

Religious Activities Section of 9/30/2020 San Francisco Health Order:**Order No. C19-07j – Appendix C-2: Allowed Additional Activities****[Revised September 30, 2020]****(9) Religious Activities****a. Basis for Addition.**

In an effort to balance core First Amendment interests with public health, the Health Officer is creating special provisions for faith-based services and ceremonies. Even with adherence to physical distancing and face covering requirements, bringing members of different households together to engage in in-person religious gatherings carries a higher risk of widespread transmission of COVID-19. Such gatherings may result in increased rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, especially among more vulnerable populations. Therefore, even though in-person religious gatherings are allowed by this provision, with safety limitations, it is strongly recommended that individuals use alternative means to practice their faith for the time being, such as the many online and broadcasting platforms available in the digital age, in place of in-person gatherings.

b. Description and Conditions to Operate.

1. Individual indoor prayer in houses of worship: Members of the public may enter a house of worship, subject to the following conditions:

- i. Only one individual member of the public may enter the house of worship at a time. If the person is a parent or guardian of minor children, the person may bring their children with them but not other adults from the same household. If the person is an adult who needs assistance, the person may bring a caregiver.
- ii. The member of the public must maintain at least six feet of physical distance from any Personnel present in the facility;
- iii. All individuals in the facility must wear a Face Covering, subject to the limited exceptions in Health Officer Order No. C19-12c (e.g., for young children);
- iv. Doors and windows must be left open to the extent possible, or mechanical ventilation systems must be run, to increase ventilation;

- v. The house of worship must establish protocols for frequent cleaning and disinfection of commonly used surfaces and high traffic areas such as lobbies, hallways, and chapels;
- vi. Signage must be posted at each public entrance to inform all individuals that they must: avoid entering the house of worship if they have a cough or fever, maintain a minimum six-foot distance from one another while in the facility or location, wear a Face Covering at all times, and not shake hands or engage in any unnecessary physical contact (sample signs are available online at <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>); and
- vii. The house of worship must comply with the Social Distancing Requirements set forth in Section 15.k of this Order—and create, post and implement a Social Distancing Protocol (Appendix A of this Order).

2. Outdoor Religious Gatherings: Houses of worship and operators of other facilities or groups may hold outdoor gatherings for the practice of religion, including religious services and religious ceremonies, subject to the following conditions:

- i. Prior to being placed in the Orange Tier by the State, no more than 100 individuals may participate in the gathering and simultaneous gatherings in the same location or vicinity are prohibited. Now that the County has been placed in the Orange Tier, this maximum limit is increased to 200 individuals per gathering. If the County is later returned to a more restrictive tier by the State or other local conditions change in a manner that puts the public health at risk, the Health Officer may reduce the limit on the number of people or impose other safety restrictions. Also, for any gathering allowed under this section, the limit must be reduced below 100 people (or 200 people, if applicable) if required due to the size of the outdoor space and participants' ability to follow Social Distancing Requirements at all times;
- ii. Participants must maintain at least six feet of distance from members of different households;
- iii. All participants must wear a face covering, subject to the limited exceptions in Health Officer Order No. C19-12c (e.g., for young children); and
- iv. No food or beverages may be served or sold;
- v. One individual at a time may sing, chant, or shout, provided: (1) the person singing, chanting, or shouting is at least 12-feet from any other person; and
(2) the person singing, chanting, or shouting is wearing a Face Covering at all times;

vi. No sharing or common use of objects or equipment is permitted unless those objects or equipment are sanitized with cleaning products effective against COVID-19 in between uses by members of different households;

vii. The gathering must comply with all of the relevant requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-19c regarding outdoor gatherings; and

viii. All participants must comply with any requirements—including permitting requirements and conditions—imposed by applicable public authorities.

3. Gatherings for Indoor Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies: Houses of worship and operators of other facilities or groups may hold indoor gatherings for the practice of religion, including religious services and religious and cultural ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals, subject to the following conditions:

i. Prior to being placed in the Orange Tier by the State, the facility must limit the number of people, including Personnel, clergy, volunteers, visitors, and participants, who are present in the space to the **lesser** of: (1) 25% of the facility's normal maximum occupancy or (2) 50 people. Now that the County has been placed in the Orange Tier, this maximum limit is increased to the **lesser** of 25% of the facility's normal maximum occupancy or 100 people. If the County is later returned to a more restrictive tier by the State or other local conditions change in a manner that puts the public health at risk, the Health Officer may reduce this limit or impose other safety restrictions. Also, for any gathering allowed under this section, the limit must be reduced below 50 people (or 100 people, if applicable) if required due to the size of the indoor space and participants' ability to follow Social Distancing Requirements at all times. These capacity limits also apply to any individual room within the facility where people can gather;

ii. The facility must comply with all of the requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34, issued September 30, 2020, including as that directive is amended or updated in the future, with such requirements including, but not limited to, ensuring physical distancing between members of different Households, posting signage to remind people to adhere to best practices, ensuring adequate ventilation in accordance with updated DPH guidance, and various cleaning and sanitation requirements;

iii. The facility must screen all patrons and other visitors on a daily basis using the standard screening questions attached to the Order as Appendix A and Attachment A-2 (the "Screening Handout"). Screening must occur before people are allowed to enter to prevent the inadvertent spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. A copy of the Screening Handout must be provided to anyone on request, although a poster or other

large-format version of the Screening Handout may be used to review the questions with people verbally. Any person who answers “yes” to any screening question is at risk of having the SARS-CoV-2 virus, must be prohibited from entering or being seated in the facility, and should be referred for appropriate support as outlined on the Screening Handout. The facility can use the guidance available online at www.sfdph.org/screen for determining how best to conduct screening. People who are feeling ill, have exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 within 24 hours of arriving at the facility or answer “yes” to any screening must be kept from entry;

iv. All participants must wear a Face Covering, subject to the limited exceptions in Health Officer Order No. C19-12c (e.g., for young children). A Face Covering is not required: when eating or drinking; or if a faith leader determines it is essential to a ritual or ceremony that Face Coverings be removed, subject to limitations listed in the directive; and

v. The facility must comply with the Social Distancing Requirements set forth in Section 15.k of this Order—and create, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol (Appendix A of this Order).

(Added September 14, 2020; Revised September 30, 2020)