

SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR NINE EMPEROR GODS FESTIVAL

This note provides additional guidance to religious organisations (ROs) on the permitted activities and required safe management measures (SMMs) for the conduct of Nine Emperor Gods Festival activities. This is in addition to MCCY's prevailing conditions on Phase Two (Heightened Alert) Updated Measures for Religious Activities updated on 17 August 2021.

2. ROs can conduct congregational worship services and other religious activities for the Nine Emperor Gods Festival in places of worship with **up to 1000 worshippers at any one time or subjected to the safe capacity of the premises, whichever is lower**. The cap excludes religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum.

Nine Emperor Gods Festival Prayer Services

3. ROs must observe the following safe management measures (see [Annex](#) for summary of SMMs):

- a. **All worshippers, religious and supporting workers (including cleaners and volunteers) attending and supporting the Festival must be vaccinated¹.**
- b. All religious and supporting workers (including cleaners and volunteers) are strongly encouraged to **undergo self-administered ART** for every day that they are on-site for the 10-day Festival. The ART results are to be submitted to the RO's management committee.
- c. Seniors above 60 years old are strongly discouraged from attending or supporting the event, even if they are vaccinated. Seniors should also take their vaccination booster shot if they are eligible.
- d. ROs are **required to implement a booking system** for worshippers who wish to attend the prayers in the RO's premises and ensure no crowding or long queues outside the RO's premises.
- e. For prayer services that exceed 50 worshippers, the worshippers have to be segregated into zones holding no more than 50 persons each.
 - i. There should be no mingling of individuals across zones. There must be at least 3m physical spacing between each zone.

¹ An individual is considered vaccinated if he/ she has been: a) fully vaccinated, i.e. has received the full regimen of Pfizer-BioNTech/Comirnaty, Moderna or WHO EUL vaccines, with an additional two weeks for the vaccine to be fully effective, b) recovered from COVID-19, or c) has obtained a negative result on a pre-event test taken in the past 24 hours before the expected end of the event. Refer to <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/pet> for more details.

- ii. Devotees must observe at least 1 metre safe distancing from each other and keep within their zones.
 - iii. There must either be a separate ingress/egress for each zone or staggered entrance/exit timings so that worshippers from different zones do not mix with one another during entry/exit.
- f. Prayer services should be kept to **as short a duration as possible**. Worshippers should leave immediately after performing their prayers. There should be **no mingling** between worshippers before, during or after the prayer service.
- g. Worshippers are to observe **1 metre safe distance** between themselves and others if they are worshipping individually. Worshippers may also worship in groups of no more than 5 persons, with 1 metre safe distancing between groups.
- h. All persons present must **wear a face mask at all times**.
- i. Worshippers can burn incense and joss paper within the premises that the prayer services are held and should do so responsibly.
- j. Religious rites (e.g. medium services) are permitted, for groups up to 5 worshippers, and not exceeding 50 persons in total.
- k. Live performances and live instrumental music are allowed in places of worship as part of the congregational and worship services or religious rites. e.g. lion and dragon dance, puppet show for worship services, with the necessary SMMs in place:
- i. Maximum of 50 persons are allowed to be involved in/support the conduct of the worship service as part of live performance elements. This includes persons on-stage, backstage and off-stage.
 - ii. **Up to 20 persons who are involved in the conduct of the worship may unmask at any given time**, of which up to 20 persons can be unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments.
 - iii. If there are persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/bass instruments, all persons involved in the live performance elements must be vaccinated.
 - iv. **Persons singing or playing of wind/brass instruments must also undergo additional ART by an approved provider.**
 - v. There must be at least 3-metres setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers.

- l. Premises where the prayer services are held should be well-ventilated. Premises that have reduced air circulation (e.g. air-conditioned prayer hall) should, where possible, open doors and windows to naturally **ventilate the space after use**.
- m. **No receptions or on-site meals are allowed** before or after the prayer service. ROs are allowed to distribute takeaway meals, pre-packed staple food items and prayer packages to worshippers. ROs should minimise the number of religious workers and staff involved in such distribution, as well as minimise the frequency and duration of direct interactions with worshippers.
- n. All commuters on organised transport (e.g. buses, vans and lorries) travelling to and from the RO's premises and the welcome/send-off rituals at external premises are required to **wear a mask, and refrain from talking to each other or on their mobile phones**.
- o. ROs are strongly encouraged to continue supporting the religious needs of their communities via remote means such as recording and broadcast of Nine Emperor Gods Festival prayers and activities. ROs can have up to 50 persons on-location for digital recordings, of which up to 20 persons can be unmasked at any one time. Of the 20 persons unmasked, only up to 2 persons unmasked may sing at any given time. All 20 can be unmasked for singing and/or playing of wind/brass instruments if they are vaccinated. Those singing must maintain 2 metres between all other individuals.

4. External Venues. Similar to last year, this year's Nine Emperor Gods Festival prayers can take place in venues outside of places of worship (e.g. HDB common areas, industrial areas) if they are conducted by ROs with a good track record of implementing safe management measures [i.e. have submitted Safe Management Plans (SMPs) for Phase Three activities to MCCY], or by religious workers endorsed by these ROs.

- a. Permits and approvals must be obtained from the premises owners and relevant authorities.
- b. ROs that do not have such a track record must first seek the support of the Taoist Federation, before their applications to use external venues are considered by the relevant authorities/premises owners.²
- c. ROs may set up tentage for the prayer services, subject to approval from relevant agencies.
- d. The organisers of the Nine Emperor Gods activities and prayers (including the ROs and religious workers involved) should follow the SMMs stipulated by MCCY for such prayers (paragraph 3) as well as any other conditions stipulated by the premises owner.

² ROs should approach premises owners to apply for the use of their premises before approaching Taoist Federation.

Other Nine Emperor Gods Festival Activities

5. Dinners, Getais, Live Auctions, and Religious Processions. **Sit-down dinners, in-person getais, live auctions, and religious processions (e.g. foot, chariot and vehicular) are not allowed** for this year's Nine Emperor Gods Festival. ROs can consider alternative forms such as digital recordings that allow their worshippers to safely participate in such activities.³

MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF SAFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

6. ROs must have acknowledge through the CPRO website the new conditions for religious activities imposed before commencing the activities. ROs that have not submitted their SMPs previously for Phase Three will need to submit their plans, **at least 2 days** before proceeding with any activity as part of Nine Emperor Gods Festival.

ENFORCEMENT OF SMMs

7. MCCY reserves the right to suspend a RO's activities if there are gaps in the SMP submitted and until the necessary rectifications are made. Should there be any confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to a RO's Nine Emperor Gods Festival activities, the RO's operations and/or premises may be closed for a period of time as determined by the authorities.

8. **ROs must comply with the prescribed SMMs for the Nine Emperor Gods Festival. Under the COVID-19 (Temporary Measures) Act, first-time offenders will face a fine of up to \$10,000, imprisonment of up to six months, or both. Subsequent offences may face a fine of up to \$20,000, imprisonment of up to twelve months, or both.**

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP SINGAPORE COVID-SAFE

9. MCCY will continue to work with our ROs to ensure a COVID-safe environment for religious activities. We also seek the understanding and support of our religious communities to abide by the safe management measures.

MINISTRY OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH

For more information and FAQs on COVID-19 for the religious sector, please visit www.cpro.gov.sg or contact MCCY's Crisis Preparedness for Religious Organisations Programme Office at cpro@mccy.gov.sg.

³ These are subject to prevailing guidelines on broadcasting and recording services in MCCY's Phase Two (Heightened Alert) Tighter Measures for Religious Activities.

**SUMMARY OF SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR
NINE EMPEROR GODS FESTIVAL IN 2021**

Permitted Activities	
Religious Activity	Safe Management Measures
Congregational and Worship Services	<p>Up to 1,000 worshippers</p> <p>All worshippers, religious and supporting workers (including cleaners and volunteers) <u>must be vaccinated</u>.</p> <p>All religious and supporting workers (including cleaners and volunteers) are strongly encouraged to <u>undergo self-administered ART</u> for every day that they are on-site.</p> <p><u>Seniors above 60 years old are strongly discouraged from attending or supporting the event, even if they are vaccinated.</u></p>
Booking System	ROs are required to <u>implement a booking system</u> for the temple and ensure no crowding outside the temple's premises.
Religious Rites (e.g. medium services)	Religious rites (e.g. medium services) are permitted in, for groups up to 5 worshippers and not exceeding 50 persons in total
Live performance elements during congregational and other worship services	<p>Up to 50 persons allowed to be involved in the conduct of the live performance.</p> <p>20 allowed to unmask, of which <u>20 can be unmasked</u> for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments, only if all involved in the live performance elements are vaccinated.</p> <p>In addition, <u>ART by an approved provider</u> is required for those unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments.</p>
Commuters travelling to and from the temple and beach	All commuters on organised transport (e.g. buses, vans and lorries) travelling to and from the temple and beach are required to <u>wear a mask, and refrain from talking to each other or on their mobile phones</u> .
Recording and Broadcasting of worship services	<p>Up to 50 persons allowed on-location. Of these, 20 allowed to unmask, of which 2 can be unmasked for singing and/or playing of wind/brass instruments.</p> <p>All 20 can be unmasked for singing and/or playing of wind/brass instruments if they are vaccinated.</p>

Non-Permitted Activities	
Religious Activity	Safe Management Measures
Sit-down Dinners	No reception or on-site meals are allowed before or after the prayer services.
In-person Getai	
Live Auctions	Sit-down dinners, in-person getais, live auctions, and religious processions (e.g. foot, chariot and vehicular) <u>remain disallowed</u> .
Religious Processions (e.g. foot, chariot, and vehicular)	