

Governor Carney Issues Guidance for Churches, Houses of Worship

Churches are encouraged to hold virtual services; 30 percent occupancy allowed for services inside houses of worship

WILMINGTON, Del. – Governor John Carney on Monday issued [updated guidance](#) for churches and other houses of worship in Delaware. The guidance – created in coordination with the Delaware Division of Public Health (DPH) and the [Delaware Council of Faith-Based Partnerships](#) – encourages virtual services but expands the ability for churches and other houses of worship to conduct in-person services with restrictions.

Gatherings must be limited to 30 percent of stated fire code occupancy. Strict social distancing must be maintained. High-risk Delawareans, including those over 65-years-old, and anyone who is sick should not attend in-person services. Anyone 13-years-old or older must wear a face covering. Children 2-years-old and younger should not wear a face covering due to risk of suffocation.

[Read Delaware's full guidance for churches and other houses of worship.](#)
(Updated 5/23/20)

[Read Governor Carney's latest modification to the State of Emergency](#)

[Declaration.](#)

“All of Delaware’s restrictions – including those inside our churches and other houses of worship – are intended to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and save lives,” said **Governor Carney**. “I know it’s difficult. Practicing your faith is a fundamental right. But Delawareans who are at higher risk should not attend in-person services. Do your best to practice your faith virtually. Wear a cloth face covering if you attend an in-person service. Remain at least six feet away from others. Wash or sanitize your hands frequently. Now’s not the time for Delawareans to let up.”

Service or gathering times must be staggered to permit cleaning of public spaces between services, in accordance with guidance from DPH and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Exchange of materials of any kind during services is strongly discouraged. Baptisms, weddings and funerals are permitted if the services can follow precautions in the updated guidance.

Under Governor Carney’s [stay-at-home order](#), churches and other houses of worship are essential, but must adhere to basic safety precautions to protect congregants from COVID-19 infection and transmission.

Anyone with a question about COVID-19, whether related to medical or social service needs, should call Delaware 2-1-1. Individuals who are deaf or hard of hearing can text their ZIP code to 898-211. Hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday; 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Health or medically-related COVID-19 questions can also be submitted by email at DPHCall@delaware.gov.

DPH will continue to update the public as more information becomes available. For the latest on Delaware’s response, go to de.gov/coronavirus.

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