



GOVERNMENT OF GUAM
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES
DIPATTAMENTON SALUT PUPBLEKO YAN SETBISION SUSIAT



LOURDES A. LEON GUERRERO
GOVERNOR, MAGA'HAGA'

JOSHUA F. TENORIO
LT. GOVERNOR, SIGUNDO MAGA'LAIH

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ARTHUR U. SAN AGUSTIN, MHR
ACTING DIRECTOR

LAURENT SF DUENAS, MPH, BSN
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

TERRY G. AGUON
DEPUTY DIRECTOR

DPHSS Guidance Memo 2020-040

Re: Minimum Requirements for Places of Worship

Outlined below are requirements for places of worship to minimize the potential for transmission of COVID-19. These requirements are intended for religious ceremonies held within the place of worship, including services involving the administration of sacraments or celebration of high holy days, funeral ceremonies, and other religious services. Alternative means of participation such as remote/virtual attendance, separate seating, and/or separate services are encouraged for congregants especially those at higher risk of severe illness, such as the elderly and the immunocompromised, to minimize their risk.

Staff, including but not limited to altar servers and volunteers, congregants, and visitors who are sick or exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19, or who have family members who are ill, should stay home.

The Department of Public Health and Social Services asks all Places of Worship to strongly encourage their employees and congregants to download the Guam COVID Alert app. For more information visit guamcovidalert.guam.gov.

A. General Restrictions and Requirements

- Religious ceremonies occurring indoors are limited to no more than 25% of the facility's occupancy load.
- Attendees who do not live in the same household must maintain a physical distance of at least 6 feet. Social distancing must be enforced in all types of ceremonies and/or gatherings.
- Places of worship must provide physical distancing guides, such as tape on floors or walkways and signs on walls, to ensure that staff, congregants, and visitors remain at least 6 feet apart in lines and at other times.
- Whenever possible and reasonable, establish "one-way routes" inside and outside the facility.
- Prior to the start, and at the conclusion, of the ceremony, thoroughly clean and disinfect the facility using disinfectant cleaning supplies according to CDC guidelines:

- <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- If multiple services are offered, schedule services far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces between services.
- Disinfect microphones and stands, music stands, instruments, and other items on pulpits and podiums between each service.
- Post readily visible signage at the entrance and throughout the facility to remind staff and congregants of the need to wear face masks, social distance, follow respiratory and hand hygiene, and prohibit entry of individuals with COVID-19 symptoms.
- Staff, including altar servers, congregants, and visitors must wear face masks at all times. Such masks must cover both the mouth and the nose.
 - The place of worship should adopt U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for face coverings for certain population and situations, including those with certain medical conditions:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
- Whenever possible, prohibit the sharing of commonly used objects, such as religious aids and microphones.
- Congregational singing is prohibited; however, a soloist with one instrumentalist, or recorded music, is permitted.
 - Soloist must wear face mask when not singing.
 - Soloist is encouraged to not face the congregants or other individuals and use a microphone while singing.
- Prohibit the touching or kissing of devotional and other objects that the community is accustomed to handling communally.
- Prohibit physical contact with persons outside of your household unless medically necessary.
- Discontinue passing offering plates, trays or baskets, and similar items that move between people. Use alternative giving options such as secure drop boxes that do not require opening or closing and can be cleaned and disinfected. Consider implementing digital systems that allow congregants/visitors to make touch-free offerings.
- Prop or hold doors open during peak periods when congregants are entering and exiting facilities, if possible, and in accordance with security and safety protocols.

B. Promote Healthy Hygiene Practices

- Promote healthy hand hygiene by encouraging staff to wash their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds before and after the ceremony.
- Prior to entering the facility, require congregants to either wash their hands with soap and water, or provide hand-gel sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Provide and maintain personal protective equipment for staff to perform enhanced cleaning/disinfection.
- Wash religious garments and linens thoroughly after each service or event. Workers, congregants, and visitors should wear gloves when handling others' dirty linen, shoes, etc.
- Where possible, do not clean floors by sweeping or other methods that can disperse pathogens into the air. Use a vacuum with a HEPA filter wherever possible.

For any questions, contact the Division of Environmental Health at 300-9579 or via email, dphss-deh@dphss.guam.gov.


ARTHUR U. SAN AGUSTIN, MHR
Acting Director