



OFFICE OF LEGAL COUNSEL

INTERPRETIVE GUIDANCE

Number: COVID19-09
Date: April 1, 2020
Re: Order of the Governor of the State of Maryland, Number 20-03-30-01, dated March 30, 2020, Amending and Restating the Order of March 23, 2020, Prohibiting Large Gatherings and Events and Closing Senior Centers, and All Non-Essential Businesses and Other Establishments, Additionally Requiring All Persons to Stay at Home

At this time, the Office of Legal Counsel (“OLC”) recommends that the Administration interpret the above-referenced Order as follows:

1. **Drive-In Religious Services**. Churches, synagogues, mosques, temples, and other similar religious facilities of any faith (“Religious Facilities”) may conduct “drive-in” services, where participants gather in their vehicles near the Religious Facility and participate in the service together by remote means, subject to the following requirements, which are intended to protect public health, safety, and welfare:
 - a. Participants may leave their Homes to travel by vehicle to and from the Religious Facility, and must remain in their vehicle at all times.
 - b. No vehicle may contain more than 10 persons, in accordance with paragraph III of the Order.
 - c. Participants may not interact physically with clergy, staff, or participants in other vehicles. This includes, but is not limited to, collecting donations by basket or plate.
2. **Limited In-Person Services**. Clergy may conduct limited in-person services at their respective Religious Facilities, and participants may leave their Homes to travel to and from the Religious Facility for such services, subject to the following requirements, which are intended to protect public health, safety, and welfare:
 - a. No more than 10 persons, including clergy, staff and participants, may be present inside the Religious Facility during the service.
 - b. Participants may not interact physically with clergy, staff, or participants. This includes, but is not limited to, collecting donations by basket or plate.
 - c. Participants, clergy, and staff must (i) be at least six feet apart from one another at all times, except for participants that are part of the same household; and (ii) comply with all applicable guidance from the CDC and MDH regarding social distancing.
 - d. There must be at least a four hour gap between the end of one in-person service and the beginning of the next in-person service. The Religious Facility should be cleaned between services, in accordance with CDC cleaning and disinfection guidance.
3. **Minimal Operations at Religious Facilities**. Clergy and other staff of Religious Facilities are permitted to continue conducting Minimal Operations under paragraph IV.c of the Order, provided that they comply with all applicable guidance from the CDC and MDH regarding social distancing. In the case of religious facilities, the term “Minimal Operations” includes, but is not necessarily limited to, facilitating remote services.
4. **Effect on Prior Interpretive Guidance**. Paragraph 6 of Interpretive Guidance COVID19-08 is rescinded and superseded by this document.

This Interpretive Guidance maybe revised or rescinded at any time. Citizens are urged to consult with their own legal counsel for advice about the application of the Order and this Interpretive Guidance to their particular facts and circumstances.