

The Following Revisions to the Amber Protocols for the Diocese of Algoma will be made to the online documents over the next few days, and take effect immediately.

Contact Tracing Log

The protocols issued in July required that the Contract Tracing Log for each Sunday be maintained for a period of three years. After consulting with our insurer and legal consultants, we believe the appropriate course of action is to maintain the log sheet for each service of worship for a period of no less than 30 days and no longer than 60 days, after which they must be destroyed. We are adopting this measure because names and contact information have been collected for the sole purpose of contact tracing.

Log sheets should not be thrown in the garbage, torn up, or put in recycling. Rather, they should be shredded, burned, or destroyed in a way preserving the privacy of those registered in the log.

The requirement to store the log sheets in a secure place remains in effect.

The Use of Service Books by the Congregation in Liturgy.

Books may now be used with the following protocols in place:

- 1) Books must be quarantined for a period of not less than 72 hours between their use. If the worship space is not being used for public activity during this period of time between their use, books may remain “in the pews.” Otherwise, instructions should be given to worshippers about where they are to deposit their book upon exiting the worship space. Any individual responsible for returning books to the pews must strictly follow Amber Stage hand hygiene practices.
- 2) If books need to be handled unexpectedly during the week (ex. a funeral needs to be scheduled), those handling books must strictly follow Amber Stage hand hygiene practices.
- 3) For occasional services such as funerals and weddings, the original protocol requiring photocopied worship bulletins must be followed unless a church has a sufficient quantity of books to observe the 72-hour quarantine period for all books in use.

A Note Re: Numbers Allowed for Public Gatherings in Algoma's Congregations

The government has announced that indoor gathering numbers have decreased. What does this mean for worship services?

The government announcement was meant to address purely social gatherings that are private and/or unmonitored, such as parties. Businesses and other organizations that have put into place rigorous protocols for physical distancing, cleanliness, and the wearing of masks may continue with the former gathering limits. (Indeed, the Government of Ontario has commended the protocols and guidelines the dioceses of the ecclesiastical province have put in place.)

So our protocols remain in place for worship. As a reminder, this means maximum allowed number of people at a single service is the smaller number of:

- i) The number of people who can be seated in the worship space while sitting at least two metres apart (accounting for both single people and household units, the members of which need not physically distance)
- ii) 30% of usual seating capacity
- iii) 50 persons.

The number allowed includes all persons who are providing leadership in the service.

Since there is a spike in COVID cases in some regions of Ontario, we have decided at this time not to remove the cap of 50 persons in worship.

For funerals and committals, our Diocesan protocols remain in place for funerals held in the church building.

The Government of Ontario has announced new restrictions for gatherings at cemeteries for the entire province. Until further notice, all cemeteries in Ontario must limit attendance to a maximum of 25 people (not counting staff) at all gatherings, attendances, funerals, visitations, funeral receptions, and graveside services, subject to the following exception:

Outdoor funeral services (visitations and graveside services) up to a maximum of 100 attendees may still take place at a cemetery or funeral home's property, providing:

- a. The service is under the control and direction of a funeral director;
- b. The service (at the cemetery) has the consent of the cemetery operator for numbers over 25;
- c. Funeral directors have one staff member for every 10 attendees to properly manage the gathering and ensure physical distancing is maintained;
- d. Guests are registered/logged to enable contact tracing.

Cemeteries are expected to control access to their property. Cemeteries are permitted to restrict attendance numbers to less than the maximum. (Funeral professionals should confirm these restrictions in advance of services and advise families accordingly.)

As for other meetings in our buildings, remember once again that the key concern in the recent Ontario announcements is unmonitored gatherings. Given our practices of screening, mask wearing, physical distancing, and so on, anything that is permitted in our current Amber Stage protocols is a monitored event. So at this time we may continue as we have been.

Nevertheless, our medical consultants have suggested that, for meetings and formation events, the default across the board should be online. If online is not appropriate or possible, we must ensure the meeting is monitored, and ensure mask wearing and distancing protocols are observed. When meeting in person, we also should do our best to keep things as short as possible, and involving as few people as possible. The risk increases as the number of people and the length of the meeting increase.

The provincial government has also implemented a province-wide *mandatory* mask order for indoor public settings, including businesses, facilities and workplaces.

We have been doing such excellent work in these matters as a Diocese. Now is not the time to ask for exceptions, or fall back in our vigilance and consistency. Rather, let's continue to maintain a non-anxious, hospitable, and caring observance of our protocols.