

Guidance for Community and Faith-Based Organizations

Purpose

Central District Health (CDH) and Southwest District Health (SWDH) encourage all businesses within our districts to follow the phases outlined in the Guidelines for Opening Up Idaho available at <https://rebound.idaho.gov>. This guidance is intended to help businesses plan for safe and appropriate business operations as allowed within the phases of reopening.

Consider ways to modify all services or meetings, specific religious rites, rituals, and services to ensure the safety of staff, volunteers, and congregation.

Recommended Actions

Implementing the following guidelines is recommended:

Limit the number of patrons present in the facility to ensure that social distancing guidelines can be maintained in accordance with recommendations on social distancing and other safety measures.

- Post information about your new operational processes where attendees and members of your congregation can easily access them, e.g. website or social media, as well as entrance(s) to your church building or facility.
- Post visible signage at the entrance(s) of the church building or facility to remind staff/volunteers and patrons to:
 - Stay home if they are ill. *(Non-healthcare CFBOs are not expected to screen persons to identify potential cases of COVID-19.)*
 - Practice recommended social distancing, proper [cough and sneeze etiquette](#), and to use [proper hand hygiene](#).

Printable signs are available at the CDC website: [CDC COVID-19 Print Resources](#)

- Encourage the wearing of cloth face coverings in accordance with the [CDC recommendations regarding face coverings](#). *(Cloth face coverings are not recommended for children under 2 years of age.)*
- Provide hand sanitizer and/or hand sanitizing wipes at the entrance of the facility.
- Ensure adequate supplies (e.g., soap, paper towels, hand sanitizer, tissue) to support healthy hand hygiene practices.
- Supply tissues and no-touch waste bins.
- Consider offering separate meetings and church services for those at increased risk, e.g. elderly or those who have a weakened immune system.
- Sanitize high-touch surfaces such as door handles, guardrails, seats, and other surfaces between meetings and church services. Be familiar with and follow the [CDC Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#) for your facility.
- Direct or control the flow of people in and out of the meeting hall/chapel to follow the 6 feet social distancing recommendation.

- Consider adjustments that can be made for close proximity, e.g. adjusting seating that allows individual and families to follow social distancing recommendations of 6 feet and encourage only individuals from the same household to sit together.
- Explore alternative ways to distribute bulletins/programs by using email, web sites, etc. to provide information. If bulletins/programs are used, place them on the pews or chairs to distribute and ask people to take them home with them.
- Nod, bow, or wave instead of shaking hands, hugging, or kissing.
- Avoid holding hands during the service/prayers.
- Modify the method for collecting regular financial contributions – using a stationary collection box, the mail, or electronic methods – instead of passing a collection tray.
- Consider modification of practices that are specific to particular faith traditions. For example, congregations that practice Communion could consider modifying or suspending this practice. Modifications could include:
 - Ensuring that religious leaders always wash their hands or use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol prior to conducting the service and Communion.
 - Placing the Communion elements in the recipient’s hand, not on their tongue, and avoiding use of a common cup.
- For organizations that assist with or oversee homeless shelters or similar facilities, review COVID-19-related [guidance for homeless shelters](#) for additional planning considerations.

Resources:

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<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/guidance-community-faith-organizations.html>