

Georgia World Congress Center Authority Highlights Guest and Employee Safety with GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation



Opportunity

Established in 1971, Georgia World Congress Center was developed to oversee the growth of an international trade and exhibition center in Atlanta. GWCCA's ever-evolving campus spans 220-plus acres and includes Centennial Olympic Park, the legacy of the 1996 Summer Olympic Games, Mercedes-Benz Stadium, home of the Atlanta Falcons and Atlanta United and, opening in late 2023, GWCCA's headquarters hotel, Signia by Hilton Atlanta.

The convention industry took a significant hit during the COVID-19 pandemic. As stay-at-home orders and limitations on group gatherings took over, many convention centers had to temporarily close. Once establishments were ready to open their doors to the public, strict changes had to be implemented to meet the current standards for health and safety protocols. This meant that convention centers like GWCCA had to quickly accommodate to remain successful.

"The results of the pandemic impacted not only attendance levels for meetings, but also how meeting planners implemented their events. It was important for us to demonstrate to meeting planners, exhibitors, and attendees our pledge and commitment to providing a safe environment for their business," said Chris Chadwick, Director of Operations, Event Logistics and Fulfillment.

Solution



GWCCA was the first convention center in the U.S. to achieve GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation. Leading at the forefront of the convention industry's response to the impact of the pandemic, it was important to show their dedication to creating a plan that made it safe for planners and guests to return to in-person meetings.

The biggest challenge GWCCA faced throughout the pandemic was responding to the constant evolution of the virus and being able to meet updated safety expectations, including touchpoints versus airborne particles and determining the most effective ways to minimize transmission. The GBAC STAR Facility process provided guidance on cleaning techniques to reduce the spread of infectious diseases.



"GWCCA continues to renew, update, and execute an extensive operational plan to ensure we're adhering to the ever-evolving impacts of infectious diseases," said Chadwick, "We've implemented a cashless environment with credit and mobile payment solutions and have upgraded air handling units to MERV 13 filters to improve system efficacy in removing viruses from circulated air."

Having GBAC STAR Accreditation has given GWCCA the confidence to welcome guests back into a safe environment with an understanding of how to control and mitigate the spread of germs and illness. This includes various areas of consideration in controlling infectious diseases and being able to meet the diversified expectations and needs of customers and guests.

Results



By achieving GBAC STAR accreditation, GWCCA discovered the following benefits:

- **Increased customer satisfaction.** Customers have commended GWCCA's approach to cleaning, disinfection, and infection prevention in the in-person meeting environment. Attendees of meetings and events have shared on social media and directly with the event organizer their appreciation for being provided with a clean and safe environment throughout the pandemic.
- **Improved safety plans.** GWCCA's website provides current and prospective tenants information on an up-to-date operational plan designed to meet the health and safety challenges presented by COVID-19, including a detailed overview of enhanced cleaning procedures, adapted food and beverage protocols, options for modified event and meeting space layouts, and details on upgraded HVAC systems. This means that occupants can have real-time updates on how GWCCA is taking steps to prevent illness transmission.
- **Confidence in employees.** The success of any company starts with a strong team. Having employees who feel safe and confident in the space they work in allows them to work effectively and bring a positive attitude to guests. With infectious disease and illness prevention being a top priority at GWCCA, employees can ensure that they are coming to work in an environment that puts their health and safety first.

"GWCCA's GBAC STAR Accreditation demonstrates our commitment to customers, show attendees, and team members that we follow the highest level of cleaning and disinfection protocols," said Chadwick, "it is paramount that we continue to maintain our customers' trust by putting their safety at the forefront of all we do."

Visit our website at [GBAC.org](https://www.gbac.org)

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—Chris Chadwick
Director of Operations
Event Logistics and Fulfillment



About GBAC, a Division of ISSA

Composed of international leaders in the field of microbial-pathogenic threat analysis, mitigation, response, and recovery, the Global Biorisk Advisory Council[™] (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, provides training, guidance, accreditation, certification, crisis management assistance and leadership to government, commercial, and private entities looking to mitigate, quickly address, and/or recover from biological threats and real-time crises. The organization's services include biorisk management program assessment and training, infectious disease and biological material response and remediation, the GBAC STAR[™] Facility and Service Accreditation Programs, training and certification of individuals, and consulting for building owners and facility managers.