

COVID-19

GUIDANCE NOTE

23 October 2020

ACT Covid-19 Guidance Note

Summary of Standard Requirements

Like all businesses in the ACT, each congregation must maintain

- Physical distancing of 1.5 metres wherever possible – for more information visit the [Protect yourself](#) page.
- Good hygiene – find out more on the [Protect yourself](#) page.
- Signage that clearly displays occupancy allowance at entrance to each venue or space. Download the [Maximum Capacity sign for small venues \(with max 25 capacity\)](#) or the [Maximum Capacity sign template for one person per four square metres](#).
- Frequent environmental cleaning and disinfection – download the [WorkSafe cleaning checklist](#) for more information.

All congregations have been asked to complete a Covid-19 Safety Plan. A template for ACT Congregations is available on the Synod [Covid-19 Safe Roadmap](#).

Congregations – maximum numbers

- Where no COVID Safety Plan is in place the maximum amount of people permitted in the church or venue is 25.
- If a COVID Safe Plan is in place, venues can use the sum of:
 - one person per four square metres of usable space for each indoor space (up to a maximum of 200 people); and
 - one person per two square metres of usable space for each outdoor space (up to a maximum of 200 people).

See below for detailed information about the requirements, including those for weddings and funerals.

Current Restrictions – what is allowed

From 9am on Friday 9 October 2020:

Weddings and Funerals

- The maximum number of people who may attend weddings and funerals is 200 people, excluding staff and anyone involved in the service (e.g. celebrants, catering staff, photographers, etc).

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Venue capacity

Venues need to comply with the following density requirements:

- one person per four square metres of usable space for each indoor space; and
- one person per two square metres of usable space for each outdoor space.

Note: Businesses and venues must not exceed the capacity limit that applies under standard liquor or fire occupancy loading and regulatory conditions of the venue. Maximum capacity excludes staff.

- Usable space is defined in the Public Health Direction as the space that people can freely move around in, but not including the following areas:
 - stages and similar areas,
 - restrooms, changerooms and similar areas,
 - areas occupied by fixtures, fittings, and displays, and
 - staff only areas and areas that are closed off or not being used.
- Businesses, venues and facilities that are required to collect information for contact tracing are strongly encouraged to use an electronic method to collect information. The free [Check In CBR app](#) is available to fulfill this requirement.
- Wedding parties and their guests are permitted to dance at their private celebratory function. Noting that dancing is a particularly high-risk activity due to close and physical contact, the following suggestions are provided for wedding organisers:
 - Consider limiting close dancing to the wedding party only.
 - Consider asking the venue to provide an oversized dance floor to provide additional space for guests.
- Wedding celebrations and wakes should be held in accordance with rules for the hospitality sector.

Places of worship

- All venues can have 25 people (excluding staff) across the entire venue; OR
- If venues want to have more than 25, and a COVID Safe Plan is in place, venues can use the sum of:
 - one person per four square metres of usable space for each indoor space (up to a maximum of 200 people); and

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- one person per two square metres of usable space for each outdoor space (up to a maximum of 200 people).

Notes on options above:

- Businesses must not exceed the capacity limit that applies under standard liquor or fire occupancy loading and regulatory conditions of the venue.
- Maximum capacity excludes staff.
- No modifications can be made to venues.
- Where no COVID Safety Plan is in place the maximum amount of people permitted in the venue is 25.
- Usable space is defined in the Public Health Direction as the space that people can freely move around in, but not including the following areas:
 - stages and similar areas;
 - restrooms, changerooms and similar areas;
 - areas occupied by fixtures, fittings, and displays; and
 - staff only areas and areas that are closed off or not being used.
- Businesses, venues and facilities that are required to collect information for contact tracing are strongly encouraged to use an electronic method to collect information. The free [Check In CBR app](#) is available to fulfill this requirement.

What can't I do?

- A person who owns, controls or operates a non-essential business or undertaking under the Public Health Direction must not temporarily divide any usable indoor space or usable outdoor space for the purposes of calculating usable space.
- If a COVID Safety Plan isn't in place, gatherings within a place of worship should be limited to a maximum of 25 people.
- Due to recent learnings from other jurisdictions, congregational singing and choirs are discouraged, or should be minimised where possible.

What are my responsibilities?

Weddings and funerals

- Wedding and funeral organisers must have a [COVID Safety Plan](#).
- Venues must clearly display occupancy allowance at the entrance to the venue.

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- Wedding and funeral organisers must keep a record of the names and contact numbers of individuals attending. Details should be securely destroyed after 28 days. Consider using the [Check In CBR](#) app.

Places of worship

- Places of worship must have a [COVID Safety Plan](#) if gatherings are greater than 25.
- Venues must clearly display occupancy allowance at the entrance to the venue.
- Carefully manage the entry, exit and flow of people through the premises.
- While first name and contact number of attendees can be sought voluntarily in a visitors' book, including details of the date and time at which the person attended, places of worship are encouraged to consider using an electronic method to collect information. The free [Check In CBR app](#) is available to assist with this requirement.
- Physical distancing of 1.5 metres between each group or household is required.
- Increase the frequency of cleaning for high touch areas and restroom facilities.
- The use of collection plates and other shared equipment should be avoided during services.
- Limit the use of books, if possible. If not, ensure they are cleaned between each use.
- Church leaders and others involved in the service should be kept to a minimum and are to be physically distanced from the congregation.
- If choirs are performing to congregations they are to remain at least 2 metres away from the congregation and those involved in the service.
- Choir members are to be kept to an absolute minimum and are to maintain physical distancing of at least 2 metres from each other when singing.
- Try to keep to a minimum number of musicians in each service, and they should remain physically distanced from the congregation or audience. There should also be 2 metres of distance between each band member.

What are our community responsibilities?

- Avoid gathering in communal areas.
- Maintain physical distancing of 1.5 metres from other people where practical (other than when dancing).
- Maintain personal hygiene, including regular hand washing.

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- Stay home if unwell.
- Get tested if you have COVID-19 symptoms.
- Download the [Check In CBR app](#) and sign into participating Canberra venues you visit.

What does the congregation need to know?

- Continue to practise good hand and respiratory hygiene, physical distancing, stay home if you are unwell and get tested if you have symptoms of COVID-19.
- Ensure you provide your first name and contact number to any businesses that are required to ask for contact tracing purposes. Download the [Check In CBR app](#) to use at participating venues across Canberra.
- Be sensible when you have people over at your residence and have your own control measures in place. Know who is there and at what times, download the COVIDSafe app, join [Flu Tracker](#) and participate in important [Your Say Community Panel](#) engagements and health surveys that will help the ACT respond the best that it can.

Further information

A Covid-19 Safety Plan Template and other information is on the [Covid19Safe Roadmap](#) page

ACT Government [Current Restrictions for Places of Worship](#)

ACT Government Covid-19 Requirements - [Religious Services](#)

ACT Government Covid-19 Requirements – [Weddings](#)

ACT Government Covid-19 Requirements - [Funerals](#)

This information has been sourced from:

<https://www.covid19.act.gov.au/what-you-can-do/faqs-changes-to-restrictions/weddings-funeral-worship>

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