

Dear Proprietor

COVID-19 restrictions for Places of Worship – Step 3.1

Due to the strong support and proactive compliance of the Public Health Directions to date by business and our community will be changes to the COVID-19 restrictions, including the reopening of some sectors that have been closed since March.

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with initial information on what business can expect to see outlined in the next Public Health Direction to support your forward planning.

Today the ACT Government and ACT Chief Health Officer announced that as at **9am on Monday 10 August 2020**, the following changes will come into effect for your sector, under Stage 3, Step 3.1 of Canberra's Recovery Plan:

What will change:

- The requirement to display a sign at the entrance to the premises stating the maximum occupancy based on one person per 4 square metres, noting that each indoor and each outdoor space can have a maximum of 100 people (excluding staff).
- Due to recent learnings from other jurisdictions, congregational singing and choirs are discouraged, or should be minimised where possible. Choir members are to be kept to an absolute minimum and are to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres from each other when singing.
- Choirs should also maintain a minimum of 2 metres from members of the congregation.

What will stay the same:

- The activities must involve gatherings of no more than 100 people in each indoor and each outdoor space (excluding the celebrant and the professional wedding photographer) or one person per 4 square metres, whichever is lesser.
- Have a visitor book where attendees can provide their first name and contact phone number, along with the date and time at which the person attended.
- It is a requirement to have a COVID-19 Safety Plan, which must be adhered to, and which must be produced when requested by an authorised person.
 - If you have gatherings of less than 20 people you do not need a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

Guidance for compliance with Direction

- Need to manage ingress and egress and flow of people throughout the venue.
- Avoid use of collection plates and other shared equipment during services.
- Limit use of books, if possible. If not possible ensure these are cleaned after use.
- There should be 1.5 metres between each group in a service.

- Church leaders and others involved in the service to be kept to a minimum and to be physically distanced from congregation.
- If choirs are performing to congregations, they are to remain at least 2 metres away from the congregation and those involved in the service.
- Try to keep to a minimum number of musicians in each service, and they should remain physically distanced from the congregation or audience. There should also be a minimum of 1.5 metres of distance between each band member.
- Increased frequency of cleaning of high touch areas and restroom facilities.

Ongoing compliance activity:

- Compliance with the current Public Health Direction is critical in supporting community safety. Access Canberra, the Health Protection Service and ACT Policing continue to undertake proactive checks at businesses to support compliance and community safety against the current Public Health Direction.
- Non-compliance with the public health directions can result in regulatory action and serious penalties may apply.

Guidance, next steps, where to get more information:

- Further information is available on the ACT Government's [COVID-19 website](#).
- The Access Canberra Business Liaison Team is available to answer questions or provide advice. The team can be reached on (02) 6205 0900.
- The Public Health Direction which will reflect Stage 3, Step 3.1 changes is expected to be published on 7 August 2020. It will be available [at this link](#).

It's important to note that these changes do not take effect **until 9am on 10 August 2020**. Until this time, the [existing Public Health Direction](#) remains in effect and businesses, industry and community must comply with that direction.

Your ongoing cooperation and proactive compliance with the Public Health Direction is greatly appreciated as we work to support our community's safety and Canberra's recovery from COVID-19.

Yours sincerely



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