

SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR 7TH LUNAR MONTH ACTIVITIES

This note provides additional guidance to religious organisations (ROs) on the permitted activities and required safe management measures, for the conduct of 7th lunar month activities. This is in addition to MCCY's prevailing conditions on Phase Two (Heightened Alert) Tighter Measures for Religious Activities issued on 20 July 2021.

2. In Phase Two (Heightened Alert), ROs can conduct congregational and other worship services for:

a. Up to 50 persons at a time without Pre-Event Testing (PET)

b. Up to 100 worshippers at a time, only if there is PET for all worshippers¹

- i. Worshippers who have been vaccinated², or have an exemption notice³, do not need to undergo PET.
- ii. Religious and supporting workers, and volunteers who have extended interaction with worshippers during the worship service, will need to undergo PET. Those who have been vaccinated, or have an exemption notice, do not need to undergo PET.
- iii. Worshippers have to be segregated into zones holding no more than 50 persons each.
 - There should be no mingling of individuals across zones, each zone must have at least 3m physical spacing.

¹ This excludes (i) individuals entering or remaining at the venue solely to work as a permitted enterprise or permitted enterprise worker, for or with the place of worship, and (ii) supporting workers/ volunteers who only have transient contact with worshippers (e.g. ushers). Religious workers or volunteers with extended interaction with worshippers during a service must undergo PET.

² "Vaccinated" for purposes of this document means that the individual has completed the full vaccination regimen in Singapore by the administration of an approved vaccine (i.e. the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine) by a recognised vaccination provider **and** has had sufficient time to develop sufficient protection (i.e. two weeks or more have passed after the second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine), or is a recovered individual who has had one dose of an approved vaccination by a recognised vaccination provider (i.e. the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine) **and** has had sufficient time to develop sufficient protection (i.e. two weeks or more have passed after the dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine or the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine).

³ The exemption notice refers to a PET exemption notice with a relevant validity period. It must be issued 270 days from the date of the earliest PCR+ result performed in Singapore or 270 days from overseas PCR+ result if a Serology-positive (S+) result is obtained in Singapore.

- Devotees must observe at least 1 metre safe distancing from each other and keep within their zones.
- 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.

3. Non-congregational religious activities and religious rites are also permitted in places of worship for groups of up to 2 persons, subject to a total premises cap of 100 persons.⁴

4. These two sets of activities can be held concurrently, subject to safe management measures.

7th Lunar Month Prayer Services

5. In line with the above measures in Phase Two (Heightened Alert), ROs conducting 7th lunar month prayers and activities must observe the following safe management measures:

- a. 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.
- b. 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 2 persons, with 1 metre safe distancing between groups.
- c. All persons present must wear a **face mask at all times**.⁵
- d. Worshippers can burn incense and joss paper within the premises that the prayer services are held and should do so responsibly. Worshippers should leave immediately after performing their prayers.
- e. Only **non-wind instrument for live performance** elements are allowed e.g. playing of percussions for worship services, with the necessary SMMs in place:
 - i. Maximum of 30 persons are allowed to be involved in/support the conduct of the worship service. This includes persons on-stage, backstage and off-stage.

⁴ This total cap is the combined number of persons participating in the various permitted activities (excluding congregational and other worship services) on the premises at any one time, excluding religious and supporting workers. Respective caps on the individual activities will continue to apply.

⁵ Children twelve years and below, as well as persons who have health conditions that may result in breathing or other medical difficulties when a mask is worn for a prolonged period of time, may wear a face shield in lieu of a face mask.

- ii. Persons involved in/support the conduct of the worship service must be masked at all times.
 - iii. There must be at least 3-metres setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers.
- f. 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**.
- g. **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.
- h. ROs are strongly encouraged to continue supporting the religious needs of their communities via remote means such as recording and broadcast of 7th lunar month prayers and activities. ROs can have up to 15 persons on-location for digital recordings, of which up to 10 persons can be unmasked at any one time. Of the 10 persons unmasked, only up to 2 persons unmasked may sing at any given time. Those singing must maintain 2 metres between all other individuals. **ROs who wish to use their premises for digital recording or broadcast are required to notify through the CPRO website** of (i) the planned dates of the digital productions; (ii) venue; and (iii) confirmation of adherence to the performers and crew limits, before conducting the digital productions.

6. Places of Worship. ROs are allowed to conduct the 7th lunar month prayer services in their places of worship. The number of persons attending such prayer services would count towards the existing limit of 50 persons without PET or 100 persons with PET at any one time for worship services in the place of worship (excluding religious workers and staff who must be kept to a minimum number).

7. External Venues. Similar to last year, 7th lunar month prayers this year 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 still 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 or the Singapore Buddhist Federation, before their applications to use external venues are considered by the relevant authorities/premises owners.

- c. ROs may set up tentage for the prayer services, subject to approval from relevant agencies.
- d. The organisers of the 7th lunar month prayers (including the ROs and religious workers involved) should follow the safe management measures stipulated by MCCY for such prayers (paragraph 5) as well as any other conditions stipulated by the premises owner.

Other 7th Lunar Month Activities

8. Columbaria. ROs can continue to **allow the customary visits to columbaria** in their places of worship if the columbaria have already been permitted to operate in Phase Two (Heightened Alert).

- a. **Individuals who visit the columbaria must maintain a safe distance of at least 1 metre at all times. Families who visit the columbaria in groups are limited to no more than 2 persons in a group.** There should be at least 1 metre safe distancing between groups and no mingling between groups. These visits should be kept as short as possible.

9. Live Auction, Dinners and Getais. **Live auctions, sit-down dinners and in-person getais are not permitted** for this year's 7th lunar month. ROs can consider alternative forms such as digital recordings that allow their worshippers to safely participate in such activities.⁶

MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF SAFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

10. ROs must have acknowledge through the CPRO website the new conditions for religious activities imposed from 22 July through 18 August 2021 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 7th lunar month.

11. 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 7th lunar month activities, the RO's operations and/or premises may be closed for a period of time as determined by the authorities.

WORKING TOGETHER TO KEEP SINGAPORE COVID-SAFE

12. 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.

⁶ These are subject to prevailing guidelines on broadcasting and recording services in MCCY's Phase Two (Heightened Alert) Tighter Measures for Religious Activities.

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.