

Phase 1 and 2 Religious and Faith-based Organization COVID-19 Requirements

With frequent reports of spiritual gatherings becoming COVID-19 “superspreader” events in which a single service results in dozens of new COVID-19 infections, if possible, spiritual worship should continue to be done remotely or at a drive-in service. But if spiritual worship must be done in-person, the following requirements must be employed.

Religious and faith-based organizations are permitted to, provided all requirements in this document are met:

Phase 1 Hold outdoor services on the organization’s property (or immediately adjacent property if explicitly permitted by the local jurisdiction) with up to 100 individuals, excluding organization staff.

Phase 2 Hold indoor services at a place of worship with up to 25% capacity or 50 individuals, whichever is less, (excluding organization staff) and

Hold or provide in-home services or counseling inside a person’s residence with up to 5 total individuals (excluding organization staff).

Any organization volunteers are included in the maximum number of permissible individuals. The services covered in these operational guidelines include all worship services, religious study classes, religious ceremonies, religious holiday celebrations, weddings, and funerals.

Organizations are strongly encouraged to keep a log of attendees at each service or counseling session, and to retain that log for at least two weeks. If an outbreak occurs, this information may be critical to help save lives.

Safety and Health Requirements

All organizations (including religious and faith-based organizations) have a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law, and comply with the following COVID-19 organization-specific safety practices, as outlined in Governor Jay Inslee’s “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” Proclamation 20-25, and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces](#) and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace>.

Religious and faith-based organizations must specifically ensure operations follow the main L&I COVID-19 requirements to protect employees, members, and visitors:

- Educate all employees in the language in which they are most proficient about coronavirus, how to prevent transmission, and the owner’s COVID-19 policies.

- Screen employees for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 at the start of every shift. Make sure sick employees stay home or immediately go home if they feel or appear sick. Cordon off any areas where an employee with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness worked, touched surfaces, etc., until the area and equipment is cleaned and disinfected. Follow the cleaning guidelines set by the CDC to deep clean and disinfect.
- Maintain minimum six-foot separation between all employees, members, and visitors in all interactions and at all times. When strict physical distancing is not feasible for a specific task, other prevention measures are required, such as use of barriers, minimization of individuals in narrow, enclosed areas and waiting rooms, staggered breaks, and work shift starts.
- Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves and face coverings as appropriate or required to employees for the activity being performed. Require employees to use PPE as appropriate or required for the activity being performed. A facial covering must be worn by every individual not alone at the location unless their exposure dictates a higher level of protection under Department of Labor & Industries safety and health rules and guidance. Refer to [Coronavirus Facial Covering and Mask Requirements](#) for additional details. A cloth facial covering is described in the Department of Health guidance, <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Portals/1/Documents/1600/coronavirus/ClothFacemasks.pdf>.
- Ensure frequent and adequate hand washing with adequate maintenance of supplies. Use single use disposable gloves, where safe and applicable, to prevent transmission on items that are touched frequently or shared and discard after a single use.
- Establish a housekeeping schedule that includes frequent cleaning and sanitizing with a particular emphasis on commonly touched services.

A location-specific COVID-19 Supervisor shall be designated by the organization at each location (indoor and outdoor) to monitor the health of employees and enforce the COVID-19 safety plan.

An employee may refuse to perform unsafe work, including hazards created by COVID-19. And, it is unlawful for the employer to take adverse action against an employee who has engaged in safety-protected activities under the law if their work refusal meets certain requirements.

Employees who choose to remove themselves from a worksite because they do not believe it is safe to work due to the risk of COVID-19 exposure may have access to certain leave or unemployment benefits. Employers must provide high-risk individuals covered by Proclamation 20-46 with their choice of access to available employer-granted accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work arrangement is not feasible. Other employees may have access to expanded family and medical leave included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, access to use unemployment benefits, or access to other paid time off depending on the circumstances. Additional information is available at <https://www.lni.wa.gov/agency/outreach/paid-sick-leave-and-coronavirus-covid-19-common-questions>.

All religious and faith-based organizations are required to comply with the following COVID-19 organization-specific safety practices:

1. Prior to beginning operations as described in this document, all religious and faith-based organizations are required to develop for each location (indoor and outdoor if applicable) a comprehensive COVID-19 exposure control, mitigation and recovery plan. The plan must include policies regarding the following control measures: PPE utilization; on-location physical

distancing; hygiene; sanitation; symptom monitoring; incident reporting; location disinfection procedures; COVID-19 safety training; exposure response procedures and a post-exposure incident project-wide recovery plan. A copy of the plan must be available at the location for inspection by state and local authorities, but state and local authorities are not required to preapprove the plan. Failure to meet planning requirements may result in sanctions, including the location being shut down.

2. COVID-19 safety information and requirements, such as CDC, DOH, OSHA posters shall be visibly posted at each location (indoor and outdoor).
3. Authorized access to the organization's indoor location should primarily be through the front door. Other access points should be kept closed.
4. All employees, members, and visitors in attendance shall wear face coverings before, during, and after the service (whether indoor or outdoor).
5. There may be no direct physical contact between servers and members or visitors. Anything to be consumed may not be presented to the members or visitors in a communal container or plate.
6. No choirs shall perform during the service. Singing is permitted, but individuals must not remove their face coverings to sing – it must stay on for the duration of the service.
7. All services may provide access to restrooms, provided that access is controlled and limited to no more than 2 people at a time. Individuals waiting to use the restroom must maintain at least 6 feet of distance between each person.
8. Soap and running water shall be abundantly provided at locations for frequent handwashing. Employees should be encouraged to leave their workstations to wash their hands regularly, and required to do so before and after going to the bathroom, before and after eating and after coughing, sneezing or blowing their nose. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers with greater than 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol should also be provided and used, but are not a replacement for the water requirement.
9. Disinfectants must be available to employees, members, and visitors throughout the location (indoor and outdoor) and ensure cleaning supplies are frequently replenished.
10. Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces after each use—including personal work stations, mirrors, chairs, headrests and armrests, doorknobs, handrails, restrooms and breakrooms—using soapy water, followed by the appropriate disinfectants. If these areas cannot be cleaned and disinfected frequently, the organization shall be shut down until such measures can be achieved and maintained.
11. All organizations must adhere to physical distancing requirements and have six feet of space between workstations or have physical barriers between them.

12. All organizations must adhere to physical distancing requirements and have six feet of space between the congregation's seats, pews, and benches or have physical barriers between them. Members of the same household may be seated together as a single unit. This may require the organization to reconfigure the congregation's seats, pews, and benches or have physical barriers between them. The organization must place markings on the floors and seats indicating a six feet radius to help guide members and visitors.
13. Increase ventilation rates where feasible. Evaluate ventilation and utilize U.V. filters with a higher MERV rating.
14. Ensure that tissues and trashcans are placed throughout the location (indoor and outdoor).
15. Inform all employees, members, and guests that they must self-screen for signs and symptoms of COVID-19 before arriving at the location.
 - Request employees, members, and visitors to take their temperature before attending a service. Any individual with a temperature of 100.4°F will not be permitted to attend the service or attend work at the organization.
 - Any individual with a household member who has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or with symptoms of COVID-19 (including a fever above 100.4°F) may not attend the service or attend work at the organization.
16. For in-home services, religious and faith-based organizations are permitted to convene up to 5 individuals, excluding organization staff. These individuals do not need to be from the same household. However, individuals must wear face coverings when individuals from outside of the household participate.

General questions about how to comply with the agreement practices can be submitted to the state's Business Response Center at <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/how-you-can-help/covid-19-business-and-worker-inquiries>.

All other violations related to Proclamation 20-25 can be submitted at <https://bit.ly/covid-compliance>.