

Guidelines for Places of Worship

Places of worship will be expected to meet the [Healthy at Work Minimum Requirements](#). In addition, **places of worship should follow the guidelines in order to reopen and remain open:**

Social Distancing

- Places of worship should, to the greatest extent practicable, continue to conduct alternative services, including tele-services, radio broadcasts, and drive-in services.
- Places of worship conducting drive-in services should ensure their congregants remain in their vehicles and not socialize through their vehicle windows, except at a distance of more than six (6) feet. Attendees should turn off their vehicles to avoid idling and protect everyone's health.
- Places of worship conducting in-person services should limit attendance to no more than 50% of the building occupancy capacity, including clergy and staff-employees, while maintaining social distance between household units of at least six (6) feet. This means that there must be six (6) feet between individuals on a row and individuals between rows, such that a six-foot radius is maintained around all household units. A place of worship that cannot maintain this space must further reduce its occupancy capacity until it is achieved.
- Places of worship should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that clergy, staff-employees, volunteers and congregants wear coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana) over their mouths and noses while attending services.
- Places of worship should wait to reopen youth services (including, but not limited to, Sunday schools) until childcare services have reopened on June 15, 2020. Once they reopen, youth services should follow the requirements posted for childcare services.
- Singing during services creates a higher risk of spreading infectious particles. Choirs should avoid singing. Congregants should wear face coverings and consider a greater than six feet social distance from others if they choose to sing. Houses of worship should consider alternatives to congregational singing, including by playing pre-recorded or live instrumental music (e.g. pianos and guitars - no wind instruments) during services.
- Places of worship should consider taking congregants' temperatures and asking about signs of illness before admitting them into the place of worship. If they do take temperatures, they should consider using a non-contact thermometer or thermal imager. If a place of worship must use a standard oral/aural thermometer, consider having the congregant take their own temperature and relay the information to maintain social distancing and sanitize the thermometer after each use.

Healthy at Work



- Places of worship should not allow individuals with elevated temperatures (100.5 degrees Fahrenheit or above) or signs of illness (coughing, shortness of breath, sneezing) to attend in-person services. Houses of worship should direct those having symptoms of COVID-19, as well as people who have had close contact with a person who has symptoms like dry cough, chest tightness, and/or fever, to refrain from participating in any aspect of in-person services. Places of worship should encourage symptomatic persons to stay at home, seek immediate medical care, or get tested.
- Places of worship should use greeters to direct congregants to available masks and bulletins. Greeters should be masked, maintain social distancing, and consider wearing gloves.
- Places of worship should display markers and signage in the sanctuary/meeting space to guide social distancing.
- Places of worship should communicate with the congregation often and with clarity and transparency. Prepare the congregation for worship and for the changes that are occurring in procedures due to the national health crisis.
- Places of worship making restrooms available must ensure restrooms are only used by one person at a time and all portions that are regularly touched (e.g., door, sink, and toilet handles) are appropriately disinfected after each use.
- Places of worship conducting in-person services must, to the greatest extent practicable, provide hand sanitizer, handwashing facilities, tissues, and waste baskets in convenient locations.
- Places of worship should not provide communal food or beverages to clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, or congregants.
- Places of worship should restrict access to common areas, to the greatest extent practicable, in order to maximize social distancing and reduce congregating. These common areas include, but are not limited to, foyers, lobbies, vending areas, community and multi-purpose rooms, and event spaces.
- Because of the requirement to socially distance at least six (6) feet apart, places of worship should refrain from the practice of handshaking, handholding, or hugging.
- Places of worship should encourage those at higher risk for severe illness per CDC guidelines not to attend in-person services. These guidelines are available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/faq.html#Higher-Risk>. Instead, places of worship should, to the greatest extent practicable, provide services that are not in-person, including tele-services, drive-in services, and/or radio services for those individuals. If a house of worship is unable to provide alternative services, they should,

to the greatest extent practicable, implement hours where service can be safely provided to congregants at higher risk for severe illness.

Personal Protective Equipment Requirements

- Places of worship should ensure, to the greatest extent practicable, that clergy, staff-employees, volunteers and congregants wear face coverings (e.g., cloth mask or bandana) over their mouths and noses while attending services.

Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements

- Places of worship must ensure facilities are properly cleaned and ventilated.
- Places of worship must ensure cleaning and sanitation of frequently touched surfaces with appropriate disinfectants. Appropriate disinfectants include EPA registered household disinfectants, diluted household bleach solution, and alcohol solutions containing at least 60% alcohol. Places of worship must establish a cleaning and disinfecting process that follows CDC guidelines when any individual is identified, suspected, or confirmed as COVID-19 positive.
- Places of worship, as appropriate, must ensure they do not use cleaning procedures that could re-aerosolize infectious particles. This includes, but is not limited to, avoiding practices such as dry sweeping or use of high-pressure streams of air, water, or cleaning chemicals.

Training and Safety Requirements

- Places of worship should ensure appropriate signage is posted throughout their facilities to inform clergy, staff-employees, and congregants about good hygiene and new practices.
- Places of worship should ensure clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, and congregants are instructed to avoid touching their faces, including their eyes, noses, and mouths, particularly until after they have thoroughly washed their hands upon completing work and/or removing PPE, to the greatest extent practicable.
- Places of worship should ensure clergy, staff-employees, volunteers, and congregants are informed that they may identify and communicate potential improvements and/or concerns in order to reduce potential risk of exposure.