

We have had a number of “reopening” questions raised by Parishes and Schools and wanted to provide you with our thoughts on each issue. Should you wish to discuss or have comments, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Travel and Attendance at Large Group Gatherings

On May 4, we provided the Reopening Plan for the Diocesan Offices as a path for you to follow in creating plans to open your own offices. In that guidance we stated:

For any employee who has plans to travel outside the Diocese, they are to report this to their supervisor. Upon returning, they are to self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days and are not to enter one of our buildings until the self-quarantine time has passed.

Subsequent to that, Governor DeWine removed the self-quarantine requirement for travel outside of the State of Ohio. Therefore, for the Diocesan Offices we will change this requirement to:

For any employee who has plans to travel away from home, they are to report this to their supervisor, including the destination. Upon returning, the employee should consider whether they should self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days, especially if their travel was to a known COVID hotspot. In addition, they may be asked to self-quarantine by their supervisor, if they or other employees feel that there is excessive risk of spread due to the person returning immediately to work.

It should be noted that if an employee plans to attend a large group gathering (defined as more than 10 individuals not of the same family who reside together), this should also be reported to their supervisor. Following the event, the employee should consider whether they should self-quarantine for a minimum of 14 days. Events of this nature would include, but not be limited to, weddings and funerals but would not include religious services. In addition, they may be asked to self-quarantine by their supervisor, if they or other employees feel that there is excessive risk of spread due to the person returning immediately to work.

For the latest information on traveling and potential hotspots, please visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/travelers/index.html>

Protocol for reported positive COVID-19 diagnosis

Several locations have asked for input on what they should do should it be reported to them that someone who attended Mass had received a positive COVID-19 diagnosis. Keep in mind that the guidance from the CDC and State agencies continues to evolve and is subject to change but, at present, the following is our guidance:

- Determine the last time that person or one of their family members living with them was in one of our buildings. If they attended Mass, determine which Mass, on which day.
- Notify your Parish or School community that an individual who has tested positive for COVID-19 attended Mass, the day they last attended Mass and the Mass time they attended
- If standard sanitizing procedures were followed after the Mass the person attended, then no further cleaning or sanitizing procedures should be necessary. You may, of course, choose to re-

sanitize the area just to be sure that all surfaces were addressed. Two items from the CDC should be taken into consideration

- CDC has reported that the virus will live on metal, glass and ceramic surfaces up to 5 days and wood up to 4 days
- CDC recently issued guidance that surface transmission of the virus “is not thought to be the main way the virus spreads, but we are still learning more about how this virus spreads.”
- You may choose to close the impacted building temporarily while you sanitize surfaces
- We do not believe, based on CDC guidance, that there is a need to “deep clean” your buildings or to close the buildings for the 14 day period used as a guide for self-quarantine.
- You are not required to notify the local Board of Health. They would have been notified when the person tested positive for COVID-19 and would have started contact tracing.

Keep in mind that this guidance would only be a starting point if someone in your office is diagnosed with COVID-19 or shows symptoms and is sent for testing. Some additional guidance would be:

- Do not allow the individual to come to work
- Notify staff that an individual has reported symptoms and is undergoing a COVID-19 test
- Close the office until the results of the test are known
- While the office is closed, fully sanitize the offices
- If the result of the test is positive, direct all staff who had contact with the individual to self-quarantine for a total of 14 days. Notify your community that there has been a positive test and that anyone who visited the office 3 days prior to the individual showing symptoms could have been exposed

Bingo

Several locations have asked if they can resume Bingo. Although the State has allowed banquet halls to reopen for events up to 300 people, provided that social distancing is followed, for all other gatherings (with the exception of religious activities), there is still a 10 person limit on the number of people allowed at other gatherings. Until this limit is increased, Bingo cannot be resumed. Our recommendation is that you develop a full plan that outlines how you will resume, when it’s allowed, and maintain the State directives that are in place, including social distancing, the wearing of masks by all individuals in the building (although not mandatory, it is very important for the safety of all that we require this), and sanitizing all areas before and after you hold the event. Of particular importance will be:

- how you safely sell instant Bingo tickets given the usual process that brings individuals into close contact;
- whether you resume offering food; and
- if you do how you will comply with the safety requirements.

As a starting point for developing your plan, I have attached a re-opening plan issued in Texas when they re-opened Bingo.

Festivals

The question has been raised as to whether Festivals planned for the Summer and Fall will be allowed. The simple answer, at this time, is that we just don't know. It is clear that the Board for the State Fair has concluded that they cannot design a protocol that would allow the State Fair to be held in a safe manner and has cancelled this year's Fair. We also continue to be held to a limit of 10 people for any gathering, which would apply to Festivals, due to this being a "public gathering". Until that limit is increased (currently due to expire July 1, 2020), it would not be possible to hold a Festival as we have in the past. At this point we are recommending that if you still feel you might hold your festival, you need to do several things:

1. Select a cut-off date where a decision must be made and if the 10 person limit is still in place, or a limit that would make it unworkable to hold your festival is in place, then you know when you must decide to cancel
2. You develop a protocol that addresses all of the State and Federal requirements, including crowd limits, wearing of face coverings (although not mandatory, it is prudent to require all in attendance to wear face coverings), how to sanitize rides, inflatables, etc. in between use, requirements for serving food (they are extensive), etc.
3. Add language to any vendor contract, whether for rides, tents or entertainment, the ability to cancel without cost and that identifies the risk of COVID-19 and have the vendor provide indemnity to us on their behalf and on behalf of any individuals using their service/ride for such risk.

My belief is that when you work through developing a protocol, that you may find, like the Board for the State Fair, that it would be more reasonable to cancel your Festival for this year.

Banquets

Governor DeWine has allowed Banquet Halls to open for groups up to 300 for events like wedding receptions. This limit is expanded provided that rules around social distancing are followed.

- Add language to the contract with the renter that lists the appropriate rules and puts responsibility for following the rules by all guests on the renter. This includes how bar and food service will be handled and requirement that liquor can be served provided all guests consume the alcohol while seated
- Add language to the contract with the renter that identifies the risk of COVID-19 and has the renter provide indemnity to us on their behalf and on behalf of any attendees for such risk
- Add language that if food is served, it must be table service
- if a caterer is being used, we have a provision that needs added to their contract related to following CDC and State guidelines for food service

Use of facilities by Parish and School Groups

Many groups within the parish and school have asked to resume their gatherings/meetings/activities using our facilities. It is prudent that we proceed cautiously in allowing these activities to resume. It is essential that you evaluate individually all of these requests based on the kind of activity and whether it is reasonable that you can adhere to the CDC and State guidelines, including limits on gatherings, social distancing, disinfecting, etc. If you believe that you can most likely meet the guidelines, then at a minimum you should create a plan on how the group will adhere to State and CDC guidelines, including

social distancing, disinfection of the area they use, limit on number of participants, etc. This plan should then be shared with all members of the group.

Keep in mind that as you evaluate the group's activities, pay particular attention to those groups whose activities would have the highest risk of spreading the virus. This would include groups that require singing (i.e. choir, certain types of prayer groups, etc.). One of the earliest reported group spread was at a choir practice. It would be best at this time to not approve these groups resuming their activities.

Also keep in mind that sports activities inside of our facilities should, at this time, not be allowed. The difficulty with following the guidelines of social distancing and sanitization make it impractical to allow them to resume.

We have received inquiries about use of the facilities for events like funeral luncheons, KofC dinners, Women's group and Senior group luncheons. The State guidelines that are most applicable to this would be those for banquets. They require that tables be 6 foot apart, employees wear masks, and congregating is not allowed. These restrictions, by their nature, would also not allow for food to be served buffet style due to exposure of the buffet area to multiple guests, most not wearing masks. Although it has not been shown that COVID can be transmitted through food, it certainly can through tables and serving utensils. So at this point, you should not allow these kinds of events in your facilities.

Use of facilities by Outside Groups

Many outside groups have also asked to resume their gatherings/meetings/activities using our facilities. It is prudent that we proceed cautiously in allowing these activities to resume. It is essential that you evaluate individually all of these requests based on the kind of activity and whether it is reasonable that they can adhere to the CDC and State guidelines, including limits on gatherings, social distancing, disinfecting, etc. If you believe they can most likely meet the guidelines, then at a minimum you should request that they:

- submit a plan on how the group will adhere to State and CDC guidelines, including social distancing, disinfection of the area they use, limit on number of participants, etc.
- require that the group or its participants as appropriate, sign our COVID-19 Indemnity Form or you may add the appropriate language to your standard rental agreement and have them sign

Only after you have reviewed their plan and determined that it follows all State and CDC guidelines, should you agree to allow the group to use our facilities.

Keep in mind that sports activities inside of our facilities should, at this time, not be allowed. The difficulty with following the guidelines of social distancing and sanitization make it impractical to allow them to resume.

Also, in evaluating outside groups using our facilities, we ask that you make all allowances possible for groups that serve the public good. For example, Alcoholics Anonymous and similar 12-step programs are significant to society and if possible, you should allow these groups to resume using your facilities.

Use of COVID-19 Waiver Form

In order to provide protection against liability issues which may result from an individual who is diagnosed with COVID-19 after being on our property, we have worked with our insurance carrier and

in-house General Counsel, to develop a waiver form specific to COVID-19 (attached). This requires the individual, as well as parents/guardians of minor children participating in activities at a Parish or school, that although we have worked to create an environment that is in compliance with State and Federal guidance, they are still at risk due to their voluntary participation and that they solely accept the risk of such participation and absolve the Diocese of liability in that regard.

As noted above, you should use this form with any outside group or similar language in any rental agreement signed by an outside group.

You should also use this form whenever you hold Parish activities where it would be difficult to assure social distancing. This could include, for example, summer camps, sports camps and conditioning, Religious Education and Youth Ministry events, or if you begin to allow the use of your gym for open gym.

Should you have questions, please contact Tom Prunte, General Counsel, for guidance **with respect to the Waiver form or any related issues.**