



Business Energy Savings Program

COVID-19 Modified Operations Recommendations for Places of Worship

General Recommendations for Closed Places of Worship

- Ensure emergency and security systems are operating as intended
- Clean and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, sink handles, countertops)
- Supply hand sanitizer for use near frequently touch surfaces, such as doorknobs and light switches
- Provide disposable wipes to anyone entering your facility so that surfaces can be wiped down before and after use
- Maintain appropriate thermal conditions and indoor air quality for occupied spaces
- Implement protocols to allow access to predetermined and approved areas by request:
 - If an area must be occupied, consider increasing outside air to a maximum and disabling demand control ventilation
 - Schedule occupancy of area such that person-to-person contact is limited
 - Provide guidance, such as floor or seat markings, to encourage worshippers to maintain six feet of separation
 - For daycare, considering minimizing number of children per room

Alternatives to Traditional Services

Virtual Services

- Consider using alternative media platforms to share services:
 - TV broadcast
 - YouTube
 - Zoom, Skype, Teams, etc.
- Minimize the number of personnel required to record and publish virtual services

Drive-in Services

- Ask worshippers to remain in their vehicles for duration of the service
- Maintain six feet of separation between vehicles
- Provide single-use service booklets and encourage worshippers to recycle materials when they return home
- Consider offering window-side ceremonies
 - Those performing the ceremony should wear masks and gloves
 - Discontinue use of shared serving ware

Maintaining Spaces

General

- Turn off all nonessential interior lighting
- Close all nonessential windows, doors, and blinds

- Turn off or unplug unnecessary electrical equipment:
 - Computers, monitors, printers, and scanners
 - Televisions, cable boxes, and other media players
 - Lamps, signs, and decorations
 - Desk phones (power only, leave network cable connected)
- Turn off, unplug, or de-energize non-essential facility equipment:
 - Water fountains
 - Bathroom exhaust fans
- Shut-off leaky faucets, urinals, or commodes and tag for repair

Worship Space

- Turn off or lower accent and display lighting
- Turn off or unplug production equipment when not in use (e.g., audio, visual, lighting)
- Consider providing face masks to worshipers before entry
- Disinfect areas and objects after each use
- Put away literature to reduce touch points

Kitchen and Break Rooms

- Empty, defrost, and unplug nonessential refrigerators, freezers, ice machines, and coolers
- Turn off or unplug unnecessary cooking equipment (e.g., ovens, fryers, stovetops)
- Unplug small kitchen appliances when not in use (e.g., blenders, coffee machines, toasters)
- Leave dishwashers slightly ajar to prevent growth of mold and mildew
- Drain oil from fryers
- Turn off exhaust hoods

Equipment

HVAC and Controls

- Set building automation system to unoccupied, if applicable
- Set thermostats to unoccupied setpoints (IECC 2015 suggests 55°F heating / 85°F cooling)
- Set HVAC fans to “Auto” mode (ensure fans are not short cycling)
- Set HVAC to maintain relative humidity below 60%
- Close outside air dampers to minimum allowable position
- VAV Systems:
 - Set supply dampers to minimum allowable position
 - Adjust supply fan to minimum speed to reduce static pressure
 - Increase supply air temperature (cooling)
- Consider increasing MERV rating of central air filtration, utilizing portable room air cleaners with HEPA filters, and installing ultraviolet germicidal irradiation technologies

Hot Water Heaters

- Turn down to lowest temperature setting
- Consider tankless or demand-type heater
- Inspect insulation around heater tank and distribution piping

Reopening Procedures

- Signage to ensure social distancing should be posted in high-traffic areas. In small congregation areas, such as a small kitchenette, signage should prohibit occupation of the space by more than one worshiper or employee at a time.
- Worship areas and other common rooms should be posted with a maximum occupancy that allows for sufficient social distancing based on the size of the room.
- Floor markers should be placed in areas where worshipers may queue up, such as in aisles, outside of places of worship, etc.
- Where possible, allow only one person at a time in restrooms. Post signs in the restrooms reminding people about hand-washing protocols. If it is not possible or practical to limit occupation of the restroom, place floor markers that indicate six-foot boundaries. In situations where these controls aren't possible, abide by social distancing protocols to the extent possible.
- Place hand sanitizer stations strategically around the facility, especially at entrances.
- Place sanitizing wipes where they can be used to open doors that cannot be left open.

Deep Cleaning: 7-Day Rule

If the facility has been **unoccupied** for seven days or more prior to the anticipated reopening, there is no COVID-19 related cleaning necessary.

For facilities that have been **occupied** within the seven days prior to opening, a COVID-19 specific cleaning and sanitization process will need to be undertaken. This cleaning and sanitization process should include the following:

- All common and high-traffic areas (worship areas, restrooms, kitchens, etc.) should be deep cleaned using EPA approved cleaners known to kill viruses. It is strongly recommended that a third-party service be used to perform this task.

Additional Resources

View more in-depth guidelines from the CDC: [CDC Coronavirus Guidance for Business](#)

If you'd like to learn more about how switching to energy-efficient technology can save money for your business in the short term and long term, check out [Eversource's Business Energy Savings Program](#).

The recommendations contained in this document are guidelines provided by the CDC and should not be considered guidance directly from Eversource. This document is intended to help both businesses and employers inform their decision making. Decisions businesses, employers and local public health officials make should be determined by the specific circumstances in local jurisdictions. Check and follow all CDC, local city, and state guidelines about reopening.