



EMERGENCY COMMAND CENTER

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GUIDANCE FOR CHURCHES **DURING THE COVID-19 PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY**

AS OF FRIDAY, JULY 31ST, 2020

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe (CRST) continues to closely monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The CRST recognizes that many residents of the Cheyenne River Reservation wish to attend church services and that practicing one's religion can be important for mental health and overall well-being.

Church leaders must understand that whenever they choose to open their facilities during the COVID-19 public health emergency, they have a greater social responsibility to keep everyone safe. Churches are encouraged to do a "soft opening" on their first meeting in order to prepare their facilities & educate their parishioners on their plans for holding services during this public health emergency.

GUIDELINES

The purpose of these guidelines are to allow churches on the Cheyenne River Reservation to hold church services when appropriate per level of risk while protecting parishioners and officiants from exposure to the COVID-19 virus.

1. CHURCH ATTENDANCE

- a. Limit the number of people allowed in the church at one time to 30 square feet space per person.
- b. Shorten service times up to 45 min. or less in order to cut down potential exposure time.
- c. Establish a special service time for parishioners who are high-risk for COVID-19 (older adults and people with severe underlying health conditions).
- d. Limit Sunday School, nursery, children's church ministries, youth events, small group meetings, special dinners, or other events that would attract a crowd when indicated based on risk level.
- e. Churches must follow the most current CRST COVID-19 Response Plan.
- f. It is the churches responsibility to monitor changes to the CRST COVID-19 Response Plan.

2. PREVENT SPREAD OF COVID-19

- a. Face mask covering must be worn at all times inside and outside of the church building, unless church staff are alone in their office.
- b. When feasible, open windows and doors and/or use fans to promote airflow.

- c. Parishioners should not enter the church if they 1) have symptoms of a respiratory illness (coughing or fever), 2) have tested positive for COVID-19 in the past 14 days, 3) were in close contact with an individual who had symptoms of COVID-19 or tested positive for COVID-19, or 4) have traveled either out of state or to a hotspot in SD within the past 10 days.
 - d. Members of the same household can sit together as a family unit but must be seated at least 6 ft. from other families.
 - e. When feasible, consider having church services outdoors.
3. COMMUNICATION OF PROTOCOLS TO PATRONS
- a. It is the church's responsibility to communicate and enforce health protection protocols through signs and handouts to parishioners and staff.
4. INTENSIFY CLEANING AND DISINFECTING
- a. Provide hand sanitizer (60-95% alcohol) and/or soap and disposable hand towels in lobbies, entrances, kitchens, dining rooms, and bathrooms.
 - b. Frequent and regular disinfecting must be done before and after each church service.
 - c. Routinely clean, sanitize, and disinfect surfaces and objects that are frequently touched, such as books, pews, chairs, altars, etc.
 - d. Be ready to follow CDC guidance on how to disinfect your church if a sick person has been in the building.
5. SERVICES
- a. Refrain from passing an "Offering Plate" from person to person. Alternatives are a "giving box" at the entrance, online giving or if possible, one person holding the plate at all times while wearing gloves.
 - b. If your church offers communion, refrain from using shared plates, bowls or drinking glasses and encourage 6-foot distance between parishioners if lines are formed.
 - c. If your church offers a sign of peace, do this verbally without touching others.
6. TRACKING
- a. Churches should be prepared to assist public health departments to identify and find recent contacts of people who discover they are infected. This may include rapidly identifying and contacting all people who had contact with a COVID-19 patient who attended the church. Churches should set up a system to collect information for all attendees.



DATE

Chairman Harold C. Frazier

RESOURCES

CDC. Community and Faith-Based Organizations. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/index.html>