



Religious Establishments, Weddings, Domestic Partnerships and Funerals Services

Updated September 22, 2021

There is a night-time curfew in effect from 12:30am - 05:00am and the below guidance must be followed.

Travel Advice for Staff, Volunteers, and Attendees

The Ministry of Health advises against any non-essential travel during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The organizer should develop travel policies for both employees and attendees to ensure the information is adequately communicated.

For further guidance visit the web pages for [travellers](#). [1]

Contact Tracing

Contact details of staff and attendees must be recorded and kept for 21 days.

If requested, this information must be provided to Public Health Officers to assist with contact tracing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The contact details to be collected include:

- The Full name of each attendee will be recorded
- Date and time of visit
- Phone number
- Email address

It is advisable to have door stewards to welcome guests and remind them of the requirements as necessary.

Gathering Size

Indoor and outdoor religious services (other than funerals and weddings) are allowed and the **maximum gathering size does not apply**, although **physical distancing measures may be applied**. However:

- **Indoor and outdoor (graveside) funerals** are allowed with a **maximum of 20 persons plus the officiant and funeral home staff**. - For an *outdoor gathering limit exemption* an application must be submitted to the Ministry of Youth, Culture, and Sport.
- **Indoor and outdoor weddings and domestic partnerships** are allowed with a **maximum of 20 persons plus the officiant and photographer**. - For an *outdoor gathering limit exemption* an application must be submitted to the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport.

Attendees

- **Choir** members to be spaced 6ft apart for singing, with a mask worn at all times when not singing.
- **Congregation** members must be spaced 3ft apart, except if in same household, and wear masks throughout the service. No mask removal for singing.
- **Officiants** must be spaced 6ft apart and wear a mask when not speaking.

Please note: singing and playing of wind and brass instruments may increase the projection of respiratory droplets (aerosols), which is why we advise physical distancing between members of the public and recommend, in addition to physical distancing, the use of outdoor services and facilities whenever possible.

Services

Outdoor or virtual services may be used where practical.

Consider offering multiple services to allow more people to attend.

If multiple services is an option, ensure there is adequate time between services to allow for:

- The congregation to leave
- Cleaning/sanitizing of seats/equipment to take place
- The next congregation to arrive

Consider special services for the elderly and those with medical conditions who are especially vulnerable to COVID-19.

If separate services are held for seniors/vulnerable persons these should occur first before other services of the day.

Aerosols can linger in air so those services should precede, not follow other services.

The more time allowed between services generally the better i.e. early morning service followed by lunch time service followed by evening service is better than services at 8am, 10am, and 11:30am. All outdoor ventilation that can happen by opening doors and windows between and during services would be ideal as well. Please think long and hard before exposing our seniors and vulnerable members to high risks.

Establishment

Use Wardens/Deacons to:

- Direct traffic flow and car parking
- Ensure queues outside the religious establishment maintain strict physical distancing

- Control choke points inside the establishment
- Ensure the use of multiple doors to minimise choke points for people entering and exiting the buildings, and to ensure traffic flow.
- Ensure the essential sanitation of items that will be touched i.e. donation platters.

The use of shared hymnals/bibles/books is not recommended. Instead, we encourage the use of a multimedia projector screen with relevant passages to refer to or ask people to bring their own.

Greetings & Physical Distancing

Congregants of separate households must AVOID handshakes, hugs, kisses and/or holding hands, at this present time, which is common during prayer.

The Faith leader should give verbal announcements about hand hygiene and the need for continued physical distancing during the gathering.

Hand hygiene and physical distancing requirements should be placed in highly visible locations of the religious establishments.

Hand sanitizers must be available for use at every entrance and exit.

Cleaning

Ensure that a thorough cleaning with antibacterial cleaning cloths is undertaken throughout the religious establishment giving specific attention to door handles, seats, rails, light switches and all bathroom and kitchen surfaces and meeting places

Have a thorough cleaning of all surfaces outlined above between services. Maintain logs of the cleaning.

Ensure appropriate capacity in bathrooms to allow for physical distancing

Ensure bathrooms are thoroughly cleaned between services. Maintain logs of the cleaning.

Hygiene/Bathroom Facilities

Hand sanitizer stations must be at each entry point of the facility.

Signage at certain locations must be in place to reinforce the rules.

Ensure hot running water and liquid hand soap is available in all bathrooms and kitchens for use during the gathering.

Ensure paper towel and toilet paper via dispenser(s) are available for use during the gathering.

Remind all congregants to wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before drying thoroughly.

Encourage congregants to use disposable paper when touching toilet handles, bathroom taps, and when opening bathroom doors.

Ensure trash bins are available, regularly cleaned and emptied during the gathering and available for people to open the doors using the paper towels.

Ensure tissues are readily available to catch coughs, sneezes and for nose-wiping and trash bins are available throughout the church to collect them.

Promote the use of knuckles to operate light switches.

Promote the opening of doors with elbows or tissues.

Luncheons and Agape Feasts

Luncheons are not recommended at this time as the removal of masks and close contact between different households increases the risk of transmission.

Feasts must follow the [Guidance for Indoor and Outdoor Dining](#) [2].

Wakes, receptions or other celebrations

The total attendees allowed is **20 persons** (re both indoor and outdoor gatherings). **Masks must be worn.**

If a larger number is desired, apply to the Ministry of Youth, Culture and Sport for an exemption.

Strict physical distancing, however must be maintained which includes:

- Six feet; or
- Three feet, provided each person is wearing a mask which completely covers their nose and mouth.

Please note: singing and playing of wind and brass instruments may increase the projection of respiratory droplets (aerosols), which is why we advise physical distancing between members of the public and recommend, in addition to physical distancing, the use of outdoor services and facilities whenever possible.

Anyone who is showing symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) (a new continuous cough, a high temperature or loss of taste and smell) should not attend the funeral or marriage due to the risk that they pose to others; remote participation should be considered, for example live streaming.

Persons travelling to Bermuda for a wedding, funeral, or domestic partnership, should not attend until permitted to in accordance with the travel guidance found [here](#) [1].

Traditionally, at funerals people will queue to meet and express condolences to next of kin. This should be avoided to prevent crowding.

Remember only people from the same household can be closer to each other than six feet without a mask.

The signing of the register needs to be undertaken in a place where the participants can keep at a safe distance. Many vestries will be unsuitable. All those signing the register should sanitize their hands before signing, complete all the signatures necessary for them and then sanitize them again.

Service books should be avoided. Use single use printed service sheets.

If in a religious establishment, it should be fully cleaned before and after the event.