

# COVID-19 Considerations for Churches and Places of Worship



Currently efforts by Federal, State and Local health agencies are underway to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet).

To further combat the spread of COVID-19 in Missouri, Governor Parson and Dr. Randall Williams, Director of Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services, encourage Missourians to practice good hygiene and maintain social distancing. When leaving the home, all Missourians need to practice social distancing when they need to travel outside their homes to work, access foods, prescriptions, health care, and other necessities, or to engage in an outdoor activity.

While the order allows for individuals to go to a place of worship, social distancing should be encouraged and maintained as much as possible.



## Prevention Steps

- Post signs that promote handwashing and hygienic practices at entrances, restrooms, and other visible areas.
  - Provide tissues, waste baskets and hand sanitizer in areas where people gather or meet. Provide disposable wipes and other cleaning and disinfecting materials so that frequently touched surfaces (counters, doorknobs, toilets, sinks, phones, etc.) can be properly wiped down before each use.
- Encourage those who are ill and those with serious underlying medical conditions to stay home or join services remotely if possible.
  - Closely follow recommendations and requirements for cleaning and disinfecting in your facility.



## Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- Do not shake dirty laundry; this will minimize the possibility of dispersing viruses through the air.
- Wash items, as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

## Surfaces

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched. Surfaces such as hymnals, prayer books, sinks, door knobs, bathroom surfaces, tables and chairs, and phones should be cleaned often.
- Follow the instructions on your cleaner/disinfectant for how long the surface needs to remain wet to be effective.
- For disinfection, household bleach solutions (1/3 cup of unscented household bleach per one gallon of water), alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
- A list of EPA-registered products to kill pathogens such as COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus>
- Use disposable gloves for cleaning and disinfecting. Throw them away after each use. If gloves are not disposable, thoroughly disinfect them and only use them for cleaning.
- If you use disinfectant wipes, use according to package directions. Do not reuse the wipes to wipe down multiple surfaces. Throw used wipes in the trash.
- Use disposable towels for cleaning and handwashing.
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present. Clean with appropriate cleaners as indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, launder items, as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.



## How can I protect myself from COVID-19?

It's important that everyone take steps to reduce the spread of novel coronavirus, especially to protect those who are more vulnerable. Steps you can take to prevent spread of flu and the common cold will also help prevent coronavirus:

- wash hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If not available, use hand sanitizer. See <https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo> for a quick review of proper handwashing techniques.
- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- avoid contact with people who are sick especially if you are 60 or over or have an underlying health condition, like heart disease, diabetes, lung disease or a weakened immune system.
- stay home while you are sick and stay at least 6 feet away from others.
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing
- wear a cloth mask which covers your mouth and nose, when outside your home.

If you are traveling overseas, check for the latest COVID-19 Travel Alerts and follow the CDC's Travelers' Health guidance.

Currently, there are no vaccines available to prevent COVID-19 infections.

**For more information:** [www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus](http://www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus)

**Hotline:** 877-435-8411

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