

Parish COVID-19 Checklist

Revised: 21-Oct-2020

Preparation of the Church for Mass and Other Sacraments

Clergy and Volunteers

- Clergy and volunteers must undergo a screening check per the attached titled **Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)** provided by the Ontario Government. Anyone who does not pass screening should be advised that they should not enter the church and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario. Once an individual has passed the screening questions, they should be allowed to enter the church.

Cleaning

- All staff engaged in cleaning should wear a mask and disposable gloves. In addition, hand sanitizer should be available throughout the performance of their duties if handwashing is not readily available. Masks are to be disposed of when dirty or no later than the end of the day. Gloves should be changed as often as necessary.

Prior to Mass

- Interior direction signs/physical distancing markings on the floor (tape) should be placed in obvious locations for the washroom, etc.
- Ensure that all measuring aids (signage, tape measure, tape, etc.) as well as floor and seat markings are in good condition.
- Ensure Holy Water fonts are empty.
- Hand sanitizer stations should be placed in proximity to all exits, all washrooms and in the sanctuary.
- All hymnals, prayer books and other papers are to be removed from the pews during the pandemic.
- Wastebaskets should be placed in the church for used tissues, masks and gloves and emptied frequently.
- In the possible event that church halls are used to accommodate parishioner overflow, sound systems in halls should be checked to ensure that church services can be broadcast within them.

After Mass

- After every Mass, a disinfecting cloth should be run over all the pews, including the backs and sides where people's hands come in touch with them.
- Areas used for reconciliation should be cleaned regularly. Screens and kneelers (where applicable) should be wiped.
- Church halls should be cleaned in the same manner as the church proper. Chairs should be laid out at 2-metre (six-foot) distance intervals. Chairs should be wiped if they have been used in the previous 72 hours.

- Washrooms should be checked after every Mass, sanitizing and replenishing supplies as appropriate. Care should be taken to make sure the instructions for safe and reliable hand washing techniques remain posted in a visible position.

Confession

- Confessionals are not to be used during the pandemic. A larger space elsewhere in the parish complex should be used. The priest and penitent should both wear masks. A portable kneeler with a screen may be used by the penitent who wishes to remain anonymous. Where physical distancing cannot be achieved, an impermeable screen is to be placed between the penitent and priest. The door handle/ The screen is to be cleaned with disinfectant between each confession.

Entrance & Exiting the Church/Seating the Congregation

Ushers

- All should wear masks and disposable gloves if available (or sanitize frequently).
- An Usher captain should be designated at each Mass to ensure that all tasks are reviewed and performed.

Prior to Mass

- The Celebrant, and all liturgical ministers must undergo a screening check per the attached titled **Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)** provided by the Ontario Government. Anyone who does not pass screening should be advised that they should not enter the church and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario. Once an individual has passed the screening questions, they should be allowed to enter the church.
- Ensure that entrance signs are posted or otherwise situated in visible positions at each entrance to the church before every Mass. Ensure signage is posted at washrooms and in areas that may be closed (e.g. Crying room, etc.)
- Designated Usher should ensure physical distancing is maintained.
- Ensure that people entering are not mixed with people leaving and that where possible each group use doorways designated for entering and exiting. Ushers may assist by directing people so that physical distancing is maintained.
- Review the floor and seat markings to see that they are all in good repair and order.

Showing People to Their Seats

- Families residing the same household and individuals should be seated in pews so that there is 2 metres of space between them and next person/family seated.
- You may wish to seat families in one area with plenty of space for them.
- Remember to skip rows to ensure the two-metre (six-foot) distance is met.

Exiting

- After dismissal, the usher will direct parishioners to exit row by row beginning from the back of the church (recommended). Parishioners must be reminded to maintain two-metre (six-foot) physical distancing.

Communion

- Ministers of Communion should wear masks. Ushers must keep people distanced two-metre (six-foot) distance from each other and regulate the pace of the Communion procession. Each usher should remain two-metre (six-foot) distance away from persons they are directing.

Collection

- Ensure that the locations of collection baskets are properly noted and draw people to them. The collection basket should be situated in proximity to the entrance or exit and a person should be assigned to safeguard the basket maintaining physical distancing while people are exiting.

Music

- The people are to be encouraged to not sing.
- A Cantor (accompanied by a single instrumentalist) may sing at Mass if the Cantor is a minimum of ten feet (three metres) distance from anyone else while singing.
- In a church where physical distancing can be ensured between choir members, then such a choir is possible but only if the choir members are a minimum of ten feet (three metres) from one another and any other person in the Church.
- Musicians are to sanitize their hands before Mass.
- Musical instruments and microphones should be sanitized after the celebration.

Overflow Room

- Where the Local Ordinary has approved the use of the church/parish hall for overflow use, the parish hall seating is to be laid in a manner consistent with the social distancing norms being used in the main church. An usher should be present if an alternative area is opened.

Sick Parishioners

- If an usher notices that someone is demonstrating visible signs of COVID 19 including, but not limited to cough, dizziness, fatigue, shortness of breath, aching muscles, confusion – that person and any related parishioner should be asked to leave and seek medical treatment in a tactful way.

Traffic Flow

- Entrance and exit doors must be strictly used. Must see that people entering are not mixed with people leaving and that each group use doorways designated for entering and exiting. In smaller churches, Ushers must coordinate traffic flow to maintain order. Some role of “traffic officer” might be instituted to have people come in and out so as not to collide or violate the two-metre (six-foot) distance space rule, wherever possible.

- Ushers must review the floor and seat markings to see that they are all in good repair and order.

Parish Office Facilities

Staff

- All staff must undergo a screening check per the attached titled **Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)** provided by the Ontario Government prior to entering the office facilities. Anyone who does not pass screening should not enter the office facilities and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario. Once an individual has passed the screening questions, they should be allowed to enter the office facilities.
- Each staff member is required to have his/her own mask – wearing of mask in personal office is at the discretion of each person.
- Upon entering the office, staff are required to use the hand sanitizer.
- Masks are to be worn when meeting in common areas when social distancing is not possible, when meeting a visitor to the office and/or personal office.
- Each staff member is responsible for sanitizing their office at the end of each day.

Visitors

- Visitors should be screened before entering the office facilities using the attached titled **Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)** provided by the Ontario Government.
- All visitors should wear facial mask or shields. They should be encouraged to bring their own, but if they do not bring one then one should be provided to them.

Facilities

- Safety instructions are to be posted at the office entrance
- Hand sanitizer and Lysol wipes should be placed throughout the building for easy access (entrance, waiting area, offices, meeting rooms, kitchen, washrooms, etc.)
- Washrooms should be checked regularly, sanitizing, and replenishing supplies as appropriate. Care should be taken to make sure the instructions for safe and reliable hand washing techniques remain posted in a visible position.
- All meeting participants should wear masks, sanitize their hands, and practice physical distancing.

Parish Hall Facilities

- All staff and volunteers must undergo a screening check per the attached titled **Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)** provided by the Ontario Government prior to entering the hall facilities. Anyone who does not pass screening should not enter the hall facilities and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario. Once an individual has passed the screening questions, they should be allowed to enter the hall facilities.

- All regulations with respect to physical distancing (two meters or six feet) and all precautions with respect to personal sanitation and cleaning of the parish hall must be adhered to.
- Setup of the parish hall must permit enough room for attendees to enter, exit and move about, while maintaining physical distancing requirements, before, during and after the gathering.
- Wherever possible one door should be used as an entrance and a different door should be used as an exit. Doors should be labelled “Entrance” and “Exit”.
- The maximum number of persons permitted to gather in a parish hall is 50 persons, provided physical distancing is always maintained and gatherings or events are staffed either by the pastor (attending the event), a custodian or a parish volunteer.
- Prior to and after each meeting or event all door handles and any other “touch points” must be disinfected.
- The parish must determine who will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing. In some cases, the user group may be responsible, but the parish must make sure it is done properly.
- The following uses of the parish hall are permitted:
 - Meetings of parish staff
 - Meetings of parish committees (e.g. Parish Pastoral Council)
 - Meetings of parish ministry groups (e.g. bible study, RCIA)
 - Meetings of other parish groups (e.g. CWL, K of C, SSVP)
 - Other groups that were using the parish hall prior to the pandemic (e.g. AA)
 - Blood donor clinics
 - Some parishes offered exercise classes prior to the pandemic. If so, such classes are permitted, but with the added measure that the physical distance requirement is increased to a minimum of three metres (10 feet).
- Food and beverage service are not permitted at this time, except for the following:
 - Baking of pies, for example, for later sale for the purpose of parish fundraising. In such cases, those assisting in the kitchen are required to wear a mask the entire time they are in the kitchen as well as maintaining physical distancing. In addition, the kitchen must be cleaned and disinfected after each use.
 - The SSVP may offer services on a “take out” basis to their clients
 - Parishes may offer take-out meals for the poor and disadvantaged with the following additional rules:
 - Meals must be “take out” only. Those providing the means may place them on a table for the recipient to pick up to help maintain physical distancing where possible.
 - Those coming for the meals are not permitted to enter the building.
 - Those persons preparing, distributing, or otherwise involved in the process must wear a mask and practice physical distancing.
 - The kitchen must be cleaned and disinfected before and after use.
 - Parishes can also consider providing a mask with each meal they distribute.

Ministry of Health

COVID-19 Screening Tool for Workplaces (Businesses and Organizations)

Version 1 – September 25, 2020

This tool provides basic information only and contains recommendations for businesses or organizations for COVID-19 screening as per Ontario Regulation 364/20. It is not to be used as a clinical assessment tool or intended to take the place of medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Where the document includes references to legal requirements, it is not to be construed as legal advice. This document may also not be applicable to health care settings, and some non-health care workplaces (e.g., congregate living settings) where existing screening is already in place.

Workplaces should implement this screening for any workers¹ or essential visitors² entering the work environment. This does not include patrons entering a workplace (e.g., customers entering a grocery store, restaurant, bar or other food or drink establishment). It also excludes emergency services or other first responders entering a workplace for emergency purposes. Further, essential workers who travel outside for Canada for work purposes should not be excluded entry on this basis alone.

Screening should occur before or when a worker enters the workplace at the beginning of their day or shift, or when an essential visitor arrives.

At a minimum, the following questions should be used to screen individuals for COVID-19 before they are permitted entry into the workplace (business or organization). This tool may be adapted based on need and the specific setting.

Instructions in the tool should be followed. Anyone who does not pass screening should be advised that they should not enter the workplace and should self-isolate, call their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario. Once an individual has passed the screening questions, they should be allowed to enter the workplace, but should report any symptoms immediately.

Employers must also meet all obligations under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

¹ Refers to staff (e.g., workers) and is intended to include students, contractors or volunteers that conduct business or related activities where applicable and appropriate.

² Essential visitors include individuals providing a service in the establishment who are not employees or patrons of the establishment (e.g., delivery, maintenance, contract workers).

Required Screening Questions

1. Do you have any of the following new or worsening symptoms or signs? Symptoms should not be chronic or related to other known causes or conditions.
 - Fever or chills Yes No
 - Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath Yes No
 - Cough Yes No
 - Sore throat, trouble swallowing Yes No
 - Runny nose/stuffy nose or nasal congestion Yes No
 - Decrease or loss of smell or taste Yes No
 - Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain Yes No
 - Not feeling well, extreme tiredness, sore muscles Yes No

2. Have you travelled outside of Canada in the past 14 days? Yes No

3. Have you had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of COVID-19? Yes No

Results of Screening Questions:

- If the individual answers **NO to all questions from 1 through 3**, they have passed and can enter the workplace.
- If the individual answers **YES to any questions from 1 through 3**, they have not passed and **should be advised that they should not enter the workplace** (including any outdoor, or partially outdoor, workplaces). They should go home to self-isolate immediately and contact their health care provider or Telehealth Ontario (1 866-797-0000) to find out if they need a COVID-19 test.

Resources:

- COVID-19 (coronavirus) in Ontario webpage (find a testing location, check your results, how to stop the spread of the virus).
- Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development’s Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace
- Ministry of Health’s COVID-19 Guidance for Essential Workplaces