

Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 1 October 2020

Latest News

Last week in relation to the Movement and Gathering Direction (No.4), we saw the removal of all Local Government Areas that had been listed as Restricted Areas, meaning that everyone in the State of QLD can:

- have a maximum of 30 people in their home, including the members of your household that live there. The visitors can be from different households; and
- have a public gathering with a maximum of 30 people including yourself and members of your household.

This Direction previously did not have direct implications to our Churches as Places of Worship. However, overnight we saw an update issued to the [Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings Direction \(No.6\)](#). In addition, we note an update made on 30 September to the [COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship](#) site.

The below captures the implications of these changes using FAQ's to assist navigating the new conditions.

NB: The Industry COVID Safe Plan is now mandatory for all places of worship (regardless of their size or how many/few attendees they have). This means all places of worship (of any size) must follow the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship and the public health guidelines/principles contained within, as well as complete the checklists in the appendices and prominently display the statement of compliance.

How many people can attend a worship service or church activities?

Occupant density is based on:

- Indoors
 - no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for indoor venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or
 - no more than one person per 4 square metres for indoor venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more; or
- Outdoors
 - no more than one person per 2 square metres for outdoor venues or spaces.

People from the same household should be allowed to sit together and groups of households kept separate

Children and infants are included in the total numbers where limits are indicated.

What are the requirements for youth groups and children's ministries?

The same density requirements outlined above apply, depending on the venue size. Children from the same household do not need to physical distance.

What health rules still apply?

1. Physical distancing of 1.5 metres
2. Hand hygiene (washing hands or using alcohol-based sanitiser)
3. Respiratory hygiene (coughing or sneezing into elbow)
4. Tracking, tracing, rapid response (keeping contact details for 56 days for each service and ensuring it is readily available if requested)
5. Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection

What if we have a worship service or a church activity/event with more than 500 people in attendance?

For indoor or outdoor worship services/ church activities/events that are larger than 500 people, Churches must notify Public Health Units of the event a minimum of 10 days prior via email at COVID-19.Industryplans@health.qld.gov.au

The following information needs to be provided to the Public Health Unit:

- Organisation name of the place of worship/organisation which is holding the event
- Trading name of the place of worship/organisation which is holding the event
- Key contact person(s) that can answer queries regarding the event (before/during/after)
 - Position in organisation
 - Phone number(s)
 - Email address
 - Postal address
- Name of the event
- Date(s) the event will be held
- Duration of the event (start and finish times)
- Location of the event (if multiple locations, each location, start/finish times for each)
- Which Approved COVID Safe Plan(s) they are intending to operate under
- Estimated/known number of people attending the event (including staff)
- Overview of activities that will be occurring at the event. E.g. sport competition, food stalls, merchandising, entertainment, rides, fireworks, etc.

Where only parts of an event are covered by the Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship, event organisers must develop a COVID Safe Event Plan or use the COVID Safe Event Checklist (if less than 500 people). The COVID Safe Event Plan should refer to the relevant components of Approved Plan(s), which are applicable to the respective parts of the event.

What about pre and post service gatherings?

People may gather before or after a service if they are seated and physically distance appropriately. Churches will need to ensure the gatherings are guided by the Industry COVID Safe Plan and that public health controls are followed.

People must be seated when eating or drinking refreshments. The service of food is guided by the Retail Food Services Industry COVID Safe Plan.

There are very strict hygiene requirements that are attached to the service of food and no buffet or self-service of food is allowed.

What about church activities in a private residence?

If using a private residence as a place of worship for people other than members of the household, then ALL requirements outlined the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship apply and are the responsibility of the person hosting the worship service in their home. This applies even if the home is affiliated with a place of worship (i.e. home ministries/outreach services) or a registered place of business for a place of worship.

To determine maximum attendance for home worship services, the COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship **and** Movement and Gathering Direction will both apply, **with the number of individuals permitted to attend a home worship service limited to the lesser of the two.**

NB: Only use the room of the house where the worship service will be conducted, not the entire home size to determine the size of the usable space.

Example:

A 3m x 4m (12 square metres) room in a person's home where the religious service is taking place would mean that 6 people could attend according to the density requirements of 1 person 4 square metres for a space more than 200 square metres or 1 person per 2 square metres for a space under 200 square metres up to a maximum of 50 people. However, the Movement and Gathering Direction currently allows a maximum of 30 people in a residence. Therefore, the lessor of the two requirements would apply and for the 12 square metre room a maximum of 6 people would be permitted to attend the religious service in a person's home.

How many people can attend a wedding?

Wedding ceremonies can have a maximum of 100 people on the basis that occupant density is no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or no more than one person per 4 square metres for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more.

How many people can I have at a funeral?

Funerals may be attended by a maximum of 100 people on the basis that occupant density is no more than one person per 2 square metres (up to a total of 50 people) for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or less; or no more than one person per 4 square metres for venues or spaces of 200 square metres or more.

Is contact tracing still required?

Contact information must be kept for patrons, contractors, and staff. This information must include:

- Full name
- Phone number
- Email (or residential address where the person does not have an email account)
- Date and time of entry
- Exit time or estimated period, where feasible.

If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers within the stated time. The information should be readily available to ensure your business can fulfil this request.

Any person visiting the place of worship, patrons, contractors and staff must sign in with their time of arrival, they should also be strongly encouraged to provide a time of departure or estimated duration, with signage displaying that signing out allows for more effective contact tracing.

When was the COVID Safe Industry Plan for Places of Worship updated?

The [Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship Version 4](#) is dated to be effective from 3 September. QB, via their involvement with Head of Churches were not consulted in this revision (nor were the Heads of Churches), and we were not made aware of its release until yesterday 30 September ahead of the updated Direction effective today 1 October.

QB will liaise further to work through appealing some of the inconsistencies in this latest revision.

Are there penalties if we don't comply?

Non-compliance may result in an on-the-spot fine of \$1,334 for individuals and \$6,670 for corporations under the Public Health Act 2005.