



Sioux Lookout  
First Nations  
Health Authority

**CORONAVIRUS**  
**COVID-19**

# PUBLIC HEALTH GUIDANCE

## PLACES OF WORSHIP

JULY 14, 2020

Sioux Lookout First Nations Health Authority  
COVID-19 Regional Response Team

Guidance document for community leadership, pandemic planning teams, and spiritual leaders to ensure the safety of community members as they practice worship.



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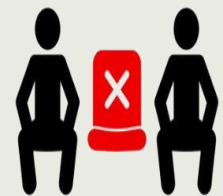
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This document is based on current advice from the province and local health authorities. Advice may change as the COVID-19 situation in our region and your community changes. Keep current with changes and update your guidelines and practices.

## LIMIT AND MONITOR ATTENDANCE

- Design the seating arrangement to be 30% of the building's official capacity at any time.
- Draw a seating plan that meets this requirement and allows participants to maintain 2m/6ft of physical distance on every side.
- If you have fixed seating, measure out and mark off spaces where people may sit.
- Household groups may stay together but will need 2m/6ft between them and others.
- If your congregation is more than 30% of the building capacity, you might plan to hold more services - as long as cleaning and disinfection can take place in between each service. See instructions on cleaning and worship online below.
- If you have been streaming services online, continue to do so to allow everyone to participate.
- Consider creating a way for participants to RSVP to services so you know who plans to attend.
- Plan how traffic will flow in and out of your building to keep 2m/6ft distancing.
- Consider using ushers to direct people in their movements and seating, take attendance, and screen for symptoms.
- If you choose not to use hosts or ushers, post clear signage and instructions for people to follow.
- Keep a list of those attending each service. In the event there is an outbreak, it will be easier to contact those who may have been exposed.
- Make an announcement ahead of time or post information outside the place of worship so that attendees know what to expect.





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## IMPLEMENT HEALTH SCREENING

- Leaders, staff, and volunteers must self-screen before starting their duties. Anyone with even one symptom of COVID-19 may not work. They should stay home and arrange to be tested.
- Signage for COVID-19 health assessment should be posted at all entrances and visible to participants regarding self-screening. Instruct participants to stop and self-assess before entering.
- Hosts and ushers taking attendance should also be screening people as they arrive.
- Persons who become ill while in the service, or those observed to have symptom(s) must go home right away and self-isolate. They should call their Nursing Station or Assessment Centre for further guidance.



## ENTRANCES AND EXITS

Provide hand hygiene stations that include soap, water, paper towel, disposal bin, and/or 70%+ alcohol-based hand sanitizer. Post signs at each entrance and exit, including:



- A notice about the maximum number of people allowed in the place of worship.
- COVID-19 health assessment sign
- A reminder that anyone with COVID-19 symptoms, or who has been in contact with someone with COVID-19 is not permitted to enter.
- Hand washing and respiratory etiquette signs should be posted in high visibility areas.
- A reminder to keep physical distance



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## AVOID SINGING, CHOIR, LOUD SPEAKING, OR CHANTING

- Consider options for corporate expressions that include online or pre-recorded forms of worship.
- A single cantor or soloist may be used, but they must be at least 4 metres away from the congregation, behind a screen, or facing sideways.
- Do not share microphones or musical instruments.
- Do not use wind instruments. Pianos, organs, guitars, and drums can be used, but not shared.
- If there is more than one person playing a musical instrument (as in an ensemble or music team), each member must be spaced apart by 2 m/6ft unless they are from the same household.
- Do not speak or sing from a balcony location as droplets can fall and spread over a wider area.
- Unison or liturgical prayers can be uttered in a low or quiet voice.
- Consider using an online recording for the congregation to listen to or ask the congregation to participate in a low or quiet voice only.



## AVOID SHARING ITEMS

- Do not share microphones. Clearly identify who will use each mic.
- Clean and disinfect sound equipment and area between each use. Appoint only one person to operate audio/visual equipment per service.
- All bulletins or order of service leaflets should be disposed of after the day's service.
- Ensure that there are sufficient waste bins for disposal.





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- Put away shared books such as hymn or prayer books, and items for children such as toys.
- Do not "pass the plate." Make a way for people to bring their gifts and put into one place or arrange for online giving.
- Do not share ceremonial or social foods or drink, including communion, tea, coffee, juice, or cookies.
- It is recommended to discontinue communion at this time, but if you
- decide to have communion have congregants bring their own elements and ensure there is no sharing. Another option is for folks to do communion online from home.

## **SUSPEND CHILDREN'S PROGRAMS AND SERVICES**

- Children, if in attendance, must stay with family/caregivers at all times for the duration of the service.
- Consider online streaming of resources for children as a portion of your service for everyone to enjoy and learn together.



## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

Most common household cleaning products are effective at eliminating the virus. Valid cleaning and disinfectant products should have an 8-digit Drug Identification Number (DIN) to confirm it is approved for use in Canada.

- Check the expiry dates of products and always follow the manufacturer's instructions.
- Keep products stored safely away from children.
- Cleaning/disinfection wipes should only be used for surfaces, and according to the manufacturer's instructions.
- Chlorine bleach solutions may be used for disinfection.



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- Prepare fresh bleach solution every day and make only what you estimate you will need. The formula for this solution is 1-part bleach to 99 parts water (10ml bleach in 990ml water).
- Educate staff on proper use of cleaning agents and disinfectants, including
- required disinfectant contact times.
- Disinfection efforts will only be effective if you leave the wet product in place for the right amount of time. Contact times are different for each product.
- Surfaces must always be cleaned with a household cleaner or soap and water before disinfecting.
- Understand safety precautions and requirement for use of mask and gloves, and safety goggles.
- Ensure adequate ventilation when using products (e.g. open windows, doors, or use fans).
- Ensure ventilation systems are operating properly and replace filters as scheduled or sooner.
- You may need to plan for, and implement, a deep cleaning of your Place of Worship, especially if it has been closed and not in use all this time.
- Clean and disinfect all high-touch surfaces (e.g. toilets, sinks, door handles, light switches, remote controls) twice a day or more, and when visibly dirty.
- Ensure washrooms are always stocked with liquid soap and paper towel. Antibacterial soap is not required to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- Plan to clean and disinfect between every service.
- Wash hands with soap and water immediately after cleaning.



**NOTE:** Disinfectant wipes may have a combined cleaning and disinfectant in one solution, but depending on how dirty the surface is, it may need to be pre-cleaned as disinfectants may become ineffective when dirt is present.



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## TRAINING

- Staff and volunteers should always use a single-use or cloth mask while providing services.
- Provide training for staff and volunteers on proper hand hygiene techniques, respiratory etiquette, when to use masks, proper use of mask, how to clean or discard single use masks appropriately, and proper cleaning techniques.
- Only those who have been trained should provide service.
- Contact your local Community Health Centre for educational support if needed.

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*It is a joy to open the doors to the places of worship. But to keep them open we must put infection prevention and control practices in place to stop the spread of COVID-19.*

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