

# Building Use Guidelines During Covid-19 Re-Opening

*In an effort to provide a safe environment and comply with government mandates and the guidance of health officials, the following procedures are suggestions you may want to consider following:*

**FIRST** - SECURE A SUPPLY OF DISENFECTANT WIPE AND HAND SANITIZER BEFORE RE-OPENING. (HAVE TAPE MEASURE, AND SOMETHING TO MARK 6FT SPACING)

**SECOND** - CONTACT YOUR FACILITY TO SEE WHAT GUIDELINES THEY WILL REQUIRE YOU FOLLOW.

## OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO IMPLEMENT

1. Determine occupancy limit of the space you will occupy.
2. Greeter can supply/issue an amount of hand sanitizer to each member entering the room.
3. Social distancing of 6ft between each person will be maintained at all times. Chairs will be set up at a distance of 6ft from each other and *should not be moved*. (Mark spacing according to the surface of the floor you have: i.e., masking tape, duct tape)
4. Face masks must be worn at all times.
5. Sanitizing restrooms before and after the meeting. Make a service position for one man and one woman for each meeting.
6. Restroom occupancy is limited to 1 person at a time.
7. Chairs/tables used will be wiped down before and after each meeting.
8. Coffee – bring your own.
9. Make a sign of guidelines to post on door to enter meeting to avoid confusion.
10. Make a sign of guidelines on the restroom door.
11. Do not hug or holds hands before, during or after your meeting
12. Do not pass around medallions for someones anniversary or any basket for 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition. Put basket on a table for contributions.

Each group is autonomous and should have a group conscience to decide the safety measures you want to put into place. **Making a sign of your guidelines and placing them outside the entrance to your meeting will help those entering know your requirements.** Consider Contact Tracing. (Information on next page

**STAY SAFE AND BE WELL! RESPECT EACH OTHER**

**The following suggestions were shared with Minneapolis Intergroup. These suggestions were compiled with the guidance of the Baltimore Intergroup Advisory Committee. They also had conversations with and input from several other intergroups and central offices across the country to determine best practices to protect A.A. members going forward. We thank all of those who provided input and wanted to share them with our AA community.**

In addition to suggestions for groups to consider, there are also ‘musts’ that groups need to abide by to stay within the regulations and mandates of our state. While there are no ‘musts’ in the A.A. program, there are legal musts in the larger community. Fortunately, our programs of recovery has taught us how to be responsible citizens both in A.A. and the world.

To protect A.A., groups should be mindful of the Traditions. Tradition 1 tells us “*Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.*” When making group decisions, we say, “*Each group is autonomous.*” However, the second part of Tradition 4 is just as important: “*except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.*” **These traditions remind us that we must ensure that our group decisions do not negatively impact our fellow members or A.A. as a whole, and that we as individuals act in ways that ensure our common welfare.** Traditions 1 and 4 are important now more than ever. We have to consider the health and well-being of other A.A. members, and we need to protect the positive reputation and goodwill of A.A. in the community.

Here are considerations for your groups to discuss:

#### WHEN CAN A.A. GROUPS SAFELY RE-OPEN MEETINGS?

- A.A. must abide by the mandates of local jurisdictions where our groups meet. As an organization and as individuals, we are not exceptions to the law.
- Each state mandates its own restrictions regarding re-opening.

#### WHAT IF OUR GROUP IS READY TO RE-OPEN BUT THE CHURCH OR FACILITY WHERE WE MEET IS NOT?

- This should go without saying, but groups must have permission from their churches and facilities to resume meeting on the premises—either inside or on the grounds or parking lot. Unfortunately, we are aware of one group who has continued to meet in-person inside the church without the church’s permission. We do not condone this, even if the intent is to help newcomers.

## WHAT SAFETY PROTOCOLS SHOULD GROUPS HAVE IN PLACE?

- Groups should be aware of the state restrictions and guidelines churches and facilities have in place, as well as each facility's individual requirements. [Here are some of the public health safety guidelines recommended:](#)
  - Limiting the number of people into the space
  - Recommended distancing of 6 to 7 feet between individuals (see the link above)
  - Wearing face masks
  - Sanitizing contact surfaces before and after each meeting
- Intergroup suggests contacting your church or facility to determine its safety requirements and adopting them as group policy.

## WHAT IS CONTACT TRACING AND HOW CAN GROUPS PARTICIPATE WHILE MAINTAINING ANONYMITY?

- [Contact Tracing is a control measure employed by local and state health department personnel as a key strategy for preventing further spread of COVID-19.](#) Public health staff work with a patient to help them recall everyone with whom they have had close contact during the timeframe while they may have been infectious. Contact tracers already practice a version of our principle of anonymity. They must abide by HIPAA laws, which means that when someone tests positive for COVID-19, contact tracers warn others of their potential exposure as rapidly and sensitively as possible, while protecting patient privacy and identity.
- Why should groups be concerned with contact tracing? To ensure that our common welfare comes first, groups that meet in-person should have a contingency plan in place if a member tests positive for COVID-19. Contact tracers will be contacting the church and the group no matter what, so it's important that groups be prepared ahead of time with a way to protect everyone's health and anonymity.
  - What is the plan for contacting the church or facility where the group meets if someone gets sick?
  - What is the plan for contacting other A.A. members who were at a meeting on the same day as an infectious A.A. member who didn't realize he or she was sick at that time?
  - What is the plan for contacting the church and other A.A. members if someone is tested but is still waiting for results? What if the member's test comes back negative?
- To ensure our common welfare, one suggested contingency plan can be accomplished effectively while maintaining everyone's anonymity.
  - Groups could list attendees by first name and phone number for each meeting. That would make it easier to alert everyone about the potential for infection should someone get ill or if someone is tested. Group should later destroy each meeting list after enough time has passed.

- If an A.A. member tests positive, he or she does not have to break anyone's anonymity when talking with contact tracers. When a contact tracer asks the infected person who he or she has been in contact with, the sick member can say, "I attended 'spiritual meetings' or 'community meetings' (or another generic term) that meets at 'such-and-such' church. Here's the phone number of the primary contact for that meeting who can put you in touch with everyone else that was at that spiritual/community meeting on that day."
- The contact tracer would then call the group secretary or primary contact to explain that someone from the meeting at such-and-such church has tested positive for COVID.
- The group secretary can give the list of first names and phone numbers to the contact tracer who would be in charge of notifying everyone. OR, the secretary could notify everyone. Either way, no one has to know the name of the person who is sick (since HIPAA would prohibit the contact tracer from naming the patient) and no one would have to say anything about being a member of A.A.
- If an A.A. member is tested and is still waiting for results, one recommendation is to inform the church or facility where the group meets as well as everyone at the meeting so those people know to self-quarantine.
  - In the event that a person's test is negative, we recommend notifying members and the church so people can be released from self-quarantine. We can do all of this in a way that assure anonymity and is compliant with HIPAA.

**We hope you find this information helpful. Minneapolis Intergroup**