

COVID-19
safety plan for
resuming in-person
church activities

OAKRIDGE ADVENTIST CHURCH

British Columbia's "Restart Plan"¹ entered Phase 2 on May 19th and social interaction will further increase as we enter Phase 3 in June. Premier Horgan and Dr Henry have stated worship gatherings of up to 50 people are permitted if distancing measures can be maintained. We will likely be limited to that group size until we enter Phase 4 (TBD). This document will list the plans and protocols developed for a safe return to in-person worship and church activities.

The BC Conference has permitted churches to reopen June 6 provided they meet the challenging but necessary modifications and protective measures to protect community health.

There are three sections of this document:

1. Guidelines and Recommendations by Work Safe BC
2. Safety Regulations for Churches from BC Conference
3. OAC's specific actions, timeline and communication

¹ www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/bc-restart-plan
And <http://www.bccdc.ca/health-info/diseases-conditions/covid-19/event-planning>

1. Guidelines and Recommendations from Work Safe BC

Assess the risks at your church

- a. Involve Board members and Ministry Leaders ✓
- b. Identify gathering areas ✓
 - Top floor for worship service only. Outdoors for socializing.
- c. Identify tasks and processes where close contact occurs ✓
- d. Identify high-touch surfaces, shared tools/equipment ✓

Implement protocols and reduce the risks

- a. Identify protocols for industry and apply them to the church ✓
- b. Identify protocols for your attendees ✓
- c. Identify protocols issued by the provincial health officer ✓

First level protection (Elimination)

- a. Set limit to number of members at your church to ensure social distance is being followed ✓
- b. Establish occupancy limit (taking into consideration Public Health advisories) ✓
- c. Establish worship-from-home guidelines to reduce number of attendees at church ✓
- d. Establish occupancy limits for common areas ✓
- e. Implement measures to keep attendees at least 2 meters apart ✓

Second level protection – Barriers and Partitions (If Needed) ✓

- a. Install barriers if social distancing cannot be attained [*not needed. We have ample space*]

Third level protection (Administrative) – Rules and Guidelines

- a. Identify rules and guidelines on how the attendees should conduct themselves ✓
- b. Clearly communicate these rules and guidelines to attendees by combining training and signage (include proper hand washing and hand sanitizing procedures) ✓

Fourth level protection – Using PPE (Optional Measure)

- a. Review information on how to properly select and use a mask ✓
- b. Understand the limitations of masks. Use when other control measures cannot be implemented ✓
- c. Non-Medical Masks or Face Covering
Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, May 21, 2020: Wearing a mask is an “additional layer [of protection] in some situations. . . particularly in enclosed or crowded settings where you might be indoors . . . where you may not be able to always maintain that [six foot] distance.”
Though not required by BC, due to the high-risk activity of singing which is equivalent to coughing in spreading respiratory particles, OAC will mandate masks as an extra precaution. ✓

Fourth level protection – Surface Hygiene Practice

- a. Review information on cleaning and disinfecting surfaces ✓
- b. Ensure handwashing facilities are visible and accessible ✓
- c. Implement policies that specify when attendees must wash their hands and communicate them ✓
- d. Implement cleaning protocols for common areas (include frequency and timing) ✓
- e. Provide training if attendees are designated to clean common areas ✓
- f. Review tools deemed unnecessary such as coffee/tea kettles, shared utensils, etc. ✓

Develop policies (anyone showing symptoms of COVID-19 is prohibited) ✓

- a. Anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms in the last 10 days, which include fever, chills, new or worsening cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, new muscle aches or headaches ✓
- b. Anyone directed by Public Health to self-isolate ✓
- c. Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada or has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case must isolate for 14 days ✓
- d. First aid attendants are present, if possible ✓
- e. "Working alone" policy (if needed) ✓
- f. Worship from home policy (if needed) ✓
- g. Ensure board members have a training on strategies required to address the risk of violence that may arise as attendees adapt to restrictions of modification to the church worship. Ensure a violence prevention policy is in place.
- h. Policy for attendees that develop symptoms while attending ✓

Develop communication plans and training

- a. Ensure board members receive the training plan (policies) ✓
- b. Ensure all church members receive the policies ✓
- c. Ensure signage is posted and is clear (include occupancy limitation for each gathering area) ✓
- d. Ensure signage is posted at all entrances clearly indicating who is restricted from entering ✓
- e. Appoint someone to monitor attendees to ensure policies and procedures are being followed ✓

Monitor your church and update plan as needed

- a. Set plan in place to monitor and make update to your plan as needed ✓
- b. Communicate to attendees who they can go to with health and safety concerns ✓
- c. Set a safety committee to help address safety concerns from the church ✓

Assess and address risks for resuming operations

- a. Set training plan for new members (baptisms) ✓
- b. Set training plan for members taking on leadership roles ✓
- c. Adapt training plan to include changes to church ✓

2. Regulations for Churches provided by BC Conference

Church Services may continue if each event is set up for safety and has a written plan to keep people safe. Here are the risk-reduction measures that need to be implemented:

- a. A group no greater than 50 people may congregate in one place/ at a site.
- b. Communicate the importance of regular hand hygiene and not touching one's face.
- c. Practice 6-foot / 2-metre physical distancing.
- d. Physical contact (hand shaking, hugs) outside of one's household is not permitted.
- e. Wash hands with soap and water OR an alcohol-based (min 60%) sanitizer before and after.
- f. Cover your mouth and nose with your elbow, tissue or cloth when coughing or sneezing.
Dispose of used tissues right away and immediately wash your hands.
- g. Inform the following people to take extra precautions:
 - i) Those over age 60
 - ii) Those having compromised immune systems
 - iii) Those with underlying chronic medical conditions
- h. Those living in the same household can sit together.
- i. Sharing of food or utensils is not permitted. Eating pre-packaged meals is permitted.
- j. Communion services are not permitted. (Virtual Communion Services are encouraged)
- k. Stay at home if household members (or those you have regular contact with) are unwell.
- l. Those who handle cash or coins must clean their hands frequently.

Cleaning and Washroom Rules:

- a) Clean and disinfect your church before you reopen.
- b) Ensure increased cleaning throughout the day when in use. Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces such as doorknobs, countertops, light switches, bathrooms and other surfaces at least once a day. Regular household cleaning products are effective at eliminating COVID-19.
- c) Place sanitizers at building entrances.
- d) Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies during events (soap, sanitizer, tissues, and wastebaskets).
- e) Ensure the washrooms are always well stocked with liquid soap and paper towels and that warm running water is available.
- f) People must still stay six feet apart in washrooms. (exception for members of one household)
- g) Have paper towels to open the door with a garbage can by the door.

On-site Signs and Posters:

- a. In bathrooms: Proper hand washing instructions
- b. On entrance doors: Site requirements

3. OAC's Site specific actions

Commitments & Considerations:

- We will follow government requirements². Our protocols are subject to change in response.
- We will be sensitive to the optics of our actions and comfort level of our community
- We will prioritize the needs and safety of those most vulnerable
- We will make decisions based on scientific research about contagion risk³

In addition to measures noted in preceding parts of this document OAC will adopt the additional risk mitigating protocols and assess every 2 weeks to modify based on community spread:

- Everyone onsite will have to register in advance or log their contact info upon arrival to ensure attendance limits are managed and contact tracing is supported.
- Attendees must answer "no" to all Covid self-assessment questions⁴
- Communication to attendees needs to address personal risk and responsibility.
- To reduce common touch points all doors will be propped open
- Giving tithe and offering will be encouraged online or by using the self-serve dropbox..
- Ushers will seat worship attendees in left and right sides of designated pews spaced 2m apart, ensuring 2m between household groups. Children must remain with their adults.
- Dismissal at the end of service will take place by pew #, back to front. No lingering in the lobby. Post-worship fellowship will be encouraged outdoors in open-air spaces.
- Sanitize seating and high touch surfaces after gatherings
- Bibles and hymnals have been removed from pews. There will be no printed bulletins. Tithe envelopes and flyers can be pick-up upon arrival or departure.
- Classrooms & unused spaces will be closed off. We will only use the top level initially.
- Water fountain will be replaced by a touchless motion-sensor dispenser.
- Singing expels fomites to the same extent of coughing:⁵ We will continue worship in song led by pre-recorded worship teams. In house live worship teams from the same household/network initially. Congregational humming will be encouraged! :)
- For the first few gatherings, everyone on site must wear a mask covering mouth and nose while indoors. They will be provided for those who don't bring their own.
- Everyone on the platform will use a separate, dedicated mic.
- Gathering times will be limited to 90min. Aim for 1 hour. Bible studies continue online.
- Washrooms: Marked "urgent use only." Seat covers installed to reduce airborne spread. Overhead fans clean & operational to improve air clearance. Disinfecting spray, wipes & gloves will be stocked for users to clean surfaces they touch.. Access limited to 2 persons.
- Should someone develop symptoms while attending: Service team to provide mask, escort to "sick room", call 9-1-1 if difficulty breathing or chest pain occurs, clean and disinfect surfaces the individual has touched.

² gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/reports-publications/covid-19-pho-class-order-mass-gatherings.pdf

³ www.erinbromage.com/post/the-risks-know-them-avoid-them

⁴ <https://bc.thrive.health/covid19/en>

⁵ <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>

Timeline

All dates are tentative and subject to change if we note a spike in community spread that indicates higher risk to on-site gathering we will convene an emergency Board meeting and determine if postponements or cancellations are warranted.

Mid May. Church members surveyed regarding their desire and comfort around returning to in-person church in June. Leaders continue to be consulted as we evaluate, prepare equipment, stock supplies and establish new protocols.

June 6 Rehearsal Sabbath. Invite only to leaders and volunteers to train and test new protocols. 2 weeks after May long weekend. If BC gov't reports low case numbers, proceed. Debrief afterwards on adjustments needed before we welcome in-person attendees. Nursery room remains closed except as a transit corridor for the media team.

June 13 & 20: First worship services open to 40 attendees **by reservation only.**
(12 key volunteers: 2-4 musicians, 3 media, 3 greet/usher, 1 service/safety, 1 speaker)
Worship in Song includes both in-house musician and pre-recorded Songs from the Sofa

Future: If more than 50 people want to attend in-person:
Limit in-person registration to bi-monthly to accommodate 100, once monthly for 200.
Explore the possibility of adding a second service (not broadcast)
↳ location & time to avoid contact with other groups and allow for cleaning

With all this extra effort required to host a small group of people, the question will come, why? Is it worth it? We have already identified a few individuals that have no internet access, live alone, are in abusive living scenarios who are desperate for spiritual, social connection and respite which worship gatherings offer.

Church Board motion:

May 25, 2020 Motion 2020-59: Board moves to endorse this plan pending BC's positive progress toward Phase 3. CARRIED.

One Item remains outstanding for June 13. Request support from Alston and Andre?

Ensure board members? (Service team?) have a training on strategies required to address the risk of violence that may arise as attendees adapt to restrictions of modification to the church worship. Ensure a violence prevention policy is in place.

Communication Plan

This document will be sent directly (by email) to Board Members, Elders and Ministry leaders. It will be accessible to members and interested stakeholders from OAC's website. How to attend instructions will be announced at the close of upcoming worship services, e-newsletters and social media platforms. Those who register will receive more details on the safety practices expected of them.

On-site signs:

In Washrooms: "How to Handwashing" by each sink

By Hand Sanitizers: "How to Sanitize" by each sanitizer dispenser

Max occupancy signs* (without masks. Exceptions can be made if necessary by wearing masks)

Library 6

Main Office 4

Pastor's office 2

Facility office 3

Ministry Room 1 (Also need to designate this "Emergency Sick Room" with a sign)

Chapel 15

Fireside 10

Washroom 2

At each entry point/door: Site requirements 11x17 (can be landscape)

In compliance with the Order from the Provincial Health Officer issued May 22nd, 2020 Gatherings of more than 50 persons are not permitted until further notice.

Physical distancing of 2m (6ft) from each other is required.

Face coverings may be required - follow staff directions.

Assume personal responsibility for hand hygiene and disinfecting surfaces you touch.

Help keep our community safe. Return home if you feel ill, are sneezing or coughing.

Worship, study and pray with us online. Visit oacvancouver.ca for details