

Protocol for Places of Worship: Appendix F

Recent Updates:

6/29/20: In the event that 3 or more cases are identified within the workplace within a span of 14 days the employer should report this cluster to the Department of Public Health.

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.

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, 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 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 facilities 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.
- 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 contractors and temporary workers test 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 the public health guidance on [responding to COVID-19 in the workplace](#).
- Symptom checks are conducted before staff may enter the facility. Checks must include a check-in concerning cough, shortness of breath or fever and any other symptoms the employee may be experiencing. 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 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.

- All staff who have contact with visitors or other staff during worktime are offered, at no cost, a cloth face covering. The covering is to be worn by the staff person at all work times when in contact or likely to come into contact with others. Staff need not wear cloth face coverings when alone in a private office or workspace.
- 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 the both public areas and restrooms and other areas used by Staff are disinfected frequently, on the following schedule:
 - Entry area/lobby _____
 - Public worship area(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

- Attendance at religious services and cultural ceremonies at the **house of worship** is limited to a maximum of 25% of building capacity or 100 individuals, whichever is lower. This figure is understood to include all participants, celebrants, staff, organizers and visitors. Pre-registration is offered for all services and ceremonies to include participants name, email, and phone number.
- Measures have been implemented (advance registration, counting attendees at entry) to assure compliance with house of worship occupancy restrictions.
- Parking areas have been reconfigured to limit congregation points and ensure proper spacing (for example, by closing off every other space).
- If drive-in services are offered cars are directed to park at least 6 feet apart.
- Permitted religious events are planned to allow for physical distancing. The only exceptions to this are the two people who comprise a couple who are getting married and the members of a single household, who may attend the event together and sit together as a unit if permitted by their religion.
- Virtual access is considered for visitors who wish to participate in services or events but are at high risk if exposed to COVID-19.
- If attendees at events must wait online prior to enter or at any other point during their presence at the site, tape or other markings are used to demonstrate the required 6-foot distance between individuals.
- Events are conducted outdoors to the extent feasible, to permit physical distancing and allow for air flow.
- Services and celebrations are shortened to limit time spent at the site.
- Onsite events such as meetings and conferences are limited to the extent feasible.
- Separate entries and exits have been identified 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 entrance) wearing a cloth face cover is posted near the door but at least 6 feet from the nearest entering or department person to monitor use of face coverings and track occupancy.
- Event spaces are reconfigured to permit physical distancing. Whether chairs, benches or floor space are used arrangements and markings are used to permit a 6-foot space between individuals or between household groups and other household groups or individuals.
- Offices, public seating areas and other non-production worksite areas are reconfigured to support physical distancing.
- If applicable, aisles in the house of worship 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.
- 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 and visitors 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.
- Hands-free equipment is installed wherever feasible (including restrooms) to reduce risk of contamination.
- Visitors are verbally screened at entry for respiratory symptoms and fever.
- 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 discourage 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. If done, these activities should be done outdoors 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 kept closed 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.



- Restrooms are kept operational and stocked with extra soap, paper towels and hand sanitizer.
- Restrooms 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: _____