

# COVID-19: Guidance for Faith Organizations and Funeral Homes from the Wyoming Department of Health

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August 1, 2020

## Background

Public health orders continue and are modified periodically. All orders are designed to limit the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Key definitions and order provisions are contained in each order. Questions regarding enforcement and interpretation of orders should be directed to your County Public Health Offices. While faith based organizations and funeral homes have been exempted from this order since June 15, 2020, this document provides guidance from the Wyoming Department of Health operations in order to limit the spread of COVID-19.

A copy of the current statewide orders can be found at: <https://covid19.wyo.gov/>.

## General Guidance and Recommendations

The Wyoming Department of Health (WDH) strongly encourages the following social distancing and cleaning measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during gatherings at faith organizations and funeral homes.

1. WDH recommends that faith organizations and funeral home gatherings maintain or implement the following precautions:
  - a. Maintain a six (6) foot distance between individual household groups at all times.
  - b. The number of people confined to any one area at a time should be limited to allow for adequate distancing between households.
  - c. Close contact between members of different household groups should be restricted before, during, and after the gathering.
  - d. Reading materials, collection plates, and communion trays should be passed out to individual attendees by the leaders/staff rather than passed between attendees, to the extent practicable.
  - e. Prior to a gathering, faith organizations or funeral home leaders/staff should be screened for symptoms of COVID-19, or exposure to a person with COVID-19 during the previous fourteen (14) days. See the screening guidance [here](#).
    - i. Staff/leaders with symptoms of illness or known exposure to a person with COVID-19 infection within the previous fourteen (14) days should not participate in the gathering.
    - ii. Staff/leader logs of the screening activity should be kept and made available for inspection by the local health officer.
  - f. The entire facility should be cleaned thoroughly, including all high touch areas before and after each gathering, according to CDC guidelines for cleaning found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>.
  - g. Exchange of food or drink, other than communion, is not recommended. If this does occur, precautions should be taken to reduce contamination. For example, food and drinks should be served in prepackaged containers, or served by staff instead of self-serve.
  - h. Staff/leaders who come within six (6) feet of attendees and other staff/leaders should wear a face covering.
2. Continue to offer the ability to watch or listen to the meeting or service from home, if the organization has that ability.
3. Continue to offer the ability to give through contactless methods (e.g., online giving) instead of using collection plates.



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4. Hand sanitizer should be made available at the entrance of the building for people to use upon entry and exit from the building.
5. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed on maintaining proper hand hygiene, avoiding touching their face, eyes, nose and mouth, and covering coughs and sneezes.
6. Individuals participating in the meeting or service should be informed to stay home if they are experiencing symptoms of COVID-19, or have had known close contact with an individual who is positive for COVID-19, within the last fourteen (14) days. Symptoms of illness/COVID-19 can be found here: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>.
7. Individuals should be encouraged to wear a face covering throughout the event, especially if coming within 6 feet of others.
8. Religious organization leader(s), and those presiding over a funeral service, do not need to wear a face covering while addressing the religious group but should maintain a 6 foot distance from the group and others during the service.
  - a. Worship and choir members should maintain a 6-foot distance from each other and members of the congregation since prolonged and loud vocalization can increase distribution of respiratory droplets.
  - b. Microphones or other audio/video equipment used to address the attendees should be sanitized after each use.
9. Individuals considered to have high-risk health conditions, and those who live or work with high-risk individuals, should be encouraged to stay home. High-risk individuals are those aged 65 and older, immunocompromised, or have other health factors as identified by the CDC that increase risk of becoming seriously ill if exposed to COVID-19. Organizations should designate areas inside the facility reserved for high-risk individuals or offer a service specifically for high-risk individuals.
10. Organizations should limit or restrict nursery and/or children's ministry operations. Consider having children remain with the rest of their household in the main meeting space. If children's services are necessary, the organization should follow the childcare guidance found [here](#).

**More resources from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for community and faith organizations can be found at**

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

**For more information about the COVID-19 outbreak please visit: [health.wyo.gov](http://health.wyo.gov) or [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov).**

