



HOLIDAY DONATIONS AND CHARITY DRIVES DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY

As of December 1, 2020

Advisory

During this holiday season, New Yorkers should stay vigilant and observe health precautions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. While the holidays are a time of giving (e.g., toys, coats, school supplies) through donations and charity drives that help families throughout the state, these public health measures are necessary to ensure that charitable activities remain safe for all who participate during the ongoing public health emergency.

Through the *New York Forward* initiative, the New York State Department of Health's (DOH) data-driven, science-based precautions and protocols helped reduce community spread of the virus. However, with increases in confirmed cases and clusters throughout New York State, it is imperative that the organizers and operators of donation and charity drives follow State-issued executive orders, regulations, and guidance that apply to their operations and activities. Following DOH interim guidance on related commercial activities (e.g., retail, rental, office-based work), organizers and operators must ensure that employees, volunteers, and donors are able to:

- **Maintain appropriate social distancing** of six feet between individuals, unless individuals are members of the same household, by taking measures such as spacing donation collection boxes to avoid crowding of people
- **Ensure acceptable face coverings are worn** by individuals participating in the activity who are over the age of two and can medically tolerate the covering
- **Access hand hygiene stations**, such as hand washing (e.g., soap, warm running water, hand drying supplies) and hand sanitizing (e.g., alcohol-based sanitizer with 60% or more alcohol); and ensure employees and volunteers practice hand hygiene before and after handling donated goods. If employees and volunteers are wearing disposable gloves, ensure that they are replaced between uses followed by appropriate hand hygiene.
- **Regularly clean and disinfect** high-traffic areas (e.g., lobbies, restrooms), frequently touched surfaces (e.g., tables, doorknobs, hand railings), and shared equipment (e.g., container lids or handles)
- **Post signage** with health precautions (e.g., face coverings, social distancing, hand and respiratory hygiene) and **distance markers** indicating six-foot spaces in areas where lines form or people congregate
- **Emphasize the types and conditions of donations that are acceptable** (e.g., new, unwrapped goods) to limit the number of donated items that cannot be used or must otherwise be discarded (e.g., soiled goods)
- **Encourage the use of touchless, in-building, or curbside drop-off options**, when available, to minimize handling of goods between multiple people, where possible
- **Consider alternative, virtual donation options** (e.g., online drives or charity events), where feasible

Given the risk posed by a resurgence of COVID-19 cases this season, New Yorkers are cautioned to avoid crowds, wear a face covering in public, and stay home if feeling sick to prevent and reduce the spread of this deadly virus.

Resources

- New York State Department of Health Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website
<https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Coronavirus (COVID-19) Website
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>