

2020

Public Health (Covid-19) (Restrictions on Religious Institutions) Order

SRO. 64

GRENADA

STATUTORY RULES AND ORDERS NO. 64 OF 2020

THE MINISTER IN EXERCISE OF THE POWERS CONFERRED ON HIM BY SECTION 60 OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH ACT, CHAPTER 263 AND REGULATION 7 (2) OF THE PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) REGULATIONS, 2020, SRO NO. 59 OF 2020, IN CONSULTATION WITH THE CHIEF MEDICAL OFFICER, HEREBY MAKES THE FOLLOWING ORDER—

(Gazetted 29th September, 2020).

1. Citation. This Order may be cited as the

PUBLIC HEALTH (COVID-19) (RESTRICTIONS ON RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS) ORDER, 2020.

2. Public Health Protocols for religious institutions. The Public Health Protocols as set out in the Schedule shall apply in respect of all religious institutions.

SCHEDULE

(section 2)

PUBLIC HEALTH PROTOCOL FOR RELIGIOUS INSTITUTIONS

1. Complete and submit the online form (provided by the Ministry of Education, Human Resource Development, Religious Affairs and Information, on May 14, 2020). This form provides information on what the church has put in place, or intends to put in place, to protect members and visitors. Churches are only required to submit this form once, before the scheduled reopening date.
2. Calculate the number of attendees to be allowed in the building. The measurement to be used is 18 square feet, per person (using the seating space). Markers must be used on benches and chairs must be placed no less than 3 ft., in every direction. Families (individuals living in the same household) are exempted from physical distancing.
3. Provide, for each service, appropriate facilities and adequate supplies not limited to, but including, hand washing facilities, clean running water, soap, paper towels, hand sanitiser and disinfectant. A sanitising station must be set up close to the door (hand sanitiser OR running water), for people entering.

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4. Establish a separate room in the building, or a space (inside the building, or outside) to accommodate an individual(s) who become(s) sick during the service (with COVID-19 symptoms). A vehicle can also be assigned to immediately transport a person (without private transportation), who may become sick during the service. Additionally, the responsible party must call the COVID-19 Hotline immediately, to report the case and the COVID-19 signs displayed.
 5. Establish visible signs/notices encouraging members to observe the protocols and practices to prevent the spread COVID-19.
 6. Share protocols and expectations with all members, before the date of reopening.
 7. Church services are allowed on any day of the week, observing all protocols. Ministers of Religion must not continue a service, if members are not observing the protocols. Churches are encouraged to continue other activities remotely. Ministers are encouraged to keep services within two and a half hours as members are expected to wear the mask for the duration of the service.
 8. More than one service can be held on the same day, however there must be at least one hour between each service, to facilitate proper sanitisation of the venue.
 9. Ensure that all individuals entering the building are wearing a mask and that it is worn for the duration of the service, except in cases where individuals are 12 ft apart. When addressing the gathering, a speaker may remove his mask, but **MUST** observe physical distancing of at least 12 ft.
 10. Due to the health-related concerns, individuals with underlying health conditions, pregnant and nursing women, senior citizens and those who might not be able to wear a mask for the duration of the service are strongly encouraged to remain at home, for the time being. Children under five (5) years, who are supervised by parents, will be exempted from wearing a mask if they are unable to.
 11. Sanitise the building, before each service. Frequently touched areas must be carefully sanitised before and during each service. All cleaning products must be used according to the directions on the label. All cleaners must follow guidelines from the Ministry of Health. Masks and gloves must be used by cleaners, at all times.
 12. Ensure that transportation arrangements are in place, so that all individuals leave immediately after the service. The national regulations must be used to determine the number of individuals, from different homes, who can share a vehicle and the seating arrangements.

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13. At the beginning of each service, announce the hygiene, sanitation and physical distancing protocols to be followed.
 14. Strongly discourage all physical contact.
 15. Use stationary boxes for the collection of monies and envelopes. Ensure a distance of 3 ft is maintained between those who are going to the box. Ensure protocols are followed when handling monies, for example, the 3 ft physical distancing and use of appropriate hand sanitiser immediately after.
 16. Ensure that physical distancing is observed and hand sanitisers are used during communion services. Individuals involved in administering communion must wear gloves, or use hand sanitisers (containing at least 70 percent alcohol). For religions where communion is administered by ‘sharing of the cup’, please note that this is currently not allowed, as a health and safety precaution.
 17. Where microphones and podiums are shared, they must be properly sanitised after each person uses them. Alternatively, hand sanitisers can be used to sanitise hands before and after use.
 18. Avoid the use of Air Conditioning (AC) units. Keep all windows and doors opened, during the service, as much as possible.

RECORDS

Ministers of Religion are strongly encouraged to assign an individual who will monitor and encourage the implementation of the protocols and keep a register. This can be done by having one list and ticking off the names of persons who regularly attend each service, while visitors can be asked to sign in.

In the event that a member, who attended a service, is tested positive for the virus this record will be used by the Ministry of Health to contact and test other individuals who attended the service on the given day.

FUNERALS

Funerals services (at the church, or graveside) are allowed any day of the week with services for a maximum of 1 hour, but will remain private and by invitation only. The total number of invitees is to be decided, based on the size of the church (Maximum 75 persons) and the protocol on physical distancing (persons sitting 3 ft. apart). Ministers of Religion must remind persons attending the funeral of the need to wear a mask and to observe the 3ft physical distancing protocol, for persons who do not live in the same house.

A maximum of 75 people will be allowed at the graveside. No processions should be allowed on the way to the burial ground. Only a private reception for close friends and immediate family members (maximum 75 people) will be allowed observing all the necessary protocols. Outdoor receptions are encouraged and the family must keep a record of the persons who attended the reception, in the event there is a need for contact tracing. Receptions should last for a maximum of 3 hours.

BAPTISM

Where baptisms are held, persons involved must wear a mask and use hand sanitiser (or wear gloves).

WEDDINGS

Weddings should be private and by invitation only. The number of invitees/individuals at the service will be determined by the size of the church (maximum of 75 persons) and the protocol for physical distancing, (persons must sit at least 3 ft. apart if they do not live in the same house).

A reception with no more than 75 people can be held for a maximum of 3 hours with persons observing physical distancing and wearing a mask. Outdoor receptions are encouraged and the family must keep a record of the persons who attended the reception in the event there is a need for contact tracing.

OTHER RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES/ACTIVITIES

All other ceremonies held in the church building must be held using the same protocols which guide church services.

OPENING OF CHURCH OFFICES

1. Church offices (community and national) can be opened to facilitate administrative, counselling and other services.
2. All relevant protocols must be observed.

PASTORAL CARE

Home visits for pastoral care can be done at any time, observing physical distancing and wearing of masks.

CRUSADES & OTHER OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES

Outdoor crusades and other religious activities can be held. Live streaming is encouraged, to avoid mass gathering. A maximum of 75 people are allowed per

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activity. All protocols regarding physical distancing and wearing of masks must be observed.

Consideration will be given to a request to accommodate more than 75 people in such activities. However, such a request must be submitted to the Minister for Religious Affairs outlining the venue, the expected number of people and the necessary structures that will be put in place, to ensure the safety of those who will attend.

STREAMING LIVE

Where a church has not returned to the usual place of worship and has not submitted a reopening form, a group of up to 10 persons can use the church to record or stream live church services. All protocols related to physical distancing, wearing of a mask and sanitisation must be observed.

VIOLATIONS

Like every other case, violations will be addressed through the regulations governing the national state of emergency. However, the opportunity will first be given to the head of the national organisation, to which the church belongs (where it is applicable), to put corrective measures in place, following a meeting with the authorities referred to in the regulations.

KEY POINTS FOR ANNOUNCEMENTS BEFORE & DURING SERVICES

1. Maintain a 3ft distance, at all times.
2. Stay at home, if you are sick.
3. Stay at home, if an individual(s) from your household has/have been suspected to have, or was/were tested positive with COVID-19.
4. Practice proper hygiene protocols. Wash hands often with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds, or use an alcohol-based hand sanitiser that contains at least 70 percent alcohol, if soap and water are unavailable. Liquid hand soaps must not be diluted.
5. Cough and sneeze into tissue and discard the tissue, immediately after use, into a bin. If there is no tissue, cough into your inner elbow. Wash your hands immediately after coughing. Individuals must leave the building, if they are coughing constantly.

6. Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.
7. Avoid close physical contact with others.
8. Wear an appropriate face mask, covering your nose and mouth, upon entering, leaving and while in the building.
9. Stay informed and follow the advice given by the Ministry of Health.

For further clarification and details, please call or email:

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- religiousaffairsgrenada@gmail.com

Made by the Minister this 29th day of September, 2020.

NICKOLAS STEELE
Minister with responsibility for Health.