

Fira de Barcelona: Covid-19 risk mitigation plan at events

Design and operational guide for exhibitors



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Introduction to the design and operational guide for exhibitors

In response to the emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus and with the purpose of contributing to the economic recovery by guaranteeing absolute safety for our customers and employees, Fira Barcelona has carried out a comprehensive study of the risk of being infected by the virus during our trade fair activity, enabling us to design and implement countermeasures geared towards preventing and mitigating the above risk. These countermeasures have been applied in many different fields (adaptation of capacities to the recommended physical distancing, traffic flows, additional cleaning and sanitation protocols, additional signage, etc.).

The following guide offers recommendations for the design and operation for the stands, which, together with the actions being taken around the rest of the venue, will enable us to reduce the risk of the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus there. In order to perform the risk analysis and draw up this guide, we have worked in partnership with external companies specialising in risk management and obtained the endorsement of the epidemiology service of the Hospital Clínic de Barcelona, a domestic and international flagship institution in the management of infectious diseases. The guide is divided into different sections and the recommendations listed here are mostly related to the stands' design and operation, except for those that require mandatory compliance. This guide should be regarded as complementary to FIRA's technical standards and implemented in accordance with the safety and accessibility provisions defined therein.

General principles of the mitigation strategies

According to the current medical studies recognised by the international scientific community, the risk of the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus is chiefly due to interactions between people and between people and contaminated objects. The chief recommendation for risk mitigation is to avoid person-to-person and/or person-to-object interactions. If this is not possible, the established physical safety distance should be maintained. In the event that the above recommendations cannot be fulfilled, physical means of separation (personal protective equipment, protective screens, etc.) should be incorporated. With these operational principles in mind, seven specific risk mitigation strategies have been taken into account to define the actions listed in this guide:

0. **MAINTAIN** any current interaction if it's safe.
1. **ELIMINATE** any interaction whenever possible.
2. **DIGITALIZE** the interaction if possible.
3. **SEPARATE**: maintain a physical distance or use physical means of separation.
4. **SCREEN**, identifying and managing potential positives.
5. **PROTECT** people by means of hygienic measures and personal protective equipment.
6. **INFORM** the measures and the need for compliance.
7. **SUPERVISE** compliance with the above points.



Measures implemented at Fira Barcelona venues

In accordance with the general mitigation principles, Fira Barcelona has implemented countermeasures at its venues common to all its fairs, at which it will supervise their compliance. The aim is for all the participants (visitors, exhibitors, employees, etc.) to be able to use its venues for trade fair activities in a safe space and in a controlled environment. The main changes visitors and exhibitors will encounter at the venue will be:

- All the **spaces have been redesigned** to ensure that **social distancing** can be maintained, using an automatic capacity control for the space that monitors compliance in the communal areas and in all the exhibition areas.
- All the attendees must wear a **protective face mask**, except in spaces whose design allows social distancing to be maintained.
- **Hydroalcoholic gel** will be available at the entrances to the venues, in the communal areas and at frequent contact points.
- There will be **reinforced entrances** to allow **rapid and queue-free admission**, with additional signage to ensure that social distancing is maintained at all times.
- **Temperature controls** will be installed at all the entrances to the venues.
- **Online registration and access** via the mobile application will be encouraged and times for arrival at the venue will be assigned.
- **Changes in the traffic flows** have been established to ensure orderly management with clear directions of movement and the busiest intersections will be monitored by means of artificial intelligence to ensure that social distancing is maintained.
- The handing out of **materials** (documents, brochures, welcome packs, etc.) to the exhibitors and visitors is **not recommended** and their distribution will be limited throughout the venue.
- Person-to-person interactions will be complemented by **digital interactions** so as to enhance the user experience and increase the impact of the event outside the exhibition venue.
- **Cashless** payments at all the locations in the venue, including the restaurants and entrances, will be promoted, together with the **procurement of online services** to reduce the need to visit the exhibitors' service counters.
- **Protective screens** will be installed at all the customer service points, including the restaurants' payment points.
- In the event of the potential detection of a positive, the venue will have a **system to locate the business contacts** of the person in question and make them available to the health authorities so that they can follow them up.

- **The medical service points will be reinforced** with isolation areas and properly equipped and trained medical personnel.
- The communal areas and frequent contact points will undergo **enhanced cleaning** or they will be replaced by contact-free interactions.
- **The ventilation system will be improved** by means of the use of antibacterial filters and greater frequency of the air renewal.
- The **catering areas** will be adapted, with health and hygiene controls, the serving of the food in individually-packaged formats, control of their capacity and social distancing.
- **The signage, public address system and on-site communication** will be enhanced to ensure compliance with the prevention measures, which will be adapted to people with disabilities.



Example of a sign indicating the hygiene measures installed at the entrances to the venue.

- **Training** in the new prevention practices for personnel and employees.
- **Compliance with the measures will be controlled** by automatic systems and Fira’s personnel. There will also be an **Emergency Operating Committee** to regularly reassess the risks and adapt the measures.

The physical and operational design aspects to be taken into account by the exhibitors in each risk mitigation strategy are listed below.

Note: The guide contains both recommendations and **mandatory** rules. The latter appear in the guide **marked** with a **warning** icon attached.

Risk mitigation strategies in the design and operation of the stands

Maintain



0. **Maintain** all the elements of the physical and operational design that do not generate person-to-person or person-to-object interactions and/or those which, by their nature, mitigate the risks of contagion. This can be done, for example, by means of the use of elements which, due to their design, allow easy cleaning and disinfection (spaces with easy-to-clean surfaces) and/or have large, open spaces.

Eliminate



1. **Eliminate** installations and activities that are not strictly necessary.
 - Before adding countermeasures to a process, question whether the process is necessary. Examples of potential processes that could be questioned:
 - Handing out of non-essential materials to visitors (press, brochures, etc.).
 - Carrying out of activities (talks, lectures, etc.) with the presence of a high number of visitors in a reduced space.
 - Meetings at the stand that are not strictly necessary, etc.
 - Greetings with physical contact (shaking hands, etc.).
 - It is advisable to incorporate these countermeasures into the stand design phase, e.g. by electing designs and materials that allow the assembly to be carried out by fewer people over fewer days, reducing the number of personnel required and the time needed for the assembly, thus maximising social distancing.

The design and operational measures designed to reduce person-to-person and person-to-object interactions are listed below:

1.1. **Eliminate queue** generation points:

- Restrict the handing out of **free products** to visitors/exhibitors.
- **Increase** the service **capacity** to attend to visitors and reinforce the personnel available during peak hours.

- **Reduce the demand** at peak times by implementing, for example, appointment systems at the stand.
- At moments with high numbers of visits, establish systems to **prevent the forming of queues** in front of the stand. e.g. by noting down the visitors' details in order to contact them later.

1.2. Personnel planning (Fira and visitors) to reduce interactions:

- **Reduce the number of** non-essential employees while ensuring that there are enough to prevent the forming of queues.
- **Plan** the personnel's **working hours** to ensure that they are as spread out as possible and minimise the possibility of them gathering or coming into contact with each other.
- **Promote digital meetings** whenever possible, particularly in the case of internal events such as personnel meetings, personnel training, non-commercial meetings, etc. If necessary, consider whether these can be held with fewer employees, maintaining social distancing, and/or in outdoor areas.

1.3. Question all the material to be handed out

- **Eliminate or minimise materials** that are not strictly necessary, including promotional materials, and the handing out of paper documentation (brochures, etc.) and pens or similar for the signing of documentation, etc.
- Generally speaking, the material to be handed out should be properly **packaged/sealed** in advance so that it is suitable for **individual use**.

1.4. Incorporate criteria to eliminate interactions in the stand design:

- **Consider eliminating installations** that are not strictly necessary, those that may be used by many people and those that contribute to overcrowding from the stand design (rest areas at the stand, interactive demonstration points, etc.).
- Whenever possible, position the products to be displayed so that they are visible **without them having to be held or handled** by the visitors.
- When designing the stand, avoid the use of doors or compartments that need to be actuated as much as possible or, alternatively, consider adding foot or forearm actuators to allow the doors or surfaces to be opened without any need for manual contact.



2. **Digitalize.** Include **technology** to eliminate **person-to-object interactions** in the physical and operational design of the stand or replace the latter with digital interactions:
- Exchanges of contact data by means of **mobile technology** (use of NFC, Bluetooth or other data exchange technologies, photographing of business cards, etc.).
 - If elements (activities, demonstrations, etc.) that need to be actuated are incorporated into the stand, the above should preferably be performed **without any manual contact** (infra-red rays, etc.).
 - **Reduce/eliminate** the use of **paper** in all the processes. Promote the exchange of information via digital media:
 - Replace physical catalogues with digital files.
 - Replace paper with the use of QR codes.
 - Etc.
 -  - **Promote Registration online** to avoid collecting printed passes during the event.
 - Promote the use of **online services** to avoid having to procure services in person at the exhibitors' offices. It is also advisable to **pay by card** during all interactions at the venue, thus avoiding cash.
 - **Complement**, whenever possible, face-to-face meetings with virtual meetings, including conferences and other broadcasts, to improve the user experience and increase the global audience and the impact of the event abroad.
 - Opt for **screen technology** to display information. Ideally, use non-touch screens or, otherwise, schedule the regular cleaning of the screen, particularly after each use.
 - In the case of **lectures** or talks at a stand, encourage the use of **web applications** to allow questions to be sent to the speaker or the preparation of surveys so as to avoid the passing around of microphones.
 - Consider using **technological solutions** to eliminate the need for person-to-object contact in the stand design.

Separate

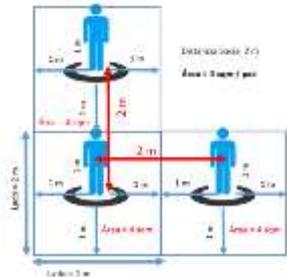


- 3. Separate.** Prioritise the **maintenance of social distancing** between people, thus minimising person-to-person interactions.

3.1. Capacities:



- The **maximum stand capacity** will be calculated upon the basis of a minimum of **2,5m² of space per person**. For example, the capacity of a 20m² stand would be 8 people, including both the exhibitors and the visitors. *Note: The figure of 2,5m² per person is the minimum space, but this may be enlarged when the event is held if the Administration so requires.*



- The area for people **seated** inside the stand should be designed with a gap of 1,5 metres between each chair, thus guaranteeing 2,5m² per person.



- Design the general **waiting and queueing** areas with sufficient space between people (in front, behind and to the side of them) in order to maintain a physical separation between the queueing positions. The waiting positions in the queue should be properly indicated, preferably with markings on the floor to ensure a safety distance between the positions.



- The **maximum capacity** of the stand will be clearly **indicated** with signs outside it or it will be controlled by an access control system.



- Exhibitors will be responsible for **ensuring** that the number of people at their stands never exceeds the maximum capacity permitted (the total number of people present at any given time, including exhibitors, visitors, etc.).

- In cases in which the visitor is a person with a **disability** and he/she requires a companion, the latter will not be counted for the purposes of the stand capacity, as long as they are both duly protected with PPE.



- Plan the stand design to ensure that the **working positions** of the exhibitors and any other stand personnel and those of the visitors are **separate from each other**, thus **maintaining the right physical distance**. This principle is particularly important for stands with a lower surface area.



- In the event that a queue forms outside a stand at any time, it will be the **exhibitor's responsibility to manage it properly** so that the flow of people in the aisles is not hindered.

- As far as possible, limit the **different entrance and exit flows** at the stand, prioritising movement along the right-hand side as a general principle.

- During the event it is important to **monitor the flow of people** at the stand to identify **opportunities for improvement** and make the **appropriate adjustments**.

3.2. Screens:

-  - When there is a need for person-to-person interaction and it has not been possible to eliminate it or replace it with an alternative strategy, the interaction should be shielded by a **protective screen** made of methacrylate, polycarbonate or any other similar material (on a desk, counter, etc.).
- Consider using a **counter** or a **solid barrier at the stand** to separate the stand's personnel from the visitors or to separate the stand from the aisle.
- If the use of a screen is not possible (the type of interaction prevents it, e.g. displaying a machine, clothing, etc.), it may be replaced by the use of **face shields** (in addition to the face masks). But the protective screen solution should be the primary choice in this case.
-  - The positioning of screens and other risk mitigation countermeasures should be planned with inclusive **accessibility criteria**, taking into account people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

Screen



4. **Screen.** Establish the **means of control** for the personnel to allow the rapid **detection of potential cases** of positives and their treatment in a suitable way, thus minimising the risk of contagion.

4.1. Temperature control

-  - Exhibitors will **ensure** that all the personnel working at the stand (exhibitor personnel, other suppliers, etc.):
 - have **had their temperature taken before entering the venue**, to check that they do not display any symptoms of fever (a temperature of 37.5°C or higher).
 - **do not display any other symptoms** related to Covid-19 (coughing, breathing difficulties, etc.).
 - have not **been in recent contact** with anyone who has tested positive for the disease.

Otherwise, **they will refrain** from entering the venue and providing a service at the stand.

-  - If, during the event, a person at the stand (a member of the personnel, a supplier, etc.) displays symptoms compatible with Covid-19, he/she should go to the nearest medical assistance point so that the relevant examination can be performed.

4.2. Management of positives and contact identification

-  - If a person (a member of the personnel, a visitor, etc.) is considered to be a suspicious case of Covid-19 by the relevant medical personnel, the organisation should be informed so that it can perform a follow-up of the people who may have been in contact with him/her.
-  - Exhibitors are requested to have an **access control system** at their stand, enabling them to identify and **register** the people who have visited it and permitting the **traceability** of the contacts, if necessary. Its use will be **mandatory** for all **commercial visits** to the stand.

Protect



5. **Protect.** Provide means of protection against exposure to infection through the use of **personal protective equipment**, the implementation of **hygiene and sanitary controls**, a **supply of gel** and the application of **additional cleaning and disinfection procedures**.

5.1. Personal protective equipment (PPE)

-  - **Face masks:** the use of face masks will be mandatory in all the areas of the venue and inside the stands. Exhibitors will be responsible for guaranteeing and supervising their use at the stand, handing them out to the personnel and visitors inside it if they do not bring one.
-  - Certain activities during which a face mask cannot be worn (tasting, drinking, etc.) may only be conducted in **areas duly** enabled for such a purpose and **additional protective measures** will be taken to minimise the risk of person-to-person and person-to-object interaction, including the use of fixed locations at least **1,5 metres apart**, **areas situated away from the flow of people** or protected by protective screens, individual closed areas, etc.
- **Face shields:** Face shields may be worn to **complement** face masks (**but not as replacements for them**), particularly when interaction with a large number of people is required throughout the day. It is advisable for these shields to be worn by a single person and not shared by different people. If necessary, the shield should be cleaned between uses.

- **Gloves:** Gloves should preferably be worn whenever the materials on display need to be **handled**, particularly materials that may be touched by different people throughout the day.
-  - **Other protective equipment:** In cases in which, due to the nature of the activity, it is necessary to use the above or other items of protective equipment at the stand, exhibitors must **ensure** that people **have** them and **use** them properly.
- **Working clothes and garments:** If an exhibitor has to **wear** specific working clothes, it is advisable for him/her to bring it to the venue having **properly disinfected** in advance, and to **put them on** once in the venue.
- It is advisable to **establish who will be responsible for supplying the PPE** of the personnel working at the stand with the assembly companies or those providing services at the stand in an initial stage. The above applies to the assembly, event and disassembly phases.
- All personnel (exhibitors or other professionals) that are considered **vulnerable groups** are advised not to go to the venue until the epidemiological situation has improved. Should they choose to attend, **additional risk prevention measures should be implemented:** avoiding queues and using personal protection equipment, in the form of face masks and face shields, if possible. On addition is recommended to increase hand hygiene.

5.2. Hygiene and sanitary control of catering services at stands.

- In cases in which tasting services are to be offered to visitors, the following guidelines must be followed:
 -  ▪ The products will be offered in **individual-format packaging** to enable visitors to hold said packaging and then taste them in a specially enabled area, having previously washed their hands.
 -  ▪ **Coffee and tea** should be served in closed disposable cups.
 -  ▪ In the event that the product has to be **handled** before being offered to the visitor, this task will be performed by personnel **duly accredited** as food handlers.
-  - It is not be permitted to **offer tasting products in bulk** or in formats entailing that a single product may have been handled by several people and/or that the product may have been exposed to particles of the SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus.
- As a general principle, **food, sweets and snacks should not be made available** to visitors, especially when they are not products on display.
- It is advisable to use **bins** without manually-activated lids and to place bags inside them.

5.3. Supply of gel:

-  - In cases in which it is necessary for visitors to **touch the material** on display and it is not possible for them to wear gloves (to assess textures, etc.), they should **previously disinfect** their hands with a sanitising liquid or hydroalcoholic solution.
-  - Fira Barcelona will guarantee the availability of hydroalcoholic gel at the entrances to the venue and in the communal areas. Exhibitors must also **provide gels or hydroalcoholic solutions for their personnel and visitors** to their stands and ensure that people wash their hands before handling the material on display.
- Whenever possible, **the material on display will be sanitised** before and after it is touched by a visitor.
- Generally speaking, it is advisable to use sanitising products recommended by the Ministry of Health.

5.4. Cleaning/disinfection: Specific recommendations for the different types of areas and materials to be cleaned/sanitised are listed below:

- Generally speaking, for the cleaning of the stand and its surfaces and other objects (the material on display, etc.) it is advisable to **only use duly approved** cleaning and disinfection **products**, with a prevalence of solutions containing at least 60% of ethanol that have been recommended by the Ministry of Health.
-  - Due to their potential harmful effects on people's health, the use of **ozone** and **UVC lamps will not be permitted**, except in cases in which it is duly authorised by Fira de Barcelona.

Stand cleaning/disinfection

- Incorporate **regular cleaning** of the stand into the **planning of the activities** to be carried out. This cleaning may be performed **by the exhibitor's own personnel** or by procuring it via Fira Barcelona's official supplier. It is advisable to include the **display and promotional materials** in the planning of the regular cleaning of the stand.

Cleaning and disinfection of surfaces (desks, counters, etc.).

- Whenever possible, **surfaces** that have come into contact with visitors and other people **should be cleaned** on a **regular** basis. Consideration should be given to doing so between consecutive visits.
- Clarify the **expectations** of those who will be responsible for cleaning certain stand surfaces, particularly those that come into contact with the public and require regular cleaning. Consider procuring a **specific service** for the cleaning or plan it with the **stand personnel**.

- It is particularly important to focus the cleaning of the stands on parts **that are regularly used** and those where a lot of person-to-object interactions take place (stair rails, door handles, areas near where visitors move along the aisles, etc.).
- In the event that **talks** are held at the stand or in areas where single audiovisual materials are to be used by several people, the use of microphones, lecterns, slide projectors and other audiovisual materials is not recommended. If necessary, a **specific protocol** for cleaning and disinfecting them between consecutive uses will be established. This protocol will be established in accordance with the material to be used and the envisaged configuration of speakers.

Cleaning/disinfection of the products on display

- As much as possible, the **material on display** which may lead to person-to-object interactions should be regularly cleaned and sanitised. Ideally, this cleaning will be performed **after each visit**. If the above is not possible, it will be performed at **regular** intervals in order to mitigate the risk of contagion among visitors.
-  - In the event that the material on display cannot be cleaned and sanitised, measures should be put in place to ensure that everyone handling this material **washes their hands** before and after touching the material.

Inform



6.1. Prior communication with visitors, personnel, suppliers, etc.

-  - This document and other safety and risk prevention recommendations provided to exhibitors by Fira Barcelona **should be delivered to the personnel prior to** their attendance at the venue to help them **to familiarise themselves** with this information.
-  - Exhibitors shall ensure that this information is shared with the **suppliers involved** in the design and construction of their stands and any other companies or employees they rely on for their participation at the stand, so that everyone has proper knowledge of the above mitigation initiatives and **incorporates them** into the planning and execution of their projects.

6.2. Personnel training. Ensure that **all the personnel** set to participate in the event at the stand (auxiliary services, security personnel, etc.) are **aware of the duties** they have to perform, as well as the additional protective measures they must apply during the event, including standing the right distance apart in queues, use of PPE, control of the stand's capacity, management of the visitors' contacts, additional cleaning protocols, etc.

6.3. **Signage.** Include the incorporation of **signage elements** into the stand to complement the countermeasures listed above in its design and in the planning of the activities to be carried out. For example:

-  - **Maximum capacity** of the stand, so that visitors are aware of this information before entering the stand.
-  - **Waiting positions** inside the stand, if the stand design so permits.
 - Positioning of hand sanitation devices at the stand.
-  - Use of PPE at the stand in addition to face masks if so required.
 - To promote alternative forms of greeting, without physical contact.
 - Consider incorporating other signage elements related to the cleaning and sanitation activities at the stand or other information that may help make the visitors to the stand to feel more at ease.

Supervise



7. Supervise.

-  - Ensure that the actions taken to mitigate risks at the stand **are complied with** at all times **throughout the event**.
-  - Operate an internal **control system** with **clear responsibilities** to ensure compliance with these countermeasures, identify opportunities for improvement and make the necessary adjustments.
-  - Carry out a continuous assessment of the measures to identify any potential improvements to be implemented.
-  - Fira de Barcelona will supervise compliance with these measures during the event. In the event that any exhibitor fails to comply with the protocols, Fira reserves the right to refuse admission.