



January 28, 2022

Dear ACA Members,

Thank you for letting us know of your concerns about our Health & Safety Guidelines for CiderCon. We absolutely share your goal of minimizing the risk for attendees at CiderCon. We take the health and safety of our members very seriously and have worked conscientiously as a board and with the help of outside health experts to develop our guidelines.

In fact, a negative PCR test is insufficient to guarantee that attendees will arrive Covid-Free. PCR test results take days, and during that time, and during travel, attendees may be exposed to the virus. There is no testing regime that will make it possible to prevent potential *exposure*, especially as people interact with staff, go out to dinner, or participate in events outside the conference.

The most important and dependable steps for *preventing transmission* are masking and social distancing. Recent data has also shown that KN95s are significantly more effective than surgical masks, which in turn are orders of magnitude better than cloth masks. We call your attention to the following protocols in bold we will be following:

- **Masks must be worn at all times** at indoor CiderCon events with the exception of during meals and tasting events where specific safety protocols will be in place. This includes tour buses.
- **Security and staff will enforce mask adherence.**
- CiderCon staff and volunteers will participate in daily health screenings.
- **At this time, the hotel and the Greater Richmond Convention Center require their staff to wear masks.**
- **Tasting sessions will be in expansive rooms and will be socially distanced as much as possible.**
- The Cider Share welcome reception is being divided into two sessions, with featured cideries rotating off. We will be capping attendance of Cider Share to 200 per session. The room has the capacity for 600, and we will encourage social distancing.
- **Thursday's and Friday's lunches are box lunches so you can easily opt to eat where you would like.** Tables will be set at less density than normal.
- Please do not attend CiderCon with symptoms.

In addition, we are pleased that we have acquired **sufficient KN95 masks to be able to provide one to every participant.**

People who are vaccinated are less likely to contract COVID from exposure, or to have serious illness if they do contract it. If you are in that category, you have already done the most important thing to minimize your risk. Adding KN95 masks and social distancing are the most effective steps beyond that to avoid contracting the virus.

We have spent many hours working through these guidelines. They are more stringent than what is currently required by the Virginia State Health Department or the Convention Center. We hope this explanation has helped to explain the reasoning behind these guidelines. Please don't hesitate to contact Eleanor if you have additional questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eleanor Leger

Brooke Glover

John Behrens

Michelle McGrath