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THE STABILISATION PERIOD PHASE TWO (HEIGHTENED ALERT) TIGHTER MEASURES FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

On 24 September 2021, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced further tightening of community safe management measures (SMMs) during this stabilisation period. This document provides the conditions under which religious organisations (ROs) are permitted to carry out activities in places of worship from 27 September 2021 through 24 October 2021.

PHASE TWO (HEIGHTENED ALERT)

2. Under Phase Two (Heightened Alert), the following revised SMMs have been applicable to ROs since 19 August 2021:

- a. Increase in the permissible group size to 5 persons;
- b. Increase to 1000 worshippers for congregational and other worship services
 - i. Up to 50 worshippers if unvaccinated;
 - ii. Up to 1000 worshippers if vaccinated¹;
- c. Resumption of other non-congregational religious activities;
- d. Increase in capacity for live performance elements; and
- e. Increase in capacity for marriage solemnizations.

Stabilisation Period

3. Under the Stabilisation Period from 27 September 2021, tighter measures will apply to religious and other community activities. In addition to measures that took effect from 19 August, the following changes apply to ROs from 27 September:

- a. Decrease in the permissible group size to maximum 2 persons; and
- b. Resumption of in-person non-congregational religious activities for children aged 12 and below from 11 October 2021.

Annex A summarizes the changes that take effect from 27 September 2021 with updates dated 18 October 2021.

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.

Worship Services

4. **ROs may continue to conduct congregational and other worship services at places of worship for up to 50 unvaccinated worshippers at a time**, subject to SMMs and the safe capacity of the premises. This cap excludes religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum. **ROs are strongly encouraged to only deploy fully vaccinated workers for worship services.**
5. **We strongly encourage all religious and supporting workers (including cleaners and volunteers) to undergo a self-administered Antigen Rapid Test (ART), before they are deployed on-site during this period**, even if they are fully vaccinated.
6. From 27 September 2021, **worshippers can participate in worship services in groups of no more than 2 persons** (decrease from 5 persons today).
7. ROs can conduct congregational and other worship services, for more than 50 and **up to 1000 worshippers at a time, only if all worshippers, religious and supporting workers are vaccinated.**
8. For congregational and other worship services exceeding 50 worshippers, **worshippers have to be segregated into zones holding no more than 50 worshippers 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).
 - 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.
9. Children aged 12 years and below are currently ineligible for any COVID-19 vaccine in the National Vaccination Programme, and are exempted from undergoing PET. **Children aged 12 years and below² can participate in vaccinated only-worship services provided they make up no more than 20% of the total number of worshippers on-site.** If there is more than one child in the group, all children must be from the same household.

² This measure applies to children 12 years and below (i.e. born in and after 2009).

10. **Seniors aged 60 years old and above are strongly discouraged from attending or supporting religious activities**, even if they are vaccinated. Seniors should also take their vaccination booster shot if they are eligible.

11. ROs should continue to observe the following SMMs for worship services (including services for vaccinated individuals):

- 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 Face shields are not permitted as substitutes for face masks. Young children are still strongly encouraged to use a mask, especially when they are in a group setting (e.g. attending worship service).
- c. Singing by worshippers with masks on is not permitted.
- d. **Live performance elements are permitted during the worship service at places of worship**, with the following SMMs (see [Annex B](#) for details).
 - i. A maximum of 50 persons are allowed to be involved in/support the conduct of the worship service. This includes persons on-stage, backstage or off-stage.
 - ii. **Up to 20 persons who are involved in the conduct of the worship service may unmask** at any given time, of which **up to 20 persons can be unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments**. Persons should only unmask when required to perform their duties.
 - iii. **If there are persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments, all persons involved in the live performance elements must be vaccinated**. Otherwise, unmasking for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments is not allowed.
 - iv. **Persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments must also undergo ART** by an approved test provider⁴ **with results valid**⁵ **through the duration of the service** for which they are unmasked for this purpose.

³ Children 12 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 Refer to <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/pet> for more details on ART, including a list of MOH-approved COVID-19 test providers.

⁵ The test results are only valid for 24 hours from the time an individual registers at the testing premises to take the test. The RO must ensure that the result of the test is valid until the end of the participation in the worship service.

- v. There must be at least a 3-metre setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers.
 - vi. Minimise the duration of live performance elements for congregational and other worship services.
 - vii. During rehearsals for live performance elements, **if there are persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments, all persons involved in the rehearsal must be vaccinated.**
 - viii. Masked singing will be treated in the same way as unmasked singing (i.e. masked singers will count towards the maximum number allowed to unmask for singing and/or playing of wind instruments).
- e. 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.
 - f. 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**⁶.

Marriage Solemnizations

12. ROs may continue to use places of worship to conduct marriage solemnizations where:

- a. **Solemnizations involving up to 50 attendees (including bride and groom): for unvaccinated attendees.**
- b. **Solemnizations involving 51 to 1000 attendees (including bride and groom): all attendees must be vaccinated.**

13. These activities are subject to SMMs and the safe distancing capacity of the solemnization premises. The caps at paragraph 12 exclude the solemnizer and religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum.

- a. If the total number of attendees is more than 50 (including the wedding couple), they must still be segregated into zones of up to 50 persons each (see paragraph 8 for zoning requirements). An individual attending the solemnization must remain within his or her respective assigned zone and must not enter an unassigned zone.

⁶ Refer to: <https://www.nea.gov.sg/media/news/news/index/good-hygiene-and-improved-ventilation-to-further-reduce-the-risk-of-covid-19-transmission>

- b. Attendees must maintain a 1-metre safe distance between groups except a core “wedding party”⁷, 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 on the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)’s website⁸.

14. Solemnizations at places of worship⁹ **may continue to involve live instrumental music (non-wind/brass)** with the necessary SMMs in place (see Annex C). The number of 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.

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

Funerals

16. From 27 September 2021, **funerals, wakes, installation of niches and post-funeral rites at places of worship can involve not more than 30 attendees at any time, and in groups of no more than 2 persons** (excluding religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum), subject to SMMs and the safe capacity of the premises.

- a. There must not be any reception with food and drinks.
- b. ROs must also comply with prevailing safe management measures listed on MTI’s website¹⁰.

⁷ 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.

⁸ Refer to Safe Management Measures for Marriage Solemnizations and Wedding Receptions at: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

⁹ Should ROs conduct solemnizations at third-party premises, live instrumental music (non-wind/brass) is permitted only at indoor third-party premises. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premises owner.

¹⁰ Refer to Safe Management Measures for Funeral Events at: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

17. Funerary-related activities at places of worship¹¹ may continue to involve live instrumental music (non-wind/brass) with the necessary safe management measures in place (see [Annex C](#)). 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.

18. **Visits to columbaria at places of worship** should be kept as short as possible, with no mingling between groups. From 27 September 2021, each group may have no more than **2 persons** (decrease from 5 persons today).

Other Religious Activities

19. From 27 September 2021, **religious rites that are not part of a worship service are also limited to 2 worshippers at any one time**. Religious and supporting workers involved in the conduct of these rites should be kept to a minimum.

20. From 11 October 2021, ROs may **resume in-person religious rites and other religious activities (e.g. religious classes, pastoral services) for all persons (including children aged 12 and below¹²) in gatherings not exceeding 50 persons**, subject to SMMs appropriate to the nature of the religious activity.

a. Each religious class must not exceed 50 persons, including the religious worker/teacher (and supporting workers, if any) with each group comprising no more than 2 persons. As a best practice, we encourage a greater separation of 2 metres between groups of students attending religious classes.

b. **ROs are strongly encouraged to conduct religious classes online.**

21. From 11 October 2021, religious and supporting workers (including volunteers) conducting in-person religious classes for children aged 12 and below will be required to undergo Fast and Easy Testing (FET).

a. The mandatory FET will be conducted once a week (7 days), regardless of vaccination status. All **unvaccinated** staff under the FET regime are also required to undergo VoRT (i.e. testing twice a week). For avoidance of doubt, from 11 October 2021, individuals on FET regime who are vaccinated will be subjected to FET requirements, while those who are unvaccinated will also be subject to the more stringent VoRT requirements.

b. **ROs are required to notify MCCY through the CPRO website of (i) the names of the persons involved in the conduct of the class; and (ii) appointed supervisor to oversee the FET, before conducting the religious class.** More information on the FET guidelines are available on the CPRO website.

¹¹ Live instrumental music (non-wind/brass) is also permitted for funerals/post-funeral rites held at permitted indoor/outdoor third-party premises. ROs may also be subject to other safe management measures as stipulated by the premises owner.

Recording and Broadcast of Religious Services and Prayers

22. 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.

- a. **ROs can have up to 50 persons on-location for these productions, of which up to 20 persons can be unmasked at any one time, with no more than 2 persons unmasked for singing and/or playing wind/brass instruments.**
- b. **If everyone involved in the production is vaccinated, all 20 persons can be unmasked for singing and/or playing of wind instruments.**
- c. Masked singing will be treated in the same way as unmasked singing (i.e. masked singers will count towards the maximum number allowed to unmask for singing and/or playing of wind instruments).
- d. **Those singing and/or playing wind/brass instruments must maintain 2 metres between all other individuals.** All other persons present must 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, and thorough cleaning of technical equipment. There shall be no audience.

SAFE CAPACITY IN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

23. All the permitted religious activities in paragraphs 12 to 21 (i.e. excluding congregational and other worship services) can continue to take place concurrently, subject to a total premises cap¹³ of **1000 persons** – subject to SMMs and the safe distancing capacity of the premises – and only if these activities can be conducted safely at separate locations within the place of worship, with no interaction between worshippers while entering, exiting or while in the premises, and where the activities also comply with the activity SMMs.

24. **ROs are strongly encouraged to support the religious needs of their communities through remote means, as far as possible, in line with national guidelines to reduce social interactions, and thus minimise risk of COVID-19 transmission.**

- a. 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.

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

DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER

25. ROs should **primarily engage their religious workers and staff to support the permitted religious activities but can deploy volunteers to support if necessary**. The number of personnel involved in conducting each permitted activity should be kept to a minimum.

26. From 27 September 2021, **work-from-home will be the default for workplaces**. During this period, the snap 10-day Work from Home (10D WFH) regime will be suspended. Social gatherings at the workplace will continue to be disallowed. Religious workers and administrative staff should comply with prevailing workplace SMMs stipulated by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).¹⁴ Restrictions against cross-deployment¹⁵ across worksites remain in place.

TRACETOGETHER AND SAFEENTRY

27. TraceTogether-only SafeEntry, where the TraceTogether App or Token is required for SafeEntry check-ins, is **required at all venues that are required to implement SafeEntry**¹⁶. ROs must make the necessary preparations to accept check-ins by the TraceTogether App or Token. ROs can refer to www.safeentry.gov.sg for FAQs, or more information on how to set up TraceTogether-only SafeEntry for their premises.

28. To provide quicker and more seamless check-in using the TraceTogether App or Token, **all ROs conducting congregational and worship services are required to deploy the SafeEntry Gateway (SEGW) at their main entrances**. ROs may deploy either the physical SEGW Box or use the SEGW function found in the latest version of the SafeEntry (Business) App based on their needs [Refer to <https://go.gov.sg/gateway-overview> for more information].

MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF SAFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

29. **ROs must acknowledge through the CPRO website the new conditions for religious activities** imposed before commencing the activities. ROs that have not submitted their Safe Management Plans (SMPs) previously for Phase 3 will need to submit their plans, **at least 2 days** before commencing any activities outlined above. The detailed requirements and format for submitting these SMPs can be found at www.cpro.gov.sg.

¹⁴ Refer to: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures>.

¹⁵ 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). ROs will be required to demonstrate that cross-deployment or interaction between employees is critical for business operations, when requested by MOM or MCCY.

¹⁶ To help ease the transition, scanning of barcodes on personal IDs will be retained until 31 May 2021.

30. 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 for the implementation of safe management measures 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

31. The tightening of measures for religious activities reflect the seriousness of the current COVID-19 situation. 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-19 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.

**SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES IN SMMS FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES
IN STABILISATION PERIOD OF PHASE TWO (HEIGHTENED ALERT)**

Religious Activity	Measures during Phase Two (Heightened Alert)	Measures for the Stabilisation Period	
	From 19 August 2021	From 27 September 2021	From 11 October 2021
Permissible Group Size	Group sizes of up to 5 persons	Group size of up to 2 persons	
Congregational and Worship Services	<p>Up to 50 worshippers, if unvaccinated</p> <p>Up to 1000 worshippers, in zones holding no more than 50 worshippers each, if all worshippers, religious and supporting workers are vaccinated</p>	[No change]	
Live performance elements during congregational and other worship services	<p>Up to 50 persons allowed</p> <p>20 allowed to unmask, of which 20 can be unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments, only if all involved in the live performance elements are vaccinated.</p> <p>In addition, ART is required for those unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments</p>	[No change]	

Religious Activity	Measures during Phase Two (Heightened Alert)	Measures for the Stabilisation Period	
	From 19 August 2021	From 27 September 2021	From 11 October 2021
Other Religious Activities (e.g. religious rites, classes)	Religious rites and other religious activities (e.g. pastoral services, religious classes) allowed, so long as they are conducted in gatherings not exceeding 50 persons	<p>Religious rites limited to only 2 worshippers at any one time.</p> <p>In-person non-congregational religious activities (e.g. pastoral services, religious classes) for children aged 12 years and below are <u>suspended</u>.</p> <p>Strongly encourage religious activities for persons to be conducted virtually.</p>	<p>Religious rites limited to only 2 worshippers at any one time.</p> <p>In-person non-congregational religious activities (e.g. pastoral services, religious classes) for children aged 12 years and below can resume.</p> <p>Religious and supporting workers (including volunteers) are required to undergo 7-Days FET.</p> <p>All unvaccinated staff under the FET regime are also required to undergo VoRT (i.e. testing twice a week).</p> <p>ROs must notify CPRO before conducting such religious classes.</p> <p>Strongly encourage religious activities for persons to be conducted virtually.</p>

Religious Activity	Measures during Phase Two (Heightened Alert)	Measures for the Stabilisation Period	
	From 19 August 2021	From 27 September 2021	From 11 October 2021
Marriage Solemnizations	<p>Up to 50 attendees, if unvaccinated</p> <p>Up to 1000 attendees if all are vaccinated</p>	[No change]	
Recording and Broadcasting 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> <p>No need to notify CPRO before conducting the digital session</p>	[No change]	

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

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ¹⁷ live performance elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not more than 30 persons (whether on-stage, backstage or off-stage). • From <u>19 August 2021</u>, a maximum of 50 persons are allowed to be involved in/support the conduct of the worship service. This includes persons on-stage, backstage or off-stage. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ No more than 20 persons may be unmasked at any given time (subject to safe distancing capacity of the premises) ○ 20 persons can be unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments. This is allowed only if all persons involved in the live performance elements are vaccinated • Otherwise, unmasking for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments is not allowed • Additionally, persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments must undergo ART by an approved test provider with results valid through the duration of the service for which they are unmasked for this purpose <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 • During rehearsals for live performance elements, if there are persons unmasked for singing or playing of wind/brass instruments, all persons involved in the rehearsal must be vaccinated • Masked singing will be treated in the same way as unmasked singing (i.e. masked singers will count towards the maximum number allowed to unmask for singing and/or playing of wind instruments)

¹⁷ E.g. audio crew or videographer.

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Safe distance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All unmasked persons engaged in singing and/or the playing of wind/brass instruments are 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 (includes when giving verbal responses) • 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

A summary of the allowances and requirements for activities involving unmasking for singing and/or playing of wind/brass instruments are outlined below for easy reference.

From 19 August 2021

Activity	Total number allowed	Total number allowed to unmask	Total number allowed to unmask for singing and/or playing of wind /brass instruments	Requirements
Live performance elements as part of worship service	50	20	20	a. All involved in the live performance must be vaccinated. b. Those unmasked for singing and/or playing of wind/brass instruments must have a valid ART through the performance.
	50	20	0	If any one of the above conditions is not met.
Rehearsals for live performance elements	50	20	20	a. All involved in the rehearsal for the live performance must be vaccinated.
	50	20	0	If the above condition is not met.
Recording and broadcasting of religious services and prayers	50	20	20	a. All involved in the recording and broadcasting service must be vaccinated.
	50	20	2	If the above condition is not met.

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

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ¹⁸ 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

¹⁸ E.g. audio crew or videographer.