

Health Ministry of Cyprus issues rules for places of worship



The Health Ministry has issued a health [protocol](#) for the operation of places of religious worship in order to protect public health from the spread of coronavirus.

Last month the ministry had issued similar rules for Greek Orthodox churches.

In an announcement on Sunday, the ministry cited Cyprus' positive epidemiological picture as regards the coronavirus pandemic.

It said the impact of summer on the virus was not in itself adequate to stop transmission and the outbreak in Cyprus will depend on compliance with rules of hygiene and social distancing.

It also noted that those responsible of places of worship should ensure compliance with requirements on maximum numbers per square metre, distancing and other hygiene rules particularly as regards the items used for the religious ceremony.

Social distancing inside places of worship

One person per eight square metres with a minimum of two metres between two people. Congregations can follow the service outside, maintaining the two metre rule. The loudspeakers will be switched on for services to levels permitted by law.

It is recommended that embracing, handshakes etc are avoided. It is recommended that edible and non-edibles be distributed outside, adhering to the distancing rules under the supervision of a responsible person.

Personal hygiene rules

There must be two stands with hand sanitiser at the entrance and everyone must disinfect their hands. The use of masks is recommended inside. In case of coughing or sneezing, cover the nose and mouth with sleeve or tissue. The tissue that must be thrown away immediately and then disinfect hands.

Cleanliness and disinfection of surfaces and spaces

Regular daily cleaning and disinfection of surfaces that are touched frequently (eg door handles).

Ventilation of interior

It is important that there is natural ventilation of places of worship when there are people inside. If there is a/c then doors and windows must remain open. The instructions of the electromechanical service must be adhered to.

Protection of vulnerable groups

For their protection, it is recommended that vulnerable groups remain home and or only go when absolutely necessary during days with there are fewer people.

Areas for temporarily isolating individuals

Individuals who may show symptoms must be isolated temporarily away from the others. This area must be ventilated. There must be a mask for the individual to wear, napkins and hand sanitiser.

Continuation of activities online or other means of communication

The internet, social media etc can be used to post video recorded speeches, sermons. Sunday school can be taught online etc.

Meals/social work for the needy

To avoid crowding, food must be handed out or distributed in packages. Hygiene rules must be adhered to in preparing them. Distancing rules apply for those distributing them.

[Source](#)