

Standards for safer organised controlled events taking place in an enclosed area

Effective 30th August 2021

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has been leaving a mark on the world, with a great toll on health, economies and society in general. Consistent use of a variety of public health measures have helped to control and control the pandemic. We also know that vaccines work, and through a combination of these factors (measures and increasing vaccination rates), Malta is tangibly experiencing good results in terms of lowered positivity rates and a significant decrease in hospitalisations, ITU admissions and COVID-related deaths.

What is clear is that the amount of virus currently circulating has again stabilised. Despite the above, the upcoming steps in the transition strategy involves a higher risk than the previous ones. Therefore, the risk of spread of existing circulating virus is still potentially highly plausible.

Variants (known and future ones) will continue to be the big unknown. The Delta variant provided an additional challenge. Evidence suggests it is 40% to 60% more transmissible than the earlier Alpha (B.1.1.7) variant which was the first major variant of concern in the EU. The Delta variant is the prevailing variant in Europe including Malta.

Vaccination uptake

The impact of vaccination has so far been highly satisfactory. With higher coverage rates within the population, the virus would be somewhat less likely to spread widely because fewer people remain vulnerable to be infected severely. Since the vaccination roll out in Malta has now been extended to all age groups in whom vaccines are licensed, the element of inequities between those who are or are not vaccinated should continue to decrease. Vaccine hesitancy and misinformation remain two important aspects that need to be constantly addressed, requiring a broad communication strategy to gain and maintain the public's trust.

De-escalation of public health measures

Gradual de-escalation of measures has been ongoing since April 2021, with activities allowed in accordance with standards, where mitigation measures have allowed for places and services to re-open and such activities to take place.

In several countries, the introduction and recognition of vaccine certificates allows or will allow for a variety of options particularly for fully vaccinated individuals to be able to enjoy additional privileges with regards to restrictive measures.



Mitigation of risk has been one of the hallmarks of this pandemic and will continue to be so. In an effort to allow a gradual return to normality, smaller scale events in an enclosed and controlled environment, could be held with certain criteria in place, for persons in possession of a COVID vaccine certificate. Strict adherence to the mitigation measures mentioned below will continue to be needed to ensure that such events can be done as safely as possible.

COVID-19 digital certificate

Vaccine certificates recognised legally by the Superintendent of Public Health through government gazette notices will be those accepted to attend to events in accordance with this standard. The EU DCC – Vaccination Certificate will be issued for anyone who has received a full vaccination course plus the elapse of 14 days since the last vaccine dose with an EMA (European Medicines Authority) authorised vaccine through the Maltese national vaccination programme. Further Vaccination certificates accepted will be those which are issued in that official form, and with regards a vaccine, recognised and approved by the Superintendent of Public Health and which are published in the government gazette from time to time.

Organised controlled events for vaccinated persons

These standards are applicable for small organised controlled events, namely:

1. Cultural, artistic, dance, theatre and music performances
2. Corporate events - conferences, awards nights, AGMs etc
3. Weddings and other celebrations
4. Spectators at Sports events

These standards **do not apply** to religious events where the protocol applies

<https://deputyprimeminister.gov.mt/en/health-promotion/covid-19/Documents/mitigation-conditions-and-guidances/Standards%20Places%20of%20Worship%20and%20Services.pdf>

The following standards are applicable for all events organised under this standard:

- Organised events shall have an identified named organiser who shall be responsible for the event.
- Organiser is to apply for approval to organise an event with Malta Tourism Authority and submit risk assessment found at www.Bit.ly/event100pax2021 or www.mta.com.mt and the filled in assessment form sent on riskdepository@visitmalta.com at least 10 days prior to the event.
- All events are subject to inspection by authorised officers.
- Events shall strictly be with prior booking/reservation/tickets/registration. Any invitation should request confirmation of attendance prior to event. No sale of tickets is allowed at the door.
- Admittance shall be exclusively on presentation of a valid vaccination certificate (as per definition above). Organisers are to verify vaccine certificates by authentication



with the system. They can apply for access to the authentication system by sending a request to iccertifikavaccin@gov.mt

- All venue staff, performers and technical crew shall also have a valid vaccination certificate.
- Organisers shall exercise the right of refusal of entry onto the premises of patrons if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms.
- Staff and attendees shall be subject to temperature checks at entrance for the presence of fever and those with a temperature of 37.2 ° C or higher shall be denied entrance.
- An appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub is to be provided at each entrance and ensure that all persons sanitise their hands prior to entrance.
- The number of attendees shall be capped not to exceed the number of persons stipulated in Table 1.
- Organiser shall ensure that at the event venue there are no onlooking spectator areas where people can gather. Outdoor events shall take place in strictly fully controlled areas that are open spaces which are effectively enclosed/hoarded and that cannot otherwise be overlooked / looked into. Any outside event done with hoarding shall need to have 5-10 metres secure perimeter area outside hoarding to avoid gatherings.
- Events cannot be organised in residential property including leased residential property.
- Entrance into and exit from the premises shall be regulated with staggered entry and exit times, adopting appropriate crowd management techniques as necessary, to ensure minimum gatherings of people outside the enclosed venue. Numerous controlled entry/exit points required to prevent queues (where applicable). Adequate number of staff to be available for this purpose.
- Masks to be worn at all times and can only be removed when eating or drinking.
- No smoking allowed in the event area.
- A minimum two (2) metre distance shall be kept between performers and patrons
- Any food or drink service or outlets on the premises shall adhere to all Standards issued by the Public Health Authorities and relevant legislation. Such service shall be provided directly to patrons. Crowd control measures within the venue shall still be required and mechanisms to facilitate equal distribution of patrons.
- Staff and patrons are to wear masks and/or visors at all times while on the premises.
- All performers and crew utilising theatre facilities are required to follow the obligations detailed even if they are not employed by the theatre operator.
- Ongoing cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common areas inside the premises shall be carried out.
- Records of the contact information (name, surname, ID card/ passport number and contact phone number) of at least one person per party, as well as details of seating arrangements need to be kept for up to 28 days after the event.



Seated events

- Audiences shall be seated in such a way that each seated person maintains social distancing of at least two (2) metres from another seated person. In the case of persons from the same household, they shall be allowed to sit together in a group, and in such case no more than 6 persons shall be allowed to sit together. For persons not from the same household, up to 4 persons can opt to be seated together.
- As of the 13th September 2021, seated events with a capping of 100 persons can opt to have least one (1) metre from another seated person.
- For seating around a table, no more than 6 persons can be seated except for groups of persons from the same household.
- All standing up shall be prohibited except upon entering and exiting the venue and in order to go to restrooms.
- No buffet service and no stand-up bar services shall be allowed at the event.
- Seated events shall not have any breaks or intermission, and no dancing or mingling of patrons shall be allowed.
- Organisers must have security personnel to ensure that attendees remain seated and to manage any problems that may arise.

Standing events

- As of the 6th September 2021, standing events are allowed only in a cordoned off outside venue/area with a capping of 100 participants within an area of not less than 1 person per 2 metres; – so for a 100 person event, the area occupied by the participants cannot be less than 200 metres squared.
- As of the 13th September standing events with a capping of 100 participants within an area of not less than 1 person per 2 metres can be organised at an outdoor or indoor venue.

Sections for events

If the venue is equipped to have **physically separate sections**, ie each section is physically separated, has a separate entrance and exit, separate facilities, including staff, the event can accommodate up to a maximum of the capping in Table 1 for people per separate section. Each section needs to have physical separation with no possibility of crossing over. Staff and spectators from separate sections are not to have any contact with each other.

Hybrid standing and seated with sections cannot be organised.

Sections cannot be applied to weddings.

Professionals on stage who for a reason do not have a vaccination certificate may be allowed to work at the event provided they submit a negative PCR within 72 hours from start of event



and that no contact at all is made with any members of the audience or other staff at any point in time in the event. Other staff in contact with this person will need to be informed.

Timeline

The easing of measures has followed the approach of gradual easing, which is very dependent on the local epidemiological situation and will continue to be determined by the evolving epidemiological situation in Malta. Whilst the Islands are hopeful that the current favourable situation is retained, potentially allowing for further easing of measures, it must be understood that such transition can be bi-directional with the re-introduction of measures should the epidemiological situation start to deteriorate. However, in the event that the situation remains favourable, the following table shows the expected timeline and applicable maximum number of attendees that will be allowed to attend events organised according to the above-mentioned standards:

Table 1A. Seated events

	5 th July 2021	19 th July 2021	2 nd August 2021	16 th August 2021	30 th August 2021	13 th September	13 th September
Event capping	100	150	200	300	500	500	For 100 participants capping
Physical distancing	2 metres	2 metres	2 metres	2 metres	2 metres	2 metres	1 metre

Table 1B. Standing events

	6 th September 2021	13 th September 2021
Event capping	100	100
Location	Outside	Outside/ inside
Physical distancing	1 person/ 2 metres squared	1 person/ 2 metres squared



Risk assessment

A risk assessment tool found at <https://www.visitmalta.com> is required for all events. Organiser is to submit the filled in risk assessment tool on riskdepository@visitmalta.com at least 10 days prior to the event.

This tool must be completed in this Excel spreadsheet. If any of the basic requirements are not ticked, then the event cannot be held.

Digital certificate verification

Digital Vaccination Certificates and the identity of the persons attending the event must be checked and recorded together with contact details (at least 1 person per party) and the organiser is responsible to verify these to allow for events to be safe.

Organisers of events will be required to have QR code readers installed on their devices that can read the digital certificates to be able to verify the authenticity of COVID safe pass with respect to vaccination.

Children and pregnant persons

Children aged 5-11 years need to present a negative rapid test result done within 24 hours or a negative PCR within 72 hours from start of event.

Children under the age of 5 years need not have a test result so long as they are accompanied by a parent/guardian who is in possession of a valid COVID-19 vaccine certificate.

Pregnant persons who wish to attend such events, need to present a certificate from a medical practitioner and a negative rapid test result done within 24 hours or a negative PCR within 72 hours prior to start of event. These persons shall attend at their own risk. Pregnant women in the 2nd and third trimester are encouraged to get vaccinated.

An approval of an event and these standards do not exonerate the organiser from abiding by other applicable regulations, health and safety regulations, legislation and applicable permits.