

**Application for Variance
Douglas County Variance for Places of Worship**

Douglas County

As Approved on May 22, 2020

- 1. List the sections of Executive Order D 2020 044 and/or Third Amended Public Health Order 20-28 that a variance is being sought for.**

Douglas County requests a variance to Appendix F, Number 5¹ of the Third Amended Public Health Order 20-28 as amended on May 14, 2020 (the “Order”) limiting houses of worship to congregations of 10 or fewer people. Douglas County proposes to allow Houses of Worship to conduct services subject to the restrictions contained herein.

¹ APPENDIX F: CRITICAL BUSINESSES - Critical Business. Any business, including any for profit or non-profit, regardless of its corporate structure, engaged primarily in any of the commercial, manufacturing, or service activities listed below, may continue to operate as normal. Critical Businesses must comply with the guidance and directives for maintaining a clean and safe work environment issued by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) and any applicable local health department. Critical Businesses must comply with Social Distancing Requirements and all PHOs currently in effect to the greatest extent possible and will be held accountable for doing so.

Critical Business” means:

5. Houses of worship may remain open, however, these institutions are encouraged to implement electronic platforms to conduct services whenever possible or to conduct smaller (10 or fewer congregants while ensuring 6 feet in between congregants), more frequent services to allow strict compliance with Social Distancing Requirements.

2. **Summarize alternate restrictions being proposed to replace the above-referenced restrictions and indicate where in the Plan these alternate restrictions are addressed**

Places of Worship

Places of worship are encouraged to continue online or drive-up services as much as possible. For those places of worship that intend to resume public assemblies, the following guidelines are recommended:

- In each confined indoor space, in order to achieve 6 ft social distancing, the limit is 50% of the posted occupancy code limit ensuring a minimum 28 square feet per person not to exceed more than 175 people at any given time.
- Operate with current recommended state physical distancing practices, which may limit capacity further than stated above.
 - Establish appropriate social distancing between families throughout the facility, for instance, place a minimum of 3 chairs between groups and close off every other aisle. Groups shall consist only of members of a single household.
 - In restrooms with multiple sinks and stalls, mark some facilities as closed to ensure social distancing is practiced in restrooms including limits on the number of people who may enter at one time.
 - Where possible, utilize separate settings (each with four walls, partitions or physical barriers, and a designated entrance and exit) to enable opportunities for multiple smaller gatherings.
 - If operating in a larger setting, divide setting into multiple small-group areas to ensure groups do not contact each other. Stagger arrival and dismissal to decrease contact between groups.
 - If a facility feels it can safely exceed the maximum number of participants, it may submit a proposed plan to the local public health agency for review and approval that explains how seating areas will be properly social distanced and broken into fully separated settings.
 - Those participating in the leadership of the service, including, but not limited to clergy, staff, musicians and volunteers shall stand at least six feet apart during performances.
 - Choir performances should consist of soloists or instrumental performances;
 - If there is a need for group choir performances, performers must stand at least 10 feet away from other performers and audience.
 - Designate a one-way entry/exit at doors and aisles where possible.
 - Place markings on floors to maintain at least six feet distance where lines might form.
 - Do not allow guests to wait in the lobby area.
- Require staff, volunteers and congregants to wear face coverings, except where doing so would compromise an individual's health
 - Staff and volunteers may remove face masks during service when not in close proximity to others, for instance, during a sermon, corporate prayer or musical performance.
 - Congregants are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings during the duration of the service but may consider removing masks when seated at least six feet away from other groups during service.
 - Masks will be made available to congregants.
- Post signs at entrances and throughout the facility as needed to remind guests of face covering recommendations, social distancing and proper hygiene guidelines.
- Provide sanitizing stations throughout the facility.

- Implement touchless options (i.e. doors & sinks) where feasible.
 - Entrance and exit doors can be propped open or managed by designated individuals to limit touchpoints.
- Question congregants before entering facility if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms.
 - Ask people to stay home and watch online if they are experiencing symptoms
- Make reasonable accommodations for vulnerable individuals who are still under the Stay at Home order, for instance, online services, special hours, and/or socially distance seating options.
- Perform frequent cleaning and disinfection of facility between services.
- Open windows and doors where possible to increase ventilation when safe to do so.
- Close the facility and disinfect it if a staff person, volunteer or congregant is discovered to be COVID-19 positive.
- Communion elements will be distributed by designated individuals with gloves and masks.
- Remove all materials, including books, envelopes and pens, from pews/chairs.
- Utilize stationary receptacles for receiving offerings to avoid passing materials amongst attendees.
- Implement a pre-registration or ticketing process in order to control crowd size.
 - If someone shows up who has not pre-registered, implement protocols to accommodate them if room is available:
 - Any unreserved seating will be on a first-come, first served basis
 - All others will be encouraged to attend another service or watch online services
 - Utilize a pre-assigned seating process for family groups
 - Require contact information to implement contact tracing protocols if an outbreak occurs
- Offer more frequent service options where possible to decrease attendance density.
- Provide training materials to staff and volunteers on how to maintain social distancing, traffic flow patterns in exit/entrance areas, and to answer questions.
 - Staff and volunteers will monitor and provide controls to ensure social distancing is practiced at time of dismissal, for instance, dismiss one row at a time
 - Do not allow crowds to gather in lobby or parking lot after service
- Provide communication to members on what to expect during service in advance.
- No distribution of food, beverages or materials will occur.
- Childcare facilities will remain closed; families are encouraged to stay together during services.
- Distribute detailed plan to staff and congregants prior to resuming in-person activities.