

COVIDSafe Plan

A **Place of Worship** may operate only for the following activities (as from 11:59pm Tuesday 27 October 2020): **Indoor religious gatherings or ceremonies** for a maximum of 10 people (**up to 20 in regional Vic BUT ONLY in separate groups each of max 10 - with such groups either 10m apart or in separate rooms - each with a religious practitioner to lead**) if the overall density quotient allows, plus 1 **religious practitioner**, with provisos:

- all requirements of this approved COVIDSafe Plan are agreed to;
- the gathering or ceremony is no more than 90 min in duration;
- no food, drink, crockery etc are permitted to be shared;
- there is only one gathering at a time, whether indoor or outdoor.
- **Outdoor religious gatherings or ceremonies** for a maximum of 20 people (**50 in regional Vic**) if held in open space **proximate** to a place of worship, plus 1 **religious practitioner**, with the same 4 provisos as above.
- **Weddings** for up to 10 guests indoors, plus the couple being married, plus the celebrant and photographer (i.e. 14 persons altogether)
- **Funerals:**
 - Indoors – 20 indoors, plus those necessary to provide the service;
 - Outdoors – 20 outdoors (**50 in regional Vic**), plus those necessary to provide the service.

NB in all counts, infants under 1 year of age are not counted towards the limit.

Below is a COVIDSafe Plan offered to Sessions.

It's prepared for use within the Presbyterian Church of Victoria, whether Melbourne or Regional Victoria and is set out with the same six points as the DHHS template for Victoria workplaces.

As we meet for the permitted activity of “**Indoor religious gatherings**” there are six COVIDSafe principles that apply, and each Session should sign-off on the following:

1. Ensure physical distancing

- a. We will observe the maximum number of people permitted for the “**Indoor religious gatherings**” as per the current CHO Directions for our region.
- b. We will enforce the 1.5 metre social distancing requirement at all times by cordoning off pews, rearranging furniture or removing some seating so as to ensure physical distancing.
- c. We will display signs to show limits at the entrance of all enclosed areas where limits apply. These signs outline the maximum occupancy of areas so as not to exceed the overall density quotient of one person per 4 square metres.
- d. We will use an entry and exit system to the building making it as efficient as possible so as to minimise congestion or gathering of people, allocating different doors for entry and exit.

2. Wear a face covering

- a. We require for entry to worship a face covering that is a fitted face mask, of at least two plies, that covers the nose and mouth to provide the wearer protection against infection (save where a person has a lawful exception).
- b. Face coverings will be worn by all worshipers at all times and we will monitor the continued use of face coverings by worshipers.
- c. When engaged in activities where clear enunciation or visibility of the mouth is essential the worship leader at that time will not be required to wear a face covering.
- d. We will make available compliant face coverings to any who come unprepared.

3. Practise good hygiene

- a. We encourage regular handwashing and require general hygiene to be practiced.
- b. We have readily-available hand sanitiser.
- c. We have appropriate ventilation.
- d. We ensure all surfaces frequently touched, including lecterns, microphones, light switches, doorknobs, handrails etc, are cleaned immediately after worship by people using single-use disposable gloves with

disinfectant labelled as anti-viral.

- e. We maintain a cleaning log that is kept for a minimum of 28 days.

4. Keep records and act quickly if workers become unwell

- a. We request the first name, contact phone number, time of entry and exit, and area of church premises attended of all worshipers who attend for longer than 15 minutes.
- b. We are required to hold these records for 28 days for the purposes of contact tracing and are required to hold these records for 28 days for the purposes of contact tracing subject to the COVIDSafe Plan privacy instructions found [here](#)
- c. After 28 days, we will destroy the records.
- d. If a worshiper or faith leader tests positive:
- we will immediately notify the relevant authorities including DHHS and WorkSafe Victoria;
 - we will notify all other worshipers via the phone number supplied when entering the church;
 - we will follow all directions listed in Workplace Directions (No 7), or its replacement, when responding to either suspected or confirmed cases of COVID-19.
- e. We ask worshipers to declare verbally before each worship service that they are free of symptoms, have not been in contact with a confirmed case, nor have been directed to isolate.
- f. No person who declares themselves unwell will be permitted to enter.

5. Avoid interactions in enclosed spaces

- a. We will reduce the amount of time people spend in enclosed spaces beyond what is necessary and practical for the conduct of worship services, and will consider using outdoor spaces for some activities, if appropriate.
- b. Windows and doors will be open for the duration of the worship service to enhance airflow and optimise fresh air.

6. Create workforce bubbles

- a. This is not so applicable for churches, but we will ensure there is no overlap of worshipers entering or exiting the church by staggering start and finish times to reduce the use of common areas.

This plan has been prepared for the use of the _____ Presbyterian Church based on the best available information as at: this date, 27 October 2020.

Location of the Place of Worship: _____

Contact: _____

Date: _____, Session of _____, Minute No. _____

Signed (Session Clerk): _____

Additional Notes

- Keep your plan up to date:
 - your COVIDSafe Plan must be reviewed and updated as restrictions or public health advice changes;
 - you may need to provide your COVIDSafe Plan to an Authorised Officer or WorkSafe Inspector upon request, or in the event of a confirmed positive case at your place of worship;
 - expect inspections and audits to ensure implementation and compliance with your COVIDSafe plan.
- Share your plan, once approved, with your members and worshipers.
- A **religious practitioner** (whether employed or engaged) is a person so defined under the Tax Assessment Act 1997 (Cth).