

## Changes to COVIDSafe arrangements for regional NSW and the ACT

Apart from the change in capacity in regional NSW which is now one person per four square metres (still one per two square metres in the ACT), the major changes are for requirements to wear face masks. The regulations for both NSW and ACT are mostly similar regarding face masks.

All people (excepting children under 12 years of age and people with a physical or mental health illness or condition, or disability that makes wearing a fitted face covering unsuitable) must wear a face mask in indoor premises being used for public worship or religious services, including places of worship. Children from 2 years of age are encouraged to wear a face mask. Children under 2 years of age are not to wear masks due to potential choking hazard.

### Mask wearing exemptions

People, including clergy and lay leaders, can remove a fitted face covering for a variety of reasons and most relevantly to our context when:

1. Eating or drinking
2. Communicating with another person who is deaf or hard of hearing
3. Clear enunciation or visibility of the person's mouth is essential

There is an exemption here around communication that allows necessary flexibility for clergy and other leaders. While singing is still permitted in the ACT (it is not allowed in NSW), it is with masks on.

To avoid the risk of contamination, NSW Health recommends putting on a new, clean mask when you have finished eating or drinking. If this is not possible, remember to wash or sanitise your hands. You should always use hand sanitiser or wash your hands before and after changing your face mask. Remember, stay 1.5 metres apart from people you don't live with.

We must also keep in mind our obligation to do what is reasonably practicable to maintain safety and to be seen to maintain safety for our staff and others attending services and events. In terms of mask wearing, this would mean clergy and other leaders having a mask and wearing it during those ancillary times where specific opportunities for exemption do not apply. For example, wear a mask on the way in/out or when greeting parishioners in a social / fellowship setting.

### Children and young people ministry

You must wear a fitted face mask when you are in an indoor area of a non-residential premises. This includes venues where ministry with children and young people might occur. There are exemptions for schools and early childhood care facilities.

### Offices

In the ACT, masks do not need to be worn in an office environment unless interacting with members of the public. In NSW, working alone in an office allows for not wearing a face mask, however, a mask should be applied if another person enters.

### Op shop and outreach ministries

Mask wearing applies other than for the listed exemptions.