

Post - COVID-19

Facility Utilization:

Social Distancing, Ministry Considerations, and More...

Smart Church Solutions has developed this guide to help you consider how you can effectively and intentionally resume a limited live meeting and worship experience while still adhering to the ever-changing recommendations. We have attempted to present many of the more difficult choices you will need to consider prior to the resumption of operations, albeit in a limited capacity.

Whether you personally agree with some of the suggestions and restrictions on large group gatherings (that vary from state to state and sometimes county to county), we encourage you to take the lead in adhering to public gathering safety guidelines. To intentionally disregard suggested measures is not prudent nor is it a good witness.

This list is NOT exhaustive and must be considered at the local church level. Be wise and prudent as you navigate these highly unique times.

1. Cleaning Supplies Prep – *Are you really prepared?*

Some considerations include:

- Have we prepared a document detailing the cleaning processes in place and the chemicals used to help alleviate concerns of those returning to the facility?
- Have we updated my Hazardous Communication Plan and Safety Data Sheets with any new chemicals?
- Have we purchased all the supplies needed to adequately cover the increased cleaning plan?
- Have we trained the team, and are we prepared to schedule them accordingly, to cover the cleaning needs?
- Do we have what is needed to quickly clean and sanitize “high-touch” areas and do we have the proper Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and protocols in place for any body-fluid clean-up?

WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

2. Space Consideration – *Are you only using what you “need”?*

Some considerations include:

- Have we thought through the areas we really do not need (for reduced operations) and cordoned them off so we do not have to re-clean them?
- Have we considered having a means by which we can indicate a room has been cleaned last? *Think of how many public restrooms use a posted document to indicate the last time it has been serviced.*
- Have we considered not offering any prepared beverages or snacks (coffee, donuts, snack crackers) to avoid the additional cleaning requirements and to help avoid body-fluid transfer? *Perhaps provide bottled water, if necessary.*
- Do we need to remove seating groupings in the shared area to help avoid clustering?
- Have we considered removing all non-essential tables and info stands from public areas to reduce contact surfaces and perhaps run announcements on a TV or monitor?

3. Access Points –

How can we reduce touching when entering and exiting?

Some considerations include:

- Can we invest in automatic door openers to assist in more of a touchless experience? *Perhaps add proximity sensors to the doors or designate a single volunteer to push the opener for individuals.*
- Can we add door kick downs (type of door stop) or hold open devices on other common use (restrooms and worship area) doors? *The more we can limit touching of doors the better.*
- Is there a possibility to utilize trained volunteers, with the proper Personal Protection Equipment, to open and close doors for all that enter?
- Do we have a plan to limit clustering in the foyer/lobby/narthex?

WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

4. Seating –

How will we worship together and remain safe?

Some considerations include:

- With pews or theater seats, how can we visually show recommended social distancing?
- If moveable seating, can we remove some of them and increase spacing?
- If additional large meeting areas are available, can we simulcast to those spaces as well as provide appropriate social distance considerations?
- What technology do we need to consider to engage in simulcast operations?
- Do we have a plan for cleaning and disinfecting seating and high-touch areas, especially between multiple services?
- Do we know our total occupancy, and do we have a way to count attendance and limit numbers when necessary?
- Can we leverage our facility software or event management software to have sign-ups or registrations for service times to ensure we do not have to turn folks away at the door?

5. Children and Preschool – *Is the risk of cross exposure part of your plan?*

Some considerations include:

- What standards and guidelines has our state or local municipality put in place for public schools and daycare facilities? *We may want to follow the same.*
- While this may be a tough pill, we may need to not open our children’s areas initially.
- If we do open them, consider how to address queuing lines and check-in stations. *Will we use our kiosks? If so, we may need to wipe them down after every check-in, requiring additional volunteers.*
- What process can we put in place to limit the amount of touching from parents to our workers?
- Have we procured, trained in their use, and provided additional Personal Protection Equipment and cleaning supplies to our volunteers?
- What are our established plans if a child or family member presents signs of an illness?
- Will we be able to safely take a temperature reading if necessary?

WHAT WE NEED TO DO:

6. Operational Concerns – *The considerations less traveled...*

Some considerations include:

- Will we pass the plate still or provide offering boxes? If providing offering boxes, do we have safe money handling procedures (from a medical view) in place?
- For the worship team, will we designate microphones for everyone? Do we have enough microphones for a 1 to 1 assignment? What is our plan to limit exposure for individuals leading worship? Will we have designated areas for them to stand to keep safe distances?
- Speaking of music, should we suspend the use of a choir and choir loft?
- Do we have a plan for how to address sacred sacraments?
- Will our tech services team wear Personal Protective Equipment when handling, operating equipment? If not, do we have a plan to sanitize after each use?
- Have we thought through how to welcome folks yet still encourage distancing in the parking lots?
- Consider what we will do with “pew” hymnals, prayer books and Bibles. Should they be removed or cleaned after every service?
- Do we need to make special arrangements for how to park cars and operate the parking lot?