




LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY & CORRECTIONS
PUBLIC SAFETY SERVICES



H. "BUTCH" BROWNING, JR.
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

OFFICE OF STATE FIRE MARSHAL

INTERPRETIVE MEMORANDUM 2020-24

TO: All Clergy
FROM: Chief H. "Butch" Browning, State Fire Marshal 
RE: Outdoor Religious and Places of Worship
DATE: May 1, 2020

In accordance with Governor John Bel Edwards' COVID-19 Proclamation to be released May 1, 2020, any outdoor religious and places of worship venue must adhere to strict mitigation standards in preventing the spread of COVID-19. The general operating matrix will require spacing of groups, limiting concentration of people, strict use of PPE, and frequent sanitizing. The specific requirements are provided below:

Life Safety and Egress:

Open areas with or without temporary tents, subject to local or parish rules and ordinances, must meet NFPA 101 Life Safety Code and must be open on all sides (no barriers). The tent must not be enclosed. The following conditions are required:

- The capacity is subject to social distancing requirements and spacing of seated attendees with strict supervision provided by crowd managers;
- Limit group seating to persons who are members of the same household;
- Modify human contact as part of any religious ceremony
- State approved fire extinguisher within 75 feet of tent area; and
- Minimum 7-foot, 6-inch head room (ceiling height)

Crowd Managers shall be provided to call for emergency evacuation, enforce social distancing requirements, assign seating to attendees and further manage any movement of people throughout the service.

- This function can be performed by church ushers, staff or leadership;
- One Crowd Manager shall be provided for every 50 persons in attendance;
- In the event of a fire or other emergency they must call for evacuation and then call 911;
- Maintain 6-foot distance between persons or congregated people of a household from others when entering, moving about, seating and exiting; and
- Seating of persons or congregated people of a household shall be assigned in a manner that allows spacing of at least 6-feet from all other individuals seated (This applies to seating available on either side, forward and behind).

Louisiana Department of Health Guidance:

It is encouraged that persons be asked not to attend if they are 65 years or older or have the identified comorbid, chronic health conditions

Personal Protective Equipment

- Crowd Managers are required to wear face masks
- Crowd Managers should wear gloves when handling chairs and other items as part of their duties, and should wash their hands before and after assisting with set up/breakdown
- It is strongly recommended that attendees wear face masks

Cleaning of Outdoor Areas and Other Items

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent, if it is visibly dirty. Then, use disinfectant
- Tables, chairs, seats and other items used in the service should be cleaned between services.

Recommended Cleaning Products

- Clean the area or item with soap and water or another detergent, if it is dirty. Then, use disinfectant
- Recommend use of EPA-registered household disinfectant. Follow the instructions on the label to ensure safe and effective use of the product

Many products recommend:

- Keeping surface wet for a period of time (see product label)
- Precautions such as wearing gloves and making sure you have good ventilation during use of the product
- Diluted household bleach solutions may also be used if appropriate for the surface.
 - Check the label to see if your bleach is intended for disinfection, and ensure the product is not past its expiration date. Some bleaches, such as those designed for safe use on colored clothing or for whitening, may not be suitable for disinfection
 - Unexpired household bleach will be effective against coronaviruses when properly diluted
 - Follow manufacturer's instructions for application and proper ventilation. Never mix household bleach with ammonia or any other cleanser
 - Leave solution on the surface for at least 1 minute
- To make a bleach solution, mix:
 - 5 tablespoons (1/3rd cup) bleach per gallon of water, or
 - 4 teaspoons bleach per quart of water

Alcohol solutions with at least 70% alcohol may also be used

Sample Seating Layout

