

# Queensland Baptists COVID-19 Update 2 July 2020

## Latest News

In response to the QLD Government moving Stage 3 of the Roadmap to Easing Restrictions forward by one week, we seek to provide some clarity around what this means for our churches.

The [Restrictions on Businesses, Activities and Undertakings \(No.3\)](#) was released yesterday, coming into effect from midday tomorrow 3 July.

There is a significant impact to our churches that is contained in this Direction, and we have set out below what the transition means for navigating the opening/operating our churches.

The updated Direction identifies key criteria for operating a restricted business during Stage 3 (including operating at a private residence, or in a public space). These criteria include:

- 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; and
- in accordance with the **COVID SAFE Framework**; and
- with public health controls (as per the mandatory WH&S requirements)

The **COVID SAFE Framework** is a set of options for managing COVID – 19 related risks. This includes Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plans, COVID SAFE Checklists or COVID SAFE Event Checklists. Applicable to our churches is the **Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship**.

In summary, under the updated Direction for Stage 3 we see the following 2 options:

1. Opt into the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship; OR
2. Where the business elects not to operate under an Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan, they operate:
  - a. with a maximum of 50 people with no more than one person per 4 square metres and physical distancing observed; and
  - b. keep contact information for all attendees and staff for contact tracing purposes for a period of 56 days, unless otherwise specified. This information must include name, phone number, email address, and the date and time period of attendance. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers. The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose and deleted after 56 days.
  - c. implementation of a WH&S Plan for meeting mandatory requirements in relation to COVID – 19 risks.

The Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship has been resubmitted with proposed changes for Stage 3 and we hope to have more in relation to this in coming days. As we head into this weekend **and** until a further iteration of this is released for Stage 3, churches have the option to operate under:

- [Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship](#) for **Stage 2** OR
- With a maximum of 50 people with no more than one person per 4 square metres and physical distancing observed, WH&S etc. OR
- Continue live streaming of services and observing the mandatory WH&S guidelines for staff/volunteers

We will release further details of the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Stage 3 once we have confirmation of its approval.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### *What happens if we opt into the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship for this weekend?*

We currently only have an Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Stage 2, so unless the next revision for Stage 3 is approved you will need to use the current Stage 2 version. This is a comprehensive Plan that does include (but not limited to) such things as:

- Maximum of 5 groups of 20 people (with social distancing)
- 4m<sup>2</sup> per person with no singing or 7m<sup>2</sup> per person with singing
- No pre or post service gathering
- Extensive cleanings routines etc.

If the Industry Approved Plan for Stage 3 is approved before the weekend, it may take some time for you to be prepared to implement as we will not know the content of its restrictions and guidelines until it is published.

### *What if we do not want to opt into the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan? What can we do?*

From midday tomorrow 3 July without using the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan the options are:

1. Option 1 – operate as follows:
  - a. with a maximum of 50 people with no more than one person per 4 square metres and physical distancing observed; and
  - b. keep contact information for all attendees and staff for contact tracing purposes for a period of 56 days, unless otherwise specified. This information must include name, phone number, email address, and the date and time period of attendance. If requested, this information must be provided to public health officers. The information should be securely stored, not used for any other purpose and deleted after 56 days.
  - c. implementation of a WH&S Plan for meeting mandatory requirements in relation to COVID – 19 risks.
2. Option 2 – live streaming of services, observing the mandatory WH&S guidelines for staff/volunteers

### *Can we use different rooms and areas in the church to fit more people in?*

It is important to note that the requirement to maintain a 2 or 4 square metres applies to areas of the business that are open to or used by the “public”, so for a church gathering this means the area being used for the actual gathering. This does not mean factoring all of the separate spaces across a site and using the totalled floor space for calculating how many can be in the hall/auditorium for a Sunday church service.

You could however in this example stream the service to another area of the site to a group of people gathered according to the occupant density requirements for that space.

### *Why can't we just operate without the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan and have 50 people with 2m<sup>2</sup> each?*

The option for only needing 2m<sup>2</sup> per person is for spaces with less than 200m<sup>2</sup> **AND** who have the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan implemented. The Direction states in section 11 *that a person who owns, controls or operates a restricted business, activity or undertaking that does not have an Approved Plan or an applicable COVID Safe Checklist may only operate the business, activity or undertaking for a maximum of 50 people, with no more than one person per 4 square metres and physical distancing observed.*

### *What is the COVID SAFE Framework?*

This is a set of options for managing COVID – 19 related risks. This includes Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plans, COVID SAFE Checklists or COVID SAFE Event Checklists. Currently the only one applicable to our churches is the Industry Approved COVID SAFE Plan for Places of Worship i.e. the Checklists are for specific high-risk industries.

### *What about Weddings now?*

Separate to general operating for a Place of Worship we also see the Direction provide for limits of 100 people for weddings and funerals. With this limit you must also in comply to the occupant density requirements.