



NEW YORK STATE

Reopening New York

Guidelines for Religious and Funeral Services

These guidelines apply to all religious and funeral gatherings, including burial and committal services, statewide.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all operators of religious and funeral services should stay up to date with any changes to state and federal requirements related to religious and funeral services and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For any religious or funeral service occurring indoors, limit the congregant/attendee capacity to 10 people. If separate buildings are available for use, each building may hold a maximum of 10 people at the same time, so long as the buildings have separate entrances and exits designated and groups do not interact. ✓ A distance of at least 6 ft. must be maintained amongst all individuals at all times, unless safety or the core activity requires a shorter distance (e.g. pallbearing) or the individuals are members of the same household. However, any singing activity must provide for a distance between individuals of 12 ft., subject to additional protective measures. ✓ Any time employees, volunteers, and/or attendees must come within 6 ft. of one another (or 12 ft., if singing), they must wear acceptable face coverings, unless they are members of the same household. ✓ Prohibit the use of tightly confined spaces (e.g. elevators, vehicles) by more than one individual at time, unless all individuals are wearing face coverings. If occupied by more than one person, keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity. ✓ Limit in-person gatherings to 10 people or fewer (e.g. rehearsals, congregational meetings). ✓ Prohibit holding or shaking hands of members in different households during services or prayers. ✓ Limit activities involving singing (e.g. choir, soloist, cantor, musical ensemble), unless 12 ft. of separation can be provided between individuals or additional distancing or physical barriers can reduce transmission of respiratory droplets. ✓ Establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Limit in-person presence of staff to only those employees/volunteers necessary. ✓ Modify the use and/or restrict the number of stations (e.g. podiums) and seating areas, so that staff members, volunteers, and attendees are at least 6 ft. apart in all directions and are not sharing stations or seats without cleaning and disinfection between use, unless all individuals are members of the same household. ✓ Hold services outdoors (e.g. services for religious gatherings, graveside-only funerals) and/or provide remote service options (e.g. live streaming, AM/FM broadcast), when possible. ✓ Offer advanced sign-ups to manage capacity. ✓ Change or remove practices that involve close contact or sharing things among members of different households (e.g. sharing a car or limousine ride between locations, providing food/beverages for attendees before, during, or after the event or service). ✓ Hold drive-in services. Ensure attendees remain in the vehicle in which they arrived and that they don't interact physically with clergy, employees, or attendees in other vehicles; vehicles should contain only members of a single household, and cars must be at least 6 ft. apart or use alternate parking spaces. ✓ Reduce bi-directional foot traffic by posting signs with arrows in narrow aisles, hallways, or pews.



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	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide workers with an acceptable face covering at no-cost to the worker and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement. ✓ Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, and face shields. ✓ Face coverings are required at all times except while seated, provided all individuals are 6 ft. apart except for immediate household members. Faith leaders, officiants, volunteers, and/or attendees must be prepared to don a face covering if another person unexpectedly comes within 6 ft. (e.g. when walking to seats). ✓ Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and may not be shared. Consult the CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as instructions on use and cleaning. ✓ If providing gowns or other garments, ensure they are cleaned and laundered between uses. ✓ Train workers on how to don, doff, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE. ✓ Limit the sharing of objects (e.g. religious texts, collection plates) as well as the touching of shared surfaces (e.g. pews, instruments, doors, railings); or, require individuals to wear gloves when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or, require individuals to sanitize or wash their hands before and after contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place donation plates/boxes in central location with proper distancing protocols in place. ✓ Remove religious texts from pews or benches, and encourage congregation to bring their own. ✓ If choir/musical ensemble meets enhanced distancing measures, encourage members to launder their own gowns at home and bring their own instruments, where possible. ✓ Adapt certain religious practices that traditionally require close contact in order to minimize contact between individuals. ✓ Empty fonts or other shared water-related service or ceremonial activities.
Hygiene and Cleaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain cleaning logs on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Wherever possible, increase ventilation of outdoor air (e.g. opening windows and doors) while maintaining safety precautions.

STAY HOME.

STOP THE SPREAD.

SAVE LIVES.



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Hygiene and Cleaning (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on site, including handwashing with soap, water, and paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. Hand sanitizer must be placed throughout the location for use by all attending or working. Place receptacles around the facility for disposal of soiled items. ✓ Provide and encourage participants to use cleaning/disinfection supplies before and after use of shared and frequently touched surfaces, followed by hand hygiene. ✓ Ensure distancing rules are adhered to in restrooms by reducing capacity, where feasible. ✓ Regularly clean and disinfect the location or facility and conduct more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals (e.g. restrooms) and for frequently touched surfaces. ✓ If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfecting causes safety hazards or degrades the material (e.g. religious artifact), put in place hand hygiene stations, supply gloves, and/or limit the number of individuals touching such material. ✓ Cleaning and disinfecting of facilities, shared surfaces, and other areas, as well as shared objects, must be performed at least after each service, using Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19. ✓ For funeral-related services, prohibit touching, hugging, or kissing the body of a deceased person who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, per CDC guidance. ✓ Prohibit shared food and beverages (e.g. buffet-style meals). 	



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Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines, and that you will implement them. ✓ Post signage throughout the facility to remind individuals to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. ✓ Develop a communications plan for employees, volunteers, and congregants, that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. ✓ If an employee or faith leader tests positive for COVID-19, operator must immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts who had close contact with the worker, while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal law and regulations. ✓ Maintain a continuous log of every person, including workers and visitors, who may have close contact with other individuals at the gathering site or area; excluding deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means. The log is not required to maintain a list of attendees. ✓ Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop webpages, text and email groups, and social media campaigns to provide information to staff, volunteers, and attendees. ✓ Encourage attendees to provide contact information so they can be logged and contacted for contact tracing, if necessary.
Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees, faith leaders, and volunteers, asking about (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Responses must be reviewed daily and documented. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Offer optional health screenings for attendees. ✓ Perform screening remotely (e.g. by telephone or electronic survey), before people arrive, to the extent possible. ✓ Coordinate screening to prevent people from intermingling in close contact with each other prior to completion of the screening.



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Screening (cont'd)	<p>People who present with COVID-19 symptoms should be sent home to contact their health care provider for medical assessment and COVID-19 testing. If tested positive, they may only return after completing a 14-day quarantine.</p> <p>People who present with no symptoms but have tested positive may return to only after completing a 14-day quarantine.</p> <p>People who have had close contact with a confirmed or suspected person with COVID-19 but are not experiencing any symptoms should inform the operator of the religious or funeral service and may be able to work with additional precautions, including regular monitoring for symptoms and temperature, required facing covering at all times, and appropriate social distancing from others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ A person who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms should not be allowed to enter the gathering place and should be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing. ✓ Attendees cannot be mandated to complete a health screen or provide contact information but may be encouraged to do so. ✓ Screeners should be trained by individuals familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols and wear appropriate PPE, including at a minimum, a face covering. ✓ Have a plan for cleaning, disinfection, and contact tracing in the event of a positive case. 	