

Places of worship should have an operational plan in place to mitigate the risk of spreading COVID-19.

The plans do not need to be submitted for review or approval. However, to ensure confidence of the worshippers, places of worship are encouraged to make their plans available to their congregation.

PLACES OF WORSHIP SHOULD USE THE FOLLOWING PROTOCOLS AS THEY OFFER ACTIVITIES.

Establish protocols to maintain the six (6) foot physical distancing requirements for staff, volunteers and worshippers for services and activities. Consideration include:

- Direct members to seating or standing areas that are already properly distanced
 - o Consider the use of signage and barrier protection to limit movement and maintain distancing
 - o Directing the flow of traffic
- Offer more protected areas (e.g., at the very front of the area of worship) for more vulnerable people and offer them separate areas of entry and exit, or allow them to arrive and depart prior to, or after, other worshippers, although vulnerable populations are encouraged to stay home during Stage 1
 - o Consider separate service times for vulnerable populations
- Identify how services can be performed while limiting close interactions with volunteers and worshippers such as, but not limited to:
 - o Limiting the number of people in the service at a time
- Recommend worshippers refrain from hugging, handshaking, and other physical contact

Identify how the place of worship will provide adequate sanitation and personal hygiene for staff, volunteers and worshippers, including but not limited to:

- Disinfection of the facility and regular cleaning, especially of high touch areas
- Provision of prevention supplies such as hand sanitizer, tissues, trash cans
- Encourage anyone who enters the place of worship to wash hands or use hand sanitizer prior to or just after entering the building
- Require or encourage that staff, volunteers and/or worshippers wear face coverings as a regular practice
- Ask all staff, volunteers and worshippers to self-monitor for fever or symptoms of COVID-19 and refrain from entering the building if there is any concern about possible infection
- Ensure religious leaders always wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol prior to conducting the service and any close contact or interaction with others

PLACES OF WORSHIP SHOULD USE THE FOLLOWING PROTOCOLS AS THEY OFFER ACTIVITIES.

Consider whether to modify specific religious rites, rituals and services, consulting with local public health officials as needed.

- Consider online collections or donations, use of postal mail, a collection box at the entrance of the facility, or other mechanisms if it is customary to obtain collections during services to limit the handling of cash and limit close contact.
- Consider modification of practices that are specific to particular faith traditions such as the practice of communion, for example modifying or suspending this practice.

Identify strategies to address ill staff and volunteers, which should include requiring COVID-19 positive staff and volunteers to stay at home while infectious, and may include also restricting staff or volunteers who were directly exposed to the COVID-19 positive staff or volunteer, and the closure of the place of worship until the location can be properly disinfected.

Develop and provide alternative ways to stay connected to worshippers and offer remote (e.g., online, televised, radio) services to worshippers who are unable to attend or who are concerned about attending.

Resources:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/checklist.html>
- Health and Human Services: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/3-17-20-faith-and-community-based-covid-19-faq.pdf>
- EPA list of COVID-19 effective disinfectants: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>