

Protocol for Places of Worship: Appendix F

Recent Updates (Changes highlighted in yellow):

12/19/2020:

- Places of Worship are permitted to offer faith-based services, or otherwise allow access for faith-based practices, indoors and outdoors, provided that strict physical distancing is followed, which requires a minimum of six feet between persons from different households. Face coverings or masks that cover both the nose and mouth must be worn at all times while on site. Places of Worship are strongly encouraged to continue to hold faith-based services outdoors to the maximum extent practicable.
- Face coverings must be worn by staff working in cubicles, including cubicles equipped with partitions. This is a temporary measure in compliance with the temporary HEALTH OFFICER ORDER issued on November 28, 2020. The requirement is effective from 12:01AM (PST) on November 30, 2020 until further notice.
- At all times when eating or drinking, staff must maintain a 6-foot distance from others and should do so outdoors. Eating or drinking at a cubicle or workstation is preferred to eating in a breakroom.
- Staff and visitors arriving on-site must also be screened for whether they are currently under isolation or quarantine orders.

**Please note that the County of Los Angeles is experiencing an unprecedented surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths. Indoor gatherings and activities with others not in your household present significant risk to your health and the health of others due to COVID-19 transmission. Public Health strongly recommends that persons only attend faith-based services outdoors or remotely. The recommendations in this protocol are intended to lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission among attendees, but they will not eliminate that risk.

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 lower risk 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”). 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 outdoor or remote services and other related activities for all attendees, especially those who are vulnerable to COVID-19 including older adults and those with co-morbidities, given the increased risk of community transmission of COVID-19 resulting from the unprecedented surge of new daily cases, hospitalizations, and premature deaths.

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. Those activities must follow specific guidance and protocols provided by the State and County Department of Public Health.



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.

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 “household” is defined as “persons living together as a single living unit” and shall not include institutional group living situations such as dormitories, fraternities, sororities, monasteries, convents, or residential care facilities, not does it include such commercial living arrangements such as boarding houses, hotels, or motels.¹ 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” or “congregants” 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, faith-based service or practice, or cultural ceremony occurs and any adjacent buildings or grounds at which permitted activities of the congregation are conducted.

¹ Los Angeles County Code, Title 22. §22.14.060 - F. Family definition. (Ord. 2019-0004 § 1, 2019.) https://library.municode.com/ca/los_angeles_county/codes/code_of_ordinances?nodet=TIT22PLZO_DIV_2DE_CH22.14DE_22.14.060F

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 COVID-19](#), 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](#).
- [Entry 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 **is currently under isolation or quarantine orders**. 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 **must** 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.

- In compliance with HEALTH OFFICER ORDER FOR CONTROL OF COVID-19: TIER 1 SUBSTANTIAL SURGE RESPONSE issued November 28, 2020, all staff must wear face coverings at all times except when working alone in private offices with closed doors or when eating or drinking. The exception made previously for staff working in cubicles with solid partitions exceeding the height of the employee while standing is overridden.
- To ensure that masks are worn consistently and correctly, staff are discouraged from eating or drinking except during their breaks when they are able to safely remove their masks and physically distance from others. At all times when eating or drinking, staff must maintain at least a six-foot distance from others. When eating or drinking, it is preferred to do so outdoors and away from others, including visitors. Eating or drinking at a cubicle or workstation is preferred to eating in a breakroom if eating in a cubicle or workstation provides greater distance from and barriers between staff.
- Occupancy is reduced and space between employees is maximized in any room or area used by staff for meals and/or breaks. This has been achieved by:
 - Posting a maximum occupancy that is consistent with enabling a distance of at least six feet between individuals in rooms or areas used for breaks;
 - Staggering break or mealtimes to reduce occupancy in rooms or areas used for meals and breaks; and
 - Placing tables six feet apart and assuring six feet between seats, removing or taping seats to reduce occupancy, placing markings on floors to assure distancing, and arranging seating in a way that minimizes face-to-face contact. Use of partitions is encouraged to further prevent spread but should not be considered a substitute for reducing occupancy and maintaining physical distancing.
- Staff are instructed to wash or replace their face coverings daily.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment, including eye protection and gloves as needed, is provided to staff 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 hourly, on the following schedule:
 - Entry area/lobby _____
 - Hallways _____
 - Meeting rooms _____
 - Shared work areas _____
 - Break rooms _____
 - Stairways/Stairwells _____
 - Elevators _____
 - Restrooms _____

- Other _____
- 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

- Faith-based services and cultural ceremonies at _____ or access to faith-based practices at _____ Places of Worship are permitted provided that:
 - All attendees/visitors must wear a face covering that covers their mouth and nose at all times when in attendance and also at any time when they could come into contact with, or when walking past others who are non-household members.
 - All attendees/visitors must observe a six-foot physical distance between themselves and others who are not members of their household. 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 the required physical distancing in the indoor space.
 - Seating is reconfigured to ensure that all attendees/visitors are able to maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet between themselves and others who are not members of their household.
 - Clear pathways have been identified between parking areas and other arrival points to the service areas to minimize crowding and congregating, to allow for monitoring of occupancy and for entrance screening.
 - A staff person (or staff people if there is more than one pathway) wearing a cloth face covering is posted at the entryway but at least 6 feet from the nearest arriving or departing person to monitor use of face coverings and track occupancy of attendees/visitors.

- If attendees/visitors 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.
- If applicable, aisles within the area used for indoor services 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.
- Please note that the following alternative options are strongly encouraged 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 Places of Worship may be used as the setting for services and events that are conducted virtually. It is recommended that no more than 10 individuals participate in production and broadcast process, who must follow infection control and physical distancing requirements. .
- Measures have been implemented to promote physical distancing at outdoor events.
 - Measures have been implemented (counting attendees at entry) to assure attendance does not exceed the number of people who can be accommodated with the required 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.
 - Faith-based services 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 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.

- It is recommended that services and celebrations are shortened to limit time spent at the site among non-household members.
- 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/visitors. 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 service area 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/visitors 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 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.
- Entry screenings are conducted before visitors, including congregants, arriving for faith-based services or cultural ceremonies may enter the Place of Worship. Screenings must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, fever or chills and whether the visitor is currently under an isolation or quarantine order. 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 Place of Worship 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 while in the Place of Worship or on the grounds of the Place of Worship. 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 infection 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 advises 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. Consider practicing these activities through alternative methods (such as internet streaming) that ensure individual congregation members perform these activities separately in their own homes or alone in a separate room at the Place of Worship. Please review the State Industry



Guidance for Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies here. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends organizations consider temporarily suspending singing, chanting, or shouting, especially when indoors. If attendees choose to sing, chant, or shout, whether indoors or outdoors, encourage them to continue wearing their masks while doing so and increase the distance between people to greater than 6 feet.

- Self-service foods and beverages are not offered.
- If multiple services are conducted daily, provide for disinfection of seating areas after each use, or the replacement of disposable coverings after each use if applicable. Religious garments and linens should be 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.
- 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 Place of Worship (website, social media, etc.) provide clear information about schedules, occupancy limits to ensure physical distancing requirements are met, 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 faith-based services and cultural ceremonies 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:
