**NEW TESTAMENT ASSEMBLY**

**Covid-19 Risk Assessment Checklist: Towards re-opening church buildings**

The NTA National Trustee Board has written up the following Covid-19 risk assessment guidance as it relates exclusively to the re-opening of churches. It does not cover every risk and control possible but provides the minimum recommended health protocols for all NTA churches and places of worship. It must be reviewed and made specific; therefore, it is the responsibility of individual assemblies and departments to carry out a risk assessment before re-opening. Risk assessments should consider how many people can safely occupy a building at a given time, length of time it will be open for and the number of employees/volunteers needed to manage the process.

We know now that the virus that causes COVID-19 can be spread to others by infected persons who have few or no symptoms. Even if an infected person is only mildly ill, the people they spread it to may become seriously ill or even die, especially if that person is 70 or older (65 for BAME) with pre-existing health conditions that place them at higher risk. Because of the hidden nature of this threat, everyone should rigorously follow the practices specified in these protocols, all of which facilitate a safe and measured resumption of worship on NTA Church premises.

The virus that causes COVID-19 is still circulating in our communities. We should continue to observe practices that protect everyone, including those who are most vulnerable. Please note, public health guidance cannot anticipate every unique situation. Churches and their teams should stay informed and take actions based on common sense and wise judgment that will protect health and support the advancement of our mission.

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| **[Insert church name here]** |
| **Activity being assessed:** | **COVID-19 Re-opening Risk Assessment** | **Senior Pastor:** |  |
| **Person(s) completing assessment:** |  | **Person(s) reviewing the assessment:** |  |
| **Date of review:** |  |

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| **Ref** | **Identified Risk** | **Arrangements to mitigate risk**  | **Arrangements implemented by (Name) and when?** | **Completed** |
| 1 | Possible contamination in the main church hall/seating area | * Deep cleaning is carried out before reopening and confirmation of this visible on entering the building
* Building has been aired
* Switch on and check electrical systems if needed
* Run the water from all taps and other hot and cold water-outlets for at least five minutes to ensure the water system has been thoroughly flush through. If you have any concerns seek appropriate professional help/advice
* Hand sanitisers are available to those entering and exiting the church building
* Make sure there is plenty of liquid soap, disposable hand wipes and toilet paper
* If you and share your building with another church or user please contact your landlord and come to some agreement on how cleaning will be done before, during and after intervals.
* Where to enter and leave the building (allocating someone to help people navigate would be helpful) and/or provide clear signage
* Each person should enter and leave the building one at a time
* The movement of congregants throughout the church must be planned and managed
* Whilst it is acknowledged that fire doors play and integral role in church safety, it is currently assessed that key corridor doors may need to be held open to avoid handle contamination. Fire doors to be closed when everyone leaves church.
* Food consumption is not permitted in this area
* Main church hall to be assessed to determine the maximum number of people that can be accommodated to enable adequate social distancing (2 metres). Depending on the size of your church, this can be done for every room or meeting area.
* Chairs positioned at a reasonable distance apart or markers used
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| 2 | Possible contamination within church office | * Deep cleaning is carried out before reopening and confirmation of this visible at the office entrance
* Office has been aired
* Switch on and check electrical systems if needed
* Maximum occupancy level clearly visible on or near the office door
* Due to office size, layout and limited space, non-office-based staff are not to enter the office area, requests to be made from the doorway.
* Office staff to work at their designated desks to avoid shared equipment and to be responsible for regular cleaning of IT and phone equipment using antibacterial cleaning materials.
* If employees/volunteers share desks, these must be cleaned between usage.
* Food consumption is not permitted in this area
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| 3 | Possible contamination within meeting rooms/teaching and learning spaces | * As above – deep cleaning, office aired and check electrical systems.
* Maximum occupancy level clearly visible on or near the office door
* No sharing of bibles, pens or any learning materials. Children to work using their own books or on paper, feedback to be given verbally.
* Children to bring their own water bottles or drink from disposable plastic cups provided
* All soft furnishings removed e.g. cushions, mats, beanbags, etc.
* Decide who will be responsible for the cleaning of equipment and resources and what cleaning products will be used
* All toys removed from learning/play areas
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| 4 | Possible contamination from the use of toilets | * Deep cleaning is carried out before reopening and confirmation of this visible at the office entrance
* Access to toilet areas 1-2 people at a time. Consider a clockwise routine to and from the corridor
* Hands must be washed thoroughly after using toilet facilities
* Sufficient liquid soap will be available at all times in all toilets, this will be checked daily by the designated cleaner/cleaning team and will be topped up in between if required. Only liquid soap is permitted in churches.
* Hand drying will be by air hand drier or disposable towels only
* Bins in toilets will be emptied daily and this will be reviewed with emptying increased more frequently if required.
* Children should be accompanied by their parents when using the toilet
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| 5 | Cleaning church after known exposure to someone with the coronavirus symptoms | * If possible, close the church building for 72 hours with no access permitted.
* Once the building has been quarantined for 72 hours then carry out a deep clean
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| 6 | Airborne transmission of coronavirus at church | * Screen employees and volunteers before coming into the church building or place of worship.
* Instruct employees and volunteers not to attend church if they have symptoms of Coronavirus (COVID-19) and to follow guidelines (See below)
* Send home anyone who has any of the following new or worsening signs or symptoms of possible COVID-19:
	+ Cough
	+ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
	+ Chills
	+ Repeated shaking with chills
	+ Muscle pain
	+ Headache
	+ Sore throat
	+ Loss of taste or smell
	+ Diarrhoea
	+ Feeling feverish or a measured temperature greater than or equal to 100.0 degrees Fahrenheit.
* Do not allow anyone with new or worsening signs or symptoms listed above to return to church until:
* In the case of the individual being diagnosed with COVID-19, they may return to church when all three of the following criteria are met: at least 3 days (72 hours) have passed since recovery (resolution of fever without the use of fever-reducing medications); and the individual has improvement in symptoms (e.g., cough, shortness of breath); and at least 10 days have passed since symptoms first appeared; or
* In the case of the individual having symptoms that could be COVID-19 and does not get evaluated by a medical professional or tested for COVID-19, the individual is assumed to have COVID-19, and the individual may not return to church until the individual has completed the same three-step criteria listed above; or
* If the individual has symptoms that could be COVID-19 and wants to return to church before completing the above self-isolation period, he/she must obtain a medical professional’s note clearing them for return based on an alternative diagnosis.
* Do not allow a congregant with known close contact to a person who is lab confirmed to have COVID-19 to return to church until the end of the 14-day self-quarantine period from the last date of exposure
* Congregants must maintain at least 2 metre separation from each other. If such distancing is not feasible, then other measures including face covering, hand hygiene, cough etiquette, cleanliness, and sanitation should be rigorously practiced.
* It is strongly recommended that everyone wears cloth face coverings (over the nose and mouth). If available, they should consider wearing non-medical grade face masks.
* Reduce the number of people coming to church to what is absolutely necessary, to maintain social distancing measures.
* Stagger start and finish times to reduce congestion and contact at all times.
* Increase the number of access points to enable social distancing.
* Use signage and floor markings to ensure the two-metre distance is maintained between people
* Ensure good ventilation.
* Rearrange tasks to enable them to be done by one person, or by maintaining social distancing measures (two metres).
* Ensure arrangements are in place for monitoring compliance
* Avoid using public transport to commute to work/church where possible.
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| 7 | Surface transmission of the virus | * Reiterate the guidance on the appropriate cleaning and hand washing hygiene
* Provide facilities to allow everyone to wash their hands for 20 seconds using soap and water or hand sanitiser (minimum 60% alcohol based) when entering and leaving church.
* Encourage everyone to wash or sanitise their hands upon entering the building and allow regular breaks to wash hands.
* Enhanced cleaning procedures will be in place across the church building, particularly in communal areas and at touch points, including procedures for cleaning at the end of each break and shift. Particular attention must be paid to: entry and exit points, gate handles, taps and washing facilities, toilet flush and seats, door handles, hand rails on staircases, corridors.
	+ Recruit a cleaning team and confirm whose responsibility it will be to carry out the cleaning (toilets, kitchen, high contact surfaces)
	+ Confirm whose responsibility it will be for removing potentially contaminated waste from church
	+ All waste receptacles have disposable bin liners
	+ Implement cleaning rota at entrances which must be signed after each deep clean
	+ Church opening team must not enter the church building/office without viewing the signed cleaning rota for that day/shift
* Cleaning procedures should be in place for musical instruments, microphones and equipment controls, tools being used by more than one person, workbenches, seating and surfaces, microwaves, refrigerators and kettles, keyboards, telephones, photocopiers and other office equipment.
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| 8 | Possible contamination from a symptomatic person on site | * Anyone displaying symptoms should not be at church
* Should someone arrive at church with symptoms, develop symptoms on their way to church or whilst at church they will be required to leave church immediately. If they need collecting, they must sit in a dedicated/isolated room supervised by a member of the leadership/pastoral team, who will be required to wear a fluid resistant surgical face mask, disposable gloves, and apron for the duration of the supervision. Next of kin will be contacted if required. The individual supervising will then remove all PPE and immediate dispose of it into a plastic bag outside and wash hands thoroughly. They will be given the option to go home and shower/change clothes.
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| **Signature of the lead pastor** | **Date** |
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