

Protocol for Places of Worship: Appendix F

Recent Updates:

7/1/2020: Please note that the California COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies was updated. Click [here](#) to review it.

7/9/20: Additional information provided regarding employee leave benefits and air and ventilation system improvements

7/16/2020: Updated to comply with the July 13, 2020 Order issued by the State Public Health Officer Order that requires the closure of all indoor operations by Places of Worship. Indoor operations at places of worship are closed to the public. Public activities, including services, weddings and funerals, may continue to be conducted outdoors on the grounds of places of worship in compliance with this revised protocol or virtually, using the site or other location as setting.

7/17/20: Additional information provided regarding employee and visitor face coverings and symptom checks.

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health is adopting a staged approach, supported by science and public health expertise, to allow places of worship to safely reopen. In conformance with the July 1, 2020 California COVID-19 Industry Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies and the July 13, 2020 Order issued by the State Public Health Officer in response to increased prevalence of COVID-19 statewide, this Protocol provides guidance for places of worship and providers of religious services and cultural ceremonies (referred to collectively as “places of worship”) to support a safe, clean environment for employees, interns and trainees, volunteers, scholars, and all other types of workers (referred to collectively as “staff”) as well as congregants, worshippers, visitors, etc. (referred to collectively as “visitors” or “congregants”). In addition to the conditions imposed on houses of worship by the State Public Health Officer, places of worship must also be in compliance with the conditions laid out in this Protocol for Places of Worship.

Please note: This Protocol does not obligate places of worship to resume any in-person activity. Further, it is strongly recommended that places of worship continue to facilitate remote services and other related activities for those who are vulnerable to COVID19 including older adults and those with co-morbidities.

This Protocol is not intended for food preparation and service, delivery of items to those in need, childcare and daycare services, school and educational activities, in-home caregiving, counseling, office work, and other activities that places and organizations of worship may provide.

This Protocol may be updated as additional information and resources become available so be sure to check the LA County website <http://www.ph.lacounty.gov/media/Coronavirus/> regularly for any updates to this document. Note also that the California Department of Public Health will conduct a review to assess impact of the State Order and of these protocols 21 days after the date of the State Public Health Officer’s Order.

This checklist covers:

- (1) Workplace policies and practices to protect staff health
- (2) Measures to ensure physical distancing
- (3) Measures to ensure infection control



- (4) Communication with staff, visitors and congregants
- (5) Measures to ensure equitable access to critical services.

These five key areas must be addressed as your facility implements its Places of Worship Protocols.

All entities covered by this guidance must implement all applicable measures listed below and be prepared to explain why any measure that is not implemented is not applicable to the site.

Place of Worship name: _____
Facility Address: _____
Maximum Occupancy, per Fire Code: _____
Approximate total square footage of space used by visitors and congregants for services: _____

In the protocols that follow, the term “staff” is meant to include employees, volunteers, interns and trainees, scholars and all other individuals who carry out work at the site, The term “visitors” should be understood to include members of the congregation, worshippers, and members of the public who are on site as visitors. The terms “site” and “house of worship” both refer to the building at which worship occurs and any adjacent buildings or grounds at which permitted activities of the congregation are conducted.

A. WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT EMPLOYEE (STAFF) HEALTH (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY TO THE FACILITY)

- Staff who can carry out their work duties from home has been directed to do so.
- Vulnerable staff (those above age 65, those with chronic health conditions) are assigned work that can be done from home whenever possible.
- All staff have been told not to come to work if sick and to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation, if applicable.
- Information on employer or government-sponsored leave benefits the employee may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home. See additional information on government [programs](#) supporting sick leave and worker’s compensation for COVID19, including employee’s sick leave rights under the [Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#) and employee’s rights to workers’ compensation benefits and presumption of the work-relatedness of COVID-19 pursuant to the Governor’s [Executive Order N-62-20](#)
- Work processes are reconfigured to the extent possible to increase opportunities for staff to work from home.**
- Upon being informed that one or more worker/practitioner, independent contractor and/or temporary worker tests positive for, or has symptoms consistent with COVID-19 (case), the employer has a plan in place to have the case(s) isolate themselves at home and require the immediate self-quarantine of all workers that had a workplace exposure to the case(s). The employer’s plan should consider a protocol for all quarantined workers to have access to or



be tested for COVID-19 in order to determine whether there have been additional workplace exposures, which may require additional COVID-19 control measures. See Public Health guidance on responding to COVID-19 in the workplace.

- Employee screenings** are conducted before employees may enter the workspace. Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills and if the employee has had contact with a person known to be infected COVID-19 in the last 14 days. These checks can be done remotely or in person upon the employees' arrival. A temperature check should also be done at the worksite if feasible.
- In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace (including cases among staff and/or congregants) within a span of 14 days the employer should report this cluster to the Department of Public Health at (888) 397-3993 or (213) 240-7821. If a cluster is identified at a worksite, the Department of Public Health will initiate a cluster response which includes providing infection control guidance and recommendations, technical support and site-specific control measures. A public health case manager will be assigned to the cluster investigation to help guide the facility response.
- Employees who have contact with others are offered, at no cost, an appropriate face covering that covers the nose and mouth. The covering is to be worn by the employee at all times during the workday when in contact or likely to come into contact with others. Employees who have been instructed by their medical provider that they should not wear a face covering should wear a face shield with a drape on the bottom edge, to be in compliance with State directives, as long as their condition permits it. A drape that is form fitting under the chin is preferred. Masks with one-way valves should not be used. Employees need not wear a face covering when the employee is alone in a private office or a cubicle with a solid partition that exceeds the height of the employee when standing.
- Employees are instructed to wash or replace their face coverings daily.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment is provided to staff, including eye protection and gloves as needed, responsible for washing religious garments and linens, seat or floor coverings, or other cloth items used in services or ceremonies.
- Staff are instructed to wash their cloth face coverings daily.
- All work areas are separated by at least 6 feet or by partitions.
- Common areas, including restrooms and areas used only by staff are disinfected frequently, on the following schedule:
 - Entry area/lobby _____
 - Hallways (s) _____
 - Meeting rooms _____
 - Shared work areas _____
 - Break rooms _____
 - Stairways/Stairwells _____
 - Elevators _____
 - Restrooms _____
 - Other _____

- Staff are prohibited from eating or drinking anywhere inside the facility other than designated dining areas to assure that masks may be worn consistently and correctly.
- Disinfectant and related supplies are available to staff at the following location(s):

- Hand sanitizer effective against COVID-19 is available to all staff at the following location(s):

- Staff are allowed frequent breaks to wash their hands.
- Staff have been instructed not to conduct home or other off-site visits to anyone who has tested positive for or exhibits symptoms of COVID-19 unless that person has completed the prescribed self-isolation or self-quarantine period.
- A copy of this protocol has been distributed to each staff person.
- Each staff person is assigned their own tools, equipment and defined workspace. Sharing held items is minimized or eliminated.
- All policies described in this checklist other than those related to terms of employment are applied to staff of delivery and any other companies who may be on the premises as third parties.
- Optional—Describe other measures:

B. MEASURES TO ENSURE PHYSICAL DISTANCING

- Indoor religious services and cultural ceremonies at places of worship are prohibited until further notice by the State Public Health Officer. Alternative options may be used for public religious services and cultural events. These options are:
 - Services and events are conducted outdoors in compliance with infection control and physical distancing requirements;
 - Services and events are conducted virtually via live streaming or taping for later broadcast.
 - Note that indoor space at the place of worship may be used as the setting for services and events that are conducted virtually, as long as infection control and physical distancing requirements are followed and no more than 10 individuals participate in production and broadcast processes.
 - Use of indoor space at the site is otherwise limited to staff carrying out non-public or virtual activities.
- Measures have been implemented to promote physical distancing at outdoor events.
 - Measures have been implemented (advance registration, counting attendees at entry) to assure attendance does not exceed the number of people who can be accommodated with physical distancing at outdoor events.
 - Parking areas have been reconfigured to limit congregation points and ensure proper spacing (for example, by closing off every other space).
 - If drive-in outdoor services are offered, cars are directed to park at least 6 feet apart.

- Clear pathways have been identified between parking areas and other arrival points and the site on the grounds at which a religious service or cultural ceremony is being held to minimize crowding, allow for monitoring of occupancy and leave room for symptom checks as staff and visitors enter.
- A staff person (or staff people if there is more than one pathway) wearing a cloth face covering is posted at the start of the pathway but at least 6 feet from the nearest arriving or departing person to monitor use of face coverings and track occupancy.
- Permitted religious events and cultural ceremonies are configured to permit the required 6 feet of space between any 2 people
 - The only exceptions to this are the two people who comprise a couple who are getting married or the members of a single household, who may attend any event together and sit together as a unit if permitted by their religion.
- If attendees at events must wait in line prior to being seated or at any other point during their presence at the site, markings are used to demonstrate the required 6-foot distance between individuals.
- Services and celebrations are shortened to limit time spent at the site.
- Outdoor areas are configured to permit physical distancing. If chairs, benches or standing space are used, arrangements and markings are employed to permit a 6-foot space between individuals or between household groups and other household groups or individuals.
- If applicable, aisles within the area used for outdoor events are designated as one-way to support physical distancing.
- Podiums, platforms and other speaker areas have been reconfigured to allow at least 6 feet between speakers or celebrants.
- Staff have been instructed to maintain at least a 6-foot distance from each other in all areas of the site.
- Virtual access is offered to visitors who wish to participate in services or events but are at high risk if exposed to COVID-19.
- Arrangements are in place to make restrooms safely available to attendees at outdoor events. The site may choose to provide portable outdoor toilet and handwashing facilities, and/or to make indoor restrooms available. If indoor facilities are made available, the following precautions are in place:
 - A defined route is marked from the outdoor area used for the event to the indoor location of restrooms.
 - Tape or other markings are used to assure physical distancing if attendees must line up to use restrooms.
 - Attendees are encouraged to use restrooms as needed during the service or event to avoid crowding at the end.
 - Restrooms facilities are in good working order and are equipped with adequate soap and one-time use towels to permit required handwashing.
 - Restroom facilities are configured to permit physical distancing outside of walled cubicles.
 - A staff person (or staff people if there is more than one interior restroom option) wearing a cloth face covering is posted at the entrance to the restroom but at least 6 feet from the nearest arriving or departing person to monitor use of face coverings and track occupancy.

- Staff have been instructed to maintain at least a 6 foot distance from each other in all areas of the site, including indoor work areas.
- If applicable, elevator capacity is limited to 4 individuals or fewer at a time for any elevator that does not allow for 6-foot physical distance between riders. All riders are required to wear cloth face coverings. Consider elevator sizes, number of building floors, and daily number of employees to establish physical distancing guidelines appropriate for elevator riders.
- If applicable, stairwells have been opened for “up” or “down” traffic with increased cleaning of stairwells.
- Workstations in offices and other areas are separated by at least 6 feet and common areas are configured to limit employee gatherings to ensure physical distancing of at least 6 feet.
- Occupancy in staff restrooms, break rooms and other common areas is limited to permit physical distancing.

C. MEASURES FOR INFECTION CONTROL

- The HVAC system is in good, working order; to the maximum extent possible, ventilation has been increased through opening of doors and windows during gatherings.
- Consider installing portable high-efficiency air cleaners, upgrading the building’s air filters to the highest efficiency possible, and making other modifications to increase the quantity of outside air and ventilation in all working areas.
- Hands-free equipment is installed wherever feasible (including restrooms) to reduce risk of contamination.
- Symptom checks are conducted before visitors including congregants arriving for religious services or events may enter the facility. Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing and fever or chills. These checks can be done in person or through alternative methods such as on-line check in systems or through signage posted at the entrance to the facility stating that visitors with these symptoms should not enter the premises.
- Visitors arriving at the establishment are reminded to wear a face covering at all times (except while eating or drinking, if applicable) while in the establishment or on the grounds of the establishment. This applies to all adults and to children 2 years of age and older. Only individuals who have been instructed not to wear a face covering by their medical provider are exempt from wearing one. To support the safety of your employees and other visitors, a face covering should be made available to visitors who arrive without them.
- Signs in visible locations are used to remind visitors that face coverings are required during services and celebrations except for children under age 2 or others with impaired breathing or other at-risk conditions.
- Signs in visible locations prohibit visitors from engaging in handshakes, hugs, or similar greetings that pose contamination risk.
- If prayer books, rugs or other direct touch items are used in services or ceremonies, individuals are instructed to bring their own or disposable items are offered for participants.
- Microphones, stands, music stands, instruments and other items on pulpits and podiums are disinfected between uses.
- Site has discontinued passing offering plates and similar items. Digital systems or touch-free collection boxes or other devices are used for collection of contributions.



- The California Department of Public Health directs that “activities such as singing and chanting negate the risk-reduction achieved through six feet of physical distancing” due to an increased likelihood for transmission from contaminated exhaled droplets. These activities may be included in outdoor events with much greater physical distance or through alternative methods (such as internet streaming) that ensure individual congregation members perform these activities separately in their own homes. Please review the updated State Industry Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies [here](#).
- Self-service foods and beverages are not offered.
- If multiples services are conducted daily, disposable seat covers are provided. Disposable or washable covers are provided for pillows used as seating on floors. Washable coverings are changed after each use.
- Religious garments and linens are washed after each service or event at the highest temperature water setting possible.
- Workspaces and the entire facility are cleaned at least daily when in use, with restrooms and frequently touched areas/objects cleaned more frequently.
- The site is closed to the public between scheduled events to avoid contamination.
- Staff responsible for cleaning between events/or at the close of the workday are paid for time spent on these duties if not part of their regular work.
- Restroom signs remind visitors to wash hands frequently for 20 seconds.
- Toilet facilities are kept operational and stocked with extra soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer, and are sanitized regularly using EPA approved disinfectants consistent with manufacturer’s directions on the following schedule:

 - Hand sanitizer, tissues and trash cans are available to the public at or near the entrance of the facility.
 - Optional - Describe other measures to promote infection control

D. MEASURES THAT COMMUNICATE TO THE PUBLIC

- A copy of this protocol is posted at all public entrances to the site.
- Online outlets of the congregation (website, social media, etc.) provide clear information about schedules, occupancy limitations, parking limitations, required use of face coverings, and options for virtual participation.

E. MEASURES THAT ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS TO CRITICAL SERVICES

- Services that are critical to congregants have been prioritized.
- Services that can be offered remotely have been moved on-line
- Measures are instituted to assure access to services and celebrations for congregants who have mobility limitations and/or are at high risk in public spaces.

Any additional measures not included above should be listed on separate pages, which the site should attach to this document.

**You may contact the following person with any questions or
comments about this protocol:**

Site Contact Name:

Phone number:

Date Last Revised:
