



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

Effective 16th 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 thanks to 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 is very low and has remained low even as the first de-escalation of measures have been implemented. 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. Another major incoming risk will be the influx of tourists and especially those that have not been vaccinated to date.

Variants (known and future ones) will continue to be the big unknown, especially in view of the fact that those identified in Brazil, South Africa and India appear to evade some of the immune response from vaccines.

Vaccination uptake

The impact of vaccination has so far been highly satisfactory. With higher coverage rates within the population, the virus would be less likely to spread widely because fewer people remain vulnerable to be infected. 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 small events can be done as safely as possible.

Such mitigation measures would have to be scaled up as the events grow larger. The risk estimation tool helps applicants to choose the right mitigation factors for the size of the event.

COVID-19 digital certificate

Vaccine certificates recognised legally by the Superintendent of Public Health through government gazette notices will be those accepted. The Maltese Vaccine 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 only applicable for small organised controlled events, namely:

1. Cultural, artistic, dance, theatre and music performances
2. Corporate events - conferences, awards nights, AGMs etc
3. 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:

- 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.
- Provide an appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub 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 person 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 meters 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.
- There shall only be seated events, without breaks or intermission, and no dancing or mingling of patrons shall be allowed.
- Masks to be worn at all times and can only be removed when eating or drinking seated.
- No smoking allowed in the event area.
- 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 seated patrons. No buffet service and no stand-up bar services shall be allowed at the event. 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.
- Audiences shall be seated in such a way that each seated person maintains social distancing of at least two (2) metres from other seated person. In the case of persons from the same household, 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 seating around a table, no more than 6 persons can be seated except for persons from the same households.
- A minimum two (2) meter distance shall be kept between performers and patrons
- All standing up shall be prohibited except upon entering and exiting the venue and in order to go to restrooms.
- Organisers must have security personnel to ensure that attendees remain seated and to manage any problems that may arise.
- 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, including details of seating arrangements need to be kept for up to 28 days after the event.

If the venue is equipped to have physically separate sections, ie each section 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. Staff and spectators from separate sections are not to have any contact with each other.

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 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 starts 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 1.

	5 th July 2021	19 th July 2021	2 nd August 2021	16 th August 2021	30 th August 2021
Event capping	100	150	200	300	500



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 Certificate and record the identity of the persons attending the event must be checked and organiser are responsible to verify these to allow for events to be safe

Organisers of events will be required to have QR code readers installed on 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 from start of event. These persons shall attend at their own risk.

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