

Heat and Health Tips for Watch Parties and Summer Events – Celebrate Safely

Massachusetts has a big summer ahead—including FIFA World Cup matches (June 11–July 19, 2026) and 250th anniversary celebrations. If you're hosting a watch party or large gathering, use this checklist to plan ahead and reduce common summer health risks, including extreme heat, poor air quality, sun exposure, bug bites, food safety issues, and sanitation concerns.

Permits

Contact your local health department, police department, and any other entities associated with the party location to learn about the requirements for watch parties and large celebrations in your community.

Heat and extreme weather planning

How hot is too hot?

It depends, which is why planning is so critical. Be prepared to answer these questions:

- Do you have options like shade or misters to keep people cooler?
- Who will be coming to celebrate and are they more at risk for heat illness?
- Is there an unhealthy heat alert in the forecast?
- Are there alerts for severe weather or wildfires?
- Can you inform more vulnerable people if the heat will be risky?
- Can you share safety messaging beforehand?

Things to consider as you plan your event

- Rising temperatures are not only uncomfortable; they also pose serious health and infrastructure challenges
- When the temperature rises to 85°F or more for three days in a row, there is a significant increase in emergency room visits and heat-related illnesses

Use online tools before and during the event

[Sign up for Community Heat Alerts](#) to get updates when unhealthy heat is expected in your area. Alerts can help you plan ahead and take steps to stay safe.

[Unhealthy Heat Forecast](#) - [Use the Massachusetts Unhealthy Heat Forecast](#) to track heat risk across the state with a 7-day outlook, including today's color-coded risk level, active alert banners, and city/town forecasts to support planning and timely outreach.



Extreme heat also increases the chance of other extreme weather like thunderstorms and can worsen air quality because of pollution, allergens, and wildfires. It also can cause water quality problems that close beaches. Check these websites before you go:

- [Massachusetts Air Quality Map](#)
- [Interactive Beach Water Quality Dashboard](#)

Choose your location carefully

Take these steps to help keep people cooler.

Shade

- Choose a location with shade
- Create shade with shade sails, canopies, and umbrellas

Hydration

- Have free water stations available. Make sure the water is safe to drink and from an approved source.
- Put up flyers and messaging encouraging people to stay hydrated and drink water even if they are not thirsty
- Remind people who may be consuming alcohol to also hydrate frequently. Drinking alcohol makes you feel less thirsty, but it dehydrates you and can make it difficult to recognize the early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness.

Scan to sign up
for Community
Heat Alerts:



[Download the Unhealthy Heat Community Toolkit](#)

Messaging resources

As you promote your party, use our [community toolkit](#). Download and share these social media images to help raise awareness about unhealthy heat in your community. Each image includes a simple heat safety message that can be posted on social media, shared with local partners, or used to support community outreach before your event.

Stay safe from unhealthy heat
during summer events



Visit the [Community heat resources page](#) for downloadable graphics and messages.



Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Massachusetts Department of Public Health

Learn more at:
[Celebrate Safely This Summer:
Heat and Weather Safety Tips](#)

Misting Stations

- Consider using a pop-up misting tent, passive misting station, or a user-activated misting station
- Use the [City of Boston's Cooling guide](#), which has helpful tips on setting up misters

Plan an event near a pool or beach

- [Find a DCR swimming facility near you](#), including swimming pools, wading pools, and spray decks
- Use the [Interactive Beach Water Quality Dashboard](#) to monitor water quality
- [Our recreational water safety for everyone brochure provides](#) multilingual safety tips for swimming, pool operation, and summer recreation
- [The Extreme heat best practices for public and semi-public pools fact sheet](#) helps you stay safe while swimming—monitor heat risks, provide shade, and maintain water quality during heat waves.



Know the signs and symptoms of heat-related illness

[Know the signs for heat cramps, heat exhaustion, and heat stroke and actions to take.](#) Here are some symptoms that may be easily spotted, and staff can be on the lookout for:

- Lots of sweating
- Muscle cramps
- Tiredness, or weakness
- Cold, pale, clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache or dizziness
- Irritability
- Seizures
- Confusion
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

Understand who is most at risk of heat-related illness

- Infants and young children under 5
- People over 65
- Pregnant people
- People of color due to systemic racism
- People with limited English proficiency
- People who have mobility constraints
- People working or exercising outdoors

Prevent and treat heat-related illness

Heat cramps Know the signs and beat the heat!

Actions to take:

- Provide water, clear juice, or a sports drink
- Encourage individuals to stop exerting themselves physically and move to a cool place
- Have them wait for the cramps to go away before doing any more physical activity

Look for:

- Lots of sweating
- Muscle cramps (often in the stomach, arms, or legs)

Seek medical attention if:

- The person's symptoms are getting worse
- Cramps last longer than 1 hour
- The person is on a sodium diet, has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes.

Heat exhaustion

Actions to take:

- Provide water and encourage them to drink more fluids
- Move them to a cool place
- Encourage them to lie down
- Loosen their clothes or change into lightweight clothing
- Apply cool wet towels or cloths on the person

Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

- Feeling tired or weak
- Fast or weak pulse
- Cold, pale, and clammy skin
- Nausea or vomiting
- Headache or dizziness
- Irritability

Seek medical attention if:

- The person is showing up
- The person is getting worse
- Symptoms last longer than 1 hour
- The person has heart problems, high blood pressure, or other medical conditions like asthma or diabetes

Heat stroke

Actions to take:

- **CALL 911 – THIS IS A MEDICAL EMERGENCY**
- Cool immediately:
 - Apply cool wet towels or soak with cool water
 - Remove outer clothing
- Keep them safe:
 - If there is vomiting, turn the person on their side to keep the airway open
 - If they are having a seizure, make the area safe by removing anything that may cause injury

Look for:

Symptoms above plus:

- High body temperature (higher than 103°F)
- Throbbing headache
- Seizures
- Altered mental state or confusion
- Unconsciousness (passing out)

Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Bureau of Climate and Environmental Health
Learn More at mass.gov/ExtremeHeat



Train and designate “Heat Helpers” for your event

- Train workers and volunteers helping to run the event to look for the visible signs and symptoms of heat related illness and to pay special attention to the people who are at most risk (including other workers).
- For smaller events without medical staff present, make sure staff review and use the [Prevent and treat heat-related illness fact sheet](#) as reminders and to post at the event. The downloadable fact sheet is available in multiple languages.



Prepare for thunderstorms, lightning, hail, wildfires, and other emergencies

- Spread the word, “When thunder roars go indoors.” More information is available by reading the [Ready.gov Thunderstorm, Lightning, and Hail Information Sheet](#), available in PDF format
- Advise partygoers to go indoors during thunder and lightning, if there is a building nearby, or into a car
- Warn people in the water to get out immediately if you hear thunder
- Set up and designate a medical area for anyone who may need attention and make sure the area is visible from within the crowd using a flag or other visual aid
- Monitor information before the event and have an emergency plan to shut down and evacuate the attendees if needed
- Have an emergency contact list prepared and shared with staff before the event
- Ensure the location of the event is clearly marked and accessible at all times for emergency personnel



What other health risks can you help plan for and prevent?

Help prevent sunburn and bug bites

- Remember that the time of day your party is planned for may increase people’s risk of sunburn and bug bites.
- Mosquitoes are more active from dusk until dawn.
- Consider providing single use sunscreen and bug wipes for party goers
- Spread the word by ordering posters or downloading and sharing these bug spray posters on the [“Wear Bug Spray... Keep Bugs Away!” mosquito and tick bite prevention materials](#)



Food safety

Foodborne illness results from eating food contaminated with bacteria, viruses, parasites, or toxins, and includes symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, and fever within hours to days of consumption and typically lasts a few days. While anyone can become sick from food poisoning, it is more dangerous for certain high-risk populations such as adults 65 and older, children under 5 years old, people with weakened immune systems, and pregnant women. Severe cases can lead to serious, long-term health problems.



Mobile food establishments (food trucks) tips

Before the event vendors must:

- Contact the local board of health for the town or city where you plan to offer food
- Follow the local board of health’s guidance on applying for proper food permits
- Be mindful of application deadlines, pre-opening inspections, and supporting documentation that may be required (certifications, CORI checks, permits, prior inspection reports, etc.)

During the event vendors must:

- Follow proper food safety practices to avoid foodborne illness
- Always keep hot food hot (above 135F) and cold food cold (below 41F). Vendors must avoid holding food within the temperature danger zone (between 41F and 135F); this is where bacteria growth is most likely to occur
- Post allergen statement and consumer advisories
- Ensure food comes from a properly permitted and inspected source
- Have handwash stations available and fully stocked (hot water, soap, paper towels) for guests and staff
- Contact the local board of health for further guidance and use the [Report My Meal online form](#) if the vendor, the event planner, staff, or attendees suspect foodborne illness

Food Safety and Permitting Guidance for Food Trucks and Mobile Food Vendors

Mobile food truck and mobile food vendors can use this fact sheet as a quick overview of the permitting and preparation steps needed to operate at events in Massachusetts. It is designed to help vendors plan, meet food requirements, and support safe food service.

Planning and permitting

- Before you begin operations, contact the Local Board of Health for the town or city where you plan to sell food in Massachusetts. If you plan to cross state lines, you will also need to contact the appropriate jurisdiction in that state.
- Follow the local Board of Health's guidance on applying for the proper food permit. It includes information on temporary event food permits, and on a food and beverage permit for carts that move around.
- Submit your application and all required documentation at least 30 days before the event.
- Be sure to schedule an inspection with the local Board of Health before the event where you plan to operate.
- If you operate an ice cream truck, you must apply for and pass a CORI check. For more information, check our Massachusetts Central Office's Record Information (CORI) and see event truck vendors FAQs.

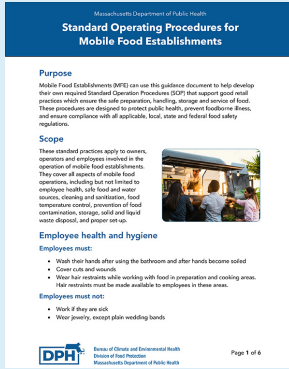
Documentation required for applications

- Food Protection Manager & Allergen Awareness Certificates
- A copy of the local food permit for the commercial kitchen and accessory agreement, if the city or town requires a temporary for preparation of food and beverages
- A list of approved and permitted supplies and their delivery schedules
- A list of carts for ingredients, prepared food, beverages, and ice
- A list of food and beverage items that will be served
- A HACCP Plan, if you make high-risk foods, such as acidified rice for sushi or smoked foods
- Production schedules for when items will be prepared
- Food Delivery Plan outlining measures to ensure products are not temperature-abuse

Learn more at mass.gov/RealFood

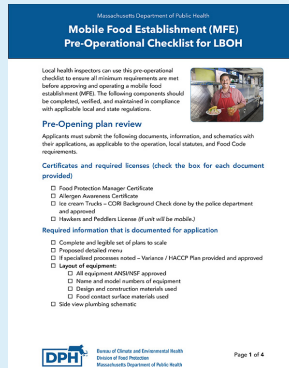
[Food Safety and Permitting Guidance for Food Trucks and Mobile Food Vendors](#)

This fact sheet gives food truck and mobile food vendors a practical overview of permitting steps, required documentation, inspection tips, food safety practices, and hot-weather worker safety considerations for operating at events in Massachusetts.



Standard Operating Procedures for Mobile Food Establishments

This guidance helps mobile food establishment operators develop standard operating procedures that support safe food handling, temperature control, sanitation, waste disposal, contingency planning, and compliance with food safety requirements.



Mobile Food Establishment Pre-Operational Checklist for LBOH

This checklist helps local health inspectors review required documents, equipment, operational procedures, and inspection items before approving a mobile food establishment to operate.

Sanitation

Proper restroom use prevents the spread of infectious diseases. Unsanitary restrooms act as reservoirs for pathogens that survive on surfaces for months. Handwashing is the most effective, low-cost method to prevent the spread of infectious diseases, including diarrheal illnesses, respiratory infections (like flu and COVID-19), and antibiotic-resistant bacteria. Consider the following:

- Determine if the restroom facilities at the location are adequate for the anticipated total number of people
- If not adequate, consider temporarily increasing this number with porta-potties and hand sanitizer stations
- Before the event, check that systems are properly functioning and follow their routine maintenance schedules
- Septic systems should be pumped prior to the event to avoid system errors or backups
- Throughout the event, routinely check all facilities are fully stocked (toilet paper, paper towels, soap, towels, trash, etc.)
- Confirm access to dumping sites during non-business hours
- Temporary facilities should be strategically placed to avoid negative impacts on the surroundings
- Implement contingency plans to avoid event disruptions



Trash

Proper trash or waste disposal is crucial for public health, as it prevents the spread of infectious diseases, reduces toxic pollution in air and water, and minimizes breeding grounds for disease-carrying pests like rodents and insects. Be a good neighbor by doing your part to help keep the community clean by implementing the following tips:



- Research the communities trash removal policies before the event
- Determine if the trash facilities provided are adequate for your event
- Consider adding trash collection containers so trash may be properly stored until final disposal
- Failure to properly store trash in receptacles with tight fitting lids may contribute to rodent activity
- Contact the local board of health for a listing of licensed waste haulers in the area
- Locate bulk dumping sites that may be used during non-business hours
- Implement contingency plans to avoid event disruptions or potential fines
- Temporary facilities should be strategically placed to avoid negative impacts on surroundings
- Contact the DPW, Parks Department or Local Board of Health for additional guidance

Noise and numbers

Studies have shown that there are direct links between noise and health. Problems related to noise include stress-related illnesses, sleep disruption, and lost productivity. Overcrowding can contribute to disease transmission, sanitation, and safety concerns. Occupancy limits help to ensure spaces allow for adequate sanitation, ventilation, and structural integrity for the number of visitors.

- When setting up your space, consider how noise will travel to neighboring locations and the potential negative impact
- Contact local police departments to determine quiet hours
- Schedule your event around these quiet hours to avoid potential fines
- Understand the occupancy limitations for your space, and ensure you never exceed the maximum allowance

Worker training and safety

Staff setting up, helping to run, and cleaning up after the event are at increased risk for heat exposure.

- When training staff as heat helpers and teaching them the signs and symptoms of heat related illness, actions to take, and vulnerable populations, make sure they understand that **the risk applies to them too**
- Consider using a buddy system to watch for early signs and symptoms of heat-related illness for the most at risk staff. [People who work outdoors, older adults \(age 65+\), pregnant people, and people with chronic health conditions are at higher risk.](#)



- Make sure you and your staff drink water, even when you are not thirsty. Read [CDC/NIOSH Heat Stress Hydration Guidance](#) for more information.
- Offer frequent breaks for staff in cool spaces

Other health and safety tips for workers:

- Proper hand hygiene is crucial for staff, as it prevents the transmission of germs, and for some workers, like food workers, it is a regulatory requirement
- Sick employees should remain home to avoid the spread of illness, plan ahead and have back-up staff available
- Establish and train staff on an emergency protocol to employ if needed
- Provide staff with an emergency contact list

