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MOVING INTO PHASE THREE OF RE-OPENING FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

On 14 Dec 2020, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce announced that Phase Three of Re-Opening will commence from 28 Dec 2020. This document provides the conditions under which religious organisations (ROs) are permitted to resume more activities in places of worship during Phase Three.

PHASE THREE: SAFE NATION

2. During Phase One (“Safe Re-opening”), places of worship could re-open for private worship for up to 5 households at a time, in addition to the conduct of marriage solemnizations as well as wakes and funerals.

3. During Phase Two (“Safe Transition”), ROs could gradually resume more religious activities, including the conduct of congregational and other worship services for up to 100 persons.

4. From 28 Dec 2020, ROs will be allowed to: (a) conduct congregational and other worship services at higher capacity limits; and (b) involve live performance elements for congregational and other worship services, as well as religious rites. Worshippers can also participate in these activities in a larger group made up of not more than 8 persons (an increase from 5 persons today), with the default 1 metre safe distance between groups.

Worship Services

5. From 28 Dec 2020, ROs may **conduct congregational and other worship services at places of worship¹, with up to 250 persons (an increase from 100 persons today) at a time** (excluding religious and supporting workers², whose numbers should be kept to a minimum), subject to safe management measures and the safe capacity of the premises.

6. For congregational services exceeding 50 persons, **worshippers have to be segregated into zones holding no more than 50 persons each.**

- a. As there should be no mingling of individuals across zones, each zone must be completely separated from another by either a physical solid partition (at least 1.8m high if not floor-to-ceiling, from wall-to-wall); or at least 3m physical spacing demarcated by continuous physical barriers (e.g. rope barrier).

¹ From 26 Jan 2021, religious activities held in residential units may involve up to 8 worshippers per day, similar to the prevailing restriction on household visitors.

² The supporting workers may include musicians (subject to Annex A) and persons required to implement the safe management measures.

- b. 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.
- c. ROs must also take reasonable steps to ensure that worshippers do not cross the physical barrier (where applicable) or enter another zone that they are not assigned to.

7. ROs should also observe the following safe management measures for worship services:

- a. Keep worship services to **as short a duration as possible**. There must be no reception or mingling between worshippers, before, during or after each worship service.
- b. All persons present (except children below 6 years of age) must **wear a face mask at all times**.³ Young children are still strongly encouraged to use a mask or face shield, especially when they are in a group setting (e.g. attending worship service or religious class) or when interacting with others.
- c. From 28 Dec 2020, **live performance elements will be permitted during the worship service at places of worship**⁴, with the necessary safe management measures in place (see Annex A).
 - i. Up to 10 persons who are involved in the conduct of the worship service are allowed to unmask at any given time, of which up to 5 persons can be unmasked for singing. Persons should only unmask when required to perform their duties.
 - ii. There must be at least a 3-metre setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers.
 - iii. Other than those allowed to unmask for singing, all others (including members of the audience) are not allowed to sing during the worship service.
- d. There should be **no sharing of prayer and other common items** (e.g. holy books, passing of offertory baskets, prayer mats) as this increases the risk of COVID-19 transmission. Worshippers are to bring along their personal prayer items instead, where required.

³ 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.

⁴ Only congregational and other worship services held at places of worship will be able to access the full live performance allowances, e.g. including singing and playing of wind instruments. Otherwise, ROs will be limited to live instrumental music (non-wind) only at indoor third-party premises. No live performance elements (including live instrumental music) will be allowed at outdoor third-party premises for congregational and other worship services. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premise owner.

- e. Places of worship with reduced air circulation (e.g. enclosed prayer spaces, air-conditioned worship hall) should, where possible, open doors and windows to naturally **ventilate the space after each use**.

Marriage Solemnizations

8. ROs may continue to use places of worship to **conduct marriage solemnizations for up to 100 attendees** (excluding the solemnizer and religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum), subject to safe management measures and the safe capacity of the premises.

- a. If the total number of attendees is more than 48, they must be segregated into zones of up to 50 persons each (see paragraph 6 for zoning requirements). An individual attending the solemnization must remain within his or her respective assigned zone and must not enter another unassigned zone.
- b. Attendees must maintain a 1 metre safe distance between groups except a core “wedding party”⁵, which is allowed to comprise up to 20 persons (including the couple and their two witnesses). There should be no intermingling or mixing between groups nor between the “wedding party” and these other groups.
- c. There must not be any reception with food and drinks, or wedding celebrations that are not essential religious rites.
- d. ROs must also comply with prevailing safe management measures stipulated by the Registry of Marriages (ROM), Registry of Muslim Marriages (ROMM) and as listed on the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)’s website⁶.

9. From 28 Dec 2020, solemnizations at places of worship⁷ may also involve live instrumental music (non-wind) with the necessary safe management measures in place (see Annex B). Persons involved in/supporting the live instrumental music segment should be kept to the minimum. No other performances (e.g. singing, dance, variety act) are allowed.

10. ROs are encouraged to continue offering video link solemnizations as an option for couples.

⁵ Besides the couple and their two witnesses, the core wedding party can comprise a group of close family and/or friends who are required or expected to interact with one another during the course of the solemnization.

⁶ Refer to: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

⁷ Should ROs conduct solemnizations at third-party premises, live instrumental music (non-wind) is permitted only at indoor third-party premises. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premise owner.

Funerals

11. **Funerals, wakes, installation of niches and post-funeral rites⁸ at places of worship can involve not more than 30 attendees at any time** (excluding religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum).

- a. There must not be any reception with food and drinks.
- b. ROs must also comply with prevailing safe management measures listed on the National Environment Agency (NEA)'s website⁹.

12. From 28 Dec 2020, funerary-related activities at places of worship¹⁰ may involve live instrumental music (non-wind) with the necessary safe management measures in place (see Annex B). Persons involved in/supporting the live instrumental music segment should be kept to the minimum. No other performances (e.g. singing, dance, variety act) are allowed.

13. **Visits to columbaria at places of worship** should be kept as short as possible, with no mingling between groups.

Other Religious Activities

14. ROs may use places of worship to conduct **religious rites and other religious activities (e.g. pastoral services, religious classes for adults and children) so long as they are conducted in gatherings not exceeding 50 persons**, subject to safe distancing and other safe management measures appropriate to the nature of the religious activity. This is also subject to the total premise cap of 150 persons (see paragraph 16).

- a. Each religious class must not exceed 50 persons, including the religious worker/teacher¹¹ (and supporting workers, if any). As a best practice, we encourage a greater separation of 2 metres between groups of students attending religious classes.
- b. Religious rites at places of worship¹² may also involve live performance elements subject to the safe management measures at Annex A.

⁸ This refers to funerary memorial events for deceased persons.

⁹ Refer to: <https://www.nea.gov.sg/post-circuit-breaker-measures>.

¹⁰ Live instrumental music (non-wind) is also permitted for funerals/post-funeral rites held at indoor/outdoor third-party premises. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premise owner.

¹¹ Persons who are speaking to a group in a classroom or lecture-style setting, where they largely remain at the spot from which they are speaking, may wear face shields in lieu of masks, and must be at least 1 metre away from any other individual.

¹² Only religious rites held at places of worship will be able to access the full live performance allowances, e.g. including singing and playing of wind instruments. Otherwise, ROs will be limited to live instrumental music (non-wind) only at indoor third-party premises. No live performance elements (including live instrumental music) will be allowed at outdoor third-party premises for religious rites. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premise owner.

Recording and Broadcast of Religious Services and Prayers

15. ROs are encouraged to continue supporting the religious needs of their communities via remote means such as recording and broadcast of religious services and prayers. **ROs can have up to 30 persons on-location for these productions, of which up to 10 persons can be unmasked at any one time. Of the 10 persons unmasked, only up to 5 persons may sing at any given time.** Those who are unmasked must maintain at least 2 metres safe distance from other individuals. All other persons present must remain masked and maintain a 1 metre separation. The time spent on-location for this activity should be kept as short as possible. The production team must also put in place safe management measures, including no-cross deployment between locations (where practicable), minimise socialisation during breaks and thorough cleaning of technical equipment.

SAFE CAPACITY IN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

16. From 28 Dec 2020, all the permitted religious activities in paragraphs 8 to 15 (i.e. excluding congregational and other worship services) can take place concurrently at the place of worship subject to **a total cap of 150 persons** (an increase from 100 persons today)¹³ – subject to safe management measures and the safe capacity of the premises – and only if these activities can be conducted safely at separate locations within the place of worship.

- a. ROs must establish a one-way flow for entry and exit points for all the permitted activities, and manage the arrival of worshippers to avoid queues from forming. There must be sufficient signs and directions to guide the different parties such that they do not interact or meet each other while entering, exiting, or while in the premises.
- b. ROs should consider reducing other concurrent activities when congregational and other worship services are ongoing, so that there is a smaller total number of people on the premises at any one time, which will help to minimise the risk of large clusters from forming.

17. **ROs can conduct congregational and other worship services for 250 persons, with no more than an additional 150 worshippers participating in other permitted activities in the premises at the same time.** For example, if there are 250 persons attending a worship service, as well as two religious classes involving 50 persons each, there can be at most another 50 persons taking part in other permitted religious activities¹⁴ (i.e. not worship services) at the same time.

DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER

18. ROs should **primarily engage their religious workers and staff to support the permitted religious activities but can deploy volunteers to support if**

¹³ 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 the religious and supporting workers. Respective caps on the individual activities will continue to apply.

¹⁴ For example, this could be a religious rite involving up to 50 persons.

necessary. The number of personnel involved in conducting each permitted activity should be kept to a minimum.

19. Work-from-home remains the default mode of working for ROs. However, employees who are able to work from home may return to the workplace to better support work and business operations, subject to prevailing workplace safe management measures stipulated by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).¹⁵ There should also be no cross-deployment¹⁶ or interaction between workers in different shifts, teams or worksites, even outside of work.

TRACETOGETHER AND SAFEENTRY

20. TraceTogether-only SafeEntry, where the TraceTogether App or Token is required for SafeEntry check-ins, will be made mandatory for places of worship and other public premises by early next year. This will be after everyone who wants a TraceTogether Token has had a chance to collect one at a Community Club or Centre in their constituency.

21. **To be ready for this requirement, ROs must make the necessary preparations to accept check-ins by the TraceTogether App or Token.** ROs can refer to www.safeentry.gov.sg on how to set up TraceTogether-only SafeEntry for their premises.

MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF SAFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

22. ROs must submit their Safe Management Plans (SMPs), including manpower deployment, **at least 3 days** before commencing Phase Three activities. The detailed requirements and format for submitting these SMPs can be found at www.cpro.gov.sg.

- a. ROs that have yet to submit their SMPs after the effective date of Phase Three may only continue with the permitted religious activities under Phase Two parameters.
- b. ROs that have not conducted congregational and other worship services for more than 100 worshippers with live performance elements must phase these in so that ROs can dedicate bandwidth to ensure that SMMs are well adhered to before resuming further activities.¹⁷

23. ROs that wish to deviate from the parameters set out in this document will have to submit a written request for deviation to MCCY and require MCCY's approval **before** proceeding with their activities.

24. 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. ROs are responsible

¹⁵ Refer to: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures>.

¹⁶ If cross-deployment cannot be avoided (e.g. due to the nature of the job), additional safeguards must be taken to minimise the risk of cross-infection (e.g. systems are in place to ensure no direct contact with the cross-deployed personnel).

¹⁷ For a start, ROs may proceed with congregational and other worship services at 250 persons without live performance elements or proceed with congregational and other worship services for 100 persons with live performance elements.

for the implementation of SMMs and action could be taken for lapses and breaches. Should there be any confirmed COVID-19 cases linked to a RO's premises or place of worship, the premises may be closed for a period of time as determined by the authorities.

WORKING TOGETHER TO MAKE SINGAPORE COVID-SAFE

25. As we resume more religious and other activities in Phase Three, we will have to remain vigilant and regularly refine our safe management measures in order to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission. MCCY will continue to work with our ROs to ensure a COVID-safe environment 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.

**SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES INVOLVING LIVE PERFORMANCE ELEMENTS**

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ¹⁸ live performance elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than 30 persons (whether on-stage, backstage or off-stage), with maximum of 10 persons unmasked at any given time (subject to safe capacity of the premises) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Of which, only 5 persons can be unmasked for singing [No masked singing is allowed] <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ As a best practice, singers should try not to position themselves directly opposite each other and are encouraged to sing away from each other ▪ Persons playing wind or brass instruments should ensure that these instruments are fully intact, and refrain from engaging in practice sessions involving only parts of the instrument (e.g. mouthpiece buzzing, playing with just the lead pipe) to prevent droplet transmission ▪ Liquids from instruments (i.e. condensation and saliva) should be collected and disposed of hygienically after the practice session or worship service/religious rite ○ Persons can be unmasked (and not require face shields) for speaking only for the duration of the congregational and other worship services, and religious rites as part of the permissible number of unmasked persons ○ Unmasking is allowed only when required (e.g. singing, playing wind/brass instruments) and for the duration of the permissible activity

¹⁸ E.g. audio crew or videographer.

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of face shields is encouraged in lieu of unmasking, where practicable [<i>Note: Persons using face shields would still count towards the respective unmasked quota.</i>]
Safe distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All unmasked persons to maintain at least 2 metres from any other individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Default 1 metre safe distance applies otherwise • At least a 3-metre setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If the stage height is at a higher vantage point in relation to the worshippers, it is encouraged for the safe distance to be more than 3 metres as the trajectory of droplet projection will likely be further ○ Premises without a clearly defined stage area should have floor markings to mark out the 3-metre boundary
Responses from worshippers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worshippers are to remain masked and can give spoken responses (no singing) • All other safe management measures for worshippers continue to apply
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sharing of equipment (e.g. musical instruments, microphones, props) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If unavoidable, equipment should be cleaned/ disinfected before handled or used by others • All technical equipment (e.g. camera, lights) should be cleaned at the beginning and end of each session, and between each user

**SAFE MANAGEMENT MEASURES FOR
RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES INVOLVING LIVE INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC**

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ¹⁹ the live instrumental music segment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep to the minimum required • Persons must be masked at all times
Safe distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Default 1 metre safe distance applies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Persons involved in the conduct of live instrumental music should minimise movement to ensure that the 1 metre safe distance can be adhered to at all times
Responses from attendees	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendees are to remain masked and can give spoken responses (no singing)
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No sharing of equipment (e.g. musical instruments, microphones, props) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ If unavoidable, equipment should be cleaned/ disinfected before handled or used by others • All technical equipment (e.g. camera, lights) should be cleaned at the beginning and end of each session, and between each user

¹⁹ E.g. audio crew or videographer.