GUIDANCE FOR PLACES OF WORSHIP

While Executive Order 2020-18 and 2020-33, did not require places of worship to stop holding services, they did require that such activities be conducted in a manner that provides appropriate physical distancing to the extent feasible. As some places of worship are considering beginning those activities again, the following guidance is intended to assist in limiting to transmission of COVID-19.

**General Guidelines Under Executive Order 2020-18 and Executive Order 2020-33:**
- Attending places of worship is defined as an essential activity.
- When engaging in essential activities that are constitutionally protected, there is no mandated physical distancing requirement. However, such protected activities should be conducted in a manner that provides appropriate physical distancing to the extent feasible.
- All Arizonaans should use their judgment and suspend public activities that can be delayed for the purposes of protecting the individual and the public as well as preserving vital healthcare resources.

Following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, under all circumstances, the following precautions should be followed by people attending places of worship. To the extent possible, the use of public transportation to attend worship should take measures to ensure that attendees may follow these guidelines:

- Stay home if sick.
- Protect yourself while visiting places of worship:
  - Stay at least 6 feet away from other patrons.
  - If you are at higher risk for severe illness, you should avoid places of worship. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.
  - Do not touch your eyes, nose, or mouth.
  - After leaving the place of worship, use hand sanitizer. When you get home, wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds.

The Department of Health Services recommends the following additional steps be taken by places of worship:

- Consider spacing out seating for attendees who are not in the same party to at least six feet apart when possible; consider limiting seating to alternate rows.
- Consider adding additional services to the weekly schedule to enhance physical distancing in large gatherings and gathernings in a large or suspended public area or outdoors.
- Consider whether gatherings may need to have limited attendance, be held virtually, or suspended if physical distancing is difficult. This includes worship services, funerals, weddings, religious education classes, youth events, support groups, and any other programming.
- Encourage Arizonans that are most vulnerable (i.e. adults 65 and over and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions) and those with symptoms of illness to stay at home.
- Encourage those with underlying medical conditions to keep longer distances from others.
- Distribute and post health messages and materials to staff, volunteers, and the community.
- **Recommendations for Employees and Volunteers:**
  - Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
  - Encourage use of a cloth face covering at all gatherings and when in the building. Coverings should not be placed on children less than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.
  - Restrict common areas where people are likely to congregate and interact.
  - Consider separate services for vulnerable adults with added precautions.
  - Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
  - Encourage use of a cloth face covering at all gatherings and when in the building. Coverings should not be placed on children less than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.
  - Encourage Arizonans that are most vulnerable (i.e. adults 65 and over and people of all ages with underlying medical conditions) and those with symptoms of illness to stay at home.
  - Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.

**Recommendations for Employees and Volunteers:**

- Train all employees and volunteers on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, and respiratory etiquette. Have employees or volunteers maintain at least 6 feet separation from other individuals and ensure the use of cloth face coverings when possible.
- Implement symptom screening for employees and volunteers prior to the start of their shift.
- Encourage childcare facilities that maintain faith-based organizations should comply with CDC guidelines for childcare facilities.
- Intensively clean, disinfect, and ventilate.
  - Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces after they are touched or used, such as doorknobs, toilets, restrooms, etc.
  - If a place of worship provides food for employees, volunteers, or attendees, the food items should be individually packaged. Maintain rigorous sanitation practices like disinfection, handwashing, and cleanliness when preparing or serving anything edible. Avoid the use of buffets or family-style food services.

**Note that guidance continues to be updated and those complying with the guidance are encouraged to visit the websites provided** frequently to ensure they are complying with the most up-to-date guidance.

Websites for additional public health guidance:
- www.cdc.gov
- www.azhealth.gov
- www.dol.gov
- www.osha.gov