



Places of Worship

Protecting Yourself and Others

- Stay home if you are sick or might be sick. Follow the Public Health Agency of Canada's steps for self-assessment: <https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>
- Clearly communicate any new practices and policies that will affect your members' worship or visit. Post these changes on your website and social media, on the front doors, and via email.
- Consider offering alternative methods to provide services such as virtual gatherings or counselling by phone. Give permission to members of your faith to use electronics if not normally permitted at specific times.
- Limit the number of people gathering at one time. Check the restrictions in your province or territory about the number of non-household people who can gather in one spot. These limitations also apply to funerals, visitations and weddings.
- Consider the higher risk level of members who may attend services, such as older adults, those with underlying conditions, etc. Additional precautions may be necessary.
- Wash your hands as you enter the building, after touching common or shared items, after using the washroom, and as you leave. Remove jewellery while washing.
- For employees: if it is unsafe to work, talk to your supervisor, health and safety committee or representative, and/or union. Continue to follow all safe work procedures.
- For congregation members: understand that protective measures are necessary and must be followed.

Facility Management

- Increase ventilation rates and fresh air return where possible.
- Monitor all people for signs and symptoms of COVID-19.
- Post signs to remind all persons to follow physical distancing, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette.
- Follow physical distancing guidelines at all times, including in the building, parking lot, etc. Consider wearing non-medical masks only when physical distancing cannot be maintained.
- Mark or block off alternating parking spaces.
- Mark or arrange seating to indicate how to maintain physical distancing when seated, as well as when entering the building, lining up for washrooms, exiting, etc.
- Remove hymn books and other shared documents, instruments or ceremonial tools that cannot be cleaned.
- Consider using separate entry and exit doors to help direct pedestrian flow.



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- Install physical barriers such as clear plastic sneeze guards, where appropriate.
- Use a plastic lined garbage bin to reduce exposure when disposing of garbage.
- Keep lists of attendees for each service to assist if contact tracing or follow-up is required.
- Keep contact lists for all staff and volunteers.
- Review all the activities that occur at your facility, such as daycares, services to vulnerable individuals, etc. It may not be possible to offer all services.

Activities

- Do not hold services that include food or beverages.
- Do not allow hand holding or shaking.
- Consider offering additional but smaller sized group services, or holding services outside, to support physical distancing. Clean and disinfect between services.
- Reassess group activities. If you do hold them, do so with the smallest number of participants possible and maintain a 2 metre (6 feet) distance.
- Singing, especially in groups, is considered a high-risk activity. Consider having a soloist sing (using a barrier such as plexiglass), or providing recorded or instrumental music. Singers that are members of the same household are at less risk and could sing together while distanced from others.
- Consider using posters or projecting information on a screen instead of handouts.
- If offering alternate services, such as a drive-in service, be sure to maintain physical distancing (including having vehicles 2 metres apart), and that any available washrooms are cleaned and disinfected often.
- Follow guidance from public health regarding separate nursery and children's activities. If not recommended, children should remain with their parents or guardians.
- Clean any shared items between users, including pens, craft supplies, bingo cards, magazines, books, utensils, linens, tools, etc.
- Ask members to keep their belongings with them (such as coats and bags). Close shared coat check areas.
- Modify how financial contributions are collected. Consider electronic transfers, or a collection box for envelopes or cheques. Do not pass a common plate. If collecting envelopes or cheques, have staff wear gloves and wash their hands after handling paper or cash.
- Consider modifying or suspending religious activities, such as Communion.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

- Clean and disinfect all commonly touched objects or surfaces such as floors (when used for prayer), counters, chairs, handles, doorknobs, elevator buttons, railings, light switches, faucets/taps, linens, clothes, books, and religious objects.
- Clean and disinfect the area between groups of users.
- Use a disinfectant or bleach solution to destroy or inactivate the virus.
 - If household or commercial disinfectant cleaning products are not available, hard surfaces can be disinfected using a mixture of 5 mL of bleach (5% sodium hypochlorite) and 250 mL of water.
 - If liquids can be withstood, disinfect high-touch electronic devices (e.g., touch screens, pin pads, keyboards) with alcohol or disinfectant wipes.
- Wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves suitable for the cleaning agent.
- Use a dedicated cloth for cleaning.



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- Clean so that when the surface is wiped, the surface still appears wet.
- Make sure workers or volunteers understand the risks, have received training, and understand the safety precautions for all cleaning methods and required PPE.
- Make sure washrooms are cleaned frequently, have running water, and are stocked with soap, paper towels and a plastic lined waste container. Visibly dirty hands must be washed with soap and water.
- Dispose of used tissues, wipes, gloves, and other cleaning materials in a plastic lined waste container.
- Use disposable gloves when handling garbage.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

- When PPE is required, train staff on how to work with and care for PPE, and to understand its limitations.
- Put on and remove PPE in the correct order according to safe work procedures to reduce exposure.
- Clean hands with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, especially during and after removal of PPE.
- Improvised or homemade masks are not PPE. Caution should be used. Discuss options with your supervisor, and/or your health and safety committee or representative, and/or union if present.

Coping with Social Isolation, Microaggression or Stigma

- When helping others, encourage them to talk to someone trained in mental health first aid, or someone else they trust about what they are experiencing.
- For an employee, ask them to contact their supervisor, employer, or employee assistance service, if available.
- Contact your local public health or community resources that offer mental health services.
- Check out organizations online:
 - Canadian Mental Health Association <https://cmha.ca/news/covid-19-and-mental-health>
 - Canadian Psychological Association <https://cpa.ca/psychologyfactsheets/>
 - Kids Help Phone <https://kidshelpphone.ca/get-info/were-here-for-you-during-covid-19-novel-coronavirus/>

If you or someone you know is in crisis, please contact your local hospital, call 911 immediately, or contact a Crisis Centre in your area.

<https://suicideprevention.ca/need-help/>



For further information on COVID-19, refer to the Public Health Agency of Canada
<https://www.canada.ca/coronavirus>

Note that this guidance is just some of the adjustments organizations can make during a pandemic. Adapt this list by adding your own good practices and policies to meet your organization's specific needs. Continue to monitor announcements for your area and follow instructions from the government, public health, or other appropriate authority.