



San Francisco is experiencing a rapid and significant surge of COVID-19 cases. Accordingly, beginning at 12:00 noon on November 29, 2020, and until there is a further order of the Health Officer, all Houses of Worship must temporarily cease hosting or operating Indoor Religious Gatherings as provided under Section 9 of Appendix C2 to Health Officer Order C19-07o and Health Officer Directive 2020-34. Houses of Worship may continue Minimum Basic Operations and may continue to host Individual Indoor Prayer and indoor funerals with no more than 12 attendees as permitted under Health Officer Order C19-07o. To the extent of any conflict or inconsistency with any other provision of this directive or guidance, these requirements control.

DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-34

**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: September 30, 2020

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. C19-07j issued on September 30, 2020 (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 This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer.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:**

- 1. This Directive applies to all individuals (“Participants”) participating in indoor gatherings for religious or cultural ceremonies, such as weddings and funerals (collectively referred to as “Indoor Religious Gatherings”) and all houses of worship 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**



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(“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. C19-12c issued on July 22, 2020, and any future amendment to that order), hand sanitizer or handwashing stations, or both, and disinfectant and related supplies to any of that House of Worship’s Personnel, all as required by the Best Practices. Where feasible, each House of Worship is also encouraged to provide such items to Participants of Indoor Religious Gatherings or to make sure that Participants bring their own to the gathering. If any House of Worship is unable to provide these required items to Personnel 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



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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.

Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH,
Health Officer of the
City and County of San Francisco

Date: September 30, 2020