For indoor services, places of worship must monitor member entries and exits and limit occupancy at all times to the greater of the following:

- 40% of the building’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder
- Buildings for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow 8 persons (including staff) per 1,000 square feet of accessible space
- In any case, no enclosed space (e.g. a single room, basement) within the building may exceed occupancy of 8 persons per 1,000 square feet
- All occupancy counts and calculations shall include attendees, staff, and other workers

If feasible, places of worship are encouraged to arrange online sign-up for services in advance in order to monitor and limit the number of attendees.

Attendees who are not part of the same immediate household must be seated at least 6 feet apart. Members of the same immediate household are permitted to sit together and less than 6 feet apart.

If there is fixed seating, rows should be blocked off and kept empty to allow for sufficient distancing between rows.

Promote ventilation for enclosed spaces where possible. For example, consider opening windows and doors to allow airflow.

Social distancing and to post signage indicating the maximum number of persons permitted per row.

Hygiene protocols:

- Ensure that attendees and workers have access to handwashing facilities, including soap and running water, and allow workers sufficient break time to wash hands, as necessary. Places of worship are also encouraged to make alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol available, if possible.

Places of Worship may refuse entry to a person who refuses to wear a face covering or mask for non-medical reasons.

Places of worship are encouraged to hold services virtually or outdoors and to ensure that attendees who are not from the same immediate household are spaced at least 6 feet apart. When conducting services, places of worship must abide by the following requirements.

Hygiene protocols:

- Ensure that attendees and workers have access to handwashing facilities, including soap and running water, and allow workers sufficient break time to wash hands, as necessary. Places of worship are also encouraged to make alcohol-based hand sanitizers with at least 60% alcohol available, if possible.

Additional details on Sector-Specific Protocols can be found at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts
PLACES OF WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS SERVICES

MA COVID-19 Checklist

STAFFING & OPERATIONS
Include safety procedures in the operations

☐ Places of Worship shall communicate to members and workers that they should not attend services in-person if any of the following are true:
  • Member or worker is experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100.0 and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle/body aches, runny nose/congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
  • Member or worker has had "close contact" with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. "Close contact" means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic
  • Member or worker has been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by their doctor or a local public health official

☐ Places of worship shall not have communal gathering pre or post service (e.g., coffee hours or other food services)

☐ Places of worship may allow small gatherings (such as support group meetings) to be held with 25 persons or fewer

☐ Places of worship running food pantries or other prepackaged food distribution may continue to do so

☐ Any childcare services should follow the latest EEC child-care guidance, available on the EEC Reopening Site

☐ If a place of worship learns that an attendee or worker or other worker has tested positive for COVID-19, it shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the place of worship is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to trace likely contacts and advise contacts to isolate and self-quarantine

☐ Places of worship are encouraged to modify the means to collect any financial contributions from attendees so as to eliminate shared contribution trays and baskets and to minimize contact. Consider setting up a no-touch method to collect contributions, and encouraging contributions through mail or electronic means

☐ Places of worship are encouraged to modify communal rituals, like taking communion or passing of the peace, so as to limit contact with others. Consider distributing, where applicable, prepackaged communion or sacraments

CLEANING & DISINFECTING
Incorporate robust hygiene protocols

☐ Places of worship shall be cleaned and disinfected between each service, including disinfection of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, microphones, shared instruments)

☐ In event of a positive case, follow current CDC guidance on cleaning and disinfecting areas when someone has a COVID-19 diagnosis

☐ If a Place of worship learns that an attendee or worker or other worker has tested positive for COVID-19, it shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the place of worship is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine

Additional details on Sector-Specific Protocols can be found at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/reopening-massachusetts