sanitized;
  5. Practices that will be used to decrease person-to-person contact, including cashless transactions, paperless registration, virtual awards ceremonies, and/or other similar actions;
  6. Practices that will be used to decrease participant and visitor density at points of natural concentration (registration tables, vendors, beer gardens, etc.);
  7. Methodology that is used to implement a voluntary vaccine requirement, as outlined in Section VI, if included; and,
  8. Any other proposed action the applicant is suggesting to improve event safety.
- B. ACCGov staff may make reasonable recommendations on how social distancing plans need to be strengthened prior an event being provisionally approved. Event applicants may appeal to an ACCGov Assistant Manager if they do not wish to incorporate measures recommended by ACCGov staff.
- C. As outlined in the Special Events Ordinance, the Police Department may terminate any activity, in part or of the whole event, which is deemed to be promoting the safety, health, welfare, and good order of the community. Additionally, any event sponsor who fails to uphold the commitments of their social distancing plan will not be eligible to receive another special event permit from Athens-Clarke County for a period of 13 months.

## **VIII. Other Considerations**

- A. The Manager may, at his sole discretion, suspend this policy and/or modify it to become more restrictive in response to new or special conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of these unique conditions include the introduction of new COVID-19 variants that are more lethal or resistant to current vaccines, one or more of our local hospitals exceeding their ICU bed capacity, one or more of our local hospitals exceeding their general bed capacity, or other similar unexpected conditions that pose a threat to public health.
- B. If police resources are not available, the Manager may utilize staff from Transportation & Public Works, the Clarke County Sheriff's Office, or other qualified department to support road closures and traffic control.

**Attachment #1  
Permitting Matrix**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Community Spread</b>	<b>Approved Special Events</b>	<b>Early Approval Checkpoint 1 (42 days out)</b>	<b>Early Approval Checkpoint 2 (28 days out)</b>	<b>Early Approval Checkpoint 3 (7-14 days out)</b>
1	N/A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Car-Based Events</li> <li>• Expressions of Free Speech, Including Marches, Protests, and Rallies</li> <li>• Expressions of Religion</li> <li>• Other Activities Protected by the U.S. Constitution</li> <li>• Vaccine Distribution/Public Health Events</li> </ul>	No Maximum Threshold/Permits Issued As Allowed By The Special Events Ordinance		
2	801-1,200	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1 Events</li> <li>• Events on Private Property Requiring Vaccination</li> <li>• Races/Rides Requiring Vaccination</li> </ul>	900 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	1,020 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	1,200 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period
3	501-800	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1 &amp; 2 Events</li> <li>• Socially Distanced Races/Rides</li> <li>• Events on Public Property Requiring Vaccination</li> </ul>	600 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	680 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	800 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period
4	301-500	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1-3 Events</li> <li>• Races and Rides</li> <li>• Events on Private Property w/Out a Vaccine Requirement</li> <li>• Events Where Total Participation Can Be Restricted to Less than 500 People, Including ACCGov Parks &amp; Facilities</li> </ul>	375 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	425 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	500 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period
5	0 – 300	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Category 1-4 Events</li> <li>• Any Other Event as Permitted by Ordinance</li> </ul>	225 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	255 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period	300 or Fewer Positive PCR Cases Per 100,000 Over a Rolling 14 Day Period

**Attachment #2**  
**Event Category Flow Chart**

