

# 2021 *FIRST* LIVE EVENT GUIDANCE

The below document is compiled to be a helpful guideline and provide areas of consideration based on what we know about live events and what we know we can project about future live events. However, each area of the country and region in the world has different rules and standards in which they are allowed to operate, and things are changing daily. **Always first and foremost, all regions should follow all social distancing and COVID policies put in place by local, state, and federal governments. This includes any guidance by the CDC (or equivalent) and Health Departments.**

In addition, there may be other requirements in place by other parties including the venue and participants (and their respective school districts and/or sponsor organizations).

These guidelines are based using a broader lens, not area or Program specific. If you have questions about potential area specific guidelines, we can certainly work through those together to come up with the best plan of action. For now, please use this as topics of consideration as you proceed with venue selection and then event planning.

## SHOULD I HAVE A LIVE EVENT

There are many factors to consider before starting the process of planning a live (in-person) event. Below are examples of considerations, but this is not an exhaustive list as there may be other factors to be considered for your area.

### Regulations

- Are events allowed in my area?
- Are there any Federal, State or Local restrictions prohibiting or limiting the size of an in-person event?
- Are there CDC or health official recommendations limiting the size of an in-person event? Even if technically allowed, it may be recommended to not gather.
- Are there any social distancing requirements that would impact or prevent an in-person event?
- Are there any travel restrictions that would impact or prevent teams or volunteers from attending an in-person event?

### Organizational

- Have you conducted a risk assessment with your organization's leadership and/or legal counsel?
- Have you consulted with your insurance carrier?
- Are you willing and able to implement all requirements, and will you feel safe doing so?

### Safety

- Do you have a comprehensive list of requirements (regulatory, health official, school, etc.) for safety measures expected at in-person events? (e.g. social distancing, masks, hand sanitizer, safety glasses, temperature checks, etc.)?
- Can you satisfy all of these requirements? (capability, budget, sourcing of materials, modifications to the event structure, etc.)?

### Sponsorship and Volunteers

- Will sponsors support an in-person event? Do they have any concerns or requirements that must be met?
- Are there any sponsor restrictions tied to donations that would impact in-person events?
- Are there enough volunteers willing to support an in-person event?
- Are there accommodations required for volunteers in high-risk categories?

### Teams

- Are teams of all types able to attend -- school-based, community, homeschool?
- Are teams willing to attend? Is there a minimum percent or number of teams needed?
- Do you have plans for inclusion of all team members in some capacity (e.g. remote judging) if you have to restrict attendance and thus team size?
- Some teams may be delayed in starting their season due to school restrictions on club and afterschool activities - will teams have enough time to prepare prior to the event?

### Venues

- Are there venues available for hosting your event?
- Can you satisfy all venue usage requirements?
- Can the venue satisfy all your event requirements? (read further for more details on venue selection and additional considerations)

The rest of this guide can help with your planning if, after considering the various factors for holding a live event, you wish to proceed.

## IDENTIFYING YOUR VENUE

### Local Guidance Options

If you decide to have a live event, it is recommended that you reach out to your local health officials to engage them early in the event planning process. You will want to know prior to selecting a venue as to whether you will have their support in making your event as safe as possible. They can not only help make sure that you adhere to all mandatory guidelines, they can offer additional suggestions and resources to decrease the risk of having a live event. Each area's standards and requirements are set locally, so it is important that you find out ahead of time what those rules are. Some of them could be cost prohibitive and you will want to know that while you are still in the decision phase and prior to signing any contracts.

## VENUE SELECTION PROCESS

### Event Scope

Before even considering a venue potential, determine the size of the event you are planning to have, and most importantly allowed to have. As we are all unsure of what that number is, a good number to use for starting your planning purposes is 250 people, though this may scale down or up depending on the conditions in your area. Consider the number of teams, adults and participants per team, volunteers, venue staff, and whether there are any spectators.

Example of event capacity for heavy social distancing conditions with no spectators. The range of events cover possible sizes for FTC League Meets, FLL Explore Festivals, FTC or FLL Qualifiers, and FRC one-day events. This example assumes there may be limits to the number of team members who may attend.

Event Size	Team Adults	Team Participants	Event Volunteers	Venue Staff	Spectators	Total
8 Teams	16 (2 per)	32 (4 per)	10	2	0	60
12 Teams	24 (2 per)	72 (6 per)	25	5	0	126
18 Teams	36 (2 per)	108 (6 per)	25	5	0	174
24 Teams	48 (2 per)	144 (6 per)	25	5	0	222

### Venue Access Control

There may be requirements for screening of participants (number allowed entry, mask adherence) as well as crowd control, especially during check-in, load-in, and load out process of the event. Consider dedicated entrances and exits to the facility to help reduce congestion and establishing check points with appropriate social distancing provisions in the event of queuing or congestion. You may also wish to consider wrist bands or some other indicator that an individual has been "cleared" (as defined by whatever social distancing requirements are in place with regards to screening, crowd control, etc.) to attend the event.

## Space

### *Pit Spaces*

Typically, the pits are people filled and are tightly spaced hubs of action. The pits will continue to be hubs of action; however, consideration should be given to increase the amount of space each team has. Some ways of doing this are:

- Larger aisles
- Increased pit spaces or space in between each pit space (i.e. every other)
- Physical barrier between pit spaces (i.e. 8' tall pipe and drape)
- One-way aisles to reduce congestion and close contact of teams passing each other in the aisles

As a rough approximation for space needed with pit spacing, you can double the typical space you will need based on a number of teams you plan on attending your event.

### *Competition Area*

While the field sizes will remain the same for this upcoming year, look at the space around the playing field (or FLL tables) and the supporting areas such as scoring. As you look at the spacing required, consider the competition area as a whole unit and how people will be positioned. Can volunteers (such as score keeping) be stationed away from team traffic? What does the flow look like in and out of the competition area? Can areas of congestion be minimized?

### *Team Check-in and Pit Admin*

At registration/check in, long lines can form. Besides making sure there is ample space for the volunteers at check-in or Pit Admin, you also need to consider and plan on where the lines form and how to make sure that they form in a way that allows for social distancing measures. When evaluating a venue look at the potential flow for check in and registration and how you can keep both sides sufficiently spaced during the process.

### *Volunteer Break Area*

Dependent on the number of volunteers, choose a room that allows for volunteers to social distance when seated. If you have 25 volunteers, you need to have seating for 40 – 50 if you are planning on most everyone sitting at the same time. This space does not need to be a room but can also be created as a room with pipe and drape if needed.

### *Quiet Room (Primarily FRC)*

Mental health is of an even greater concern with the pandemic. While there will be a reduced amount of people at the event, the event could still be over stimulating for some. If you elect to have a Quiet Room, it does not need to be a large space but should allow for people to be able to social distance if you had about 5 people at one time using the space. This space should be a physical room.

### *Medical Isolation Room*

There may be requirements for providing dedicated space for isolation of individuals who may experience onset of symptoms during the event. This does not need to be a large space but consider locating near your first aid station. This space should be a physical room.

### *Team Rest Areas*

Areas for teams to rest, eat lunch, or otherwise take a break should be considered. This includes understanding the logistics of how team meals will be managed (how will teams obtain lunch – onsite, from outside, etc.). Consider access to outdoor space where teams can spread out, though you may not be able to rely on this due to weather.

### *Provisions for Adding Spectators*

The most restrictive social distancing plan for events would call for no spectators. However, depending on local conditions it may be possible to add spectators in terms of additional team members, invited guests, or possibly even general public. In this case having space reserved for spectator seating (whether built-in, drive-in or rented bleachers, etc.) would allow for opening the event to larger numbers of attendees. When potentially planning for spectator inclusion, make a plan for not only their seating but their flow through the event.

### *Contracts*

**REVIEW YOUR FORCE MAJEURE CLAUSE.** All contracts have force majeure. Most contracts never enact this clause. Occasionally there is a weather event, for instance a devastating tornado or hurricane in which causes you to cancel your event. This past year was the first time that the industry had to enact force majeure on a global scale. Because of this, and because of the current uncertainty, venues are going to write force majeure language that benefits them. Challenge the language, and make sure that it will also benefit your organization as the signatory.

Cleaning clauses should be written into contracts for the upcoming year. Outline what is included in their cleaning fees/offerings. Each venue has a different process, staff, staffing plan and cleaning plan. Make sure that you understand what they are willing to do and how often they are willing to do it. If you are turning over your venue with new teams from day to day, the venue should be cleaned at night to prepare for new attendees. Make sure that the venue knows that and is willing to commit to that requirement.

Check and negotiate your cancellation dates. Consider asking to push cancellation dates out farther without a penalty or with a reduced penalty. This will allow, if you are unable to hold the event - but are not able to enact force majeure, that your cost to cancel will not be as high.

## VENUE SELECTION – FIRST ROBOTICS COMPETITION

The below information applies to venue selection guidelines and space requirements for *FIRST* Robotics Competition.

In a typical year the *FIRST* Robotics Competition requires space for both the competition and ancillary space needs (i.e. judging, bleachers, scholarship row, etc.). This year we are relooking at the space needs and additionally looking at how those space needs need to conform and change to allow for social distancing guidelines and personal safety.

### District Venues

Limit the amount of unique venues. Going from 10 different venues to 2, will save you and your team a lot of work, a lot of money and creates a safety net for this ever-changing situation. This saves set up and tear down costs along with more favorable buying power when you are using a venue for a longer term. Participating teams may need to drive slightly further to their event, but the traveling team will be smaller and the schedule should allow for most teams to not need overnight accommodation.

### Venue Spaces

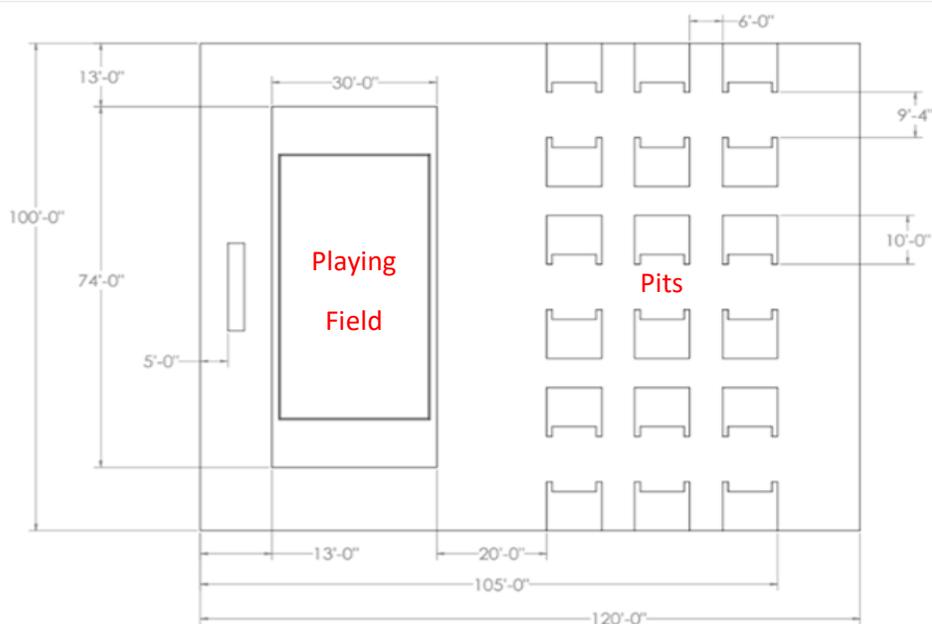
#### Playing Field

	<b>Minimum</b>
<b>Linear Specs/ Square Footage</b>	70' x 90' / 8000+ sq. ft.
<b>Ceiling Height</b>	Minimum of 15'
<b>Power (Sound/Video)</b>	60A/120V/1 Phase
<b>Internet Connection</b>	Hardline minimum 10Mb up and down
<b>Floor Surface</b>	Prefer concrete or a surface that does not need to be covered by the show.

Pit Area

	Minimum
<b>Distance from Playing Field</b>	Within 50 yards of the Playing Field
<b>Square Footage</b>	6,000 + sq. ft. minimum (holds 18 teams)
<b>Pit Power</b>	Each pit space receives a 10amp drop, 3 more 10 amp drops needed for Pit Admin, Inspection and Practice Field. (Machine Shop Power TBD) or 5A/220V/1 phase

Below is an example of a pit area with increased distance between pits:



While not in this drawing, accommodations for both a practice field, or a subset of a practice field, inspection and a machine shop should be considered when evaluating pit area space.

### Volunteer Break Area

	Minimum
<b>Square Footage</b>	1,100+ sq. ft.
<b>Seating</b>	25-35 guests/ seating for 50+
<b>Food Buffet Area</b>	(3) 6' tables for beverages and meals

### Quiet Room

	Minimum
<b>Square Footage</b>	300 sq. ft.

### Medical Isolation Room

	Minimum
<b>Square Footage</b>	300 sq. ft.

### Team Rest Area

The team rest area does not need to be a room, but instead a space identified in the venue selection process that can allow teams to take a break from the action while accommodating social distancing guidelines.

### Additional Considerations

- Loading Dock Specifications
  - Ground level or dock
    - Does venue have forklift?
  - Size of Door
- In House Union requirements if applicable
- In House Catering Options
  - Exclusivity
  - Buyout options
  - F&B constraints or limitations because of pandemic rules
- Concessions
  - Adequate social distancing in lines
  - Can teams bring in own food due to pandemic concerns
- Additional Services Needed
  - Electrical
  - Security
  - EMT Services
  - Internet network services
- Parking Options
- Ease of team load-in and load-out
- Available venue shoulder days for added event capacity if needed
- ADA Accessibility