

Waco Convention Center Reopening Guide

April, 2021



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Welcome

Thank you for selecting the Waco Convention Center for your upcoming event.

The Waco Convention Center staff strives to maintain the highest level of service, safety, and professionalism in the event industry.

This guide will provide information about the facility and help assist you through the planning process.

There is no guarantee of an event free from COVID-19 or other illness even if you follow everything in this guide. However, implementing health and safety measures are the best ways to protect live events and the people who create them, while also inspiring patrons to return to the places where we make magic happen.

Waco Convention and Visitors Bureau | Convention Center



direct (254) 750-5810 or (800) 321-9226

100 Washington Ave. | Waco, TX 76701

wacoheartoftexas.com

GBAC STAR Accreditation

In December, 2020, the Waco Convention Center was awarded the Global Biorisk Advisory Council® (GBAC) STAR™ accreditation, the gold standard for prepared facilities.

Under the guidance of GBAC, a Division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, the Waco Convention Center has implemented the most stringent protocols for cleaning, disinfection and infectious disease prevention in its facility.

Waco Convention Center's Dedicated Outdoor Air System

The Waco Convention Center is equipped with a Dedicated Outdoor Air System (DOAS). The DOAS is an HVAC unit that is installed outside and is often used with other HVAC equipment.

DOAS units bring fresh outside air into interior spaces independently from heating or cooling efforts. City of Waco Facilities Department currently manages and maintains all cleaning/maintenance of the Waco Convention Center HVAC.

Capacity Levels for Events

Events taking place from the present through December 31, 2021 can be booked at a 75% capacity level.

Events taking place from January 1, 2022 and beyond can be booked at a 100% capacity level.

Capacity booking levels are based on McLennan County’s hospitalization rates and COVID-19 transmission rates.

If hospitalization rates rise and COVID-19 transmissions increase to levels deemed unsafe by the McLennan County Health Authority, the Waco Convention Center may close, or decrease to lower capacity levels until COVID-19 cases stabilize.

Staff will work to ensure all aspects of the State and Local Executive Orders are upheld. Staff will also make every effort to remain current as orders change and evolve.

The safety of our attendees and staff is always our top priority. If unsafe practices are taking place, the Waco Convention Center management reserves the right to close the event down.

Room Capacities at 100% and 75%

Room Name	Theater		Banquet		Classroom	
	100%	75%	100%	75%	100%	75%
Chisholm	2,600	1,148	1,472	832	1,200	900
McLennan	1,200	546	680	384	500	375
Brazos	1,170	570	624	384	500	320
Bosque	191	143	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Texas North	306	140	200	112	176	106
Texas South	304	140	208	112	176	106
Ranger Room	250	187	160	88	140	99
Lone Star 103	100	75	64	36	52	32
Lone Star 104	90	67	64	40	40	28
Lone Star 105	44	33	32	24	36	24
Waco Room	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	28	21

Guidelines for Events Taking Place Prior to December 31, 2021

Events taking place from the present through December 31, 2021 can be booked at a 75% capacity level.

Some key limitations on events through December 31, 2021 are as follows:

- Masks are required for both guests and staff
- We are currently using 72" linen-less tables in order to be able to disinfect surfaces
- Registration areas must maintain 6' social distancing
- Planned entrance/exits to each room to maximize social distancing
- Maximum of 4 people per 72" round table
- Maximum of 2 people per rectangle table
- Trade Show Booths: Maximum of 2 people working at a standard-size booth. Trade show layout should maintain a smooth flow of traffic without "dead ends."
- Dances are not allowed until after January 1, 2022

Food Service:

- Prior to August 25, 2021, caterers will only be able to offer prepackaged or plated meals. Food buffets are not permitted.
- Coffee, tea and water urns are permissible.
- Also please note, the catering fee, charged to the caterer, is currently 25%.
- After August 25, 2021 – Caterers may serve buffet style, with food dished up behind Plexiglass and handed to the attendee at the end of the cafeteria line. Self-serve buffets are not allowed until after December 31, 2021.

In-House Food, Beverages, and Bar Service

Bar Services. In-house bar services will be made available on a case-by-case basis. These are standard walk-up bars. Clients are asked not to congregate around the bar area and to maintain social distance if in line.

Food and Beverage Service. Currently, the in-house catering department is closed. However, catering is available through our approved caterers.

Event Approval Process - Events Prior to December 31, 2021

For events taking place from the present to December 31, 2021, a special event approval process is in place. The Waco Convention Center Sales Representative will create a proposal detailing the following:

- Sanitizing precautions
- Customer will agree to assume the risk of holding the event during an active pandemic
- Customer is to make masks available to all attendees and staff, as well as other appropriate PPE as needed
- Room layout(s) will be drawn showing the room at 75% capacity
- The traffic flow must be detailed to maximize social distancing and good flow

The proposal will be reviewed by internal staff, and requires review and approval by the Interim Director. Upon approval, an event contract can be issued to the client.

Guidelines for Events Taking Place After January 1, 2022

Events taking place from January 1, 2022 and beyond can be booked at a 100% capacity level.

In general, the restrictions in place during 2021 are removed after January 1, 2022, but we still encourage groups to follow the General Health & Safety Guidelines found later in this document.

- Buffet service will be allowed
- As before, there is a 25% fee charged on any food or beverages, and all food and beverages must be served by an approved caterer
- Dances will be allowed

Event Approval Process for Events Taking Place After January 1, 2022

For events taking place starting January 1, 2022, event contracts can be issued without this special process, and at 100% capacity.

General Health and Safety Guidelines

Currently, we follow CDC guidelines as well as guidelines from the Waco- McLennan County Public Health District. Key points are as follows:

- Both staff and attendees are expected to wear face coverings at all times
- High-touch zones are sanitized regularly during events. These areas include handrails, door handles (both interior and exterior), bathroom surfaces, and escalator/elevator
- Hand sanitizing stations are located at key points in the building
- Staff temperatures are self-checked daily during event days
- Plexiglass shields have been installed in the reception office to protect staff and guests / attendees
- The Waco Fire Department will disinfect around the group's schedule

Safety Practices for Safer Events

Face Coverings. Physical respiratory protection such as a cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are within six feet of each other because (a) COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets and (b) a significant number of infected people will show no outward symptoms of illness

Social Distancing. Public health guidance stresses that whenever possible, everyone should leave at least six feet to the person closest to them. Where a task cannot be accomplished working alone, workers can limit their exposure by forming a “work team” in which people routinely work together, but they keep their distance from everyone else.

Hand Washing. Frequent hand washing with soap is vital to help combat the spread of any virus. Attendees and event staff should wash their hands for twenty seconds at least every 60 minutes, and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel or dryer.

Touching Your Face. Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth. Microphones, headphones, and other personal equipment should not be shared, and should be sanitized before and after each use.

Cough and Sneeze Etiquette. Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available, followed by thorough handwashing.

Conclusion

Thank you for working with us in our dedication to your health and safety – and ours.

As always, our staff will work to ensure all aspects of state and local Executive Orders are upheld.