



TOHONO O'ODHAM NATION UNIFIED COMMAND

Guidance: Places of Worship

Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, under all circumstances, the following precautions should be taken by people attending places of worship:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Protect yourself while visiting places of worship:
 - Avoid close contact and stay at least 6 feet away from others, when feasible.
 - Wash your hands often and after leaving a place of worship with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
 - Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
 - Consider the use of a cloth face coverings, when feasible.
 - 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.
 - If you are at higher risk for severe illness, you should avoid attending 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.

Tohono O'odham Nation Health Care recommends the following additional steps be taken by places of worship:

- Implement physical distancing precautions that maintain at least 6 feet between guests who do not live in the same household, when possible:
 - Consider spacing out seating for attendees who do not live in the same household to at least six feet apart when possible; consider limiting seating to alternate rows.
 - 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 events that may result in mass gatherings.



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Tohono O'odham Nation Health Care recommends the following additional steps be taken by places of worship (Continued):

- Encourage those 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.
 - Consider continuing to live-stream worship services and providing drive-in services.
 - Consider posting signage at entrances advising those with symptoms of illness to not enter.
 - Consider separate services for vulnerable elders with added precautions.
- Post signage at entrances about how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands and practice other protective measures, as well as advising those with symptoms of illness to not enter.
- Restrict common areas where people are likely to congregate and interact.
- Ensure that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly.
 - Increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods.
- Ensure that all water systems like drinking fountains, decorative fountains, and other religious fountains are safe to use after a prolonged facility shut down to minimize the risk of Legionnaires' disease and other waterborne diseases.
- Avoid or consider suspending the use of a choir or musical ensemble during religious services or other programming, if appropriate.
 - Consider having a soloist or strictly limiting the number of choir members and keep at least 6 feet between individuals.
- Consider having clergy hold virtual visits (by phone or online) instead of inside homes or at the hospital, except for compassionate care situations, such as end of life.
- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- Identify activities, rituals, and traditions (e.g., hand shaking/holding, sharing items, communion, etc.) that may need to be temporarily suspended or modified.
- Limit community sharing of worship materials and other items, such as worship aids, books, hymnals, bulletins, or other items passed or shared among congregants, and encourage congregants to bring their own. If possible, photocopy or project prayers, songs, and texts using electronic means.
- Modify the methods used to receive financial contributions. Consider a stationary collection box, the mail, or electronic methods of collecting regular financial contributions instead of shared collection trays or baskets.



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Tohono O'odham Nation Health Care recommends the following additional steps be taken by places of worship (continued):

- Implement comprehensive sanitation protocols, including sanitizing equipment before and after every use.
 - Provide disposable disinfectant wipes, cleaner, or spray to wipe down frequently touched surfaces and equipment.
 - Wipe any pens, counters, or hard surfaces between uses.
 - Consider removing items that are difficult to clean.
 - Consider limiting hours to allow for proper sanitation.
- 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.
- Nurseries and childcare facilities within faith based organizations should comply with CDC guidelines for childcare facilities.
- Intensify cleaning, disinfection, and ventilation.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces and all areas after they are touched or used, such as seats, doorknobs, tables, 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.