

Dear Member of the Boston Faith Community,

Since the virus first surfaced in Boston on February 1, 2020, the Mayor's Office has been compiling updates and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidance for businesses and organizations. You and your congregations are important members of the Boston community and we want you to be informed and have access to all that we know about the virus, how to curb the spread, and its impact on the city. You can find the most up-to-date information from the City of Boston by using these resources:

- City of Boston Health Line: 617-534-5050
- [boston.gov/coronavirus](https://www.boston.gov/coronavirus)
- Social Media accounts for Mayor Walsh ([@Marty_Walsh](https://twitter.com/Marty_Walsh)), the City of Boston ([@CityOfBoston](https://twitter.com/CityOfBoston)), and the Boston Public Health Commission ([@HealthyBoston](https://twitter.com/HealthyBoston)).

For your convenience and distribution to your organizations and community, we have provided COVID-19 fact sheets in [English](#), [Spanish](#), [Chinese](#), [Vietnamese](#), [Portuguese](#), and [Haitian Creole](#).

You can also refer to [BPHC Cleaning tips](#), [prevention tips](#), and [hand washing guidelines](#).

Guidance for Community and Faith-based Organizations

We know the services and comfort that your organizations provide. Your house of worship is an important resource as our residents deal with the new realities of the COVID-19. Please continue to follow State and City guidance on the protocols for large gatherings. The CDC has published [Guidance for Community and Faith-based Organizations](#) that ensure you and faith communities are practicing good protective measures

- Limit all gatherings to a maximum of 25 people
- Identify space that can be used to separate sick people if needed.
- Emphasize social distancing (6 feet or 2 meters away) and alternative means of transportation to avoid crowds and sharing a confined space.
- Identify actions to take if you need to temporarily postpone or cancel events, programs, and services, especially for groups at greater risk such as older adults or people with chronic health conditions.
- Identify and address potential language, cultural, and disability barriers associated with communicating COVID-19 information to workers and those you serve.
- Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies at your organization (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol, tissues, trash baskets, and a couple of disposable facemasks, just in case someone becomes sick during an event).
- Engage with stigmatized groups and speak out against negative behaviors to help counter stigma and discrimination.
- Communicate with your community members if events and services are changed, postponed, or cancelled.

Visit the website to review all guidance and [preparedness checklist](#).

Guidance for Funerals and Wakes

The CDC has published [Guidance for funerals](#) that ensure you and faith communities are practicing good protecting measures

- Funeral services shall be a maximum of 25 people. Religious organizations may also choose to have less than 25 participants.
- Emphasize social distancing (6 feet or 2 meters away)
- People should be encouraged to not touch the coffin and/or the body of someone who has died.
- Activities, such as kissing, washing and shrouding should be avoided before, during, and after the body has been prepared, if possible.
- Customary and cultural expressions of consolation of family members should exclude hugs, hand shakes or contact of any type.
- If washing the body or shrouding are important religious or cultural practices, families are encouraged to work with their community cultural and religious leaders and funeral home staff on how to reduce their exposure as much as possible. At a minimum, people conducting these activities should wear disposable gloves.
- Cleaning should be conducted after each service. EPA has provided a [current list of products](#) for use against the virus.

Virtual Prayer

Many faith leaders have started virtual prayer, conferencing prayer meetings, bible studies and using Facebook or the radio as a vehicle to have worship. The City encourages these forms of worship, if your religious institution or organization can do so. Common platforms include: Facebook Live, Youtube, Twitter, Instagram, Google Hangouts and Zoom.

Guidelines for Businesses and Employers

Below are **CDC Guidelines for Businesses and Employers** that ensure you and your employees are practicing good protective measures. To review the full guidelines and resources from the [CDC](#), [please visit this website](#).

- Emphasize staying home when sick, respiratory etiquette and hand hygiene by all employees;
- Advise employees before traveling to take certain steps;
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing;
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol;
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands; and
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.

Information on COVID-19 continues to evolve rapidly. The Boston Public Health Commission continues to provide updates on [boston.gov/coronavirus](https://www.boston.gov/coronavirus). Constituents with individual questions can call the Mayor's Health Line at 617-534-5050 (Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm) or Boston 311 (24 hours).

We stand ready to support you through this outbreak, as you have supported the city through the years. Please don't hesitate to call the Mayor's Hotline by dialing 311, for any non-emergency questions. If you have any questions, concerns or feedback please feel free to email jolivia.barros@boston.gov.