

CHECKLIST FOR DIFFERENT STAGES OF REENTRY

As the apostle Paul reminds the church at Corinth, “[T]he members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable... . If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” (1 Corinthians 12:22,26-27, NRSV).

Each stage should include these technical plans:

- Detailed plans for your context that meet requirements of social distancing for small groups and/or worship
- Sanitation Procedures
- Consistent communications to congregation and those who use the building(s) (such as guests/renters). Consider communications that are external before people come into the building, and updated signage in the building/property.
- Plans to continue to incorporate and welcome those who are either unable to or not comfortable coming to in-person gatherings until a treatment or vaccine becomes available for Covid-19
- Public health guidelines ask everyone with pre-existing or underlying conditions or those over 65 years of age, whether staff or volunteers to continue to shelter in place and/or work from home as their risk is higher in the event of contact with the virus.
- Limit entrances and exits to keep areas of the building clean of the virus.
- Make provisions for restroom use or not. Let people know before they arrive.
- Provide for disposable masks and hand sanitizer at all entrances to the building and consider utilizing temperature checks.
- Maintain records of who attends any gathering in case contact tracking is required.

Worship

- Plans for worship (including sacraments, weddings and funerals)
- If recording an online worship service in sanctuary, maintain 6 ft of space between people who are participating in the worship service. Recommended that only those who need to be there for the recording be present. Social distancing for all present. Face coverings when not speaking or leading worship.
- Consider worship outside if there is space to social distance.
- Consider “drive in” style worship if there is space, sound equipment or FM service, and can continue to keep vehicles 6 feet apart.
- No congregational singing or unison praying (outdoors or indoors). It is also recommended that all hymnals, bibles, prayer books be removed from the Sanctuary. Individual communion elements, and no passing of an offering plate (plate in back of sanctuary and continue with online/mail-in giving). Discontinue post-worship fellowship events.

Building

- Keep office functions as limited and distant as possible to ensure essential operations. All those in the office should be wearing masks. Surfaces should be sanitized regularly

- Building users and Renters should continue to not use the building unless a plan is developed with the Session and that includes consideration and documentation from their insurer(s). Specialized plans for nursery school/childcare must adhere to additional state and CDC regulations.
- Require other groups who use the building on a regular basis to present a plan that addresses cleaning needs, masks and social distancing, and adherence to state and CDC regulations to the Session prior to being allowed back into the building.
- Require all groups to maintain records of who attends the gathering in case contact tracking is required.

Ministry

- Food pantry/soup kitchens/feeding programs should continue with masks, social distancing and sanitizing. Work in shifts to keep the groups to 10 or less.
- Offer opportunities for Bible Studies, Faith formation groups to meet online.
- If you don't have small groups, use this opportunity to start small groups within your congregation. As the situation shifts, these small groups can provide spiritual and emotional support to one another.
- Think creatively about VBS. Consider doing it online or have a VBS Box or Drop off Activity.
- Mission Trips that involve travel and overnight accommodations would be unwise at this time. Look for local activities such as food pantries, or community services that need volunteers for different projects.

Adaptive questions to consider at all stages of plans:

- How are we going to continue to connect with those who have “found us” online or have health concerns and cannot come back or live away from the local community?
- What do we need to do to continue to connect online? Do we need better wifi? Cameras? Screens? Long term ZOOM account? Tech support? Shifting of staff role(s)?
- How are things going to be different as we move through the pandemic and come to the other side? What are we bringing with us? What can we leave behind? How are we going to discern where God is leading us now?
- How will these guidelines, new procedures affect our budget? What does that say to our stewardship?
- Where is God calling us into this new reality? How are we going to get there?

Stage 1

Connecticut <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Latest-Guidance>

Rhode Island (see stage 2 guidance as it has been incorporated)

Massachusetts

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-i-places-of-worship-checklist/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-i-places-of-worship-checklist-portuguese-portugues/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-i-places-of-worship-protocols-summary/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/phase-i-places-of-worship-protocols-summary-portuguese-portugues/download>

Stage 2

Connecticut <https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Latest-Guidance>
Rhode Island

https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-II/Reopening-Phase-II-Navigating-Our-Way-05.22.20.pdf

Massachusetts

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/places-of-worship-phase-ii-protocols-summary/download>

<https://www.mass.gov/doc/places-of-worship-phase-ii-checklist/download>

Stage 3

Connecticut effective TBD

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Latest-Guidance>

Rhode Island effective TBD

https://www.reopeningri.com/resource_pdfs/Phase-III/Phase-III-Picking-up-speed.pdf

Massachusetts effective TBD

No documents yet published

CDC stages

These do not list dates but are divided into three sections. The fact-sheet for houses of faith can be accessed at this link with information from the Insurance Board, which is the insurer for the Presbytery:

<https://www.insuranceboard.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/COVID-19-Phases.pdf>