

BRITISH COLUMBIA'S

# GUIDELINES

FOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS

As of September 18, 2020

Pastors and ministry leaders,

On September 18, Dr. Bonnie Henry provided new information on guidelines pertaining to in-person gatherings, specifically including events defined as:

“anything which gathers people together whether on a one-time, regular or irregular basis, including a party, worship service, ceremony or celebration of any type, reception, wedding, funeral, celebration of life... live band performance... meeting, conference, lecture, talk...”

So basically everything church related.

Here's what you need to know.

We've summed up Dr. Henry's order so that you can easily see the main points. It is important to [read the full order](#) to ensure that you understand the guidelines fully before you continue to gather in-person.



Work through this checklist with your team and check off each box as you ensure these safeguards are in place; this will help you to make sure that nothing gets missed!

If you have any questions or need help with preparing your reopening plan, please reach out to us and we will be happy to assist where we can.

## Places **OTHER THAN** Banquet Halls (including places of worship)

- No more than 50 people – this number applies to individuals who attend an event and does not include staff.
- You may have **UP TO 50** people if:

### Attendance and Check-In:

- There is an event organizer – *someone has to be in charge.*
- Access is controlled – *ensure that no one can freely enter the building without first being checked-in.*
- The number of people is closely monitored – *don't go over 50.*
- First and last names and phone numbers (or email addresses) must be collected for every attendee (or every driver of a vehicle if doing a drive-in)\* – *this is why you may need a line to be created outside of your entrance... more on this under the Facility section.*
- Keep the above information for 30 days\* – *the medical health officer will contact you for the list in case contact tracing is needed.*
- Attendees who leave during the event cannot be replaced by someone else – *once they've been counted, their number remains used until the event is over.*

### Facility:

- As people enter the building, make sure that there's no room for them to congregate outside – *create a line with social-distancing markers where people can wait before being checked-in to the building, or at the very least, a CLEARLY marked entrance and exit.*
- Hand sanitizing supplies are to be readily available – *clearly marked and easy to get at.*
- Washrooms must have soap and paper towel available.

- There must be enough space for people to maintain social distancing of 2 metres at all times, inside and outside of the building – *the only exception: members of the same family or household.*
  - Make sure there are no areas for people to congregate – *figure out the congestion spots or spaces where people tend to mingle and keep it controlled.*
  - If using tables and chairs, a maximum of 6 people can sit at 1 table, even if they are from the same party. There must also be at least 2 meters between the backs of the chairs from one table to another, unless there is a physical barrier separating them.
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- Make sure that there is at least 3 metres between the worship team/speaker and the congregation/attendees. If you don't have enough room for 3 metres, you must install a physical barrier.
  - You may hold multiple events/services in the same building at one time if:
    - Attendees from different events/service do not come into contact with one another at any time – *meaning not only no contact with someone from the gathering, but no contact with anyone else at all outside of their group.*
    - There are separate entrances.
    - There are separate washrooms.
    - Balconies may be used in addition to the lower floor for the same service if:
      - There are separate entrances.
      - There are separate washrooms.
      - All of the above conditions under “Attendance and Check-In” and “Facility” are met.
      - **NOTE:** *if access to the balcony requires using the same outside entrance doors as the lower main service, you cannot hold simultaneous gatherings as these need to be completely separate “events.” Staggered entrance times may not work logistically as one hour is required by the public health order to sanitize the space(s) in-between different groups using the same area.*
  - If you are holding more than one event/service on the same day, there must be at least one hour between events/services where there are no attendees present and the entire area must be cleaned and sanitized – *cleaning and sanitizing cannot begin until everyone has left.*

### **Self-Serve Food & Beverage:**

*We HIGHLY recommend eliminating all self-service food and beverage service for the time being and are only including these guidelines to make sure you're getting the full scope of the order.*

- Hand washing area or hand sanitizer is within easy reach of the station – *same area, not a sign pointing to the washroom.*
- Signs reminding people to wash or sanitize their hands before touching anything and to maintain social distancing or 2 metres – *yes, people need instructions.*

- High touch surfaces, utensils and handles are frequently cleaned and sanitized – *catch that: frequently. More than just at the beginning, middle and end.*

#### Drive-In Event:

- More than 50 people can attend if both above check-in conditions are met (identified in “Attendance and Check-In” section with an \*), and:
  - Attendees only attend in a vehicle
  - No more than 50 vehicles are present
  - Attendees are informed that they must remain in their vehicle at all times except if they are using washroom facilities and to always maintain a distance of at least 2 meters – *it’s also required that this be monitored.*
  - No food or drink can be sold – *sorry youth group fundraisers ☹️*
- If the organizer of the drive-in event is not the owner/operator (lead pastor), the owner/operator must ensure that the organizer is aware of all of the above requirements and has the capacity to fulfill them.

BC’s provincial Covid-19 guidelines change often. To receive the most current updates and changes that could affect your church and ministry gatherings, make sure you’re signed-up to receive our email updates. Also regularly check our resource website to find helpful articles, tips, inspiration and creative ideas for how to navigate your ministry throughout this pandemic, and beyond.

### **BCYD Email Updates**

[www.bc.paoc.org/resources/network-news-updates](http://www.bc.paoc.org/resources/network-news-updates)

### **BCYD Resource Website**

[www.leadforward.ca](http://www.leadforward.ca)

### **Most Current BC Public Health Order**

[www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-gatherings-events.pdf](http://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/health/about-bc-s-health-care-system/office-of-the-provincial-health-officer/covid-19/covid-19-pho-order-gatherings-events.pdf)