



Frequently Asked Questions for Attendees at Outdoor Faith-Based Gatherings

Updated August 17, 2020

This document was updated to reflect new face covering requirements for children.

The following guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by local facilities, and will be posted at www.sfdcp.org. This interim guidance may change as knowledge, community transmission, and availability of PPE and testing change.

AUDIENCE: Attendees that plan to attend a small out-door faith-based gathering.

Summary of Key Points

- San Francisco Department of Public Health strongly recommends that gatherings should be conducted exclusively online.
- Only outdoor faith-based gatherings are currently allowed. No indoor services or ceremonies may be held at places of worship or other facilities.
- Outdoor attendance is currently restricted to no more than 12 attendees, including staff, at any time.
- Outdoor faith-based gatherings should follow the same current guidance as for all outdoor gatherings: www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/Gatherings-Tips.pdf

Frequently Asked Questions

How many people may attend an outdoor gathering?

- It is acceptable to have up to 12 attendees, including staff, outdoors for a gathering. This is the safest, and currently the only approved, in-person method of attending a faith-based gathering.
- To minimize risk of COVID-19, it is strongly recommended that people attend remotely if possible.
- If you are in a vulnerable population (those over age 60 or with chronic medical conditions), you should carefully consider the risks before determining whether to participate.
- Do not attend if feeling ill or experiencing any one of the following symptoms: fever, chills, repeated shaking/shivering, cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, difficulty breathing, feeling unusually weak or fatigued, new loss of taste or smell, muscle pain, headache, runny or congested nose, or diarrhea.

How should I prepare to protect myself and members of my household and others?

- You must bring face coverings for every member of your household except for:
 - Children under 2 years of age should not wear face covering
 - Children 2-9 years of age must wear a face covering if feasible
 - Attendees who have a written exemption from face covering provided by a healthcare provider are not required to wear face covering
- Bring any ceremonial clothing, books, or other objects to avoid sharing these items with other



attendees at the gathering.

- Bring hand sanitizer to use before and after touching anything, such as doors, other surfaces, and ceremonial objects.
- If making a donation or payment, do so remotely online or mail your donation or payment, rather than placing cash or check in a collection item or area.

What can I expect when I arrive at an outdoor faith-based gathering?

- You may be asked questions about having COVID-19 symptoms and/or screened for fever before entering the facility. If you have any symptoms or fever, you will not be allowed to enter the facility.
- You will be asked to adhere to distancing yourself and members of your household at least 6 feet from other attendees and staff at all times whether sitting, standing, or walking.
- You may find that aisles are designated for one-way traffic to ensure social distancing.
- You should not greet others with kisses, hugs, embracing or handshakes because of the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

What routines that I am used to may be changed to protect everyone from COVID-19 transmission?

- You should not touch objects touched by other attendees other than objects brought by you for members of your immediate household. This includes any head coverings, other types of clothing, religious objects or eating or drinking utensils.
- There should not be singing or shouting. It is clear that singing or shouting increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission. In Washington State, 87% of a choir became infected with COVID-19 after one session together.
- As mentioned above, do not make donations at the facility by placing currency or checks in a container. Make payments electronically or by mail.

Can we eat or drink at the service?

- Self-service food, potlucks, or family style eating and drinking events should not be held. By avoiding these situations, you can avoid the risk of cross contamination.
- If, as part of a faith-based ceremony, eating or drinking is required, it will be done in a way to minimize contact between people, especially involving the hands and mouth.
- Glasses, cups and utensils should not be shared. If they are, glass, cup, or utensil will be disinfected between each use and the users' hands will be cleaned using appropriate hand washing or hand sanitizer.

Will my services be as long as usual? Can we congregate and socialize after the event?

- Your services may be shorter than usual to minimize the risk of COVID-19 transmission.
- You should leave the gathering as soon as the service has concluded.

Resources

Tip Sheet and Frequently Asked Questions: Small Outdoor Gatherings
www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/covid-guidance/Gatherings-Tips.pdf



Masks and Face Coverings for the Coronavirus Pandemic

<https://sf.gov/information/masks-and-face-coverings-coronavirus-pandemic>

San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)

- Information and Guidance for the public can be viewed at www.sfdcp.org/covid19
- [Safer Social Interactions](http://www.sfdcp.org/safersocial) tips are posted at www.sfdcp.org/safersocial

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC): Interim Guidance for Communities of Faith

www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html

California Department of Public Health: Places of Worship and Providers of Religious Services and Cultural Ceremonies

<https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>