

PHASE THREE - HEIGHTENED ALERT ENHANCED PRECAUTIONARY MEASURES FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

On 4 May 2021, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce announced tighter measures to be put in place from 8 May through 30 May 2021 to mitigate the risk of further community spread of COVID-19. This document provides the conditions under which religious organisations (ROs) are permitted to carry out activities in places of worship.

PHASE THREE: HEIGHTENED ALERT

2. Under Phase Three that began on 28 Dec 2020, ROs were 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. ROs were also permitted to resume singing by worshippers (i.e. congregation) from 5 Apr 2021, subject to implementation of safe management measures.

3. Under the Heightened Alert for Phase Three, from 8 May through 30 May 2021, enhanced precautionary measures will be imposed on religious activities, specifically:

- a. Decrease in capacity for congregational and other worship services from 250 persons to 100 persons, without pre-event testing (PET);
- b. PET is required for congregational and other worship services involving more than 100 persons and up to 250 persons;
- c. No singing by worshippers (i.e. congregation); and
- d. Decrease in capacity for marriage solemnisations, and for day of burial/cremation.

Annex A summarizes the key changes for ROs going from Phase Three to Phase Three: Heightened Alert.

Worship Services

4. From 8 May 2021, ROs may conduct congregational and other worship services at places of worship, with up to 100 persons at a time (excluding religious and supporting workers¹, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum), subject to safe management measures and the safe capacity of the premises. **Worshippers can participate in worship services in groups of no more than 5 persons** (a decrease from 8 persons today), in line with prevailing national requirements. No PET is required for worship services involving up to 100 persons at a time.

¹ The supporting workers may include musicians (subject to Annex B) and persons required to implement the safe management measures.

5. ROs can conduct congregational and other worship services, for more than 100 persons and **up to 250 persons at a time, only if there is PET for all worshippers² as follows:**

- a. ROs must ensure that all worshippers (except where paragraph (b) below applies) obtain a negative COVID-19 test result before they may be admitted into the venue where the service is being held.³
 - i. The test must be an MOH-approved COVID-19 test (either an Antigen Rapid Test (ART) or Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test) administered by an approved test provider.⁴
 - ii. 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 worshipper's participation in the worship service.
 - iii. The worshipper must be able to produce proof of the test result, which are either (i) Check-in Successful banner (displayed on the SafeEntry (Business) application upon scanning with TraceTogether App/Token), (ii) COVID-19 Test Result Notice (ART), (iii) COVID-19 Test Result Notice (PCR), or (iv) Patient Risk Profile Portal (PRPP) ART Result Slip.
- b. The requirements for PET in paragraph 5(a) above do not apply to worshippers who have been vaccinated⁵ or produce an exemption notice⁶. Before being admitted into the venue where the service is being held, the worshipper must produce valid documentation of either their vaccination or exemption notice which must remain valid until the end of the worshipper's participation in the service.
- c. Where PET is required for a service, ROs must prominently display signs at each point of entry and exit (including emergency exit) to the venue where the service is being held, to indicate:

² 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.

³ For further details on PET requirements, refer to: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/pet>.

⁴ Refer to: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/licensing-and-regulation/regulations-guidelines-and-circulars/details/list-of-covid-19-swab-providers>.

⁵ "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).

⁶ 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.

- i. The space is a restricted place⁷, and the duration for which it will be a restricted place (i.e. the duration of the service). ROs must clearly mark the boundaries of the restricted place (e.g. though fencing, rope, signs, walls, partition, screen).
 - ii. That entry and remaining within the restricted place is allowed only to individuals with a cleared status (i.e. have a valid negative COVID-19 test result notice, valid documentation of vaccination or exemption notice).
 - d. ROs are to highlight to worshippers attending services for more than 100 persons and up to 250 persons that entry into the venue where the service is being held will be denied to persons who do not produce the relevant negative COVID-19 test result notice, vaccination notice, or exemption notice, with the necessary validity period.
6. For congregational and other worship services exceeding 50 persons, inclusive of services conducted with PET, **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).
 - 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 continue to observe the following safe management measures for worship services (including services conducted with PET):
- 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.

⁷ "Restricted place" means any place where PET is required in this document, before individuals with a cleared status (i.e. have a valid negative COVID-19 test result notice, valid documentation of vaccination or exemption notice), can enter.

- b. All persons present (except children below 6 years of age) must **wear a face mask at all times**.⁸ 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 have been permitted during the worship service at places of worship**⁹, with the necessary safe management measures in place (see Annex B).
 - i. A maximum of 30 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 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.
 - iii. There must be at least a 3-metre setback between persons involved in the conduct of live performance elements and worshippers.
 - iv. From 8 May 2021, persons involved in/supporting the conduct of the worship service will not be allowed to sing while masked.
 - v. We strongly encourage ROs to minimise the live performance elements for congregational and other worship services, such as suspending singing and the playing of wind instruments during this period to ensure the safety of worshippers.
- d. **From 8 May 2021, singing by worshippers (i.e. congregation) will not be permitted.**
- 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**.

⁸ 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.

⁹ 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.

Marriage Solemnizations

8. **From 8 May 2021, ROs may continue to use places of worship to conduct marriage solemnizations where:**

- a. **Solemnizations involving up to 50 attendees: PET will not be required**
- b. **Solemnizations involving between 51 - 250 attendees: PET will be required for the wedding couple.**¹⁰
- c. These activities are subject to safe management measures and the safe capacity of the premises, and exclude the solemnizer and religious and supporting workers, whose numbers should be kept to a minimum.
- d. 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 6 for zoning requirements). An individual attending the solemnization must remain within his or her respective assigned zone and must not enter an unassigned zone.
- e. Attendees must maintain a 1-metre safe distance between groups except a core “wedding party”¹¹, 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.
- f. There must not be any reception with food and drinks, or wedding celebrations that are not essential religious rites.
- g. ROs must also comply with prevailing safe management measures stipulated on the Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI)’s website¹².

9. Although from 28 Dec 2020, solemnizations at places of worship¹³ may also involve live instrumental music (non-wind) with the necessary safe management measures in place (see Annex C), **we strongly encourage this be suspended or the duration be shortened during this period of heightened alert**. 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.

¹⁰ For further details on PET requirements, refer to: <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/pet>.

¹¹ 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.

¹² Refer to Safe Management Measures for Marriage Solemnizations and Wedding Receptions at: <https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

¹³ 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 premises owner.

Funerals

11. **From 8 May 2021, funerals, wakes, installation of niches and post-funeral rites¹⁴ at places of worship can involve not more than 30 attendees¹⁵ at any time, including the day of burial/cremation and in groups of no more than 5 persons** (excluding 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. There must not be any reception with food and drinks.
- b. ROs must also comply with prevailing safe management measures listed on MTI's website¹⁶.

12. Funerary-related activities at places of worship¹⁷ may continue to involve live instrumental music (non-wind) 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.

13. **Visits to columbaria at places of worship** should be kept as short as possible, with no mingling between groups of no more than 5 persons (a decrease from 8 persons today).

Other Religious Activities

14. ROs may continue to 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 17).

- a. Each religious class must not exceed 50 persons, including the religious worker/teacher¹⁸ (and supporting workers, if any) with each group comprising no more than 5 persons. As a best practice, we encourage a greater separation of 2 metres between groups of students attending religious classes.

¹⁴ This refers to funerary memorial events for deceased persons.

¹⁵ This is a decrease from the 50 attendees at any one time permitted on the day of burial/cremation.

¹⁶ Refer to Safe Management Measures for Funeral Events at:
<https://covid.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector>.

¹⁷ 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 premises owner.

¹⁸ 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.

- b. Religious rites at places of worship¹⁹ may also involve live performance elements subject to the safe management measures at Annex B.

15. Given the current need to minimise the risk of COVID-19 transmission, **ROs are strongly encouraged to conduct these activities via remote means or defer them until the COVID-19 situation improves.**

Recording and Broadcast of Religious Services and Prayers

16. 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 for singing and/or the playing of wind/brass instruments must maintain at least a 2-metre 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), and thorough cleaning of technical equipment.

SAFE CAPACITY IN THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

17. All the permitted religious activities in paragraphs 8 to 16 (i.e. excluding congregational and other worship services) can continue to take place concurrently at the place of worship subject to **a total cap of 150 persons**²⁰ – 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, with no interaction between worshippers while entering, exiting or while in the premises.

18. **ROs can conduct congregational and other worship services for 250 persons, with PET, 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 activities²¹ (i.e. not worship services) at the same time.

¹⁹ 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.

²⁰ 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. From 24 Apr 2021, up to 250 attendees will be permitted for marriage solemnizations (if the wedding couple undergoes PET). If this cap of 250 persons for marriage solemnizations is fully utilised, no other concurrent non-congregational religious activity is allowed.

²¹ For example, this could be a religious rite involving up to 50 persons.

19. **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.

DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER

20. 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.

21. **From 8 May 2021, only 50% of employees may return to the workplace** to better support in-person collaboration and business operations – subject to prevailing workplace safe management measures stipulated by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM).²² ROs are encouraged to support as many employees in working from home as possible. Restrictions against cross-deployment²³ across worksites remain in place.

TRACETOGETHER AND SAFEENTRY

22. TraceTogether-only SafeEntry, where the TraceTogether App or Token is required for SafeEntry check-ins, will be **required at all venues that are required to implement SafeEntry from 17 May 2021**.²⁴ **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.

23. SafeEntry Gateway (SEGW) will be progressively introduced as an additional mode of SafeEntry check-in to provide quicker and more seamless check-in using the TraceTogether App or Token. Existing modes of SafeEntry check-in will remain in place. Since 19 Apr 2021, ROs conducting congregational and other worship services for more than 100 persons have been required to deploy the SafeEntry Gateway at their main entrances as an additional check-in mode. **ROs conducting congregational and other worship services for 100 persons or less will also be required to deploy the SEGW at their main entrances by 15 June 2021.** 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.].

²² Refer to: <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19/requirements-for-safe-management-measures>.

²³ 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.

²⁴ To help ease the transition, scanning of barcodes on personal IDs will be retained until 31 May 2021.

MANDATORY SUBMISSION OF SAFE MANAGEMENT PLANS

24. ROs must acknowledge the new conditions for religious activities imposed from 8 May through 30 May 2021 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.

25. 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

26. 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 FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES
FROM PHASE THREE TO PHASE THREE: HEIGHTENED ALERT**

Religious Activity	Allowances during Phase Three	Allowances during Phase Three: Heightened Alert
Congregational and Worship Services	Up to 250 persons, in zones holding no more than 50 persons each, without pre-event testing	Up to 100 persons in zones holding no more than 50 persons each, without pre-event testing For more than 100 persons, and up to 250 persons, in zones holding no more than 50 persons each, with pre-event testing for all worshippers
Singing by Worshippers (i.e. congregation)	Permitted	Not permitted
Marriage Solemnizations	Up to 100 attendees without pre-event testing for wedding couple Up to 250 attendees with pre-event testing for wedding couple	Up to 50 attendees without pre-event testing for wedding couple Up to 250 attendees with pre-event testing for wedding couple
Day of Burial/Cremation	Up to 50 persons at any one time	Up to 30 persons at any one time
Other Religious Activities (e.g. religious rites, classes)	Total premises cap of 150 persons, conducted in gatherings each not exceeding 50 persons	No change in activity and capacity limits but ROs are strongly encouraged to conduct such activities remotely or to defer them

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

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ²⁵ 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 <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 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The use of face shields is encouraged in lieu of unmasking, where practicable [<i>Note:</i>

²⁵ E.g. audio crew or videographer.

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
	<i>Persons using face shields would still count towards the respective unmasked quota.]</i>
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

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

Parameter	Safe Management Measures
Persons involved in/supporting ²⁶ 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

²⁶ E.g. audio crew or videographer.