



# Public Venue Security Screening Guide

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## Touchless Screening Annex

Commercial Facilities Sector

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# 1 Executive Summary

The **Touchless Screening Annex** provides options for consideration when developing and implementing security screening procedures for major sporting events, concerts, fairs and expos, and similar large gatherings. The purpose of this annex is to outline specific considerations for touchless screening protocols as a supplement to the general screening considerations outlined in the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) [Public Venue Security Screening Guide](#).

The security screening procedures in this annex are neither definitive nor required by any regulation or legislation. Due to the wide variety of types, sizes, and locations of public venues and the events held in these sites, not all suggested procedures will be relevant or applicable. Venue owners, operators, and event organizers may choose to implement any or all the options in this annex and should supplement them with additional resources when available. CISA will not take any action against an entity or company that chooses not to implement these options for consideration.

Additional guidance related to the security of the Commercial Facilities Sector and other helpful information is available at [cisa.gov/cisa/commercial-facilities-resources](https://cisa.gov/cisa/commercial-facilities-resources).

# 2 Technology Recommendations

To meet the unique challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, organizations had to react in flexible and decisive ways. The lessons learned throughout COVID-19 response and recovery have offered valuable insights and lessons learned regarding touchless screening.

Public venues may consider the following technologies for venue occupant safety and security:

- **Temperature screening technology and thermal kiosks** assist venues in taking a subject's temperature without the need for contact.
- **Electronic health screening questionnaires** made available on a mobile app or website can reduce the chances of person-to-person transmission.
- **Digital ticketing** reduces physical contact upon entry, provides venues with intuitive ticketing management, and can decrease ticket fraud.
- **Contactless concessions** order pickup or delivery allows customers to preorder or have their order delivered to their seats.
- **Cashless concessions/merchants** provide contactless menus and minimize physical interaction.
- **Signage** should be visible and advise guests and staff of venue policy and recommendations (mask requirements/enforcement, hand washing stations, social distancing, etc.).
- **Ultraviolet (UV) light cleaning systems** assist in removing bacteria, viruses, and pathogens. Follow CDC guidelines and EPA recommendations when developing and implementing a cleaning plan.
- **Contactless access control systems and mobile credentials** identify employees and guests entering a site without the need to touch surfaces.

# 3 Operational Considerations

## 3.1 Patron Experience

The goal for venues is to provide a consistent, expeditious, safe, and secure patron experience as ticket holders approach the entrance and transition through the security screening and ticket scanning process. Ticket holders should be able to enter the venue with as little event staff contact to their person and belongings as possible while still undergoing a thorough security screening.

Consistency of policy and enforcement will create convenience for patrons, which ultimately enhances the experience. Inconsistent policy enforcement is one of the most frequently-cited negative patron experiences (e.g., “he let me in last time with this bag,” or “last time the usher let me in this restricted area.”). Ensuring a policy is both in place and consistently enforced will result in a more positive experience for patrons.

## 3.2 Governances

In addition to recommendations provided by reputable safety and health resources (Occupational Safety and Health Administration [OSHA], Centers for Disease Control [CDC], Environmental Protection Agency [EPA]), venues should closely monitor and incorporate state and local governances (health checks, vaccination verifications, etc.).

## 3.3 Bag Policies

Bag searches often require physical contact and delay entry. Public venues should consider a no bag or clear bag policy. In addition to limiting contact, the policies increase the speed of the security screening process, which also helps to ensure a positive patron experience. With proper inspection, exceptions may be made for medically necessary items.

## 3.4 Queueing Strategy

Modifications to the queueing strategy can help to decrease clustering of large groups of people and reduce possible exposure areas.

Venues should consider implementing the following:

- Decreased capacity limits
- Pavement markings and signage to support social distancing
- Timed entry ticketing
- Staggered arrival times for staff

## 3.5 Buffer Zone Protection

Public venues should consider implementing bag search procedures, including removal of prohibited, restricted, or illegal items, in a buffer zone before the ticket holder enters a queue for entrance into the venue. Establishing buffer zones can assist planners in organizing layers of protection around a venue. When creating a buffer zone, venues should consider the following:

- Buffer zones depend on the size of the area outside of the venue entrance points. They should be placed a reasonable distance from the entrances to intercept the ticket holders before they enter the queuing area of the entrance to the venue.
- Buffer zones should be established at satellite parking lots where mass transit is employed. This will allow patrons to return prohibited items to their vehicles before arriving at the venue.
- Detailed signage should be placed at buffer zone entrances that informs patrons of
  - items that are and are not permitted in the venue.
  - security screening process, including use of metal detectors or bag searchers.
  - ticket scanning process, including which kind of tickets are accepted and how to best ensure prompt scanning.
- If the area outside the entrance does not allow for a buffer zone, venue management can assign event staff or third-party partners to monitor and engage ticket holders who may have oversized bags and prohibited items before reaching the queue for security and ticket screening.

## 3.6 Buffer Zone Operational Procedures

- 1 Ensure sufficient staffing is in place to help effectively manage the buffer zone.
- 2 As the ticket holder approaches, buffer zone staff should identify prohibited items/bags that do not comply with the venue policies.
- 3 Direct the ticket holder to return the item(s) to their vehicle or take them to a bag check facility or self-operating storage locker provided by the venue or a third party.
  - Some ticket holders may arrive via mass transit and cannot return the item(s) to a vehicle.
  - Ensuring a suitable protocol is in place to handle such instances will help unneeded resource drains if the item is deemed “suspicious” or “unattended.”
- 4 Ensure staff do not touch the ticket holder or their personal belongings, when possible.

## 3.7 Bag Search Facilities and Self-Operating Storage Lockers

Consider having bag search facilities or self-operating storage lockers on-site where patrons can temporarily store items that are not permitted into the venue. Venues should consider the following when planning for bag search facilities or self-operating storage lockers:

- Develop policy and procedures to support the facilities or lockers. The policy should be communicated to all patrons through as many avenues as possible (e.g., websites, digital channels, etc.).
  - This communication should include what is and is not allowed into the venue, when and where bag searches will take place, and if patrons will have to pay for personal item storage.

- Illegal items (e.g., drugs) or prohibited dangerous items (e.g., weapons) should not be stored in bag search facilities or self-operating storage lockers.
  - Ensure clear and appropriate policies and procedures are in place to handle the disposition of these items.
- Determine the locations and the number of bag search facilities or self-operating storage lockers ahead of an event.
  - If neither option is available for an event, venue management should ensure alternate plans are in place that detail how prohibited bag and items and illegal items are handled.
  - These plans should prioritize the safety and security of patrons and staff, as well as limiting the impact to the the patron experience.
- Self-operating storage lockers should be large enough to store bags, purses, backpacks, and/or luggage, as well as prohibited items of various sizes.
- The bag search facilities and storage lockers should be placed an appropriate distance from the venue entrances and perimeter to ensure the safety and security of both patrons and staff, but close enough not to impact the patron experience.
- Event staff must visually check items before they are stored.
  - An explosive detection canine (EDC) team can also be used to supplement inspections.
- Event staff should request that patrons move or remove items in their bags for a visual inspection.
- Event staff can also use probes (such as plastic sticks or rods) to move things around without touching the bag and items with their hands. Some venue managers may allow event staff to place their hands on the bottom of bags to feel for an unusual weight.
- Staffing must be appropriate to manage the bag search facilities and self-operating storage lockers.
  - It is important to maintain an appropriate level of staffing at the completion of the event to support returning bags and items and manage lines.
- Ensure appropriate protocols are in place for items and bags that are not redeemed at the end of an event.

## 3.8 Security Screening

- Develop a “Patron Code of Conduct” and “Bag and Prohibited, Restricted, and Illegal Items” policies.
  - Ensure these policies are communicated to all patrons through as many avenues as possible (e.g., websites, digital channels, etc.).
- Provide the appropriate staffing to manage the security screening and ticket scanning process effectively.
  - The security screening process may be faster and more efficient than the ticket scanning process, which may overwhelm ticket scanning staff.
  - Evaluate whether ticket scanning should precede security screening since ticket scanning could assist the entry pacing.
  - If a prohibited item is discovered during the security screening process, the ticket holder may have the option of returning it to their vehicle or checking it at a bag search facility or self-operating storage locker (if available).
    - » If ticket scanning precedes screening, the digital ticket may not work upon re-entry. Digital tickets may need to be “exit” scanned to revalidate for re-entry.

- Consider posting a representative from the venue's ticket office at each gate to resolve ticket issues that the ticket scanning staff cannot resolve. This can help to expedite the ticket scanning process and improve the patron experience.
  - » If unable to staff each gate, consider positioning ticket offices strategically around the venue. Ticket offices placed around the venue's perimeter will ensure the ticket holder does not have to walk to only one main ticket office.

### 3.9 Improved Security Screening Technology

Consider investing in technology that will allow patrons to walk through the security screening area without divesting any items other than weapons. This technology should minimize contact with patrons and their belongings and improve ingress speed while maintaining a safe and secure environment and a positive patron experience.

Consider the following when evaluating this type of technology:

- Metal and weapon detection systems should meet a defined set of standards appropriate for the type and application of the technology.
- Define the acceptable level of risk for venues and events. Higher throughput is often achieved by decreasing the sensitivity of detectors. New technology that allows people to keep small metal items on their person (e.g., cell phones, keys, etc.) may result in missed opportunities to detect small weapons and components of larger weapons that can be carried in by a group of patrons and reassembled inside the venue.
- Increased throughput and contactless screening may reduce staffing requirements or require adjustments to screening operations (i.e. ticket scanning). Use of this technology may result in reduced staffing needs, which could yield a return on investment.
- Determine the need for visual checks and assessments. The short pause that takes place between a screener and a ticket holder at a single-use walk-through metal detector allows for two important things to happen:
  - A cursory visual search of the ticket holder for suspicious bulges and non-metallic items.
  - An assessment of the ticket holder for suspicious behavior and/or impairment from alcohol and/or drugs.
- Crowd management is needed at the gates during high ingress times. As opposed to a metered approach with a single-use walk-through magnetometer, free-flowing security screening will create a seemingly hectic and uncontrolled environment. This type of environment can motivate ticket-holders to believe there is an opportunity to violate various venue policies.
- A less involved screening process may send a message to the staff that the rules are relaxed or that they will not be held as accountable as they would during a one-on-one interaction. Effective training and quality assurance programs will be necessary to ensure proficiency and vigilance.





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