

Questions and answers about site-specific variances

What is a site-specific variance?

These variances allow indoor and outdoor venues that meet specific criteria to operate after receiving approvals from the county's local public health agency and then, the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE).

Who can apply for a site-specific variance?

- A county can apply with the state for up to 10 variances per 100,000 people for indoor and outdoor venues after first getting approval from the county's local public health agency.
- The variances apply to venues that are 30,000 square feet or larger. Other venues fit within existing capacity limits.
- Counties that are in Level 1 on the dial may apply for **outdoor** and **indoor** site-specific variances.
- Counties that are in Level 2 on the dial may only apply for **outdoor** site-specific variances.

What are the limitations on site-specific variances?

CDPHE will not grant any variances that:

- Seek a higher capacity than 50%.
- Seek to be removed from the requirements of the state's orders generally.
- Reduce or eliminate protections for people at higher risk of severe illness from COVID-19, as defined in state's orders. These groups are specifically protected by the state's orders.
- Seek variances for Public Health Order 20-29: Voluntary and Elective Surgeries and Procedures.
- Seek variances from the mask order.

How does a county apply for a site-specific variance?

Counties that have reviewed and support a request for a site specific variance may have their local public health agency submit a complete [variance form](#) to the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment. When completing the application, make sure to:

- Clearly indicate which site and capacity limitation the county is requesting a variance from.
- Describe preventive measures the county will require to meet the state's orders.
- Use the [social distancing space calculator](#) to determine capacity.
- Use the [outdoor](#) and [indoor](#) event guidance to create designated spaces within the site.

What would cause a venue to lose its variance?

Two COVID-19 cases linked to a site automatically require a mitigation plan. The variance may be suspended at any time by CDPHE, if deemed necessary, to mitigate disease spread..

Checklist for variance applications

- Square footage of venue
- Map of venue WITH occupied floor space (such as furniture, equipment, and displays)
- Capacity request both % and total # of people
- Ventilation plan if indoor
- Sanitation schedule and consideration
 - Handwashing stations and hand sanitizer
 - Restrooms
- Mask wearing for all participants
- Health exclusion considerations for staff AND participants
- Social distancing considerations
 - Designated areas
 - Ensure 6 feet of social distancing at all times
 - Signage
 - Traffic flow map
- Risk assessment analysis
- Parking and transportation plan