



COVID-19 Prevention and Planning Resources for Churches

Due to the large number of people who assemble at churches, including older, more vulnerable populations, church leaders should stay informed about the transmission and severity of COVID-19. Based on recommendations from The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (United States), World Health Organization (United Nations) and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (European Union), Adventist Risk Management, Inc. (ARM) is recommending churches take the following actions before, during and after an outbreak of the disease in your community.

Before

- Establish relationships and open channels of communication with community-wide emergency planning organisations, local governments and public health officials.
- Meet with the church Board and Safety Officer to create or adapt your emergency operations plan, paying special consideration to the needs of older adults and persons with disabilities.
- Identify what services may need to be limited or terminated and find alternative solutions.
- Promote the practice of everyday preventative measures by using resources available from local health organisations, [the World Health Organization](#) and [Adventist Risk Management](#).
- Provide supplies at your church for employees and volunteers to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, such as hand soap, gloves, masks, hand sanitizer and cleaning supplies.
- Designate spaces at the church to quarantine people who become sick while attending service, if they are not able to leave immediately.
- Work with the Conference to update your communication plan and identify resources and methods of communicating with all constituents. Write drafts of essential communication pieces to have ready for use at the appropriate time.

During

- Maintain connection with local governments and health officials to stay informed about the latest developments.
- Activate your communication plan to inform congregants of changes in services, operating hours and other important information.
- Remain vigilant in performing environmental cleaning of frequently touched surfaces.
- Continue encouraging members to practice preventative measures as [recommended by the WHO](#).

After

- Discuss the church's response with key stakeholders to evaluate the effectiveness of your emergency plan, noting lessons learned.
- Work with the board and church's Safety Officer to modify your emergency plan based on the evaluation.

Putting a plan in place prior to an outbreak in your community is the best way to respond quickly and effectively when an outbreak does occur. Communicating effectively with church members and constituents will help reassure them that the church is actively engaged in prevention measures and prepared to deal with an outbreak if it should occur.