



Even though COVID-19 case rates have come down significantly from their peak in the third surge and more people are vaccinated, there remains a risk that people who you may come into contact with when you are outside your residence may have COVID-19. Most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms of illness. There are many people you may come into contact with in San Francisco who are not yet fully vaccinated. We have also seen surges in other parts of the country and the world, increasingly impacting younger adults.

The opening or expansion of sectors does not necessarily signify that these activities are “safe.” The purpose of the required safety protocols contained in San Francisco’s Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and companion health directives is to make these activities and sectors safer for workers and the public. But reopening and expansion requires that all individuals and businesses use particular care and do their part to make these activities as safe as possible by strictly and consistently wearing face coverings indoors and outdoors in large crowds and following social distancing requirements and all other safety protocols.

Everyone who is eligible, including people at risk for severe illness with COVID-19 – such as unvaccinated older adults and unvaccinated individuals with health risks – and members of their households are urged to get vaccinated as soon as they can if they have not already done so.

DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-34e

**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REGARDING REQUIRED BEST
PRACTICES FOR INDOOR RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL CEREMONIAL
GATHERINGS**

(PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE)
DATE OF DIRECTIVE: May 6, 2021

By this Directive, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco (the “Health Officer”) issues specific direction that Houses of Worship and people participating in Indoor Religious Gatherings, as described below, must follow as part of the local response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. This Directive constitutes guidance as provided under Sections 4e and 11 and Appendix C-2 of Health Officer Order No. C19-07w issued on May 6, 2021 (the “Stay-Safer-At-Home Order”) and, unless otherwise defined below, initially capitalized terms used in this Directive have the same meaning given them in that order. This Directive goes into effect immediately, and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer. This Directive has support in the bases and justifications set forth in the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. As further provided below, this Directive automatically incorporates any revisions to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order or other future orders issued by the Health Officer that supersede that order or reference this Directive. This Directive is intended to promote best practices as to Social Distancing Requirements and sanitation measures, helping prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and safeguard the health of workers, customers, and the community.

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE
SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER DIRECTS AS
FOLLOWS:**



Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34e

- 1. This Directive applies to all individuals (“Participants”) participating in, watching or visiting facilities hosting indoor gatherings for religious or cultural ceremonies or activities, such as worship, study, prayer, weddings, and funerals (collectively referred to as “Indoor Religious Gatherings”) and all houses of worship, locations such as Residences hosting Indoor Religious Gatherings, or other providers of religious services or cultural ceremonies (“Houses of Worship”) hosting, organizing, or otherwise involved in Indoor Religious Gatherings in the City and County of San Francisco (the “City”), including the clergy or other faith-based or cultural leaders of such Indoor Religious Gatherings (“Leaders”), as permitted under Section 9 of Appendix C-2 of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.**
- 2. Attached as Exhibit A to this Directive is a list of best practices that apply to Houses of Worship engaged in Indoor Religious Gatherings (the “Best Practices”). All Houses of Worship must comply with all applicable requirements listed in the Best Practices.**
- 3. Houses of Worship must, before they begin to host or otherwise facilitate Indoor Religious Gatherings, create, adopt, and implement a written health and safety plan (a “Health and Safety Plan”). The Health and Safety Plan must be substantially in the form attached to this Directive as Exhibit B.**
- 4. Guidance from the Department of Public Health related to Indoor Religious Gatherings is attached to this Directive as Exhibit C and is available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>.**
- 5. If an aspect, service, or operation of the House of Worship is also covered by another Health Officer directive (all of which are available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>), then such House of Worship must comply with all applicable directives, and it must complete all relevant Health and Safety Plan forms.**
- 6. Each House of Worship must (a) make the Health and Safety Plan available to anyone interested in participating in the Indoor Religious Gathering and to any involved Personnel on request, (b) provide a summary of the plan to all Personnel working on site or otherwise in the City in relation to its operations, and (c) post the plan at the entrance to any other physical location that such House of Worship operates within the City. Also, each such House of Worship must provide a copy of the Health and Safety Plan and evidence of its implementation to any authority enforcing this Order upon demand.**
- 7. Each House of Worship subject to this Directive must provide items such as Face Coverings (as provided in Health Officer Order No. C19-12 and any future amendment to that order), hand sanitizer or handwashing stations, or both, and disinfectant and related supplies, to that House of Worship’s Personnel, all as required by the Best Practices. Also, each House of Worship is encouraged to make clean Face Coverings available to Participants of Indoor Religious Gatherings at the entrances to the facilities and required to provide hand sanitizing or handwashing stations to Participants. Each House of Worship must ensure that all Participants and Personnel wear Face Coverings while on the premises of the facility and**



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otherwise comply with the Best Practices that apply to Religious Gatherings or operation of the facility under this Directive. If any House of Worship is unable to provide the items required above or otherwise fails to comply with required Best Practices or, if applicable under subsections 3, 4 or 5 above, fails to abide by its Health and Safety Plan, then it must cease operating until it can fully comply and demonstrate its strict compliance. Further, any Indoor Religious Gathering organized by such House of Worship where the House of Worship has failed to comply is subject to immediate closure and the fines and other legal remedies described below, as a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

8. For purposes of this Directive, “Personnel” includes all of the following people who provide goods or services associated with the House of Worship in the City: Leaders; employees; contractors and sub-contractors (such as those who sell goods or perform services onsite or who deliver goods for the business); vendors who are permitted to sell goods onsite; volunteers; and other individuals who regularly provide services onsite at the request of the House of Worship. “Personnel” includes “gig workers” who perform work via the business’s app or other online interface, if any.
9. This Directive and the attached Best Practices may be revised by the Health Officer, through revision of this Directive or another future directive or order, as conditions relating to COVID-19 require, in the discretion of the Health Officer. All Houses of Worship must stay updated regarding any changes to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and this Directive by checking the Department of Public Health website (www.sfdph.org/healthorders; www.sfdph.org/directives) regularly.
10. Implementation of this Directive augments—but does not limit—the obligations of each House of Worship under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order including, but not limited to, the obligation to prepare, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol under Section 9 of Appendix C-2 of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. The House of Worship must follow these Best Practices and update them as necessary for the duration of this Directive, including, without limitation, as this Directive is amended or extended in writing by the Health Officer and consistent with any extension of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, any other order that supersedes that order, and any Health Officer order that references this Directive.

This Directive is issued in furtherance of the purposes of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Where a conflict exists between this Directive and any state, local, or federal public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, without limitation, the Social Distancing Protocol, the most restrictive provision controls. Failure to carry out this Directive is a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.

Susan Philip, MD, MPH,
Health Officer of the
City and County of San Francisco

Date: May 6, 2021



Exhibit A to Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34e (issued 5/6/21)

Best Practices for Houses of Worship Organizing or Facilitating Indoor Religious Gatherings

In addition to preparing, posting, and implementing the Social Distancing Protocol as required by Section 9 of Appendix C-2 of Health Officer Order C19-07 (the “Stay-Safer-At-Home Order”) as it may be amended in the future, each House of Worship operating in the City must comply with each requirement listed below and prepare a Health and Safety Plan substantially in the format of Exhibit B, below. Participants and Houses of Worship must also comply with each of the applicable requirements listed below.

Requirements:

1. Section 1 – Understanding Risk:

1.1. All people, including those at risk for severe illness with COVID-19—such as unvaccinated older adults, and unvaccinated individuals with health risks—and members of their household are strongly urged to get vaccinated before participating in activities with other people outside their Household where taking protective measures of wearing face masks and social distancing may be difficult, especially indoors or in crowded spaces.

2. Section 2 – Educating Personnel and Participants:

2.1. Ensure that all Personnel have reviewed and understand the requirements of the Social Distancing Protocol, this Directive, and the Health and Safety Plan.

2.2. Develop and implement a plan to educate Participants or others who may attend Indoor Religious Gatherings about the relevant requirements of the Social Distancing Protocol, this Directive, and the Health and Safety Plan. For example, a House of Worship may inform its congregation through a combination of emails, clear and conspicuous signage, or frequent public announcements.

2.3. Identify dedicated Personnel responsible for implementing all requirements of this Directive at a specific House of Worship. Identify dedicated Personnel to assist Participants in maintaining at least six feet physical distance, wearing Face Coverings, and otherwise complying with this Directive.

2.4. Prepare Personnel to respond to suspected or confirmed positive cases at the House of Worship in accordance with the Social Distancing Protocol. Guidance on responding to positive cases at your House of Worship can be found here under the tab for Businesses and Employers in the Information and Guidance for the Public section:

<https://www.sfcdep.org/infectious-diseases-a-to-z/coronavirus-2019-novel-coronavirus/>.

3. Section 3 – Making Indoor Spaces Safer:

3.1. If safe and feasible, make non-structural alterations to the physical indoor space to facilitate maximum social distancing (at least six feet of physical distance) between members of different Households by, for example, creating physical barriers, moving podiums, identifying dedicated paths of ingress and egress, prohibiting access to lobbies, meeting rooms or other common areas, moving or taping off seating, propping open doors at heavily used entry or exit points, closing every other parking space, and using signage or other indicators to control movement throughout the space and to remind people to



avoid touching common surfaces like door handles. In bathrooms, maximize ventilation and minimize crowding and touching of common surfaces by, for example (and only when feasible), keeping doors propped open, closing every other sink, and posting signage establishing a maximum capacity for bathrooms with clearly marked and distanced queueing areas. Mark off space in seating, prayer or counseling areas to assist Participants in maintaining at least six feet of distance from members of other Households. Indicate walking paths between spaces designated for Participants to kneel so that people do not walk where someone may touch their head to the floor.

- 3.2. Conspicuously post signage around the House of Worship – including at all primary public entrances – reminding people to adhere to physical distancing, hygiene, and Face Covering Requirements and to stay at home when they feel ill. Posted signage must include all signs required by Sections 4.g and 4.h of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. The County is making available templates for the signage available online at: <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>.
- 3.3. Adequate ventilation is critical to reducing the risk of airborne transmission of the virus in indoor settings, and especially settings where people stay in the same room for a prolonged period. All Houses of Worship must comply with the ventilation protocols at Section 4.i of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Review SFDPH’s guidance for improved ventilation available at: <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation>.
 - 3.3.1. If a House of Worship hosts Indoor Religious Gatherings during which any person removes their Face Coverings as expressly permitted by this Directive, the House of Worship must use at least one of the following ventilation strategies: (1) All available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open (doors and windows required to be kept closed for fire/life safety purposes are exempt; make sure open windows do not create falling hazards especially for children); (2) Fully operational HVAC systems; and/or (3) Portable Air Cleaners in each room that are appropriately sized for the room or area they are deployed in (see <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation> for more information). If due to smoke or other conditions, a House of Worship cannot implement any of those measures, the House of Worship cannot have Participants or Personnel remove their Face Coverings until the ventilation measure(s) can be reinstated.
- 3.4. Clean high touch water vessels, fonts, fountains, and sinks at least once daily or more frequently if required by industry standards and otherwise in accordance with current CDC guidelines. When ceremonial or ritualistic use of water is required, consider using low-touch or single-use alternatives or empty and clean vessels at least once daily or more frequently if required by industry standards. If feasible, consider conducting necessary washing at home or otherwise before arriving at a House of Worship.
- 3.5. Increase availability of hand sanitizer or hand washing stations around the House of Worship, including at entrances and exits. Ensure that restrooms are adequately stocked with soap and paper towels. Maintain adequate amounts of cleaning supplies, Face Coverings, or other appropriate personal protective equipment for Personnel.
- 3.6. Develop and implement a plan to clean high-touch areas and surfaces touched by members of more than one Household at least once daily, or more frequently if required by industry standards and otherwise in accordance with current CDC guidelines. Cleaning does not have to occur after each individual person touches a surface unless a person appears



symptomatic or there is visible contamination from nasal or oral secretions. Participants and Hosts should avoid contact with high-touch surfaces when feasible and should practice good hand hygiene.

3.6.1. Require Personnel to clean high touch areas and surfaces following CDC guidelines found at: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>. Provide Personnel adequate time and space to complete all sanitation duties. Disinfecting products must be approved for use against COVID-19 on the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) – approved list found at: <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2-covid-19>

4. Section 4 – Managing Risk During Indoor Religious Gatherings:

4.1. Strictly limit attendance at Indoor Religious Gatherings to 50% of the capacity of the building. Capacity limits include congregants, visitors and other Participants, but do not include Personnel. The capacity limits apply to discrete rooms or spaces within a House of Worship. For example, if a House of Worship includes a building with a capacity of 400 people, but holds services in a room with an individual capacity of 100 people, the service must be limited to 50 people or fewer (50% of the smaller room’s capacity).

4.1.1. Conspicuously post signage stating the maximum capacity of the space and the maximum capacity currently permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Consider implementing a reservation system to ensure capacity limits are met. Houses of Worship are strongly encouraged to minimize the number of people engaged in an Indoor Religious Gathering.

4.1.2. Encourage Participants to meet with the same group of people at each gathering, particularly if a service meets frequently or requires a minimum number of people to be present.

4.1.3. Simultaneous or overlapping Indoor Religious Gatherings are permitted only under the following circumstances: (1) the gatherings must occur in spaces that are completely physically separated from each other either in distinct rooms separated by sealed floor-to-ceiling walls or in separate buildings; (2) each distinct gathering meets all ventilation requirements of this Directive; (3) Participants at one gathering have completely separate avenues of ingress and egress from the House or Worship or, if a common path of ingress or egress must be used, the House of Worship ensures (such as by creating staggered start times for services) that Participants from different gatherings do not enter or exit the House of Worship at the same time; and (4) before hosting any simultaneous or overlapping gatherings, a House of Worship must develop and maintain a written plan detailing compliance with this subsection.

4.1.3.1. Houses of Worship may not combine groups in different rooms or spaces for a single ceremony or purpose. All Participants in an Indoor Religious Gathering must use the same indoor room or space to attend the same gathering. For example, a House of Worship may not host a single wedding ceremony where some Participants are seated in one indoor room and some are seated in another indoor room or outdoor space.



- 4.1.4.** The capacity limits for Indoor Religious Gatherings apply to religious or cultural ceremonies themselves, and not to any reception or similar gathering before or after. Indoor and outdoor receptions and similar gatherings are permitted only to the extent they comply with applicable provisions of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and any related Health Officer directives or guidance.
- 4.2.** Unless otherwise specifically provided in this Directive, strictly follow and enforce all applicable requirements of Health Officer Order C19-07 (the “Stay-Safer-At-Home Order”) and the Face Covering requirements of Health Officer Order C19-12(the “Face Covering Order”) as they may be amended. Strictly follow and enforce all requirements of this Directive at all times and prohibit all people who fail to comply with this Directive from entering the House of Worship.
- 4.3.** Screen all Participants and Personnel on a daily basis and before entry to the House of Worship using the standard screening questions attached to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order as Appendix A and **Attachments A-1 and A-2** (the “Screening Handouts”). Screening must occur before people enter the House of Worship to attend an Indoor Religious Gathering. A copy of the applicable Screening Handout must be provided to anyone on request, although a poster or other large-format version of the Screening Handouts 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 attending the Indoor Religious Gathering, and should be referred for appropriate support as outlined on the Screening Handouts. Houses of Worship can use the guidance available online at <https://www.sfcddp.org/infectious-diseases-a-to-z/coronavirus-2019-novel-coronavirus/coronavirus-2019-businesses/> for determining how best to conduct screening.
- 4.4.** Houses of Worship must be prepared to assist public health authorities in potential contact tracing efforts.
- 4.5.** Ensure that members of different Households remain at least six feet apart at all times during the Indoor Religious Gathering, except for seniors or people with disabilities who may be seated with their caregiver.
- 4.5.1.** Members of different Households may briefly be closer than six feet from a House of Worship’s Personnel if all the following conditions are met: (1) After carefully considering all possible alternatives, a Leader determines that a specific ritual or custom requires a Participant be closer than six feet from Personnel, (2) all people involved in the ritual or custom wear Face Coverings at all times they are within six feet of each other, and (3) the duration of the ritual or custom is as short as possible.
- 4.6.** Singing, chanting, playing wind instruments and other similar activities are permitted in strict accordance with Section 3.i. of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and subject to any more stringent applicable State restrictions. Activities such as singing, chanting and playing wind instruments greatly increase the distribution of contaminated exhalations which increases the potential for broad transmission of the virus, particularly in indoor settings. All people are strongly discouraged from engaging in indoor singing, chanting, playing wind instruments or other similar activities.
- 4.6.1.** Houses of Worship are strongly discouraged from organizing an event that encourages Participants to engage in singing, chanting, or shouting or otherwise encourage Participants from doing so during any Indoor Religious Gatherings.



- 4.6.2.** If a Leader or Participant is engaged in prolonged speaking such as during a sermon or reading, they must speak at least six feet from people who are not part of their Household at all times and must wear a Face Covering at all times unless otherwise specifically and expressly provided in this Directive. Leaders and other speakers should not raise their voice and should use microphones or other public address systems whenever feasible.
- 4.7.** Except as specified in this subsection, require that Face Covering be worn at all times by all people – including and in particular while singing, chanting, speaking, reciting, or praying – during Indoor Religious Gatherings unless a Participant is exempt from wearing a Face Covering under the Face Covering Order.
- 4.7.1.** Face Coverings may be removed briefly to eat or drink but only where a Leader determines eating or drinking is essential to a ritual or ceremony and in those instances the Leader must to the greatest extent feasible limit the number of people who remove a Face Covering to one individual at a time;
- 4.7.2.** If a Leader determines it is essential to a ritual or ceremony that Face Coverings be removed, a single person may briefly remove their Face Covering (1) if they do not speak, recite, chant, shout or sing and maintain at least six feet of distance from others while their face is uncovered; or (2) to speak or recite only if they isolate themselves from all other people such as by speaking inside an enclosed chamber or behind a plastic or glass partition or face shield no more than 12 inches from the mouth of the speaker and greater than 12 feet away from any other person.
- 4.8.** Prohibit sharing utensils, food, drink or other items that could result in the transfer of oral or nasal secretions between different Households unless such items can be cleaned between uses.
- 4.9.** High touch objects and surfaces must be cleaned at least once daily, or more frequently if required by industry standards and otherwise in accordance with current CDC guidelines. Cleaning does not have to occur after each individual person touches a surface unless a person appears symptomatic or there is visible contamination from nasal or oral secretions. Participants and Hosts should avoid contact with high-touch surfaces when feasible and should practice good hand hygiene.
- 4.10.** Activities for children such as religious school are allowed if all relevant ventilation, Face Covering, physical distancing, sanitation and other requirements of this Directive and the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order are met at all times. Child care arrangements are allowed only to the extent they are specifically allowed under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Unless as part of an approved child care arrangement, children who are unable to wear a Face Covering and maintain physical distance of at least six feet at all times – such as very young children – must remain in the care of those in their Household and not interact with children of other Households while visiting a House of Worship.
- 4.11.** Use office space consistent with the requirements of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.
- 4.12.** The duration of all gatherings should be limited to the maximum extent possible.
- 4.13.** Houses of Worship should discourage informal gathering or congregating after services are complete unless such gatherings are conducted in accordance with the Stay-Safer-At-



Home Order. Houses of Worship are encouraged to facilitate organized ingress and egress that minimizes grouping or queuing such as by having those seated in the back row exit the building first at the end of a service.

- 4.14.** Schedule at least 30 minutes between Indoor Religious Gatherings during which Participants may safely exit and clear the area and House of Worship Personnel may conduct any necessary cleaning and otherwise prepare the space for the next gathering. Houses of Worship may permit Personnel to participate in sequential Indoor Religious Gatherings during a single day but are reminded of the increased potential to transmit the virus from one gathering to another. Personnel participating in sequential Indoor Religious Gatherings must thoroughly wash hands and clean or replace any items or clothing that have come in contact with Participants or different House of Worship Personnel during earlier gatherings.
- 4.15.** Keep other areas of a House of Worship closed unless otherwise expressly permitted to operate under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Facilities such as day care centers, schools, kitchens, food service areas, gymnasiums or indoor athletic facilities, and children's play structures and areas are not permitted to operate unless in compliance with the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and any applicable Health Officer orders or directives.
- 4.16.** This Directive establishes minimum best practices applicable generally to all Houses of Worship. Houses of Worship are encouraged to apply the concepts and spirit of this Directive to modify their rituals in a collective effort to mitigate the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19. Examples include, but are not limited to, discontinuing kissing of ritual objects, allowing rites to be performed by fewer people, discontinuing the use of a common cup, offering communion in the hand instead of on the tongue, or providing pre-packed communion items on chairs prior to service. Houses of Worship also must implement and enforce any additional or more restrictive guidance regarding religious gatherings provided by the Centers for Disease Control or the California Department of Public Health found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/>; and <https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>.

Nothing in this Section allows a House of Worship to replace, supplement, or change any restriction in the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, this Directive, or any local, state, or federal health order or guidance related to COVID-19 with a less restrictive measure. For clarity, all Houses of Worship must strictly implement every measure in this Directive and should only supplement new or different safety measures to the extent they are more restrictive (i.e., more protective of public health) than any local, state, or federal health order or guidance related to COVID-19.

Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34e (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 5/6/21)

Each House of Worship must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

Check off all items below that apply and list other required information.

Business/Entity name:

Contact name:

Entity Address:

Contact telephone:

(You may contact the person listed above with any questions or comments about this plan.)

- House of Worship is familiar with and complies with all requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34e, available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives> and the Social Distancing Protocol available at <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/files/C19-07-Appendix-A.pdf>.
- House of Worship has prepared the facility for an Indoor Religious Gathering to ensure adequate physical distancing between and among Personnel and Participants. For example, House of Worship made a plan for Participants to get in and out of the outdoor space safely while maintaining social distancing, added physical markings to demonstrate a 6-foot distance in areas Participants may be seated or congregating and, created a reservation system to manage Participant arrival and departure times.
- House of Worship has placed signage throughout the facility reminding Personnel and Participants of their obligations to wear Face Coverings, maintain physical distance, and engage in proper personal hygiene.
- Personnel have been trained in the requirements of the Social Distancing Protocol and this Directive including obligations to screen themselves and Participants and enforce the physical distancing and Face Covering requirements of the Directive.
- House of Worship has created and implemented a plan for cleaning high touch surfaces such as seating, doors, and other common high-touch surfaces or objects at least once daily or as otherwise required by industry standards and current CDC guidelines.
- House of Worship has implemented all feasible HVAC and ventilation practices identified in the Directive.
- Gatherings are limited to 50% of room capacity and kept as short as possible.
- Six feet of physical distance is maintained between people from different Households.
- Everyone, including Participants and Leaders, wears a Face Covering unless permitted under Health Officer Directive 2020-34d or otherwise exempt.
- Singing, chanting, and shouting are permitted in strict accordance with Section 3.i. of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Houses of Worship should not encourage Participants to sing, chant, or shout during the Indoor Religious Gathering.
- Participants are discouraged from informally congregating before or after Indoor Religious Gatherings.

HSP

Health and Safety
Plan

Checklist

Health Officer Directive No. 2020-34e (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 5/6/21)

- If House of Worship Personnel are taking part in sequential gatherings, there is sufficient time between gatherings to engage in turnover and cleaning procedures. If hosting simultaneous or overlapping services, the House of Worship developed and maintained a written plan in accordance with section 4.1.3 of the Directive.

Additional Measures

Explain:



Please be advised this document will not be updated beyond the date noted below. Refer to [Directive 2020-19](#) and [Business Capacities and Activities Table](#) for current San Francisco regulations and allowances .

Tips and Frequently Asked Questions for Social Gatherings and Certain Other Organized Gatherings

UPDATED May 6, 2021

AUDIENCE: Hosts, organizers and participants of gatherings of people from more than one household. This information does not apply to gatherings of people living together in a single household.

BACKGROUND: San Francisco Health Officer Orders and Directives allow people in different households to gather, with restrictions to prevent spread of COVID-19. This tip sheet cover frequently asked questions about how to safely organize, host, and participate in gatherings of people from different households.

The Directives and associated documents are available on the [Health Directives page](#) under Gatherings, and the main Stay-Safer-at-Home Order also has related rules.

- Directive 2020-19 – Outdoor Gatherings
- Directive 2020-28 – Drive-In Gatherings
- Directive 2020-34 – Indoor Worship
- Order No. C19-07v Appendix C-2 – Small Indoor Gatherings

Additional guidance can be found at www.sfcddcp.org/covid19.

Changes to this FAQ since the April 14, 2021 Version:

- Simplifies cleaning requirements
- Highlights that SFDPH does not recommend temperature measurement. This practice may still be a requirement by the State or regulatory agency
- Removes face covering requirement for some outdoor gatherings. Face covering are still required in certain instances (sports events, festivals).
- Updates BCAT table on capacity limits for indoor small gatherings and indoor private social gatherings, masking protocols,



Overview of Types of Gatherings

GATHERING TYPE		DESCRIPTION OF GATHERING
<i>Outdoor</i>	Outdoor Special Gatherings	Political protests; Religious services or ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals, but not receptions;
	Small Outdoor Gathering	All other types of outdoor gatherings (e.g. outdoor gatherings with a meal, gatherings at a park, hosted tours)
	Drive-in Gatherings	In vehicles (e.g., for movie)
<i>Indoor</i>	Indoor Religious and Cultural Ceremonial Gatherings	Indoor religious and cultural ceremonies, including wedding ceremonies and funerals but not receptions
	Indoor Private Social Gatherings	Indoor gathering in private settings, primarily residences or settings not involving a business or facility staff
	Small Indoor Gatherings	Other indoor gatherings of small groups that are not private

Frequently Asked Questions

How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These respiratory droplets enter the air when a person breathes. Even more droplets can get in the air when infected people talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets that can infect others. Transmission can occur through:

- Larger droplets. These larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Smaller droplets or infectious particles. These can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.



COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite transmission); however, this is less common.

[Monitor Your Health Daily](#). Be alert of symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay home, and get tested.

How can we help slow the spread of COVID-19?

CA Notify – another way for us to stop the spread

CA Notify (canotify.ca.gov) is an app you can add on your smartphone. It uses Bluetooth technology to recognize when you and your phone have been in close proximity to others infected with COVID-19 to help stop the spread of the virus in our community.

If you are using CA Notify and you test positive, your diagnosis will not be shared with others. However, if other people in close contact with you are also enrolled in the app, they will be told they had an exposure. They will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location or identity.

If you are using CA Notify and you were exposed to someone who tested positive and they entered their result into the app, you will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location or identity. CA Notify is available through Apple and Google. See canotify.ca.gov for more information.

What do we know about the COVID-19 Vaccine?

The vaccine is one of the most important ways to end the pandemic. The FDA, CDC as well as California's own Scientific Safety Review Workgroup have reviewed all data from clinical trials to ensure the safety and effectiveness of all COVID-19 vaccines. **Strongly encourage all personnel to get vaccinated.** Although the first vaccines that were available are estimated to be about 95% effective in preventing sickness from COVID-19 when someone is infected, we do not know how common it is for vaccinated people to get the virus and spread COVID-19 to others. Those who have received the COVID-19 vaccine are probably less likely to get COVID-19, but it is not guaranteed. Therefore, it is still very important for those who are vaccinated, and for the rest of the population who waits for their vaccines, to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic: wearing a mask that covers your mouth and nose when outside your home, avoiding gatherings, avoiding being indoors with people you don't live with, staying at least 6 feet away from others, and washing your hands often. Find out more about the vaccine, including where and when to get it at: sf.gov/covidvax

If you have received the COVID-19 vaccine, please read more about safer social interactions at: www.sfcdcp.org/lifeaftervaccine.

How can I stay as safe as possible at a gathering?

- Wear a face covering or mask. A face covering may be required in many cases at gatherings outside the house. See the [BCAT](#) for currently face covering requirements.
- Stay for a shorter period of time. The less time you spend with people you don't live with, the safer it is.
- Stay 6 feet away from people outside your household unless everyone is fully vaccinated..



- Avoid activities or sports with **unvaccinated** people unless you can stay 6 feet away from people outside your household. Sports and exercise are higher risk because people produce more respiratory droplets when they are breathing harder. If you're going to engage in sports with people outside your household, you must follow all applicable guidance including the stay at safe home order [C19-07](#) and directive [2021-01](#). Please refer to the BCAT table for key restrictions.
- Avoid activities with **unvaccinated** people like singing, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments. These activities produce many more respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. If you must participate in or be near people who are singing, speaking, chanting, shouting or playing wind instruments, see the question below: "Can we speak, sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?"
- Be prepared. Bring your own hand sanitizer to gatherings in case there's there will be no place to wash or sanitize your hands.
- Consider staying home if you are **unvaccinated** and at higher risk of serious illness from COVID-19 due to your age or medical conditions. See <https://www.sfdcp.org/vulnerable> for a list of groups at higher risk.
- Keep others safe: don't attend if you are or a family member feels ill or has COVID-19 like symptoms. For a list of symptoms, see <http://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/covid-screening.pdf>
- People at risk for severe illness with COVID-19, such as **unvaccinated** older adults and unvaccinated people with certain medical conditions, as well as those who live or care for them are strongly discouraged from participating in activities with other people outside their household where taking protective measures of wearing face masks and social distancing may be difficult, especially indoors or in crowded spaces.
- Get the COVID-19 and flu vaccines. The COVID-19 is nearly 100% effective a reducing severe outcomes for anyone who gets infected and also prevents most symptomatic infections entirely. Preventing influenza is especially important during the COVID-19 epidemic because people who have flu and COVID-19 at the same time much more likely to die.

As a business or organization hosting a gathering, what must I do?

- Complete, maintain, and implement the following documents:
- For any gathering allowed by a Health Directive, a Health and Safety Plan for the type of gathering, including COVID-19 screening for all personnel (www.sfdcp.org/screening-handout) and participants (www.sfdcp.org/screeningvisitors). The Health and Safety Plan must be provided to Host Personnel, available to participants, and posted at the physical entrance where the Host operates. See www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-health-directives.asp to find the correct link for your gathering.
- For all gatherings hosted by any business, entity, or organization, a [SFDPH Social Distancing Protocol](#) is required.
- **Signage on reporting violations of COVID-19 Health Orders.** Host Businesses or organizations are required to post signs in employee break rooms or areas informing employees of the right to report violations of COVID-19 health orders and directives by calling 311 or visiting www.sf.gov/report-health-order-violation. Signage needs to state that employee's identity will



remain anonymous. Sample signage is available online at <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>.

- Consider keeping a record of people at your gathering, especially if they are unvaccinated, in case someone is later found to have COVID-19. People with COVID-19 can infect others up to 2 days before they develop symptoms or test positive. Hosts must help public health authorities in contact tracing efforts in case an attendee develops COVID-19. We can help prevent COVID-19 transmission by contact tracing which helps identify people who may have been exposed and helping them quarantine so they don't inadvertently spread the disease.
- Any lists should be discarded after three weeks (unless your business keeps such records in the ordinary course of business).
- Try to maintain an up-to-date contact list to alert attendees in the event of potential exposure.
- For more information, see <https://covid19.ca.gov/contact-tracing>.
- Follow SFDPH's guidelines on "[COVID-19 Positive At Workplace](#)" if someone at your gathering tests positive for COVID-19.

If you are hosting an Indoor Religious/Cultural Gathering, you must adhere to the changes made on the Business Capacities and Activities Table (BCAT) as well as:

- **Post signs about the increased risk of COVID-19 indoors.** Post SFDPH Approved Signage, stating:
 - That COVID-19 is transmitted through the air and that indoor settings carry a much higher risk of infection.
 - That unvaccinated older adults and those with health risks should avoid indoor settings with crowds.
 - The maximum capacity of the space and the maximum capacity currently permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.
- **Post Ventilation signage at public entrances and all break rooms indicating which of the following systems are used:**
 - All available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open
 - Fully operational HVAC systems
 - Appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room
 - None of the above
- **Ensure that indoor spaces are well-ventilated.**

Good ventilation controls droplets and infectious particles to prevent COVID-19 transmission by:

 - *removing air containing droplets and particles from the room;*
 - *diluting the concentration of droplets and particles by adding fresh, uncontaminated air;*
 - *filtering room air, removing droplets and particles from the air.*
- Comply with the ventilation protocols laid out at Section 4.i of the [Stay-Safer-At-Home Order](#), including to review and follow [SFDPH's Ventilation Guidance](#).



- Implement as many improvements in the [Ventilation Guidance](#) as feasible. Keep a hand-annotated copy of the Ventilation Guidance showing which specific improvements were considered and implemented.
- Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the establishment, including:
 - Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions allow and if permitted by fire and building safety requirements. Fire doors should not be wedged or propped open.
 - **Doors and Windows** required to be kept closed for **fire/life safety purposes** are exempt. For example, fire doors must remain closed. Make sure open windows do not create falling hazards especially for children.
 - If an HVAC system is present:
 - Ensure HVAC systems are serviced and functioning properly.
 - Evaluate possibilities for upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible.
 - Increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, readjusting or overriding recirculation (“economizer”) dampers.
 - Disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
 - Evaluate running the building ventilation system even when the building is unoccupied to maximize ventilation. At the minimum, reset timer-operated ventilation systems so that they start operating 1-2 hours before the building opens and 2-3 hours after the building is closed.
 - Consider installing portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
 - If the establishment uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the direction of fans to minimize air blowing from one individual’s space to another’s space.
 - For more information and additional resources, please see the following: San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH): www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation.

As a host/organizer, how else can I keep our gathering as safe as possible?

- Limit the duration of your gathering to the shortest time possible, even if it is outdoors. The shorter it is, the safer it is.
- Avoid riskier activities such as singing, speaking, chanting, shouting, and playing wind or brass instruments, even outdoors. The activities produce large numbers of respiratory droplets, increasing the risk of COVID-19. If you must take part in these activities, maximize physical distance from others at all times and wear a Face Covering whenever required. See more under “Can we sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?”
- Promote COVID-19 and flu vaccination. The COVID-19 vaccine is nearly 100% effective at reducing severe outcomes for anyone who gets infected and also prevents most symptomatic infections entirely. And flu vaccines are critical in the fight against COVID-19 by (1) keeping workers and communities healthy and (2) reducing strain on our healthcare and testing systems that are responding to COVID-19. Post signage to encourage flu vaccine among personnel and participants. Find out more information at <http://sfgdcp.org/flu>.



What else can I do to decrease the risk of our indoor gathering?

In addition to the measures laid out in *“How can I keep a gathering as safe as possible?”*

- There is always less risk when participants are vaccinated.
- For **Indoor Private Social Gatherings**, refer to the [safer social guidance](#).
- For **Small Indoor Gatherings**, follow the rules listed in Section 13 of Appendix C-2 of [Order No. C19-07v](#) (which include the following: following listed capacity limits; wearing of face coverings as required by the order; allow eating or drinking only with safety protocols for indoor dining; and, whenever possible, maintaining six feet physical distance between households and addressing ventilation improvements).
- For **Cultural or Religious activities at private residences or other indoor settings** follow the rules listed for **Small Indoor Gatherings** or if you want to increase your capacity limits follow the [Indoor Worship Directive](#).
- Get vaccinated when it’s your turn.
- Implement ventilation measures to bring in more fresh air in your indoor space.
- Make sure that personnel and participants are aware that indoor gatherings are much higher risk for COVID-19 than outdoor gatherings, so they can decide if they can safely attend.
- Consider making changes to minimize crowding and make physical distancing easier for people from different households. Examples include moving podiums, creating physical barriers, taping off or moving seating, identifying entrance and exits, indicating walking paths in areas where participants pray or kneel on the floor, prohibiting access to common areas.

Can I host more than one gathering on the same day?

Yes, as long as you schedule gatherings far enough apart that participants from different gatherings do not mix, and you can clean high-touch areas regularly and in accordance with CDC guidance.

- Hosts must separate outdoor gatherings by at least 20 minutes and indoor gatherings by 30 minutes between gatherings, to allow time for participants to exit and for personnel to clean.
- Keep the spaces clean in accordance with [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#).
- Hosts may not hold more than one Outdoor Gathering at a single location at the same time.
- Hosts may not hold both indoor and outdoor gatherings simultaneously to allow for more people to attend a gathering (e.g. indoor and outdoor wedding or funeral).

Can I hold more than one indoor worship or cultural ceremonial gatherings at the same time in a large facility?

Yes, you may hold simultaneous or overlapping indoor gatherings if all of the following conditions are met:

- Each gathering must be held in its own, physically separate space, either in different buildings, or in different rooms separated by sealed floor-to-ceiling walls. Partitions may not be used to divide an indoor space for two different gatherings.
- Participants from different gatherings are not allowed to mix.



- Different gatherings must use separate entrances and exits. If only one shared entrance and exit exist, the Host must ensure participants from different gatherings do not enter or exit at the same time, for example, by staggering start and end times.
- Personnel and participants must not move between gatherings.
- The host must develop a written plan to describe how they will keep people in different gatherings from mixing, as outlined in Section 4.1.3 of the [Indoor Worship Directive](#).
- In general, keep the areas that are not reserved for an indoor gathering closed to participants, unless expressly permitted under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.

Can personnel who are not involved in a gathering work on-site while a gathering is taking place?

Yes. Personnel are allowed to work inside the facility while multiple indoor gatherings occur as long as staff follow rules for [the Business Operating Office Facilities Directive](#) and [Stay-Safer-At-Home Order](#).

Can we eat or drink at gatherings?

Yes, in some cases. Limits of the number of people who may gather and eat and drink together at an outdoor gathering are listed in the [BCAT](#).

- Follow the masking and distancing requirement listed in the [BCAT](#).
- Avoid hand-to-mouth contact between different people. Respiratory droplets from one person's mouth can land on the other person's hand, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- As an example, communion rituals could have the priest and participants masked at all times, with the participants receiving communion in the hand and moving away from others to briefly lower their mask to place the sacramental bread on the tongue (see example video: www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q8tg8A5jmP0).
- People from different households should not drink out of the same glass or cup. They also should not share utensils. If glasses, cups, or utensils are shared, they must be cleaned between households, and anyone handling the shared item must also wash or sanitize their hands.
- Self-service food, potlucks, or family-style eating with shared serving plates or drink dispensers are not allowed.

Must we wear masks/ face coverings all the time?

- You must wear masks as specified in the [Face Covering Order](#).
- Proper use of face coverings is even more critical when in higher risk gatherings, such as indoors.
- The [BCAT](#) details instances of settings where masks may be removed. When in an environment where facial coverings are required, there may be essential moments in a ritual or ceremony where they may need to be briefly removed. A person may briefly remove their face covering only if they (1) maintain social distance and do not speak, recite, chant, shout or sing; or (2) isolate themselves from all other people to speak or recite, such as by speaking inside an enclosed chamber or behind a plastic or glass partition or face shield at the required physical distance listed in the BCAT.



What about camping, cookouts, or BBQs?

- Bring your own supplies including soap, hand sanitizer, paper towels, etc.
- If camping with people from outside your household, follow all applicable [Isolation and Quarantine guidance](#). For vaccinated individuals see www.sfgdcp.org/lifeaftervaccine.

Can we sing, chant, shout, or play wind instruments at our gathering?

Please see the [BCAT](#) for restrictions for singing, speaking, chanting, shouting, or play wind instruments. Also note, that this activity is subject to State restrictions:

- Face coverings and Instrument covers are often required and are always strongly encouraged during these activities. Performers indoors are strongly encouraged to be masked at all times as much as possible including when not performing.
- For wind/brass instruments, Instruments must not be shared among individuals of different households. If relevant to the instrument, performers should use a large, thin, plastic-lined pad on their chest and lap to collect spit.
- Consider using amplifiers to be able to sing, chant, yell, or play wind instruments more quietly, producing fewer respiratory droplets.
- Consider a physical barrier indoors between the performer and others.
- Have performers position themselves so that voices and air exiting from instruments is directed away from Participants (for example, in silhouette).
- Encourage performers to be fully vaccinated or, if not, to get tested for COVID-19 within the 72 hours prior to their performance date. People can get tested by their regular healthcare provider or at CityTestSF (<https://sf.gov/citytestsf>).
- Anyone who sings, chants, shouts, or plays a wind instrument must **maintain at least the minimum distancing requirements** from any other person that are listed in the [BCAT](#).
- Indoor musical activities should take place in a large, well ventilated area (see www.sfgdcp.org/COVID-ventilation).
- When indoors, minimize the amount of time engaged in these activities.

At a drive-in gathering, can the host sell food and drinks to the audience?

Host may sell food and drinks to audience in a drive-in gathering. DPH recommends that food and drinks be ordered online and delivered directly to the vehicles. In-person purchase and pickup of food and drinks may be allowed if the host can:

- Set up a separate designated space for in-person purchases;
- Use signage and physical barriers (such as tape, ropes, marks) as well as develop a metering system to ensure patrons and Personnel can maintain six feet of physical distancing at all times;
 - A metering system can be as simple as designating time slots for vehicles from different groups to pick up food and drinks.
- Ensure patrons do not eat or drink around the designated space, do not gather or queue outside the designated area, and immediately return to their vehicles after picking up their items.



- Please follow the guidelines outlined in the [Directive 2020-28](#) for key restrictions.

Resources

Useful COVID-19 Resources to keep checking:

- San Francisco guidance: www.sfdcp.org/covid19
- FAQ General Ventilation: www.sfdph.org/dph/files/ig/FAQ-General-Ventilation.pdf
- San Francisco Health Officer orders: www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp
- Printable resources such as signage: <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Religious Schools for Youth and Daycare Arrangement at House of Worship guidelines:
 - [2020-14-Guidance-Childcare.pdf \(sfdph.org\)](#)
 - [Reopening TK-12 Schools for In-Person Instruction Interim Guidance for School Year 2020-2021 \(sfdph.org\)](#)
- California guidance:
 - <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/>
 - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>
- CDC guidance: www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/index.html