



## Phase 3 – Places of Worship

**START DATE: March 3, 2021**

### **UPDATED March 2, 2021**

The Office of State Fire Marshal is providing you with this update in conjunction with the Office of the Governor and the Louisiana Department of Health to keep you up-to-date with additional information and/or changes as it becomes available during our battle with COVID-19. These notifications are issued automatically and immediately to those who sign up through “OpenSafely” (<https://opensafely.la.gov/>).

Every attempt is being made to **highlight** critical changes that have occurred since the previously published notification for your convenience. However, please read through this entire document in context as these changes do not stand on their own and all of the additional general information and clarifications made may not be highlighted.

#### **Preface:**

This phasing plan applies to those organizations that have been affected during the COVID-19 stay-at-home order. Essential (critical) infrastructure businesses, **and churches or other faith-based organizations holding worship services**, are not further restricted by these new guidelines and may continue to operate under the current guidelines that are applicable to the specific business or organization. Refer to: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html> for “Considerations for Communities of Faith” provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

COVID-19 is a highly contagious and deadly disease. The fundamental concept of this phased opening plan is to slowly open businesses at reduced occupant capacities that will allow for social distancing and circulation without encroaching upon others. Everyone’s cooperation is critical to the success towards defeating this disease.

The virus spreads primarily through person-to-person contact, from droplets that are formed by coughing, sneezing or other projections, or by touching infected surfaces and then touching one’s eyes, nose or mouth. Individuals can carry the virus and be contagious for up to 14 days prior to having any symptoms. **THE MOST IMPORTANT FACT** to remember is that COVID-19 has not yet gone away. We must all continue to do our part to help slow the spread, to protect the most vulnerable, and to not become complacent before a vaccine is widely available.

### **Guidance:**

It is recommended that Places of Worship adhere to moderate mitigation standards and social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Six feet of separation from other individuals not within the same household is recommended. In addition, other measures such as face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced. **Individuals 65 years or older, people of all ages with poor control of medical issues like high blood pressure, heart disease, obesity, or a weakened immune system are at a higher risk for getting very sick or dying from COVID-19 and should strictly adhere to all CDC guidelines, and are encouraged to stay at home as much as possible.**

### **Occupant Capacity and Building Safety:**

The building capacity during the **Phase 3** period is not limited by these guidelines. However, please refer to guidance provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other guidance provided for communities of faith.

### **Referenced Documents:**

- ❑ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Considerations for Communities of Faith: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/faith-based.html>