



Coronavirus COVID-19

BC Centre for Disease Control | BC Ministry of Health



Guidance for Holding Low Risk Worship Services

Updated: May 26, 2021

Introduction

As pillars of strength, religious organizations and faith-based worship services play a critical role in connecting the community by supporting beneficial and safe social interactions. As COVID-19 vaccinations are administered throughout the province, we are entering a new phase of the pandemic where we can begin to gather again to share hope, healing, restoration, and recovery together. These guidelines were developed in close collaboration with a diverse spectrum of spiritual and faith leaders and communities from across the province through a process led by SFU's Morris J. Wosk Centre for Dialogue. The Office of the Provincial Health Officer and the province are deeply grateful to these leaders.

[BC has a plan for safe resumption of activities in the province](#), including the return of indoor and the continuation of outdoor worship services. This guidance document explains what faith leaders, members, volunteers, and others need to do to ensure worship services are conducted safely. Achieving low risk worship services relies on everyone who organizes and attends them. Paying close attention to the precautions outlined in this guidance will support the eventual resumption of additional activities that are still too risky right now, such as group singing and sharing food and drink in communal settings. **Please continue to monitor [the Provincial Health Officer website](#) as it will be updated periodically, as things continue to evolve over the next weeks and months.**

Variances Permitting Indoor and Outdoor Religious Worship Services

The Provincial Health Officer has issued [two variances for indoor and outdoor worship services](#). This guidance provides information on how to hold these gatherings safely and in alignment with these variances.

COVID-19 Information

Please continue to monitor the following resources for information on COVID-19 and restrictions in the province:

- For information on COVID-19, vaccine safety and efficacy, data, public health guidance, and more, visit [BCCDC](#).
- For information on the restrictions in place in the province, visit [BC's Restart Plan](#).
- For information on how to get vaccinated against COVID-19, visit [GetVaccinated](#).



Ministry of Health



BC Centre for Disease Control

If you have fever, a new cough, or are having difficulty breathing, call 8-1-1.



Holding Low Risk Indoor Worship Services

Updated May 26, 2021

Definition of Indoor Worship Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes funerals and baptisms if they are a part of the regular service. Does not include a funeral, baptism, or wedding if held on their own. To hold these events, please see personal gatherings and organized events in BC’s Restart Plan.
Capacity Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 50 people per worship service, including all leaders, staff, soloists, musicians, etc. 2 additional people can be present to help make sure everyone follows precautions.
Space Between Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 metres unless they are from the same household.
Multiple Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple services can be held in a day as long as there is enough time (e.g., 15 minutes) in between services for cleaning and for participants to leave without interacting with those waiting to enter the next gathering. For larger venues, more than one indoor service can occur at the same time as long as one group of people does not come into contact with another group (this means each gathering needs its own entrances, exits, and washroom facilities). Indoor services and outdoor services can occur at the same time as long as one group of people does not come into contact with another group (this means each gathering needs its own entrances, exits, and washroom facilities).
Mask Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks need to be worn for indoor services / gatherings. Masks can be removed by the leader, reader, soloist, and/or musical group when speaking, chanting, singing, or playing as long as these individuals are 3 metres away from the congregation or are separated by a physical barrier that blocks droplets.
Before Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must be pre-registered; contact information must be collected and retained for 30 days for contact tracing purposes. Participants must assess their health before attending and should stay home if sick. Caution people who are at high risk of severe disease about attending in-person services. Clean and disinfect high-use areas, including tables, chairs, and door handles. Ensure enough space (at least 2 metres) is available for people to maintain distance from others. Ensure easy access to handwashing stations or hand sanitizing supplies. Increase ventilation by opening doors and/or windows for indoor services where possible.
During Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of the service must wear a mask, removing it only for speaking, chanting, or singing, as long as there is 3 metres distance between the leader and the congregation. Limit communal settings; provide food or drink in single use containers. Maintain distance from those outside your household. Limit or refrain from passing items.
Music / Singing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only soloists and musicians can sing / play at this time.
Food / Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single use containers only.
After Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone should leave the venue after the service. Social gatherings can occur elsewhere under the Gathering and Events Order. Clean and disinfect high-use areas.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Check Posters and reference materials



Holding Low Risk Outdoor Worship Services

Updated May 26, 2021

Definition of Outdoor Worship Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes funerals and baptisms if they are a part of the regular service. Does not include a funeral, baptism, or wedding if held on their own. To hold these events, please see personal gatherings and organized events in BC's Restart Plan. Does not include drive in events. To hold these events, please see the Gathering and Events Order.
Capacity Limit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 50 people per gathering / service, including all leaders, staff, soloists, musicians, etc. 2 additional people can be present to help make sure everyone follows precautions.
Space Between Participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 metres unless they are from the same household or unless everyone is seated.
Multiple Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple services can be held in a day as long as there is enough time (e.g., 15 minutes) in between services for cleaning and for participants to leave without interacting with those waiting to enter the next gathering. If holding multiple services at once, separate entrances, exits, and washroom facilities must be available for each group. Indoor services and outdoor services can occur at the same time as long as one group of people does not come into contact with another group (this means each gathering needs its own entrances, exits, and washroom facilities).
Mask Use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Masks need to be worn until seated.
Before Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participants must be pre-registered; contact information must be collected and retained for 30 days for contact tracing purposes. Participants must assess their health before attending and should stay home if sick. Caution people who are at high risk of severe disease about attending in-person services. Clean and disinfect high-use areas, including tables, chairs, and door handles. Ensure easy access to handwashing stations or hand sanitizing supplies. Increase ventilation by opening doors and/or windows for indoor services where possible.
During Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leaders of the service must wear a mask, removing it only for speaking, chanting, or singing, as long as there is 3 metres distance between the leader and the congregation. Limit communal settings; provide food or drink in single use containers. Maintain distance from those outside your household. Limit or refrain from passing items.
Music / Singing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only soloist and musicians can sing / play at this time.
Food / Drink	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Single use containers only.
After Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone should leave the venue after the service. Social gatherings can occur elsewhere under the Gathering and Events Order. Clean and disinfect high-use areas.
Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health Check / health assessment Posters and reference materials People who are at high risk of severe COVID-19 disease





**VARIANCE OF THE *GATHERINGS AND EVENTS ORDER*
OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER**

(Pursuant to Sections 30, 31, 32 and 39 (3) and (6) *Public Health Act*, S.B.C. 2008)

TO PERMIT

INDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES
May 26, 2021

The *Public Health Act* is at:

<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/content/complete/statreg/08028/?xsl=/templates/browse.xsl>
(excerpts enclosed)

TO: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 39 (6) of the *Public Health Act*, I hereby Vary the *Gatherings and Events* order, to provide for indoor worship services as follows:

THIS VARIANCE FORMS PART OF THE *GATHERINGS AND EVENTS ORDER* (the “Order”) AND REPEALS AND REPLACES THE VARIANCE DATED MARCH 25, 2021

In this Variance the definitions in the Order apply.

The definitions of “face covering” and “health check” from the Order are included for ease of reference.

Definitions

“face covering” means either of the following that covers the nose and mouth of a person:

- (a) a medical or non-medical mask;
- (b) a tightly woven fabric;

“health check” means reviewing the entry requirement and key questions at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/health-checks> and which are on the poster at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entrycheck-workers?lang=en>;

“worship service” includes a funeral, and a baptism which takes place during a regular service, but not a wedding, or a baptism which is held on its own.

1. A person may permit a place, other than a private residence or vacation accommodation, to be used for, or may organize, lead or participate in, a worship service which is held indoors.
2. The maximum number of people who may attend is 50 people. This number is inclusive of worship leaders, readers, soloists, musicians, volunteers and the like.
3. Despite section 2, up to two additional people may be present for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Variance.
4. A person organizing a worship service must pre-register all participants for the purposes of controlling attendance and contact tracing, and must
 - a. collect the first and last name, and telephone number or email address, of every person who is present at a worship service,
 - b. retain the information collected for thirty days, and provide it to a medical health officer on request,
 - c. destroy the information after thirty days.
5. A person organizing a worship service must ensure that hand sanitation supplies are readily available for use by participants.
6. Before attending a worship service, a person must carry out a health check.
7. A person who has not passed a health check must not attend a worship service.
8. A participant must maintain a distance of two metres from other participants, unless they live in the same private residence.
9. A participant must wear a face covering.
10. A worship leader must wear a face covering during a worship service, but may remove the face covering when speaking, singing or chanting, if there is
 - a. a three metre separation between the worship leader and the other participants, or
 - b. a physical barrier between the worship leader and the other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
11. A reader must wear a face covering during a worship service, but may remove the face covering when reading out loud during the service, if there is

- a. three metre separation between the reader and the other participants, or
 - b. a physical barrier between the reader and the other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
12. There must not be a choir at a worship service, but a soloist may sing at a worship service.
13. A soloist must wear a face covering during a worship service, but may remove the face covering while singing, if there is
 - a. a three metre separation between the soloist and the other participants, or
 - b. physical barrier between the soloist and the other participants which blocks the transmission of droplets.
14. A musician, or a musical group of no more than five musicians, may play at a worship service.
15. A musician, or members of a musical group, must wear a face covering during a worship service, but may remove the face covering if it is necessary to play their musical instrument, if there is
 - a. three metre separation between the musician and any other musicians and the participants, or
 - b. a physical barrier between the musician and any other musicians and the participants, which blocks the transmission of droplets.
16. Members of a musical group must maintain a distance of two metres from one another, unless the provisions of section 15 (b) apply.
17. Despite sections 9, 10, 11, 13 and 15, a person is not required to wear a face covering during a worship service, if
 - a. under the age of 12 years;
 - b. unable to put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person;
 - c. unable to wear a face covering because of
 - i. a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or
 - ii. a physical, cognitive or mental impairment;

- d. the face covering is removed temporarily for the purpose of identifying the person;
 - e. the face covering is removed temporarily to communicate with a person with a disability or diverse ability, where visual cues, facial expressions or lip reading or lip movements are important;
 - f. the face covering is removed temporarily to permit the consumption of food or drink provided during and for the purpose of worship.
18. A participant, other than a worship leader or a soloist, must not sing or chant.
19. Except as provided for in section 20, a participant at a worship service must not pass or share any item, including a collection bag or plate, book or ceremonial object.
20. Food or drink placed in a sanitary manner in single use containers may be provided during a worship service for worship purposes.
21. A participant must not gather or socially engage with other participants during, before or after a worship service except as permitted in Part A of the *Gatherings and Events Order*.
22. A participant must disperse immediately after a worship service, and must not mix with participants who are leaving an earlier service, the same service, or arriving to attend a subsequent service.
23. If feasible, during a worship service, doors and windows should be kept open to increase ventilation, and mechanical ventilation should be maximized to the extent possible.
25. Despite section 24, doors may remain closed if there are concerns about security.
26. Washroom facilities with running water, soap and paper towels for hand washing and drying purposes, or hand sanitation supplies, must be available.
27. There may be more than one indoor worship service held in a place at the same time, as long as the following conditions are met:
- a. participants attending different services do not mix with one another before, during or after the worship services; and
 - b. there are separate entrances, exits and washroom facilities for participants at each of the services.

28. There may be more than one worship service held during the course of a day, as long as participants do not mix with participants attending an earlier or later service held during the same day.
29. Following a service, and during an appropriate interval of time before another service commences, the person responsible for organizing the worship service must ensure that:
 - c. the place, including tables, chairs and door handles, is cleaned, sanitized and ventilated while there are no participants present; and
 - d. there is a sufficient period of time between services
 - i. to permit the place to be cleaned, sanitized and ventilated without any participants being present, and
 - ii. to permit participants attending different service to arrive and leave without mixing with one another.
30. Participants attending a worship service must not mix with participants attending another worship service before, during or after the worship service.
31. No person may permit a place to be used for, may organize, may lead or may participate in an indoor worship service, unless the conditions in this Variance are met.

This Variance does not have an expiration date.

Pursuant to section 54 (1) (h) of the *Public Health Act*, and in accordance with the emergency powers set out in Part 5 of the *Public Health Act*, I will not be accepting requests for reconsideration of this Order.

You are required under section 42 of the *Public Health Act* to comply with this Variance.

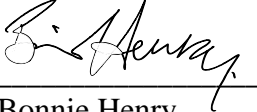
Failure to comply with this Variance is an offence under section 99 (1) (k) of the *Public Health Act*.

If you fail to comply with this Variance, I have the authority to take enforcement action against you under Part 4, Division 6 of the *Public Health Act*.

You may contact me at:

Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer
4th Floor, 1515 Blanshard Street
PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC V8W 9P4
Fax: (250) 952-1570
Email: ProvHlthOffice@gov.bc.ca

DATED THIS: 26th day of May, 2021

SIGNED: 
Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer

DELIVERY BY: Posting to the BC Government and the BC Centre for Disease Control websites.

Enclosure: Excerpts of the *Public Health Act*.

ENCLOSURE

Excerpts of the *Public Health Act* [SBC 2008] c. 28

Definitions

1 In this Act:

"health hazard" means

- (a) a condition, a thing or an activity that
 - (i) endangers, or is likely to endanger, public health, or
 - (ii) interferes, or is likely to interfere, with the suppression of infectious agents or hazardous agents, or
- (b) a prescribed condition, thing or activity, including a prescribed condition, thing or activity that
 - (i) is associated with injury or illness, or
 - (ii) fails to meet a prescribed standard in relation to health, injury or illness;

When orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made

30 (1) A health officer may issue an order under this Division only if the health officer reasonably believes that

- (a) a health hazard exists,
 - (b) a condition, a thing or an activity presents a significant risk of causing a health hazard,
 - (c) a person has contravened a provision of the Act or a regulation made under it, or
 - (d) a person has contravened a term or condition of a licence or permit held by the person under this Act.
- (2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) (a) to (c) applies even if the person subject to the order is complying with all terms and conditions of a licence, a permit, an approval or another authorization issued under this or any other enactment.

General powers respecting health hazards and contraventions

31 (1) If the circumstances described in section 30 [*when orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made*] apply, a health officer may order a person to do anything that the health officer reasonably believes is necessary for any of the following purposes:

- (a) to determine whether a health hazard exists;
- (b) to prevent or stop a health hazard, or mitigate the harm or prevent further harm from a health hazard;

- (c) to bring the person into compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it;
- (d) to bring the person into compliance with a term or condition of a licence or permit held by that person under this Act.

(2) A health officer may issue an order under subsection (1) to any of the following persons:

- (a) a person whose action or omission
 - (i) is causing or has caused a health hazard, or
 - (ii) is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the person's licence or permit;
- (b) a person who has custody or control of a thing, or control of a condition, that
 - (i) is a health hazard or is causing or has caused a health hazard, or
 - (ii) is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the person's licence or permit;
- (c) the owner or occupier of a place where
 - (i) a health hazard is located, or
 - (ii) an activity is occurring that is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the licence or permit of the person doing the activity.

Specific powers respecting health hazards and contraventions

32 (1) An order may be made under this section only

- (a) if the circumstances described in section 30 [*when orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made*] apply, and
- (b) for the purposes set out in section 31 (1) [*general powers respecting health hazards and contraventions*].

(2) Without limiting section 31, a health officer may order a person to do one or more of the following:

- (a) have a thing examined, disinfected, decontaminated, altered or destroyed, including
 - (i) by a specified person, or under the supervision or instructions of a specified person,
 - (ii) moving the thing to a specified place, and
 - (iii) taking samples of the thing, or permitting samples of the thing to be taken;
- (b) in respect of a place,
 - (i) leave the place,
 - (ii) not enter the place,

- (iii) do specific work, including removing or altering things found in the place, and altering or locking the place to restrict or prevent entry to the place,
 - (iv) neither deal with a thing in or on the place nor dispose of a thing from the place, or deal with or dispose of the thing only in accordance with a specified procedure, and
 - (v) if the person has control of the place, assist in evacuating the place or examining persons found in the place, or taking preventive measures in respect of the place or persons found in the place;
 - (c) stop operating, or not operate, a thing;
 - (d) keep a thing in a specified place or in accordance with a specified procedure;
 - (e) prevent persons from accessing a thing;
 - (f) not dispose of, alter or destroy a thing, or dispose of, alter or destroy a thing only in accordance with a specified procedure;
 - (g) provide to the health officer or a specified person information, records, samples or other matters relevant to a thing's possible infection with an infectious agent or contamination with a hazardous agent, including information respecting persons who may have been exposed to an infectious agent or hazardous agent by the thing;
 - (h) wear a type of clothing or personal protective equipment, or change, remove or alter clothing or personal protective equipment, to protect the health and safety of persons;
 - (i) use a type of equipment or implement a process, or remove equipment or alter equipment or processes, to protect the health and safety of persons;
 - (j) provide evidence of complying with the order, including
 - (i) getting a certificate of compliance from a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or specified person, and
 - (ii) providing to a health officer any relevant record;
 - (k) take a prescribed action.
- (3) If a health officer orders a thing to be destroyed, the health officer must give the person having custody or control of the thing reasonable time to request reconsideration and review of the order under sections 43 and 44 unless
- (a) the person consents in writing to the destruction of the thing, or
 - (b) Part 5 [*Emergency Powers*] applies.

Contents of orders

- 39** (3) An order may be made in respect of a class of persons.
- (6)A health officer who makes an order may vary the order

- (a) at any time on the health officer's own initiative, or
- (b) on the request of a person affected by the order, following a reconsideration under section 43 [*reconsideration of orders*].

Duty to comply with orders

- 42** (1) A person named or described in an order made under this Part must comply with the order.
- (2) Subsection (1) applies regardless of whether the person leaves the geographic area for which the health officer who made the order is designated.
- he or she made.

General emergency powers

- 54** (1) A health officer may, in an emergency, do one or more of the following:
- (h) not reconsider an order under section 43 [*reconsideration of orders*], not review an order under section 44 [*review of orders*] or not reassess an order under section 45 [*mandatory reassessment of orders*];
 - (2) An order that may be made under this Part may be made in respect of a class of persons or things, and may make different requirements for different persons or things or classes of persons or things or for different geographic areas.

Offences

- 99** (1) A person who contravenes any of the following provisions commits an offence:
- ...
- (k) section 42 [*failure to comply with an order of a health officer*], except in respect of an order made under section 29 (2) (e) to (g) [*orders respecting examinations, diagnostic examinations or preventive measures*];



VARIANCE OF THE *GATHERINGS AND EVENTS* ORDER OF THE PROVINCIAL HEALTH OFFICER

(Pursuant to Sections 30, 31, 32 and 39 (3) and (6) *Public Health Act*, S.B.C. 2008)

TO PERMIT

OUTDOOR WORSHIP SERVICES – May 26, 2021

The *Public Health Act* is at:

<http://www.bclaws.ca/civix/content/complete/statreg/08028/?xsl=/templates/browse.xsl>

(excerpts enclosed)

TO: RELIGIOUS COMMUNITIES

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 39 (6) of the *Public Health Act*, I hereby Vary the *Gatherings and Events* order, and repeal and replace existing variances which I have issued to religious communities, to provide for outdoor worship services as follows:

THIS VARIANCE FORMS PART OF THE *GATHERINGS AND EVENTS* ORDER AND REPEALS AND REPLACES THE VARIANCE DATED MARCH 23, 2021

In this Variance the definitions in the Order apply, except where varied below. Some of the definitions below are included for ease of reference.

Definitions

"**face covering**" means either of the following that covers the nose and mouth of a person:

- (a) a medical or non-medical mask;
- (b) a tightly woven fabric;

"**health check**" means reviewing the entry requirement and key questions at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/about-us/covid-19-updates/health-and-safety/health-checks> and which are on the poster at <https://www.worksafebc.com/en/resources/health-safety/posters/help-prevent-spread-covid-19-entrycheck-workers?lang=en>;

"**outdoors**" includes in an open-sided tent, under overhead covering, or in a vehicle containing persons who reside in the same private residence;

"**place**" is not limited to an outdoor area which is part of a place of worship;

“worship service” includes a funeral, and a baptism which takes place during a regular service, but not a wedding, or a baptism which is held on its own.

1. A person may permit a place, other than a private residence or vacation accommodation, to be used for, or may organize or participate in, a worship service which is held outdoors.
2. Fifty people may be present.
3. Despite section 2, up to two additional people may be present for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the Variance.
4. A person organizing a worship service must pre-register all participants for the purposes of controlling attendance and contact tracing, and must
 - a. collect the first and last name, and telephone number or email address, of every person who is present at a worship service,
 - b. retain the information collected for thirty days, and provide it to a medical health officer on request,
 - c. destroy the information after thirty days.
5. A person organizing a worship service must ensure that hand sanitation supplies are readily available for use by participants.
6. Before attending a worship service, a person must carry out a health check.
7. A person who has not passed a health check must not attend a worship service.
8. A participant must maintain a distance of two metres from other participants, unless they live in the same private residence, or all the participants are seated.
9. A participant must wear a face covering when not at their seat.
10. Despite section 9 a person is not required to wear a face covering during a worship service, if
 - a. under the age of 12 years;
 - b. unable to put on or remove a face covering without the assistance of another person;
 - c. unable to wear a face covering because of
 - i. a psychological, behavioural or health condition, or
 - ii. a physical, cognitive or mental impairment;
 - d. the face covering is removed temporarily for the purpose of identifying the person;

- e. the face covering is removed temporarily to communicate with a person with a disability or diverse ability, where visual cues, facial expressions or lip reading or lip movements are important;
 - f. the face covering is removed temporarily to permit the consumption of food or drink provided during and for the purpose of worship.
11. There must not be a choir at a worship service, but a soloist may sing at a worship service.
 12. A musician, or a musical group, may play at a worship service.
 13. A participant, other than a worship leader or a soloist, must not sing or chant.
 14. Except as provided for in section 15, a participant at a worship service must not pass or share any item, including a collection bag or plate, book or ceremonial object.
 15. Food or drink placed in a sanitary manner in single use containers may be provided during a worship service for worship purposes.
 16. Participants must not gather or socially engage with other participants, during, before or after a worship service, except as permitted in Part A of the *Gatherings and Events Order*.
 17. Participants must disperse immediately after a worship service, and must not congregate with other participants who are leaving the service, or arriving to attend a subsequent service.
 18. There may be more than one outdoor worship service held in a place at the same time, as long as participants attending different services do not mix with one another before, during or after the worship services.
 19. There may be more than one worship service held in an outdoor place during the course of a day, and participants must not mix with participants attending an earlier or later service held during the same day.
 20. An outdoor worship service may be held in the same place at the same time as an outdoor worship service, as long as participants attending the outdoor service do not mix with participants attending the indoor service before, during or after the worship services.
 21. Participants attending a worship service must not mix with participants attending another worship service before, during or after the worship service.
 22. The organizers of an outdoor worship service must ensure that there is sufficient space and time between services to prevent mixing between participants attending different services, and to permit participants attending different services to arrive and leave without mixing with one another.
 23. No person may permit a place to be used for, may organize, may lead or may participate in an outdoor worship service, unless the conditions in this Variance are met.

This Variance does not have an expiration date.

You are required under section 42 of the *Public Health Act* to comply with this Variance.

Failure to comply with this Variance is an offence under section 99 (1) (k) of the *Public Health Act*.

Pursuant to section 54 (1) (h) of the *Public Health Act*, and in accordance with the emergency powers set out in Part 5 of the *Public Health Act*, I will not be accepting requests for reconsideration of this Order.

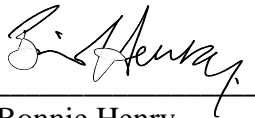
If you fail to comply with this Order, I have the authority to take enforcement action against you under Part 4, Division 6 of the *Public Health Act*.

You may contact me at:

Dr. Bonnie Henry, Provincial Health Officer
4th Floor, 1515 Blanshard Street
PO Box 9648 STN PROV GOVT, Victoria BC V8W 9P4
Fax: (250) 952-1570
Email: ProvHlthOffice@gov.bc.ca

DATED THIS: 26th day of March 2021

SIGNED:



Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer

DELIVERY BY: Posting to the BC Government and the BC Centre for Disease Control websites.

Enclosure: Excerpts of the *Public Health Act*.

ENCLOSURE

Excerpts of the *Public Health Act* [SBC 2008] c. 28

Definitions

1 In this Act:

"health hazard" means

- (a) a condition, a thing or an activity that
 - (i) endangers, or is likely to endanger, public health, or
 - (ii) interferes, or is likely to interfere, with the suppression of infectious agents or hazardous agents, or
- (b) a prescribed condition, thing or activity, including a prescribed condition, thing or activity that
 - (i) is associated with injury or illness, or
 - (ii) fails to meet a prescribed standard in relation to health, injury or illness;

When orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made

30 (1) A health officer may issue an order under this Division only if the health officer reasonably believes that

- (a) a health hazard exists,
- (b) a condition, a thing or an activity presents a significant risk of causing a health hazard,
- (c) a person has contravened a provision of the Act or a regulation made under it, or
- (d) a person has contravened a term or condition of a licence or permit held by the person under this Act.

(2) For greater certainty, subsection (1) (a) to (c) applies even if the person subject to the order is complying with all terms and conditions of a licence, a permit, an approval or another authorization issued under this or any other enactment.

General powers respecting health hazards and contraventions

31 (1) If the circumstances described in section 30 [*when orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made*] apply, a health officer may order a person to do anything that the health officer reasonably believes is necessary for any of the following purposes:

- (a) to determine whether a health hazard exists;
- (b) to prevent or stop a health hazard, or mitigate the harm or prevent further harm from a health hazard;
- (c) to bring the person into compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it;
- (d) to bring the person into compliance with a term or condition of a licence or permit held by that person under this Act.

(2) A health officer may issue an order under subsection (1) to any of the following persons:

- (a) a person whose action or omission

- (i) is causing or has caused a health hazard, or
- (ii) is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the person's licence or permit;
- (b) a person who has custody or control of a thing, or control of a condition, that
 - (i) is a health hazard or is causing or has caused a health hazard, or
 - (ii) is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the person's licence or permit;
- (c) the owner or occupier of a place where
 - (i) a health hazard is located, or
 - (ii) an activity is occurring that is not in compliance with the Act or a regulation made under it, or a term or condition of the licence or permit of the person doing the activity.

Specific powers respecting health hazards and contraventions

- 32** (1) An order may be made under this section only
- (a) if the circumstances described in section 30 [*when orders respecting health hazards and contraventions may be made*] apply, and
 - (b) for the purposes set out in section 31 (1) [*general powers respecting health hazards and contraventions*].
- (2) Without limiting section 31, a health officer may order a person to do one or more of the following:
- (a) have a thing examined, disinfected, decontaminated, altered or destroyed, including
 - (i) by a specified person, or under the supervision or instructions of a specified person,
 - (ii) moving the thing to a specified place, and
 - (iii) taking samples of the thing, or permitting samples of the thing to be taken;
 - (b) in respect of a place,
 - (i) leave the place,
 - (ii) not enter the place,
 - (iii) do specific work, including removing or altering things found in the place, and altering or locking the place to restrict or prevent entry to the place,
 - (iv) neither deal with a thing in or on the place nor dispose of a thing from the place, or deal with or dispose of the thing only in accordance with a specified procedure, and
 - (v) if the person has control of the place, assist in evacuating the place or examining persons found in the place, or taking preventive measures in respect of the place or persons found in the place;
 - (c) stop operating, or not operate, a thing;
 - (d) keep a thing in a specified place or in accordance with a specified procedure;
 - (e) prevent persons from accessing a thing;
 - (f) not dispose of, alter or destroy a thing, or dispose of, alter or destroy a thing only in accordance with a specified procedure;

- (g) provide to the health officer or a specified person information, records, samples or other matters relevant to a thing's possible infection with an infectious agent or contamination with a hazardous agent, including information respecting persons who may have been exposed to an infectious agent or hazardous agent by the thing;
- (h) wear a type of clothing or personal protective equipment, or change, remove or alter clothing or personal protective equipment, to protect the health and safety of persons;
- (i) use a type of equipment or implement a process, or remove equipment or alter equipment or processes, to protect the health and safety of persons;
- (j) provide evidence of complying with the order, including
 - (i) getting a certificate of compliance from a medical practitioner, nurse practitioner or specified person, and
 - (ii) providing to a health officer any relevant record;
- (k) take a prescribed action.

(3) If a health officer orders a thing to be destroyed, the health officer must give the person having custody or control of the thing reasonable time to request reconsideration and review of the order under sections 43 and 44 unless

- (a) the person consents in writing to the destruction of the thing, or
- (b) Part 5 [*Emergency Powers*] applies.

Contents of orders

39 (3) An order may be made in respect of a class of persons.

(6) A health officer who makes an order may vary the order

- (a) at any time on the health officer's own initiative, or
- (b) on the request of a person affected by the order, following a reconsideration under section 43 [*reconsideration of orders*].

Duty to comply with orders

42 (1) A person named or described in an order made under this Part must comply with the order.

(2) Subsection (1) applies regardless of whether the person leaves the geographic area for which the health officer who made the order is designated.

General emergency powers

54 (1) A health officer may, in an emergency, do one or more of the following:

- (h) not reconsider an order under section 43 [*reconsideration of orders*], not review an order under section 44 [*review of orders*] or not reassess an order under section 45 [*mandatory reassessment of orders*];

(2) An order that may be made under this Part may be made in respect of a class of persons or things, and may make different requirements for different persons or things or classes of persons or things or for different geographic areas.

Offences

99 (1) A person who contravenes any of the following provisions commits an offence:

...

(k) section 42 [*failure to comply with an order of a health officer*], except in respect of an order made under section 29 (2) (e) to (g) [*orders respecting examinations, diagnostic examinations or preventive measures*];