

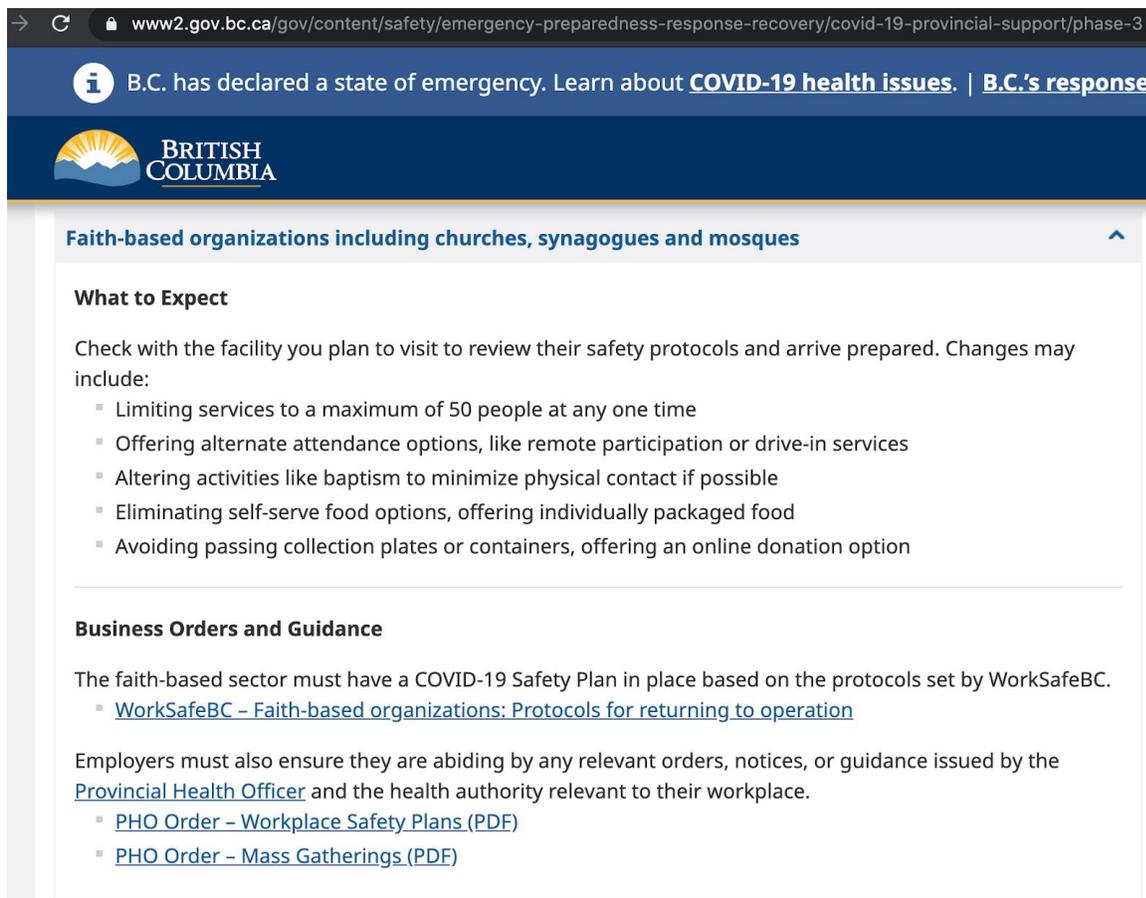
COVID-19
safety plan for
in-person & on-site
church activities

OAKRIDGE ADVENTIST CHURCH

Introduction

British Columbia's "Restart Plan"¹ entered Phase 2 on May 19th and Phase 3 on June 24. Premiere 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 of the Seventh-day Adventist Church has permitted churches to reopen June 6 provided they meet the necessary modifications and measures to protect community health.



The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/safety/emergency-preparedness-response-recovery/covid-19-provincial-support/phase-3. The page header includes the British Columbia logo and the text "B.C. has declared a state of emergency. Learn about COVID-19 health issues. | B.C.'s response". The main content area is titled "Faith-based organizations including churches, synagogues and mosques" and contains the following sections:

- What to Expect**

Check with the facility you plan to visit to review their safety protocols and arrive prepared. Changes may include:

 - Limiting services to a maximum of 50 people at any one time
 - Offering alternate attendance options, like remote participation or drive-in services
 - Altering activities like baptism to minimize physical contact if possible
 - Eliminating self-serve food options, offering individually packaged food
 - Avoiding passing collection plates or containers, offering an online donation option
- Business Orders and Guidance**

The faith-based sector must have a COVID-19 Safety Plan in place based on the protocols set by WorkSafeBC.

 - [WorkSafeBC – Faith-based organizations: Protocols for returning to operation](#)

Employers must also ensure they are abiding by any relevant orders, notices, or guidance issued by the [Provincial Health Officer](#) and the health authority relevant to their workplace.

 - [PHO Order – Workplace Safety Plans \(PDF\)](#)
 - [PHO Order – Mass Gatherings \(PDF\)](#)

There are three sections of this document:

1. Guidelines and Recommendations by Work Safe BC (p.3)
2. Safety Regulations for Churches from BC Conference (p.5)

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 WorkSafe BC & ARM

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 protocols 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

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 Non-Medical Masks or Face Covering
Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer, May 21, 2020: Wearing a mask is an “additional layer [of protection]. . . particularly in enclosed or crowded settings where you might be indoors . . . where you may not be able to always maintain extended distancing.”

Fifth 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 directed by Public Health to self-isolate
- b. Anyone who has arrived from outside of Canada or has had contact with a confirmed COVID-19 case must isolate for 14 days
- c. Anyone showing COVID-19 symptoms
- d. First aid attendants are present, if possible
- e. "Working alone" policy (if needed)
- f. Worship from home policy (if needed)
- g. Determine strategies to prevent or address the risk of anger 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 welcoming in-person worshippers must have a documented safety plan addressing Covid-19 related protocols. 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 (soap & 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 food or utensils is not permitted. Only individual, pre-packaged food 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, especially of high-touch surfaces.
- c) Place sanitizers at entrances.
- d) Provide COVID-19 prevention supplies (soap, sanitizer, tissues, and wastebaskets).
- e) Ensure the washrooms are well stocked with soap and paper towels and that warm running water is available.
- f) People must still stay six feet (2m) apart in washrooms. (exception for members of one household)
- g) Have paper towels to open the door with a garbage can by the door.

3. OAC's Site specific actions

Commitments & Considerations:

- We will follow government requirements². Our protocols will change in response to local health authority risk assessment and recommendations.
- 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.

First level protections (Elimination/Prevention)

- Everyone onsite will have to register in advance to ensure we do not exceed capacity.
- Attendees contact info is collected and saved 30 days to support contact tracing.
- Attendees must answer "no" to all Covid self-assessment questions when they arrive⁴
- Doors will be kept open when possible to reduce touching handles
- Every room has its capacity limits posted by the entry point.
- Rooms & unused spaces will be closed off. Clear communication on areas booked.
- Ushers will seat attendees in designated pews/seats spaced ensuring 2m between household groups. Children must remain with their adults.
- Water fountains will be replaced by touchless motion-sensor dispensers.
- Changes made for touchless operation of toilets, faucets and soap dispensers ASAP
- Researching toilet seat covers to reduce airborne spread from flushing action.
- Ceiling fans and vents have been cleaned and checked to be in good operation to improve air clearance.
- Nursery room remains closed except as a transit corridor for the media team.

Second level protections – Barriers and Partitions (If Needed)

- Barriers will be considered if live musicians play wind instruments or sing on site

Third level protection (Administrative) – Rules and Guidelines

- Signs posted at points of entry and washroom access.
- Communication to potential attendees will address personal risk and responsibility.
- Gathering times will be planned for 1 hour, 90 minutes max indoors.
- Giving tithe and offering will be encouraged online or by using the self-serve dropbox

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>

- Dismissal at the end of service will be directed by ushers, back to front. Post-worship fellowship will be encouraged outdoors in open-air spaces. No lingering in the lobby so those exiting may comfortably pass through.
- Should someone develop symptoms while attending: Service team to provide mask, escort to isolate in a “sick room”/space. Call 9-1-1 if difficulty breathing or chest pain occurs. Clean and disinfect surfaces the individual has touched.

Fourth level protection – Using PPE (Optional Measure)

- During meetings and activities, everyone on site must wear a mask covering mouth and nose while indoors. Masks will be provided for those who don't bring their own. In mutual agreement and with ample distancing, masks may be removed to facilitate communication needs. Singing expels contagions to the same extent of coughing:⁵ Initially we will worship in song led by pre-recorded worship teams. In house live worship teams from the same household or “bubble” will be considered. Congregational humming will be encouraged! :)

Fifth level protection – Surface Hygiene Practice

- Sanitize seating and high touch surfaces after gatherings
- Washrooms will be open for “urgent use only” stocked with disinfectant wipes for pre & post cleaning by every user
- Bibles and hymnals will not be kept in pews. When necessary, printed materials (bulletins, programs) will not be passed out but can be personally picked-up on arrival or departure. Loaned books must be returned where they are stored and inaccessible for at least 72 hours.
- Seating provided to be hard surfaces for ease of cleaning. Fabric covered seats and cushions are removed. Attendees may bring their own.
- Everyone leading in the program will use a separate, dedicated mic.

Timeline

Mid May. Church members surveyed. 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

June 13: First worship services open to 40 attendees *by reservation only*.

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.

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

Explore the possibility of adding a second service (not broadcast)

↳ location & time to avoid contact with other groups and allow for cleaning

Communication Plan

With all this extra effort required to host a small group of people, we can expect the question, “Is it worth it?” We have already identified a few individuals that have no internet access, live alone, or are in challenging home scenarios desperate for spiritual, social connection and respite which worship gatherings offer.

Church Board motion:

May 25, 2020 Motion 2020-59: OAC Board members move to endorse the Covid19 Safety plan which is determined by BC’s positive progress toward Phase 3. CARRIED.

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.

Instructions on registering for in-person church events 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:

Washrooms: “Please sanitize surfaces before and after use” & "How to Handwash effectively"

By Hand Sanitizers: "How to Sanitize"

Max occupancy of upper level rooms (if less than 50)

Library	6
Main Office	3
Pastor’s office	2
Facility office	3
Ministry Room	1 (designated "Emergency Sick Room" with a sign)
Chapel	16
Fireside	10
Washrooms	2
Back office	3

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