



# Oregon Conference OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS

## CHURCH RE-OPENING PLAN (UPDATED 8-6-2020)

As a Conference team, we can't wait for the day that every church building is open and hosting worship for our faith community. At the same time, the safety of every church member is of high importance. There are a lot of things to consider on the road to reopening your church. Safety for your most vulnerable members should take priority. It's important that every church prayerfully considers how to proceed. Here are the Oregon Conference guidelines for re-opening.

Both Washington and Oregon are taking a phased, county-by-county approach to re-opening their economies. **Oregon Conference Churches may re-open in phases, at the same pace as the county and municipality in which they reside.** (I.e. When Clackamas County moves to Phase 1, all Clackamas County Oregon Conference Churches may do the same.) Since these phases can change quickly, our communications team will be sending out updates as necessary. ***Each Church is Expected to Follow State/County/Municipal guidelines for reopening and/or operating in accordance with OHA/CDC/DOH recommendations.***

### General Guidelines for All Phases:

We will be living with the threat of COVID-19 until there is an effective treatment or vaccine for this disease. The following guidelines apply to every phase of re-opening.

- 1) **Limit all gatherings to the phase-appropriate size. This applies to all meetings of the church: worship services, bible studies, staff meetings, board meetings, etc.** (Refer to next section for phase-specific requirements)
- 2) Encourage personal hygiene and effective handwashing.
- 3) **FACE COVERINGS ARE REQUIRED** for both Oregon and Washington, including speakers. In Oregon those 5 years of age and older, must wear face coverings. Washington does not give a minimum age; however, we do not recommend face coverings on children under the age of 2.
- 4) No physical contact should take place while on church property.
- 5) Develop habits of effective sanitation for all high-touch surfaces and all A/V equipment (no shared microphones. 1 person/1 program/1 microphone)
- 6) Limit or eliminate items that are "handled" by parishioners (I.e. bulletins, hymnals, pencils, etc.)
- 7) Maintain adequate physical distancing at all times. (at least 6 ft except in household units)
- 8) Do not pass offering plate. Establish alternate forms of returning tithes/offerings.
- 9) Encourage "high-risk" members and guests to remain home. (Those with underlying health conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 complications)

## Oregon Health Authority Requirements

- **Baseline and Phase 1:** No more than 50 attendees (35 sq ft. per person required), indoors or outside, including staff. If indoors, face-coverings/face shields are required for everyone – even the speaker and performers.
- **Phase 2:** Indoors - Up to 1 person for every 35 sq ft. Maximum of 100 attendees, including staff. Face-coverings/face shields are required for everyone – even the speaker and performers. Outdoors – 1 person for every 35 sq ft. Maximum 250. Face-coverings are encouraged. (Face coverings required if unable to maintain strict physical distancing)

### All Phases:

- Assign 1 volunteer to each of the following roles:
  - Sanitation Attendant- Sanitize high touch surfaces and high-traffic areas.
  - Bathroom Sanitation volunteer- Sanitize all restrooms hourly and insure access to paper towels, hand sanitizer and other needed supplies.
  - Physical Distancing Monitor- Reinforces cooperation with all distance requirements, including all areas where attendees may congregate
- Maintain record of every attendee (including name and phone number) for each meeting to be kept on file for 60 days.
- Signage describing symptoms of COVID, and reminding those in the building of handwashing, social distancing and face covering requirements MUST be posted around your church.
- [Face-Coverings Required Sign Link](#)
- [Other Required Signs \(Scroll Down to Signage Section\)](#)
- Employees, Volunteers, and Attendees must wear face-coverings at all times.
- Potlucks may resume under the guidelines of OHA's [Guidance for Restaurants](#). Particularly Pertinent: Tables must be at least 6 feet apart. Only designated servers can handle or serve food to guests. NO SELF-SERVICE BUFFETS.

## Washington State Department of Health Requirements

- **Phase 1:** Outdoor Services of up to 100 attendees, including staff. No potluck or choirs. Face-coverings required.
- **Phase 2:** Indoor services of 25% capacity or 200 people, whichever is fewer (including staff). No potluck or choirs. Face-coverings required.
- **Phase 3:** Indoor services of 50% capacity or 400 people, whichever is fewer (including staff). No potlucks or choirs. Face-coverings required.

### All Phases:

- Have a written COVID-19 plan available for each venue that includes exposure control, mitigation, and recovery. (Consider using this document as a template. See WA State guidelines for more detail.)

- Require all attendees to wear face-coverings for the duration of the event.
- No choirs are allowed. Congregational singing is permitted as long as face-coverings remain in place.
- Access to restrooms must be controlled. No more than 2 people in a restroom at a time.
- Consider maintaining a record of every attendee (including name and phone number) for each meeting to be kept on file for 14 days.

## Oregon State Reopening Guidance Documents

[Oregon Phase 2 Venue Guidance](#)

[Oregon Guidance on Gatherings](#)

[Oregon Statewide Face-Covering Policy](#)

## Washington State Reopening Guidance Document – Phases 1-3

[WA Religious Gatherings Guidance](#)

[WA Guidance on Weddings and Funerals](#)

## Oregon Conference Phased Re-Opening Guidelines Based on Current OHA Guidance & DOH Guidance

### 1) All Church Gatherings and Meetings

- If multiple meetings occur in a day, allow time for proper cleaning, complete air exchange in venue, and to eliminate crossover of attendees between events.
- All events must maintain appropriate physical distancing.
- Remember that virus risk increases with increased time together. We encourage churches to plan events for no more than 90 minutes.
- If a facility has different spaces that have separate entrance, parking, restrooms and gathering space, it can be considered a separate gathering.

### 2) Worship Services

- Maintain a six-foot physical distancing policy. Members from the same household can sit together.
- Avoid handing out bulletins. Instead project announcements on screens.
- **Group singing is discouraged. If congregation chooses to incorporate congregational singing, at least 6 ft (preferably 12 ft) of physical distancing must be maintained. Face-coverings must be worn by all attendees while singing.**
- Change the way you offer communion.

- We suggest you have a table where single serving plates with cup and wafer are placed for individuals to pick-up on their own and no cross contamination can take place
  - If including a foot washing service, ensure masks are worn whether service is indoors or outside. Have adequate hand sanitizer in each room foot washing is taking place.
- Please do not pass the microphone on stage. One mic per person per service or sanitize microphone in between users.
- Continue offering online giving options.
- Do not pass the offering plate. Find an alternate way to return tithes/offerings.
- Come up with a fun way to greet others in a non-contact way.
- Clean the pulpit after every use.
- Consider dismissing in an orderly way to ensure physical distancing.
- Remove toys, blankets, and other objects from your mother's room. Remember to sanitize this area each week.

### 3) **Praise Teams and Other Platform Participants - Face-Coverings are Required – NO Exceptions**

- In Baseline or Phase 1 we do not recommend any congregational singing. Choirs are prohibited.
- When music is necessary, please consider utilizing only 1 singer and have them at least 6 ft., preferably 12 ft., from congregation and they are assigned a mic for their use only.
- At this time, we are also not recommending using any instruments that require air to be blown into it.
- Wipe down music stands after each use.
- Platform participants should have physical distancing of 6 ft. from the first row.

### 4) **A/V Teams**

- Clean microphones, headphones, computers, laptops, etc. after every use. DO NOT USE WATER! Rubbing alcohol or alcohol-based cleaners are best. Keep record of when each item was cleaned.
- Rotate your tech team if possible.
- Keep using the online services. Facebook may be more accessible as many people have accounts but consider other options like YouTube for those who want to watch on their smart TVs.
- Secure a CCLI license for copyright compliance, if you have not already done so.
- If you don't have media support for announcements or singing, then print texts and place them in the pews/chairs. Encourage people to take the sheets home with them and not leave them in the pews.

### 5) **Greeters and Other Volunteer Staff**

- Train greeters on how to greet post-quarantine: NO hand shaking or hugs.
- Ensure doors are propped open or have the greeters hold them open.

- Train greeters and volunteers to answer questions on procedures and policies upon the return to the building
  - Determine how many volunteers to assist.
  - Limit volunteers to those who do not have preexisting conditions that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 complications.
- 6) **Food and Snacks**
- Any hot drink stations or snacks can only be provided under the guidelines of the OHA for restaurants.
  - For Oregon churches potlucks may resume under the guidelines of OHA's [Guidance for Restaurants](#). Particularly Pertinent: Tables must be at least 6 feet apart. Only designated servers can handle or serve food to guests. NO SELF-SERVICE BUFFETS.
  - Potlucks and providing snacks or drinks are currently prohibited in Washington.
- 7) **Sabbath School and Small Groups for Adults**
- To limit potential exposure, we recommend that attendees spend no more than 1 ½ hours in Sabbath services. Please plan Sabbath School and church activities with this 90-minute target in mind.
  - Consider restarting small groups that meet during the week.
- 8) **Children's Classes**
- We do not recommend offering children's classes until schools reopen.
  - When your church is ready to open children's classes, OHA recommends that churches follow [Guidance for Summer Camps](#) in planning children's programming.
- 9) **Special Services**
- In-person Anointing of persons may take place in accordance with state and county guidelines.
  - In-person Baptism of candidates may take place, if your county is in Phase 2. The baptism candidate doesn't need to wear a mask, however, should have a washcloth to cover nose and mouth.
  - In-person Child Dedications may take place. Face-covering rules apply. The service should be short; no more than 10 minutes long.
- 10) **Drive-in Services Option**
- Participants should remain in their vehicle at all times. NO "mingling".
  - Have cars parked far enough apart that if they had their window down, they would be abiding by the 6ft physical-distance guideline.
  - Have an offering box available for guests to leave an offering as they leave or come to the church property. Having this box unmanned will allow for physical distancing to be maintained.
  - The church building can be used for bathroom facilities if a cleaning plan is in place.
  - Communion should not be offered at these services.

## 11) Church Campouts

- Church campouts fall under the category of "social gatherings." Churches must follow current "Social Gathering" guidance for their area in planning campouts or reschedule to a time when guidelines have changed to allow for church campouts. As of this update, Oregon allows social gatherings of 10. Washington allows 10 or less, depending on county.

## Before You Re-Open

### 1) **Develop a local church, step by step, plan for keeping your membership safe. Plan should include:**

- Sanitation of church, with a disinfectant product, after each meeting.
- How physical distancing will be accomplished.
- Encourage "high risk" individuals to stay home.
- Have a plan to relate to "high risk" individuals who refuse to stay home.
- Encouraging personal hygiene.
- Train your volunteers how to safely greet and serve others without contact and physical distancing guidelines.
- Consider sending your members a survey of how they feel about reopening your church.

### 2) **Preparing Your Church for Reopening**

- Deep clean your entire church.
- Consider where germs will be transferred most frequently.
- Where possible remove chairs that cannot be sanitized on a regular basis.
- Make sure your church has adequate hand sanitizer and tissues available and in multiple locations in your facility.
- Have face-coverings available for those who forgot to bring their own.
- We recommend encouraging members to bring their own bibles and remove bibles, hymnals, pens, information cards, etc. from the backs of chairs/pews.
- Consider roping off every other row and other approaches to ensure physical distancing.
- Turn off drinking fountains. Have other options for water available.

## Remember...

Even though your church may have opted to reopen, many of your members may not be ready or able to rejoin you. Please continue to offer services online.

We will continue to update you on protocols as Phases change. If you follow these guidelines and the guidelines of your County/State, and the guidelines outlined here, you will not have any difficulties with compliance.