

Responding to COVID-19

Answers to Questions

April 16, 2020

In addition to the document “Directions for Essential Ordinances, Blessings, and other Church Functions,” this document may be used to answer questions about administering the Church during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These documents are issued in response to the disruptions in Church procedures and member activities caused by the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic. They should be used as guidance for so long as this pandemic and its associated official limitations on Church meetings and public exposures exist in a particular country or geographic portion of a country. Other directions may be issued later.

Bishops and stake presidents should be alert and attentive to local circumstances and regulations. They should encourage Church members to obey the law. For each of the questions and answers listed below, the following should be carefully applied:

- Social distancing, handwashing, and other practices described in “Preventative Measures for Members” at newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/coronavirus-update#preventative-measures
- Self-isolation principles and protocols as directed by medical professionals and government leaders
- Government orders, regulations, and guidelines established in each location

Additional documents regarding COVID-19 are available at newsroom.ChurchofJesusChrist.org.

If there are particularly difficult questions, stake presidents should contact their Area Presidency.

I. Priesthood Ordinances and Family Occasions

Administering the Sacrament

May priesthood holders administer the sacrament in the homes of other ward members who do not have a worthy priest or Melchizedek Priesthood holder in the home?

Generally, yes. Currently, government directives or local regulations restrict this practice in many nations and cities. Until further notice, in these places, priesthood holders should not enter homes of Church members to whom they are not related to administer the sacrament. During this time, members can be blessed by studying the sacrament prayers and recommitting to live the covenants members have made and praying for the day they will receive it in person, properly administered by the priesthood.

Patriarchal Blessings

Can patriarchal blessings continue as scheduled?

Patriarchal blessings should be delayed temporarily. However, wherever possible, those preparing to serve missions should be given a patriarchal blessing prior to beginning their missionary service.

Weddings, Receptions and Funerals

Do the new guidelines allow for weddings (including receptions) and funerals in meetinghouses?

Where restricted by government regulations, weddings, receptions, and funerals should not be held in meetinghouses. As permitted by law, bishops and stake presidents may officiate in weddings in an appropriate setting where social distancing can be maintained. Technology may also be used to allow family and friends to view the service. Leaders and members should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines.

As permitted by law, bishopric and stake presidency members may officiate at a graveside service. Technology may also be used to allow family and friends to view the service and to record it. If desired, a larger memorial service may be held later when conditions permit.

Naming and Blessing Children

Do the guidelines allow for blessing children in the home?

Yes. When authorized by the bishop, the blessing may be performed at the family's home instead of at a Church meeting. It should be properly reported.

II. Ward and Stake Administration

Meetings and Interviews

Can bishopric meetings, stake presidency meetings, high council meetings, other presidency meetings, and interviews be held in person?

These are decisions that should be made locally based on all available information. Meetings and interviews may be conducted via technology when possible.

Recording Meeting Attendance

Given the suspended meetings, how will attendance for reports be calculated and reported?

Attendance will not be reported because Sunday services have been temporarily suspended.

Use of Buildings and Facilities

Can buildings and athletic fields be used? May youth gather to play soccer on outdoor meetinghouse courts and fields?

Branch, ward, and stake activities are temporarily suspended. Individuals should follow “Preventative Measures for Members.” Members should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines.

Can other daily activities such as sports, choir practices, and piano lessons in meetinghouses continue?

Activities such as sports, choir practices, and piano lessons are temporarily suspended. Members should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines.

What should be done with addiction recovery and self-reliance classes held weekly in Church buildings?

They should be held via technology.

Should family history centers in stake centers be closed?

Yes. Patrons should use technology from home.

Seminary and Institute

For all questions, see CES guidelines in response to COVID-19.

Tithing and Donations

Will bishoprics accept tithing and donations in person and enter the transactions during the week, or should it only be done electronically during the period of suspended meetings?

When possible, members should make their donations online. Members who have no access to online donations can give them physically to any member of the bishopric or mail donations using the preaddressed envelopes, unless the Area Presidency deems this practice inappropriate. Additional questions should be referred to the Area Presidency.

FSY Conferences

Will FSY youth conferences be held this summer (2020)?

2020 FSY conferences scheduled to be held in the U.S. and Canada in 2020 have been postponed until 2021. Stakes invited to attend FSY conferences in 2020 will now attend in 2021. An updated schedule of FSY conferences held in the U.S. and Canada in 2021–23 will be updated soon. Refunds will automatically be made to those who have registered. Youth from stakes invited in 2020 who still will meet the age requirements will be invited to attend FSY in 2021. Outside of the U.S. and Canada, Area Presidencies will provide guidance on whether FSY conferences will be held, in accordance with COVID-19 guidelines established by governments in their communities and countries. Additional information about FSY conferences is available at [FSY.ChurchofJesusChrist.org](https://www.FSY.ChurchofJesusChrist.org).

III. Missionary Service

Pre-Mission

Should missionary applications continue to be processed by local priesthood leaders? Will missionaries continue to be called in the near term?

Yes.

Can bishops and stake presidents interview prospective missionaries in person?

Yes, but prospective missionary interviews should be conducted remotely using face-to-face technology whenever possible.

Missionary Life

Can missionaries continue to teach their contacts *in person* when they are required to be in their apartments?

No. Missionaries should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines as well as direction from the Area Presidency and mission president. However, they may still teach their contacts via technology. (See the missionary video series on teaching with technology).

Can missionaries continue to contact on the streets?

Missionaries should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines and follow the direction received from the Area Presidency and mission president.

If a missionary is asked to provide a blessing to someone who has coronavirus symptoms, should the missionary give the blessing?

No. Missionaries should not visit people who have tested positive for, exhibit symptoms of, or have been in contact with someone infected with COVID-19. They may minister to them via technology and pray for them.

Should missionaries continue to offer service and work with JustServe?

Missionaries should comply with government orders, regulations and guidelines as well as direction from the Area Presidency and mission president.

Member Missionary Work

Can member missionary work continue to go forward?

Yes, under the direction of the stake president and bishop. Member missionary work is subject to the same limitations on in-person visits as full-time missionary work until conditions permit otherwise.

Missionary Meetings

In lieu of mission tours, can the Area Presidency attend leadership councils and zone meetings?

Gathering missionaries together physically for zone meetings is temporarily suspended. Meetings may be held remotely using technology as needed.

IV. Temple Work

Temple Recommend Interviews and Activation

Should Church members be encouraged to maintain a current temple recommend?

Yes. A current temple recommend recognizes a person's worthiness to enter the temple, even if temple worship is not possible.

Must temple recommend interviews continue to be done in person?

No. Members of bishoprics and stake presidencies may temporarily conduct temple recommend interviews using face-to-face technology. Members should continue to be interviewed by both a member of the bishopric and a member of the stake presidency.

Should temple recommends be issued even without signatures?

Yes. Members of bishoprics may conduct interviews using available technology. After the interview, they can sign the recommend, take a picture of it, and send the picture to the stake clerk. He should then deliver or mail the signed temple recommend to the member. The member should sign the recommend upon receipt.

After a member of the stake presidency interviews the member, he or the stake clerk may activate the recommend without a signature. When ward sacrament and other meetings resume, each member

should have his or her recommend signed by a member of the stake presidency if it has not already been signed.

V. Other Questions

Should we continue to participate in blood drives?

Yes, blood drives will continue but must follow government orders, regulations, and guidelines established in each location and the protocols of the blood drive entity (Red Cross or others). Meetinghouses and meetinghouse parking lots can be used by the Red Cross and other entities using portable facilities if all government orders, regulations, and guidelines are followed.

Should leaders notify members who may have been in contact with other members of the Church who were either exposed to or infected with COVID-19?

Generally, yes, including advising leaders and ministering brothers and sisters whose duties would naturally bring them into contact with infected members. These leaders and ministering brothers and sisters should be advised to continue to minister but via technology and from a distance, and to follow the guidelines in “Preventative Measures for Members.” Members should comply with applicable laws, including government orders, regulations, and guidelines.

Additional questions should be referred to the Area Presidency, who can provide the needed guidance.