

Update

December 22, 2021

SUPPLEMENT TO DIOCESAN GUIDELINES, NS

Nova Scotia Public Health Advisory

Beginning today, December 22, 2022, Bishop Sandra has advised parishes in the Diocese of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island to suspend in-person worship (to be reviewed January 12, 2022). This is a directive for Nova Scotia parishes and an advisement for Prince Edward Island parishes.

The updated restrictions below are **effective at 6 a.m. on Wednesday, December 22**. They will be in place **until at least January 12, 2022** and will be re-evaluated then. The Bishop's worship advisory takes precedent over suggested restrictions where applicable. **These restrictions apply for any recording or online worship facilitation.**

Physical distance and mask requirements

- physical distance of two metres (six feet) is required indoors and outdoors, except among people in the same household or a consistent social group of up to [10 people](#)
- [people must be seated to remove their mask for eating or drinking](#)
- [individuals, businesses and organizations ALL have responsibility for ensuring mask requirements are followed and can all be subject to enforcement action](#)

Gathering limits

- indoor and outdoor informal gatherings, typically at home, are limited to [10 people](#) from the same household or consistent social group; physical distance and proof of full vaccination are not required; masks are not required except in indoor public places
 - "If a faith organization holds an activity at someone's home, it is an informal gathering because the homeowner is hosting the gathering – not the organization. However, these informal gatherings at home are currently limited to people from the same household or consistent social group. This may mean that you aren't able to host some of your usual activities at someone's home for a little while." (COVID-19 Guidelines for Faith Organizations)
- [only virtual events are allowed](#) – there are no in-person events such as festivals, social events, special events (including receptions), sports games or tournaments, or arts and culture performances
- a limit of 10 participants indoors and 25 outdoors applies to professional and [amateur arts and culture rehearsals and virtual performances](#); professionals must have a plan for their workplace; physical distance is not required, and masks are recommended when possible indoors and outdoors; spectators and competitions are not allowed
- [gathering limits of 25 per cent of capacity to a maximum of 50 people indoors and outdoors apply to regular faith services](#), wedding ceremonies, funeral ceremonies and their associated visitation, movie theatres, meetings and training that are hosted by a recognized business or organization, including faith organizations
 - "**Proof of Full Vaccination (POV)** is not required for a regular faith service, such as daily or weekly services. Services that are part of your faith's annual calendar (such as Christmas and Easter services in Christian faiths) are considered the same as regular daily/weekly services – no proof of full vaccination is required." (COVID-19 Guidelines for Faith Organizations)
 - "If a faith organization holds multiple regular or special services in a single day, they are encouraged to consider making one or more of the services for vaccinated people only to

accommodate people who require or are seeking a greater level of safety and to decrease overall exposure risks.” (COVID-19 Guidelines for Faith Organizations)

- **Proof of Full Vaccination (POV)** is required for other events and activities hosted by a faith organization (most of which are now suspended until January 12, 2022), which may include but are not limited to: social time after a service, bible study, [youth group](#), retreats, community meals, fundraisers or meetings, holiday concerts (not held during regular faith services), special events, activities and events held in rental spaces, when people rent/use the church’s facilities (like a hall or other rooms) for events like a wedding reception or leisure activities/clubs like quilting or book club. ***Please note: In consultation with Public Health, it remains our perspective that Children and Youth Groups in our churches are not, by definition, a vulnerable population and therefore all leadership MUST be fully vaccinated and provide POV with each event/activity/gathering. Children and Youth must also begin to abide by vaccination requirements as they age into this system.***
(COVID-19 Guidelines for Faith Organizations)

- [regular in-person faith services can only have one person singing; no choirs or congregational singing are allowed](#)
- drive-in regular faith services are allowed with no limit on the number of vehicles; the informal gathering limit applies inside each vehicle
- indoor and outdoor informal wedding ceremonies and faith gatherings, typically at home, are limited to 10 people from the same household or consistent social group, plus one officiant; physical distance and proof of full vaccination are not required; masks are not required except in indoor public places
- indoor and outdoor [funeral ceremonies with a maximum of 10 people](#), plus officiant and funeral home staff, are allowed without proof of full vaccination but masks and physical distance are required; proof of full vaccination is still required for any visitation

Long-term care

- a limit of two visitors at a time with long-term care residents; it must be the same two visitors all the time
- it is strongly recommended that [visitors have a rapid test within 24 hours of the visit](#) if possible
- the [requirement for visitors to wear masks and be fully vaccinated](#), except for end-of-life visits, remains
- [residents can attend regular faith services in the facility](#); the room can have 25 per cent capacity to a maximum of 10 people; only one singer; no choirs or congregational singing are allowed

There is no change in the requirement for [proof of full vaccination for discretionary activities](#). It is still [required for attendees and volunteers](#), even in places where gathering limits and physical distance will apply.