



BACK TO SHUL

Congregation Or Shalom

A Plan for Returning to Normal Building Use, In-person Services, and the High Holidays

This document is subject to frequent revision as authoritative COVID-19 guidelines are revised or updated. It will be promulgated to the Rabbi, membership and employees as soon as possible after any revision. Any questions regarding its content should be directed to the synagogue office.

Revisions to the content of this document are identified in the left page margin by the | symbol.

This document describes our current planning as we transition from being in shutdown due to COVID-19 to in-person activities in our synagogue.

1. Staying Safe

At-risk Population

It is recognized that many members will not wish to re-enter the building for some time to come. Personal safety is paramount and that decision is encouraged and supported, particularly by those at higher risk of COVID-19 infection:

- Older adults¹, i.e., greater than 65.
- Those with pre-existing conditions especially respiratory issues.
- Those sharing a household with people described above.

Social Distancing

While at the synagogue, please observe the following social distancing best practices:

- Stay at least 6 feet (8-10 feet is even better) away from others, whether praying, walking, working, or otherwise engaged².
- Avoid conversations and tasks that require close face-to-face contact with others.
- Avoid physical contact with others; e.g., no handshakes, hugs, etc.
- Avoid touching commonly handled articles or surfaces.
- Avoid gathering when entering and exiting the facility. Entry and exit is limited to the front door. Do not congregate in common areas.
- Follow posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing practices.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cover coughs and sneezes.
- If feeling ill, **do not** come to the synagogue.

Face Masks

Until further notice, all those entering the building are required to bring and wear masks. Those unwilling to do so will be required to leave. The only exceptions to this policy are:

- The Rabbi when leading a service and remaining at least 12 feet away from the nearest person. A mask should be worn prior to the start of the service and when completed.
- Office staff when alone in their individual offices.
- Small children and others medically unable to wear a mask.
- The custodian when working alone in a separate room of the building or when it is empty.

¹ 60% of our member units have at least one adult aged 67 years or older.

² This may be enforced through policy, supervision, ground markings, signage, and physical barriers.

Congregants will be asked to provide their own masks that meet CDC guidelines. The synagogue will maintain a small inventory of disposable masks as a backup. Masks shall be provided for all employees.

Gloves

Handling of commonly touched items, i.e., objects handled during the course of a service, will be limited to the maximum extent practicable. Anyone touching commonly handled items that will be distributed to others should wear gloves. A limited supply of gloves will be on hand at the synagogue.

Health and Safety Protocols

Cleaning and Disinfecting

Our custodian will clean common areas and other frequently touched surfaces on his normal workdays. All likely-touched surfaces within the sanctuary and lobbies will be cleaned at least weekly. A deep cleaning shall be performed as soon as practicable following each in-person service. CDC and EPA approved sanitizing chemicals and procedures will be used.

- Hand sanitizer: Hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) shall be made available at entrance points.
- Handwashing: Clergy, employees and volunteers should routinely wash their hands using soap and water for at least 20 seconds.
- Bathrooms: Clean and disinfect frequently; a cleaning log is recommended for tracking. The cleaning schedule will conform to our custodian's work schedule
- Cleaning and disinfecting: Clean and disinfect the following before each service.
 - ▶ Door knobs and handles
 - ▶ All seating areas
 - Follow Federal guidelines (CDC, EPA) on what specific products should be used and how.
 - Use products that meet EPA's criteria for use against SARS-CoV-2 and that are appropriate for the surface. Prior to wiping the surface, allow the disinfectant to sit for the necessary contact time recommended by the manufacturer.
- | • Kitchen: Both kitchens are closed for normal food preparation and service, e.g., onegs, kiddushim, morning minyan breakfasts, luncheons, etc., until further notice.
- | • Outdoor food preparation: The CDC reports that, currently, there is no evidence that food is associated with spreading the COVID-19 virus. Further, no cases of COVID-19 have been identified where infection was thought to have occurred by touching food, food packaging, or shopping bags. There is no evidence that the virus that causes COVID-19 spreads to people through food. Increased COVID-19 risk is primarily due to not following best hygienic practices shown to lessen the probability of infection. Outdoor grilling and food service guidelines are as follows:
 - Wearing masks and social distancing are required.
 - Only one person may be the cook and must wear a mask and gloves.
 - Hand sanitizer shall be immediately available.
 - Pre-packaged food and drink is preferred.
 - No gathering near the grill.
 - No common use utensils.

- No buffet style service, i.e., any food served from a dish or bowl such as a salad.
- Food immediately off the grill should be put on a plate or wrapped in tin foil for serving.
- No access to the kitchen.
- Only individually packaged condiments.

The office staff will keep the office and its equipment as clean as possible by cleaning and disinfecting workstations and surfaces commonly used. Employees should also avoid using others' workstations and office equipment. Additionally, whenever an employee uses a common piece of equipment (e.g., printer, copy or fax machine), it should be wiped down prior to and following use. Proper cleaning and disinfecting supplies will be provided.

Heating, Ventilating, Air Conditioning (HVAC)

To the maximum extent possible, high efficiency HVAC filters will be installed. Air conditioning and heating system settings will be set to promote better ventilation during all services. Floor fans may also be used to increase airflow through the sanctuary.

COVID-19 Exposure and Reporting

Any person who was in the building and subsequently experiences COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 must notify synagogue office or leadership as soon as possible. We will assist with contact tracing³ and informing those who may have been exposed, keeping the identity of the person infected confidential. This information will be tracked separately from membership or personnel records, and names will not be released. We will notify the public health officials and follow state testing and contact tracing protocols. Impacted members, guests, employees, and volunteers shall be notified within 24 hours. We will close the building for a period up to 72 hours following a confirmed case to allow for natural deactivation of the virus.

Office Operations and Building Access

The office mezzanine is designated a Restricted Area. Routine entry is available to the Rabbi, President, office staff, and custodian. Entry by all other individuals will be subject to case-by-case determination by the office staff and in compliance with all rules in effect. Vendor and contractor access will be limited to that absolutely necessary to conduct business.

Building access is limited to a case-by-case basis. To support contact tracing, all those who have been given permission to enter the building should be logged.

No in-person meetings shall take place in the building. Zoom or other video streaming technology will be used exclusively until further notice.

Pastoral Care

| Pastoral care meetings are conducted privately in the Rabbi's study, sanctuary, or off-site.

³ Contact tracing is required by Phase 2/3 guidelines. Attendees at all services shall be pre-registered before or logged in upon arrival.

Religious School/YAHAD

The Religious School will begin in-person classes as of Sunday, 13 October. All social distancing and hygienic protocols stipulated in this document will be observed. Class size will be kept to a minimum and location in the building will be determined based on maintaining a minimum of 8 feet of separation between students and the teacher or class leader.

2. Safe Services

Phase 3 Guidelines

Houses of Worship - Physical space setup

- Indoor capacity constraint: the lesser of 50% fire code occupancy or 200 people⁴ (including attendees, clergy, employees and volunteers) may be present inside a house of worship at any time. This applies to the building in its entirety, including any auditorium or overflow room.
- Outdoor capacity constraint: No more than 50% of capacity (including attendees, clergy, employees and volunteers) may be present at an outdoor service. There is no capacity limit. Individuals and families must remain a minimum of 6 feet⁵ apart. Masks must be worn.⁶
- Indoor Seating arrangement: Rearrange space to maintain at least 6 feet of distance between attendees. Alternate rows between attendees shall be kept empty.
 - Two or more members of the same household may be seated adjacent to each other with at least 6 feet distance maintained on either side from the next attendee.
 - **The capacity constraint of 200 people shall be further reduced by the limitation imposed by the seating arrangement⁷, if applicable.**

The following additional rules shall be followed for in-person services:

- Total in-person attendance is limited to 10 family units. A family unit is defined as those persons living under one roof, i.e., a single household.
- Logged attendance: An attendance log shall be maintained to support contact tracing.
- Capacity tracking: We are responsible to enforce the building's mandated capacity limit in accordance with the guidelines should expanded attendance be allowed.
- Temperature screening: An IR thermometer will be used to screen attendees' temperature. If the registered temperature is at or above 100.5°F, building entry will not be allowed.
- Sanctuary doors will be kept open with a doorstop to minimize touching the handles.
- Restroom use will be limited to one person at a time. Entry doors will be stopped open.
- Gabbaim are expected to act as greeters and ushers and ensure that social distancing guidelines are being observed. This may include escorting attendees to their seats.

⁴ State of Connecticut Executive Order 9F dated and effective 8 October 2020. This limit is with the folding wall open. If the wall is closed and only the sanctuary is used, the maximum allowed occupancy is 50% X 160 or 80 people.

⁵ Phase 3 guidance requires at least 6 feet. In our building, we are using 8 foot spacing due to the added risk of praying aloud or singing. This is consistent with many other houses of worship as a best practice.

⁶ State of Connecticut Executive Order 9F dated and effective 8 October 2020.

⁷ Using 8 feet of separation, we can fit ~75 seats.

- The folding wall shall be open for all services regardless of the number of attendees.
- Singing is discouraged.
- Gathering: Social gathering anywhere in the building is strongly discouraged.
- Cantor: A lectern and microphone will be set up in the open area in front of the bimah.
- Disinfect microphones by wiping the grill with 70% isopropyl alcohol and letting set for 72 hrs.
- Participation on the bimah: The only person on the bimah will be the Rabbi.
 - Gabbaim will be responsible for opening and closing the ark.
 - The Rabbi will remove the Torah from the ark, place it on the reading table, and prepare it for reading. If a second Torah scroll is required, a gabbai will handle that task. Gloves should be worn.
- Raising the Torah will be done by a gabbai. It will then be moved to the cradle on one of the blue seats and partially dressed. The Rabbi will return the Torah to the ark.
- Aliyot: Those in person receiving an aliyah will say the blessings standing in front of the ark step.
- Haftorah: If in person, the haftorah will be chanted while standing in front of the ark step.
- Prayer books: Prayer books under the seats are allowed for use. At the conclusion of the service all prayer books will be left on a table at the rear of the sanctuary. They will held in 1 week quarantine before being returned to use.
- Kippot and tallisim: Ideally, please bring your own. Sanitized kippot and tallisim will be available.
- Security guard(s) will be on site.

3. High Holiday Services

General Guidelines

- All rules from the previous sections of this document will be in effect.
- All services will include broadcasting over Zoom and/or other live streaming technology. Portions of any given service may be pre-recorded so it may be distributed in discrete parts at different times.
- We will use our normal High Holiday prayer book, *Machzor Layamin Hanoraim*. The books will be available for check out and may be taken home for the High Holidays. They are to be returned to the synagogue shortly thereafter. The office will establish the checkout procedures.
- Attendees may bring personal electronic devices and use them during services. This will allow logging into Zoom and following the service (with potential screen shared documents) online.
- In-person attendance will be limited to 10 family units. It is recognized that the number of people who wish to attend may be beyond this attendance limit. In that event, the High Holiday Committee will establish a pre-registration and selection process to determine who may enter the building.
- The exact make-up of each service will be determined by:
 - what is required by Jewish law (*halakhah*),
 - what has strong tradition and spiritual meaning, and
 - what needs to be eliminated to shorten the service (which also lowers risk⁸).

⁸ Risk of viral infection is, among other things, dependent upon the number of people in the room and for how long. By limiting attendance and shortening the service risk is reduced.