

Communication

- GWUC to share accurate health information to protect our members and wider communities, which may be more likely to be accepted than from other sources.
- Promote helpful information, prevent and reduce fear and stigma, provide reassurance to people in their communities, and promote health-saving practices
- Places of worship and faith leaders should consider how guidance can be communicated to visitors, including before they visit
- The vaccine requirement is to provide a safe and healthy workplace and worship space for those attending. This topic may cause anxiety for some people – please ensure that conversations about the vaccination status of your workers is conducted with respect and in line with rights to privacy.
- The restrictions in place are compulsory as issued under lawful direction of the Chief Health Officer of Victoria
- Remain mindful and respectful that many in our community remain feeling cautious and anxious.
- It is recognised that places of worship are potentially high-risk environments given the communal nature of many religious services and activities.
- Provide clear advice informing individuals in vulnerable groups of their heightened vulnerability.
- Clearly display information on COVID-19 symptoms, physical distancing, and hygiene requirements.
- As much of the work going into reopening during a period of high risk is outside of the typical skillset of most community members and staff, conscientious training is an important tool in supporting and protecting them.
- Have guidelines and support for the presence of children so that they are safe and maintain appropriate physical distance wherever possible.
- Put up exclusion signage
- Statement of Compliance on display

Attendee

- Proof of double dose of the COVID-19 vaccine
- QR code
- A person must not refuse or fail to comply with a direction given to the person, or a requirement made of the person
- The only exemption that will apply to Authorised Workers at Affiliated churches and agencies is the **medical exemption**. An exemption will require a letter from the worker's doctor. Those with a medical exemption can live and work the same as a person who has been vaccinated.
- Face covering must be worn at all times
- Four square metre rule applies
- Under no circumstances should anyone awaiting a COVID-19 test verification, including Clergy (even without presenting symptoms) attend a church or parish setting until a diagnosis is confirmed.
- Additionally, under no circumstances should anyone attend who is closely connected to people who are awaiting test results or who have tested positive.
- Time of arrival and departure time sheet??
- Any pre-requisite washing/ablution rituals should ideally be carried out prior to arrival, and worshippers should be actively encouraged to do this.
- Recognise and acknowledge that different people will have different thoughts regarding the COVID-19 vaccine, and the **importance of respecting one another**.
- Inform attendees to remember that some people are more vulnerable than others.

Church Admin

- Must collect, record and hold vaccination information about all workers (paid or unpaid) status of all employees
- Must treat any employee that they do not hold vaccination information about as unvaccinated
- **Altering rosters to ensure that sufficient vaccinated people can effectively run a program or service**
- Houses of worship must establish a plan for movement so that foot traffic only flows in one direction and designate separate doorways for entering and exiting. They must also ensure that all instructions for movement and physical distancing are communicated in advance, marked with signage, and facilitated by trained staff or volunteers.

SERVICES

- Gatherings with few people are better than crowded sessions. **Religious leaders and communities of faith should consider multiple services with a few attendees**, rather than hosting large gatherings. (W.H.O.)

- If remote/virtual gatherings are not feasible, keep the duration of the gathering to a minimum to limit contact among participants.
- Consider modifying religious rites or rituals to avoid direct physical contact where practical.
- **Record any incident**
- Pre and post service mingling and gatherings
- Do not use communal items or accept physical offerings and handle cash with care.
- You are not permitted to exceed the maximum attendance for your place of worship. This means you will **have to refuse entry if you have reached your maximum attendance capacity**.
- Suitable signage must be displayed stating the maximum occupancy allowed
- **Queue management is important** so that the flow of groups in and out of the premises can be carefully controlled
- **Identify a room or area where a person could be isolated** if he or she becomes ill or begins to develop symptoms.

Outside church grounds

- visit members of the community in their homes, hospitals and other institutions to provide advice and religious comfort

Risk Management Measures

- This includes, for example, maintaining a record of identified hazards and risk management measures in your place of worship, such as: physical distancing, practising good personal and hand hygiene, keeping the place of worship clean during COVID-19, routine cleaning, personal protective equipment where necessary, managing symptoms
- **sit or stand side by side or behind other people, rather than facing them**
- **avoid loud talking or singing with others**
- participants should be encouraged to move on promptly
- **Choirs and congregational singing are among the most dangerous activities** because they generate a larger number of infectious aerosol particles over an extended period of time.
- **Singing during services should be avoided** and replaced with recorded music or live instrumental music.
- **Wind and brass instruments should similarly be avoided** until more research can determine their safety. A preliminary study suggests that some of these instruments may produce aerosol droplets in a similar fashion to singing.

Insurance & Liability

- Provided the Church follows relevant Government directives and has a COVID-19 plan in place and follows the plan, they would cover any claim against the Church. If, however, the Church deliberately fails to follow Government directives and/or fails to have a COVID-19 plan in place, it is unlikely they would provide indemnity as a subsequent COVID-19 claim