

### Guidance for Schools Planning Graduation Ceremonies Under Safer At Home Orders

Graduation ceremonies are an important milestone for many students, and Tri-County Health Department (TCHD) supports schools in finding innovative ways to safely recognize these students' achievements. While traditional, in-person graduation ceremonies are not safe or legal during this public health crisis, there are several creative options for holding graduation ceremonies that follow social distancing requirements under the state-wide Safer at Home Order. If ceremonies comply with the guidance below, no formal approval from TCHD is required.

### Virtual or Live-Streaming Ceremonies

- An educational institution may choose to provide a virtual ceremony by live-streaming to the graduate's homes.
- Ceremonies may be broadcast with a group of 10 or fewer people, following all social/physical distancing requirements:
  - Direct those having symptoms of COVID-19, as well as people who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms, to refrain from participating in any aspect of in-person ceremonies.
  - People must be at least 6 feet apart at all times, whether seated or standing.
  - Those at greater risk, including people over age 65 and anyone with pre-existing immune or respiratory conditions are urged to remain home.
  - Provide hand sanitizer in convenient locations and access to hand washing, if possible.
  - Ensure attendees wear face coverings over their mouth and nose.
  - Take the temperatures of all limited in-person facilitators and ask about signs of illness before allowing participation. Disallow individuals with elevated temperatures or signs of illness.
- Follow [these guidelines](#) to disinfect all surfaces before and after any in-person gathering.

### Drive-In or Vehicle Parade Ceremonies

- An education institution may choose to provide a drive-in ceremony, where households gather in vehicles at a designated location.
- Event plans, including social distancing requirements and reminders, should be clearly communicated to all participants in advance of the ceremony.
- All social/physical distancing requirements described in the previous section must be followed.
- Use electronics inside the car or a radio channel to broadcast audio and/or video

- If you will be providing devices, ensure they are cleaned and sanitized before and after use for the ceremony
- It is preferable for attendees to use their own, personal devices
- Attendees must stay in their vehicles and not socialize through their vehicle windows.
- Public restrooms must [be cleaned](#) and have signage posted that they should be used by only one person at a time.
- There should be no other opportunity for in-person interaction. Do not have a central space for taking pictures. Do not make gathering spaces available at the location for attendees to gather outside of their vehicles.
- The serving of food or beverages at the site is prohibited.
- Have attendees turn off their vehicles to avoid idling and protect everyone's health.

### Considerations for Choosing Which Type of Graduation Ceremony to Conduct

When choosing what type of graduation ceremony to conduct, consider the following:

- Virtual Ceremonies
  - Internet access for school staff and for students/families
  - Social distancing requirements for speakers
- Drive-In Ceremonies
  - Weather conditions
  - Projection screens and/or sound equipment
  - Students/families who may not have vehicles
  - Length of ceremony and availability of sufficient restrooms