



Guidelines for Re-Opening Robertson County for Business (updated 5.1.20)

Robertson County Government in partnership with the Robertson County Economic Development Board and the Robertson County Chamber of Commerce, is pleased to release the following first steps for our county's businesses as we recover from the COVID-19 crisis. This is a summary of announcements to date from Governor Lee and his Economic Recovery Task Force.

This local guidance provides recommendations for businesses to reopen beginning on Monday, April 27. It will be updated regularly as the Governor continues to release guidance and updates his Executive Orders.

We are asking Robertson Countians to work together to keep our county healthy and to be intentional about supporting our local businesses as they reopen.

- **Phase 1 – Began April 27**

- a. **Steps to Take**

- We encourage **all businesses to continue work from home policies** wherever possible.
 - We encourage **continued social distancing practices, including face covering**, in public places
 - Continue promoting **'Senior-only' hours at businesses**
 - **April 27: Reopen restaurants with 50% capacity** with safeguarding guidance as outlined in the Tennessee Pledge document (see attached) while encouraging social distancing practices
 - **April 29: Reopen retail with 50% capacity** with safeguarding guidance as outlined in the Tennessee Pledge document (see attached) while encouraging social distancing practices
 - **May 1: Elective medical procedures will be allowed to resume.** Procedures like routine screening and joint replacements are included in this first phase.
 - **May 1: Gyms and fitness classes are allowed to re-open at 50% capacity** with safeguarding guidance as outlined in the Tennessee Pledge document (see attached).

Communal spaces like locker rooms and pools should remain closed and self-service areas like juice bars and coffee kiosks should stay closed.

- **All businesses that have been deemed essential and have continued in operation or are restarting operations are asked to maintain safeguarding protocols as outlined in the Tennessee Pledge document.**
- **Re-open local greenways and golf courses** while continuing social distancing practices.
- Our Chambers of Commerce and Economic Development Board **will assist in promoting your re-opening business and encouraging residents to patronize local establishments** in order to facilitate a quicker recovery.

- **Phase 2 - May 6**

- a. **May 6: Close contact services such as hair salons, barber shops, massage and nail salons may re-open** with safeguarding guidance as outlined in the Tennessee Pledge document (see attached).
- b. The Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has released **guidance for gathering in houses of worship (see attached)**. The Governor's orders **DO NOT** restrict church services but churches are strongly encouraged to continue offering online services and other creative methods of worship and ministry until it is deemed safer to gather.
- c. **Further recommendations for this phase will be updated as available.**
- d. **When to Step Back**
 - A new surge of cases that cannot be traced to known cases
 - Sustained upward trend in cases for five (5) consecutive days
 - Hospital is no longer able to safely treat all patients
- e. **Requirements to move to Next Step**
 - A sustained downward in in new cases for at least five (5) days
 - Hospital is safely able to treat all patients requiring hospitalization without crisis standards



Universal Guidelines

For All Businesses

The State is recommending safeguarding protocols for all businesses in Tennessee, including those that are re-opening and those essential businesses that have remained open during the Safer at Home order. These safeguarding protocols are based on the recommendations of the CDC and OSHA. To support the Pledge for Tennessee, all employers and employees should take steps to reopen safely, help other industries be able to open more quickly, and help Tennessee remain healthy and open for business.

Employers

- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures on site with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work.
 - Minimum: Temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **Implement workplace cleaning and disinfection** practices, according to [CDC guidelines](#), with regular sanitization of high-touch surfaces at least every two hours
- **Mitigate exposure in the workplace** by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling
- **Allow employees to work from home as much as possible**
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave



or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms

- **Update the Employee Illness Policy** to include the symptoms of “COVID-19” or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation
- **Limit self-service options** (customer samples, communal packaging, food/beverages, etc.)
- **Post extensive signage on health policies**, including the following documents in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Employees

- **Stay home when feeling ill**, when exposed to COVID-19 (e.g., positive household member case), or if diagnosed with a confirmed case of COVID-19. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- **Increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette
- **Wear a cloth face covering (not an N-95 or medical mask, which should be reserved for healthcare workers)** while at work and in public to help protect against the spread of the virus
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible - **“Further is safer”**
- **Abide by guidelines established by employer**, which may include the use of gloves, social distancing practices in the workplace, and increased sanitation

Businesses should follow guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, as well as any applicable federal or regulatory requirements. In addition to these general guidelines for all Tennessee employers and employees, each employer and employee should refer to their industry-specific guidance, as set forth on the following pages. These industry-specific safeguarding protocols have been created with the input of private sector working groups in partnership with the Economic Recovery Group. Protocols are subject to change and may be released on a rolling basis. Companies doing business in Tennessee should follow Tennessee guidance and best practices outlined in this document.

Restaurant Industry

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to strict adherence to CDC guidelines, the State recommends restaurants put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- Follow sanitation frequency guidance contained in this document at all times
- Have dedicated face coverings and dedicated gloves (i.e., only used by one person) worn by all employees, at all times
 - Should not be N-95 or medical variety – these should be saved for use by healthcare workers
- Require all employees to report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee's household
- Provide ServSafe COVID-19 training for all food handlers as soon as possible

Consumer Protection

- Limit the number of customers in the restaurant to 50% of seating capacity
- Tables should be spaced at least 6 feet apart
- Limit tables to no more than 6 guests per table
- Mark any indoor or outdoor waiting area so that social distancing standards are met (options can include a text system to alert guests of available seating, an intercom system, or only one member of a party being allowed to wait in the waiting area)
- Bar areas should remain closed
- Live music should not be permitted
- Screen customers for illness upon their entry into the restaurant:
 - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer. Customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise
 - Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

Business Process Adaptations

- Place hand sanitizer stations in restaurant lobby and bathrooms, as well as at cashier stations
- Sanitize all front-of-house contact surfaces including door handles, screens, phones, pens, keyboards and other areas of hand contact every two hours, at a minimum
- Use menus that are disposable or sanitized between each use
- Use rolled silverware/napkins stored in sealed bins (gloves should be used by staff while rolling silverware in designated sanitary areas)
- Sanitize all tabletop items, including condiments, after each table turns (or use disposables)
- Sanitize chairs, especially where contact occurs, after each table turns
- Do not offer self-serve buffets, condiments on a counter for use by multiple tables, or beverage station re-use

Retail Industry

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to strict adherence to CDC guidelines, the State recommends retail industries put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- Staff should wear face coverings (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- Provide training on personal protective equipment based on CDC guidelines
- Provide a sanitizing station such as a wash basin with soap and/or bottle of hand sanitizer
- Stagger shifts, breaks, and meals, in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations, to maintain social distancing
- Provide regular updates and training for employees about personal COVID-19 mitigation and store safeguards based on CDC guidelines
- Require all employees to report any illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee's household
- Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible

Consumer Protection

- Limit the number of customers inside a store at a given time, excluding employees and representatives of third-party delivery companies, to 50 percent or less of store occupancy based on Tennessee's Building and Fire Code
- Customers should wear face coverings inside the store
- Consider dedicated shopping hours or appointment times for the elderly, medically vulnerable, and health care workers
- Establish one-way aisles and traffic patterns for social distancing
- Increase curbside, pickup, and delivery service options to minimize contact and maintain social distancing
- Assign dedicated staff to prompt customers regarding the importance of social distancing

- Add social distancing “reminder” signs, personal stickers, floor decals, and audio announcements

Business Process Adaptations

- Establish enhanced cleaning protocols that follow CDC guidelines including sanitizing shared resources (such as carts) after each use, and sanitizing all high traffic / high touch areas (such as counters check-out lanes, keypads, break rooms, dressing rooms, rest rooms) every two hours and when visibly dirty
- Use a clearly designated entrance and a separate clearly designated exit to maintain social distancing
- Use plastic shields or barriers between customers and clerks at service counters, and clean them frequently (every 2 hours and when visibly dirty)
- Adjust store hours to allow time for enhanced cleaning
- Prohibit the use of reusable bags (reusable bags may carry COVID-19)
- Suspend the sampling of food and personal hygiene products
- Task management-level employees within a store to monitor compliance

Exercise Facilities

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to strict adherence to CDC guidelines, the State recommends gyms, fitness/exercise facilities, or substantially similar facilities and activities put into place an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees, including:

Employee Protection

- **Allow employees to work from home as much as possible**
- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms** with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
 - Employees should take and log temperature before shifts
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- Staff should **wear face coverings** (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- **Provide training on personal protective equipment** based on CDC guidelines
- **Provide a sanitizing station** such as a wash basin with soap and/or bottle of hand sanitizer
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible—**“Further is safer”**
- **Stagger shifts, breaks and meals**, in compliance with wage and hour laws and regulations, to maintain social distancing. Consider reduced staffing requirements where possible
- **Prohibit congregating in break rooms or common areas** and limit capacity of such areas to allow for safe social distancing minimum of 6 feet whenever possible
- Employees should **increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing



- All employees should **stay home if feeling ill**, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee's household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- Covered employers and employees should **be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms
- **Update the Employee Illness Policy** to include the symptoms of "COVID-19" or create a COVID-19 specific policy. All staff should sign the policy, and the policy should be posted for confirmation.
- **Post extensive signage on health policies**, including the following documents, in the workplace to help educate building occupants on COVID-19 best practices:
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Consumer Protection

- **Screen customers for illness** upon entry to the gym:
 - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer. Persons with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted on premise
 - Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
- **Keep doors and windows open** where possible to improve ventilation
- **Post signs encouraging social distancing** (visible to customers)
- **Require that customers wash or sanitize their hands** upon entering and leaving the facility
- **Require customers to clean equipment** they come in contact with using disinfecting wipes before and after each use



- Encourage customers to **use only one piece of equipment at a time** (i.e., no circuits or “super setting”) so that machines are cleaned after use
- **Consider limiting workout length** to avoid unnecessary exposure, decrease congestion, and allow for additional sanitization
- **Recommend that persons more vulnerable or at-risk** for COVID-19 as identified by the [CDC](#)—including those who are over the age of 65 or those who have chronic medical conditions—take extra precaution or refrain from use of the facility during Phase 1 of re-opening

Business Process Adaptations

- **Restrict facility access to staffed hours only** (i.e., any unmanned facilities must be manned) and **limit facility occupancy to 50 percent of capacity** as dictated by fire code (as such capacity is adjusted in consideration of closed areas of the facility pursuant to these guidelines)
- **Mitigate exposure in the workplace** by implementing social distancing guidelines and modify scheduling
- Staff to conduct regular (i.e., every 2 hours) **disinfecting of high-touch surfaces**, equipment and common areas of the facility using disinfectant cleaning supplies according to [CDC guidelines](#)
- **Close showers, locker rooms, and lockers until further notice.** Ask customers to instead use small gym bags to store personal belongings; remind customers to appropriately monitor or secure such personal belongs or provide a secure area monitored by staff
- **Close all swimming pools, hot tubs, saunas** and other recreational water or spa facilities
- **Close all basketball courts, racquetball courts, and other places** where formal and informal group or team sports may occur
- Any **youth or adult team leagues or sports should remain closed**
- **Only allow group fitness classes if classes can be completed in accordance with social distancing recommendations** (including but not limited to: less than 50% capacity and with more than 6 feet of distance maintained between participants at all times; no shared equipment during the class; sufficiently adjusted class schedules to allow for deep cleaning between classes; martial arts and other contact activities should be completed without any person-to-person contact)
- **Encourage all employees and customers to wear PPE where applicable**, and recommend that customers wear a face covering (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers)
- **Adjust equipment layout and close or restrict access to equipment** to maintain at least six feet of distance between equipment



Tennessee *Pledge*

- **Temporarily close water fountains, common areas, break rooms, check-in counters, where customers or employees may congregate.** Encourage users to provide their own water
- **No self-service options** (coffee bars, smoothie stations and other forms of communal food in facilities). Food retail should follow restaurant guidelines.
- **Ensure that staffing of facilities is sufficient** to enable enhanced sanitization and cleaning measures

Close Contact Personal Service Businesses

These guidelines are intended to apply to “close contact personal services” as listed in [Executive Order No. 30](#), which include: barber shops, hair salons, waxing salons, threading salons, nail salons or spas, spas providing body treatments, body-art facilities or tattoo services, tanning salons, and massage-therapy establishments or massage services. Substantially similar occupations and businesses may also utilize these guidelines as appropriate.

These guidelines **do not** replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your business or licensed employees pursuant to law or regulation, including but not limited to the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance and Tennessee Department of Health. Rather, these guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safely reopening and providing services due to COVID-19.

Due to the nature of close contact personal services, an abundance of caution should be exercised to mitigate or prevent exposure to COVID-19. Persons who are more vulnerable or at-risk for COVID-19 as identified by the CDC — including those who are over the age of 65 or those who have severe underlying medical conditions — should take extra precaution or refrain from using close contact personal services during Phase 1 of re-opening.

Safeguarding Guidance

In addition to strict adherence to CDC guidelines, the State recommends all providers of close contact personal services implement an assortment of measures to protect consumers and employees.

Employee Protection

- **Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19** symptoms with the following questions:
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

- Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
- Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **Temperature screening employees:**
 - Best practice: employers to take temperatures onsite with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work
 - Minimum: temperatures can be taken and logged before arrival. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- **Practice recommended social distancing** to the greatest extent possible—**“Further is safer”**
- **Employees should increase hygiene practices**—wash hands more frequently, avoid touching face, practice good respiratory etiquette when coughing or sneezing. **Change any protective garments on a regular basis** and sanitize reusable garments such as aprons or smocks at least once per day.
- All employees should **stay home if feeling ill**, report any symptoms of illness to supervisor and require notification of COVID-19 positive case in employee’s household. Employees who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or severe underlying medical conditions) are encouraged to stay home
- **Direct any employee who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms** (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per Tennessee Department of Health and [CDC guidelines](#). Employers should maintain the confidentiality of employee health information.
- Employers should **provide training, educational materials, and reinforcement** on proper sanitation, handwashing, cough and sneeze etiquette, use of PPE, and other protective behaviors to their employees on a regular basis
- Employees should **wear a cloth face covering** (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC; if masks become wet or visibly dirty, the mask should be replaced
- All employees should **wash hands between serving each customer**, and more frequently as necessary. If appropriate for the service provided, gloves are recommended and should be discarded after each customer. The use of gloves should not be considered a replacement for frequent handwashing
- Consider designated staff to be tasked with maintaining **heightened sanitization** efforts
- Post **extensive signage** regarding increased cleaning, sanitization, and hygiene practices
- Perform **regular disinfection of high-touch surface areas** (e.g., door handles, counter space, light switches, tools and instruments) at least every two hours and when visibly dirty

Consumer Protection

- **Do not offer any self-serve food or beverages.** Temporarily close water fountains. Encourage users to provide their own water
- **Prohibit congregating** in break rooms, check-in counters
- **Customers should wear a cloth face covering** at all times while in the premises (not N-95 or medical masks, which should be reserved for healthcare workers) and as recommended by the CDC and executive order of the governor. Use other personal protection items as recommended by the CDC
- **Services that require removing face coverings (e.g., beard shaving/trimming, facials, etc.) are not permitted in Phase 1**
 - For massage, prone positions could be uncomfortable or dangerous for clients who are wearing face coverings. Accordingly, massage professionals may consider other appropriate precautions such as draping a client's head and face cradle cover with a thin cotton pillowcase. Otherwise, a face covering should be worn during portions of treatment in which the client is not prone or facedown
- **Screen customers for illness** upon their entry into the premises:
 - Best practice: Temperature checks for every customer. Customers with temperatures above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit should not be permitted in the premises
 - Minimum: Question customers regarding COVID-19 symptoms
 - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?

Business Process Adaptations

- **Limit the number of customers allowed in the premises to 50% of fire code** capacity, and practice strict social distancing between customers
- Services will be offered **by appointment only**; no walk-ins
- Make appropriate **physical modifications to accommodate social distancing**. Workstations should be at least 6 feet apart, with additional measures taken as necessary to ensure that all people stay 6 feet apart at all times except for the staff providing a service to their client; physical barriers to be used where necessary
- **Prohibit use of waiting areas** (e.g., could adopt such practices as notifying customers by call or text message) or serenity lounges; limit use of other common areas by multiple people at one time (e.g., elevators, breakrooms, etc.)
- **Businesses should remove all books, magazines, or any shared material** for customers



- Ensure **thorough workstation and equipment disinfection** after each customer (i.e. sanitize all equipment, instruments, capes, smocks, linens, chairs and work area); alternatively, utilize single-use or disposable items
- Implement **enhanced sanitization of commonly touched surfaces and equipment** (i.e., at least every two hours and when visibly soiled), using CDC recommended sanitizers and disinfecting protocols
- **Discard any single-use tools** (e.g., files, buffers, neck strips) immediately after use
- **Encourage touchless payment methods** where possible
- Place **hand sanitizer stations** in shop lobby and bathrooms
- **Do not allow self-serve products** (e.g., “testers”); consider limiting customer contact with retail products before purchase
- **Daily deep cleaning and sanitization** to be completed for high-touch areas (tanning beds, massage tables, salon chairs, etc.)
- Use **appropriate temperatures for washers and dryers** to ensure thorough sanitization of towels, linens, etc.
- **Open windows and doors** where possible to increase ventilation
- **Do not allow non-customer companions** to accompany customer during a service
- **Do not allow group or communal settings** for close contact personal services (e.g., couples’ massages, salt rooms, saunas, pools)
- **Plan for potential COVID-19 cases**, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)
- **Covered employers and employees should be aware of the provisions of the federal Families First Coronavirus Response Act**, which allows for paid sick leave or expanded family and medical leave for specified reasons, such as for self-quarantining or seeking a medical diagnosis for COVID-19 symptoms



Guidance for Gathering Together in Houses of Worship

Tennessee is stronger because of our citizens and communities of faith. Governor Lee is thankful to the houses of worship and faith communities that have played a large part in Tennessee's success to slow the spread of COVID-19 through social distancing and other means of worshiping together without physically gathering.

The First Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article I of the Tennessee Constitution protect the right of Tennesseans to worship and freely exercise their religion in every aspect of their lives according to the dictates of their own consciences. Additionally, the Tennessee Religious Freedom Restoration Act (T.C.A. § 4-1-407) provides additional protections for religious liberty. Thus, state and local governments must ensure these core constitutional and statutory rights are protected.

This resource is an aggregation of suggested protocols from various faith communities across Tennessee. Not all suggestions will be appropriate for each faith community. These suggestions are included as a courtesy for your convenience. These suggestions are not, and should not be construed as, mandates or requirements by the State of Tennessee, the Governor's Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, or any other entity of federal, state, or local government.

Moving forward, people should continue to exercise caution while COVID-19 remains present in Tennessee. To minister to vulnerable populations while also protecting those populations and continuing our state's progress to contain COVID-19, faith communities are strongly encouraged to continue offering online services and other creative methods of worship and ministry. Faith communities should conduct as many activities as possible remotely and should follow the recommendations in this guidance when deciding to begin gathering in person once again.

Decisions about when to resume in-person gatherings are serious and should be made by each house of worship and its leadership based on the unique needs of its faith community, and in consideration of preserving and protecting health and safety to the greatest extent practicable. Governor Lee's executive orders have been clear that religious services are essential, rather than social gatherings. Caring for the elderly, disabled, and immunocompromised is incredibly important to faith communities, and gatherings that include these vulnerable populations uniquely put them at risk. As such, faith leaders should evaluate the specifics of their congregation, community, and facility when determining when and how to gather in person. Due to the potential high risks of potential widespread transmission of COVID-19 in houses of worship, faith communities are encouraged to continue alternative worship options.

When faith leaders determine it is time to begin gathering in person again, faith communities should recognize that meeting in person should be different from meeting in person before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is likely that certain changes to in-person gatherings should remain in place until a vaccine for COVID-19 is available. Governor Lee hopes that all Tennesseans will continue to make responsible choices to protect themselves and their neighbors from COVID-19.

Here are some guidelines for your faith community as you determine when and how to offer in-person gatherings:

1. Evaluate how you can provide for your congregation spiritually and emotionally, while continuing to protect vulnerable populations and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

2. Wear face coverings. Social distance by staying 6 feet away from others. Consult the CDC guidelines and guidance from your local health officials to determine the risks of gathering in person. This should include thinking about the percentage of your community classified as vulnerable, how conducive your facility is to allowing social distancing, the size of your community, and more.
3. A phased approach to resuming in-person gatherings is recommended. Vulnerable populations (everyone 65 years and older, people with disabilities, people with serious respiratory or cardiovascular conditions, people who are immunocompromised, and others) and children's activities/nursery programs should not gather in person until a later time. Consider solutions to minimize close personal contact that may be part of your services, such as handshakes or sharing food and drink.
4. As the phased approach begins, limit the size of attendance in your sanctuary and other confined spaces to create seating arrangements that provide at least 6-foot distancing between household units. It is recommended not to exceed 50% of maximum capacity of the room and should enable full compliance with CDC recommendations for social distancing and hygiene. Over time, as Tennessee continues to see the successful containment of COVID-19, it will be appropriate to gradually increase capacity.
5. Encourage members of your community to stay at home if they are symptomatic, have a fever, have been in close contact with someone who has tested positive, or have traveled internationally or to a domestic hot spot in the past two weeks.
6. If you learn that a member of your congregation has tested positive for COVID-19, consult CDC guidelines and local health department recommendations to determine whether you should immediately cease in-person gatherings, close for additional cleaning, or otherwise change your protocols.
7. Stay informed of updated safety protocols and recommendations as the COVID-19 situation in your community develops.



The Governor's Office of
**Faith-Based and
Community Initiatives**

A resource for houses of worship planning to gather in-person

Leadership

Leading well through this time of uncertainty is essential; involve your leadership team to creatively and safely navigate this time of transition. There will naturally be new ministry opportunities to develop, and some prior ministry programs may change drastically.

1. Communicate to your congregation the steps you are taking to maintain clean and safe conditions on campus and to deliver relevant ministries safely.
2. Extend the good habits your community has embraced since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, such as pastoral care through small groups and digital communication and look for opportunities to adopt additional best practices.
3. Evaluate which practices are inappropriate to continue while COVID-19 remains a threat.
4. Require a COVID-19 symptom and temperature check on all staff and volunteers.
 - A. Screen all staff and volunteers for COVID-19 symptoms before services with the following questions:
 - o Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
 - o Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
 - o Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - o Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - o Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
 - B. Temperature screening for staff and volunteers before services:
 - o Best practice: employers to take temperatures on site with a no-touch thermometer each day upon arrival at work.
 - o Minimum: Temperatures can be taken before arriving. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit.
 - C. Direct any staff member or volunteer who exhibits COVID-19 symptoms (i.e., answers yes to any of the screening questions or who is running a fever) to leave the premises immediately and seek medical care and/or COVID-19 testing, per CDC guidelines. Employers should maintain the confidentiality of this health information.
5. Plan for potential COVID-19 cases, and work with local health department officials when needed (e.g., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep clean facilities)

Prepare Your House of Worship

Prepare your facility for in-person worship and gathering. Walk your campus with fresh eyes regarding upkeep and cleanliness. Invite medical professionals to help develop best practices related to the health of your congregation.

Cleaning/Sanitizing

Implement new protocols to reduce the spread of the virus.

1. Mitigate exposure by implementing social distancing guidelines – Stay at least 6 feet from other people, don't hug or shake hands, and follow other CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/social-distancing.html>).
2. Implement cleaning and disinfection practices, according to CDC guidelines (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>).
3. Sanitize shared resources after each use, and sanitize all high-traffic/high-touch areas (restrooms, doorknobs, counters, microphones, seats, etc.)
4. Use a clearly designated entrance and a separate clearly designated exit to maintain social distancing. Put up signs so it's clear to everyone.

Communicate with members of your faith community (flyers, e-mail, social media) about steps you're taking to prepare the house of worship for their arrival and ways the in-person gathering will be different. Remind them of social distancing protocols. Be mindful of the diverse health needs of other members. **Remind people who are sick or have been exposed to not attend in-person gatherings and participate virtually instead.**

Logistics

Modify the logistics of in-person gatherings to promote social distancing.

1. We recommend returning to in-person gatherings in phases for your in-person ministries. Communicate with vulnerable populations and families requiring child care during the worship service to encourage them to delay their return for several weeks. Keep an online meeting option for those who are uncomfortable or unable to attend your service in person for any reason.
2. Offer more services than you typically do to allow greater social distancing and accommodate lower capacity limits, while considering spacing services out to allow for cleaning and social distancing.
3. Ensure seating is spaced out at least six feet apart, with groups of seats together to allow household units to sit together. Consider broadcasting the service to other rooms in the facility to allow proper social distancing.
4. Move and limit unnecessary physical objects in order to reduce potential transmission of the virus.
5. Develop a fun, no-contact way to greet each other. Rely on staff or other ministers to welcome congregants and set the tone for new behaviors.
6. Consider creating new routes or methods of entrance and exit, avoiding congregating in highly populated areas, and dismissing in an orderly way to ensure proper social distancing.

Worship Programming

1. Modify distribution protocols if your tradition involves shared food or drink (e.g. communion). Avoid passing a plate or cup.
2. Temporarily replace a choir with soloists or small ensembles of individuals at least 6 feet apart.
3. Avoid sharing and passing microphones.
4. Create other ways to allow people to give without passing collection plates (e.g. stations, encouraging online giving).
5. Consider dividing smaller gatherings, like Sunday School or Sabbath School classes, into smaller groups to maintain the social distancing standards.

Amenities

1. Post signs to remind people to wash their hands and practice social distancing (e.g. restrooms).
2. Make sure there is soap and/or hand sanitizer to make it easy for people to access and use often.
3. Supply cloth face coverings (N-95 masks and surgical masks should be reserved for medical providers). Face coverings should not be returned or used by multiple people.
4. Coffee stations should be closed, and group meals are strongly discouraged.

Other Resources

For Guidance on Vulnerable Populations, visit here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/people-at-higher-risk.html>

For Guidance on Cleaning and Disinfecting Facilities, visit here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

For Guidance on Wearing Face Coverings, visit here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/diy-cloth-face-coverings.html>