



Department of Public Health

MAYOR
Oscar Leeser

GUIDANCE FOR 2021 GRADUATION AND COMMENCEMENT CEREMONIES

CITY COUNCIL

April 26, 2021

District 1
Peter Svarzbein

Ensuring the safety, health, and well-being of students, teachers, staff, and their families is our top priority. The City of El Paso Department of Public Health (DPH) is providing the following guidance for public and private K–12 schools to utilize when planning 2021 graduation and commencement ceremonies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

District 2
Alexandra Anello

District 3
Cassandra Hernandez

District 4
Joe Molinar

Clearly communicating COVID-19 protocols in advance is essential to having a successful event honoring graduates and keeping students, family, teachers, and staff safe and healthy.

District 5
Isabel Salcido

District 6
Claudia L. Rodriguez

In the event there is any conflict between this Guidance and Texas state law or Texas state regulations, the state law and regulations shall control.

District 7
Henry Rivera

Recommendations for a Safe Graduation Ceremony Venue

District 8
Cissy Lizarraga

Graduation and commencement ceremonies should be held outdoors to prevent large gatherings in enclosed buildings. This will help eliminate circumstances that encourage the spread of the virus among susceptible individuals. The duration of the graduation or commencement ceremony may be shortened from the traditional format to prevent prolonged exposure to extreme weather.

CITY MANAGER
Tommy Gonzalez

Universal use of face masks

All attendees should wear face masks for the ceremonies. Only students and faculty should be permitted to remove their face masks temporarily for photographs; they should be reminded to immediately put their masks back on once photographs are taken. The benefits of face masks to prevent the spread of the virus among individuals has been proven and is well documented.

Angela Mora – Health Director

Department of Public Health | 5115 El Paso Drive | El Paso, TX 79905
O: (915) 212-6502 | <https://www.elpasotexas.gov/public-health/>



DELIVERING EXCEPTIONAL SERVICES



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Limiting Attendance to Promote Physical Distancing

Attendance should be limited to only members of the student household and exclude extended family members. Relatives who are considered vulnerable and/or who are unvaccinated should remain at home. Members of the same household may sit together; seating between households should observe physical distancing.

Health Screening and Other Safety Protocols

Students and household members should be reminded that anyone in the household experiencing COVID-19 related signs and symptoms should not attend or participate in the ceremony. In addition, those who tested for COVID-19 and are awaiting results, and those who tested positive or live with someone who tested positive for COVID-19 within 10 days prior to the ceremony, should not attend.

Have a plan in place to reduce the occurrence of bottlenecks and avoid large gatherings before, during and after the event. It is preferred and recommended to stagger entrances and exits and review your layout before the event to eliminate other common places where people congregate.

Prevent social gatherings before, during, and after the event. Do not include side events (gaming/selfie areas, tailgating, and food trucks) in order to discourage large groups from congregating, whether formally or informally.

Hygiene Practices

Encourage students and families to bring their own hand sanitizer and make available sanitizing stations at entrance, exits and key points of the venue. Avoid shaking hands between students and faculty and remind everyone about cough/sneeze etiquette. Keep restrooms well stocked with soap, paper towels and regularly cleaned.

The health and well-being of our community is our utmost priority. We commend and congratulate the Class of 2021 recognizing the effort, hard work and dedication they exhibited throughout their school years.

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