

COVID-19 Considerations for Churches and Places of Worship



Currently efforts by Federal, State and Local health agencies are underway to help stop the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Based on what is currently known about the virus, spread from person-to-person happens most frequently among close contacts (within about 6 feet). Current evidence suggests that the COVID-19 virus may remain viable for hours to days on surfaces made from a variety of materials.



Prevention Steps

- Post signs that promote handwashing and hygienic practices at entrances, restrooms, and other visible areas.
- Provide tissues, waste baskets and hand sanitizer in areas where people gather or meet. Provide disposable wipes and other cleaning and disinfecting materials so that frequently touched surfaces (counters, doorknobs, toilets, sinks, phones, etc.) can be properly wiped down before each use.
- Encourage those who are ill and those with serious underlying medical conditions to stay home or join services remotely if possible.
- Closely follow recommendations and requirements for cleaning and disinfecting in your facility.

Surfaces

- Clean and disinfect surfaces that are frequently touched. Surfaces such as hymnals, prayer books, sinks, door knobs, bathroom surfaces, tables and chairs, and phones should be cleaned often.
- Follow the instructions on your cleaner/disinfectant for how long the surface needs to remain wet to be effective.
- For disinfection, household bleach solutions (1/3 cup of unscented household bleach per one gallon of water), alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol, and most common EPA-registered household disinfectants should be effective.
- A list of EPA-registered products to kill pathogens such as COVID-19 is available at: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2020-03/documents/sars-cov-2-list_03-03-2020.pdf
- Use disposable gloves for cleaning and disinfecting. Throw them away after each use. If gloves are not disposable, thoroughly disinfect them and only use them for cleaning.
- If you use disinfectant wipes, use according to package directions. Do not reuse the wipes to wipe down multiple surfaces. Throw used wipes in the trash.
- Use disposable towels for cleaning and handwashing.
- For soft (porous) surfaces such as carpeted floor, rugs, and drapes, remove visible contamination if present. Clean with appropriate cleaners as indicated for use on these surfaces. After cleaning, launder items, as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.





Linens, Clothing, and Other Items That Go in the Laundry

- Do not shake dirty laundry; this will minimize the possibility of dispersing viruses through the air.
- Wash items, as appropriate, in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions. If possible, launder items using the warmest appropriate water setting for the items and dry items completely. Dirty laundry that has been in contact with an ill person can be washed with other people's items.
- Clean and disinfect hampers or other carts for transporting laundry according to guidance above for hard or soft surfaces.

What is novel coronavirus?

Novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a virus strain that was first detected in December 2019 and as of March 12 has been detected in many locations internationally and in all 50 states in the U.S. The virus, while having mild effects in most people, can cause severe illness and pneumonia in others such as the elderly or those with underlying medical conditions.

How severe is COVID-19?

Upwards of 80% of those infected recover after mild symptoms. Others, especially the elderly and those with serious chronic medical conditions, may experience more severe symptoms including pneumonia that requires hospitalization, and sometimes death.

How can I prevent from getting COVID-19?

Practicing correct handwashing skills along with avoiding touching your face can protect you from COVID-19 and many other viruses. See <https://youtu.be/d914EnpU4Fo> for a quick review of proper handwashing techniques. There is currently no vaccine for COVID-19. To reduce risk of other respiratory infections, especially the flu, you can help protect yourself and others by getting a flu vaccine. Everyday precautions range from avoiding close contact with people who are sick to avoiding touching high-touch surfaces in public such as elevator buttons, door handles, handrails and handshakes. Other steps include:

- avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth with unwashed hands
- stay home while you are sick and avoid close contact with others
- cover your mouth/nose with a tissue or sleeve when coughing or sneezing



For more information: www.health.mo.gov/coronavirus

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