

Issued on 25 August 2022

## EMERGING SAFER AND STRONGER TOGETHER FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

On **24 August 2022**, the Multi-Ministry Taskforce (MTF) announced further easing of community safe management measures (SMMs) from **29 August 2022** (see Annex A).

2. This document provides the conditions under which religious organisations (ROs) are permitted to carry out activities in places of worship from **29 August 2022**.
3. The key change affecting religious activities from **29 August 2022** is:
  - a. **The mask-wearing requirement for indoor religious activities will be removed.**
  - b. **Nevertheless, worshippers are encouraged to continue exercising responsibility and caution**, such as wearing masks when in crowded places, or when visiting or interacting with vulnerable persons.

Annex B summarises the above changes. Please see the following sections for the detailed conditions for permitted religious activities.

### RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

#### Worship Services

4. There will be no changes to Vaccination-Differentiated SMMs (VDS). For services involving more than 500 persons (excluding religious workers, performers and supporting workers), worshippers must be fully vaccinated<sup>1</sup> and ROs have to conduct VDS entry checks.
5. There is no capacity limit for congregational worship services and other religious activities.
6. There is no need for safe distancing between each worshipper or performer.
7. From **29 August 2022**:
  - a. **The mask-wearing requirement for indoor worship services will be removed.**

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<sup>1</sup> Individuals aged 12 years and above are considered “fully vaccinated” for 270 days after the last dose in their primary vaccination series. For more information, refer to <https://www.moh.gov.sg/covid-19/vaccination/faqs---post-vaccination-matters>.

- b. All worshippers and performers can sing and play instruments without wearing masks.
- c. ROs and worshippers are encouraged to maintain good hygiene practices such as avoiding sharing of personal items and cleaning any items that are for shared use (e.g. microphones).
- d. Worshippers are also encouraged to continue bringing along their personal prayer items if required.

### **Marriage Solemnizations**

8. ROs may continue to use places of worship to conduct marriage solemnizations.
- a. VDS is required for marriage solemnizations attended by more than 500 persons, similar to the conditions for worship services as stated in para 4.
  - b. **Mask-wearing will not be required for indoor solemnizations from 29 August 2022.**
  - c. Refer to ROM/ROMM's guidelines for more details on the applicable SMMs for marriage solemnizations.<sup>2</sup>

### **Funerals**

9. Funerals, funeral wakes or funeral processions held during or before the burial or cremation of the deceased in places of worship continue to be allowed with no capacity limit.
- a. **Mask-wearing will not be required for indoor settings from 29 August 2022.**
  - b. Food and drinks, including individually packed food and titbits, are allowed to be served and consumed at funeral events, with the exception at government-managed facilities e.g. Mandai Crematorium and Choa Chu Kang Cemetery. Self-service buffet lines are allowed.
10. ROs must continue to comply with prevailing SMMs listed on MTI's website<sup>3</sup> for these funerary-related activities and check the guidelines for any further updates.
11. Visits to columbaria at places of worship are allowed with no group size limit and no mask-wearing requirement.

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<sup>2</sup> Refer to ROM/ROMM's guidelines and the SMMs for Marriage Solemnizations at: <https://www.marriage.gov.sg>.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to SMMs for Funeral Events at: <https://www.gobusiness.gov.sg/safemanagement/sector/>.

## **Other Religious Activities**

12. There are no changes to VDS for **religious rites that are not part of a worship service and other religious activities (e.g. pastoral services) involving more than 500 persons**, similar to the conditions for worship services as stated in para 4.

13. Religious classes (without VDS) can continue without being subject to any capacity limit, subject to prevailing fire safety and room capacity. **From 29 August 2022, mask-wearing will not be required for indoor religious classes and singing in religious classes without masks on will be allowed<sup>4</sup>.**

## **Recording and Broadcast of Religious Services and Prayers**

14. ROs can continue to support the religious needs of their communities via remote means such as recording and broadcast of religious services and prayers.

- a. **Mask-wearing will not be required for all performers and crew in indoor settings from 29 August 2022.**
- b. There are no limits on the number of performers, crew and audience.
- c. There is no need for performers/crew to be fully vaccinated to sing or play wind instruments.
- d. Safe distance will not be required.

## **CONSUMPTION OF FOOD & BEVERAGES**

15. Consumption of Food and Beverages (F&B) continues to be allowed in places of worship. This includes communal meals served by community kitchens in places of worship.

- a. **Mask-wearing will not be required for indoor F&B settings from 29 August 2022.**
- b. There is no capacity limit for communal meals.
- c. VDS will be applied if the activity exceeds 500 persons, and ROs have to conduct VDS entry checks for this purpose.
- d. F&B need not be served in individual portions.

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<sup>4</sup> Refer to MOE's advisory on SMMs for private tuition and enrichment at: <https://www.moe.gov.sg/faqs-covid-19-infection>.

- e. Self-service buffet lines are allowed. Caterers that provide self-service buffet lines will be required to provide at least two bottles of hand sanitisers (containing at least 60% alcohol) or two packs of disposable gloves in the vicinity of a self-service buffet, with all starting points covered.<sup>5</sup>
- f. Safe distance will not be required between individuals.

## **DEPLOYMENT OF MANPOWER**

- 16. All employees who can work from home may return to the workplace.
- 17. Social gatherings at workplaces can continue subject to prevailing SMMs. Religious workers and administrative staff should continue to comply with prevailing workplace SMMs stipulated by the Ministry of Manpower (MOM) and check MOM's guidelines for any further updates.<sup>6</sup>

## **TRACE TOGETHER(TT) AND SAFE ENTRY(SE)**

- 18. The TT/SE functionality will be maintained as a means of conducting VDS checks for the settings that still require it.

## **ADHERING TO SMMS**

- 19. ROs do not have to seek MCCY's approval or submit the acknowledgement form before resuming worship services and religious activities in line with the prevailing SMMs.
- 20. MCCY reserves the right to suspend a RO's activities if there are gaps in the SMMs and until the necessary rectifications are made. ROs are responsible for the implementation of SMMs and action could be taken for lapses and breaches.

## **EXERCISING PERSONAL AND SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY TO ACHIEVE COVID-19 RESILIENCE**

- 21. This further easing of SMMs is a significant milestone towards living with COVID-19.
- 22. While many SMMs are no longer mandated, we urge ROs and their worshippers to continue to exercise personal and social responsibility, and to remain vigilant as the situation can quickly change with the emergence of new virus variants.

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<sup>5</sup> Please refer to Singapore Food Agency's website (<https://www.sfa.gov.sg/covid-19/SDM>) for details.

<sup>6</sup> For more information, please refer to MOM's advisory at <https://www.mom.gov.sg/covid-19>.

23. MCCY will continue to work closely with our ROs for a COVID-19 resilient environment for religious activities.

## **MINISTRY OF CULTURE, COMMUNITY AND YOUTH**

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For more information and FAQs on COVID-19 for the religious sector, please visit [www.cpro.gov.sg](http://www.cpro.gov.sg) or contact MCCY's Crisis Preparedness for Religious Organisations Programme Office ([cpro@mccy.gov.sg](mailto:cpro@mccy.gov.sg)).

### FIVE CORE PARAMETERS TO RESET OUR SMMs

Parameter	Current Posture
<b>(1) Group sizes</b>	No limit
<b>(2) Mask-wearing</b>	Required on public transport <sup>7</sup> and select healthcare and residential care settings <sup>8</sup>
<b>(3) Workplace requirements</b>	All can return to office
<b>(4) Safe distancing</b>	Not required
<b>(5) Capacity Limits</b>	No limit <sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Public transport settings that require mask-wearing include all public transport (i.e. on MRT/LRT and public buses) and indoor public transport facilities (e.g. boarding areas at bus interchanges and MRT platforms). Mask-wearing will continue to be encouraged in crowded areas.

<sup>8</sup> Healthcare facilities and residential care homes that require mask-wearing include indoor premises of hospitals and polyclinics (inclusive of retail, F&B, common areas and other facilities within the hospital/polyclinic building), private primary care and dental facilities, specialist facilities, TCM clinics, renal dialysis centres, clinical and radiological laboratories, day hospices, residential care homes (such as nursing homes), COVID-19 care facilities, testing centres and vaccination centres and ambulances and medical transport vehicles.

<sup>9</sup> While capacity limits have been lifted, VDS will continue to apply in the following settings: (i) Events with >500 participants at any one time; (ii) Nightlife establishments where dancing among patrons is one of the intended activities; and (iii) F&B establishments, including restaurants, coffee shops and hawker centres.

## SUMMARY OF KEY CHANGES IN SMMS FOR RELIGIOUS ACTIVITIES

Religious Activity	From 26 April 2022	From 29 August 2022
Permissible Group Size	No group size limit	No group size limit
Congregational and Worship Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity limit will be removed.</li> <li>• VDS will be removed from congregational and other worship services <u>except</u> for services involving more than <u>500 persons</u> at any one time.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change to VDS for services involving more than 500 persons at any one time.</li> <li>• The mask-wearing requirement for indoor religious activities will be removed.</li> </ul>
Live performance elements during congregational and other worship services	No need for performers/crew to be fully vaccinated to sing or play wind instruments	The mask-wearing requirement for indoor religious activities will be removed.
Other Religious Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity limits will be removed.</li> <li>• VDS will be removed from religious rites that are not part of a worship service and other religious activities (e.g. pastoral services) for rites/activities involving 500 persons or less.</li> <li>• Singing in religious classes with masks on will be allowed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No change to VDS for services involving more than 500 persons at any one time.</li> <li>• Singing in religious classes without masks on will be allowed.</li> </ul>

<b>Religious Activity</b>	<b>From 26 April 2022</b>	<b>From 29 August 2022</b>
Marriage Solemnizations	Capacity limits will be removed.	<p>Mask-wearing will not be required for indoor solemnizations.</p> <p><i>Refer to the Registry of Marriages and Registry of Muslim Marriages for the detailed SMMs for marriage solemnizations.</i></p>
Recording and Broadcasting Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Safe distance will not be required between individuals.</li> <li>• No need for performers/crew to be fully vaccinated to sing or play wind instruments</li> </ul>	Mask-wearing will not be required for all performers and crew in indoor settings.