

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Regarding Requirements to Attend Mass or Church Gatherings**

#### **During the COVID-19 Pandemic**

#### **Updated August 13, 2020**

#### **How Many Worshipers Can Gather at Church?**

Phase 1 counties are currently allowed to accommodate up to 50 persons total indoors for Mass. Outdoor church gatherings in Phase 1 can also have up to 50 people.

Phase 2 counties can allow 100 persons indoors at each Mass. Outdoor church gatherings in Phase 2 can have up to 250 people (Note: Outdoor Masses are still not envisioned).

The formula for determining how many people can be allowed in an indoor space is: one person is allowed for every 35 square feet of space, up to the maximum number of people allowed.

#### **What are the Face Covering Requirements in Churches?**

Face coverings are legally required at indoor gatherings, including in churches, per statewide directive. All who are 5 years and up must wear face coverings in church in Phases 1 and 2 of reopening. Those are excepted who perform activity that makes wearing a face covering “not feasible,” like the presider (throughout Mass) and the lector (while reading). Singers and musicians are not excepted (they must wear face coverings even while singing). Exceptions are made for people with disabilities or diagnosed medical conditions that preclude them from wearing face coverings. In these few cases, special accommodations should be made so those unable to wear face coverings have seating in a cry room or choir loft away from the rest gathered. Children 2 and under should not wear face coverings. Wearing a face covering at church is not optional. Churchgoers cannot be allowed entrance without a face covering. The pastor and door monitor must strictly enforce this requirement. By archdiocesan requirement, face coverings must still be used by ministers when distributing Holy Communion. A presider *may* wear a mask throughout Mass.

*NOTE:* There has been some confusion over an OHA faith-liaison committee email which treated face covering requirements. The law allows exception for those engaged in activities where wearing a face covering is “not feasible.” If there are additional changes to this policy, we will let you know through the Archdiocese of Portland COVID-19 mailing.

#### **Are Sign-Ups for Mass Still Required?**

Yes, Mass sign-ups with names and contact phone or email are still required for each churchgoer. In the case of smaller parishes or parishes with less demand for seating, a pastor may allow people to simply show-up for Mass and sign-up immediately prior to entry. In this case, under NO circumstances can the number accommodated in the church exceed the legal requirements. Once the maximum number of attendees is reached, the door monitor or

hospitality minister **MUST** turn away the remaining faithful. The names and contact information of churchgoers must be kept for 60 days.

**Can Satellite Sites Still Be Used?**

Yes, satellite sites can still be used. The previously released guidelines apply while using the new numbers for indoor gatherings: 50 for Phase 1 and 100 for Phase 2. Refer to the May 27 Use of Satellite Sites for Mass [MEMO](#). Those 5 years and up must wear masks, and physical distancing between all but members of the same household must be practiced.

**Must Attendance Records be kept for Parish Meetings & Events?**

Yes. Until further notice, attendance records must be kept for all meetings and events, including date, time & location plus first & last name and phone or email of all participants. The records must be kept for at least 60 days. Pre sign-ups, as required for Mass, are not needed for smaller gatherings. We are encouraging parishes to move forward with faith formation and other meetings important for parish life and the practice of the faith.

**Are Monitors Required for Parish Meetings & Events?**

There must be a designated monitor for each gathering to ensure required protocols are followed, including face coverings, physical distancing, maximum numbers are not exceeded, cleaning, etc. The monitor can be a meeting participant or volunteer, but the person must be designated and instructed about the required protocols.