



To help identify items which are new, or have been updated since the last FAQ, simply look for:



How will we know about further updates?

Regularly check the latest government advice available at: <https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/current-restrictions>

The Synod Crisis Management Team monitors changes on a regular basis. These FAQs will no longer be updated weekly and now only be updated as required. It is recommended that you occasionally check the Synod website <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/> for updated FAQs, by checking the "Date Modified" column.

Should there be any major changes to COVID restrictions, these will be advised via separate email to all Church councils.

If you have any queries, these may still be sent to CrisisManagement@victas.uca.org.au

As of 10/12/2020

MULTI-LINGUAL RESOURCES

Where can I find the current government guidelines in other languages?

Ethnolink have information available in 51 languages at: www.ethnolink.com.au/covid-19-coronavirus-translated-resources/ The Department of Home Affairs has extensive multi-lingual resources available at: <https://covid19inlanguage.homeaffairs.gov.au/>

As of 21/05/2020

GATHERINGS

What face-to-face gatherings are permitted at church?

Churches, places of worship and funeral homes may now routinely accommodate up to 250 people or 75% of their seating capacity, whichever is fewer. Staff, members of clergy, church attendants, members of the choir and anyone assisting in the provision of a church service (or in the case of a funeral, performing the funeral service) are not included in the 250 person limit. Where practicable, business operators, staff, volunteers and attendees should maintain a distance of 1.5 metres from other people.

If having these larger numbers of people at a venue will mean the density limit will be exceeded (more than one person per two square metres of available space), venues will either need to lower the seating capacity or have attendees wear a facemask, unless exempt. People performing the service are not required to wear face masks in these circumstances.

<https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/familiescommunity/gatherings-density-and-physicaldistancing>

To keep the risk low at gatherings:

- There must be a COVID contact person for every service or premises
- A COVID-19 Safety Plan must be developed and implemented at all services and premises
- The service organiser (or COVID contact person) must be ready to present the COVID-19 Safety Plan to a police officer, WorkSafe Tasmania officer or another officer immediately upon request.
- Attendee information must be collected to support rapid contact tracing, if required, through the Check-in-TAS app, which is mandatory from 1 May 2021





A Framework for COVID-19 Safe Events and Activities in Tasmania

The Tasmanian Government has released [A Framework for COVID Safe Events and Activities in Tasmania](#), which supports organisers to plan COVID-safe gatherings from 1 December 2020 that exceed the [gathering limits](#) in the Management of Premises Direction. Depending on the risk profile of the event, it will be classed as Level 1, 2 or 3, and different controls will apply depending on the level. The [Mass Gatherings Direction](#) provides a legal basis for the Framework. More information on the [COVID-19 Safe Events and Activities Framework](#).

As of 10/12/2020

Visitor Registrations

From 1 May 2021 organisations will be required to use the free Check-in-TAS app to collect contact information about everyone who spends time at their premises or event.

Business, organisations and events (including churches) - who haven't already registered for Check-in-TAS – need to register their premises ahead of the 1 May deadline for compliance.

From this date patrons will be required to use the Check-in-TAS app when they visit these locations. The app is available for download from the Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

If patrons do not have a smartphone or are unable to use one, others in their group can check them in or staff at the premises will be able to check them in manually.

Mandating the use of Check-in-TAS helps strengthen Tasmania's contact tracing capability for rapid response in the event of a COVID 19 case or outbreak.

For more information see: <https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/check-in-tas>

Who is required to use Check-in-TAS?

The organisations and businesses that are required to comply with the direction to use Check-in-TAS to collect contact information about everyone who spends time at their premises from 1 May 2021 are:

- Places of worship, religious gatherings, religious premises, and other similar premises, including premises used to perform a wedding or a funeral.
- A gathering, if a direction made under section 16 of the Act requires an event COVID safety plan, in a form approved by the Director of Public Health, to be developed and implemented in respect of the gathering.

By 1 May 2021, you must clearly display the Check-in-TAS QR code (sent to you after you've registered) at all entrances of your premises or event and all patrons aged 16 years and older must be checked in by scanning this code if they spend 15 minutes or more there.

What if visitors do not want to use the QR code?

If a person does not have a smartphone or is unable to use one, others attending the premises with that person can use their own phone to check that person in. Alternatively, an organisation can register a patron's details using that organisations' device. If there is no internet access or working device, the organisation can check them in manually on paper. This information must be retained by the organisation for 28 days or added into the app when access is restored.

What if we operate multiple premises? Do we need multiple codes or can we use one code for all sites?

Each Check-in-TAS QR code is assigned to a physical address. If you operate at multiple premises or locations, you need to complete a separate registration for each site.

As of 25/03/2021

A COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan must be in place before any gathering to comply with minimum COVID-19 safety standards.

A sample [Safety Plan](#) has been prepared by WorkSafe Tasmania. Attendee names and contact details must be recorded in case contact tracing is required. These records must be kept for 21 days.

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From 1 May 2021 organisations will be required to use the free Check-in-TAS app to collect contact information about everyone who spends time at their premises or event.

When holding worship services, there are a number of factors which will need to be considered, including:

- Attendee information must be collected to support rapid contact tracing, if required, through the Check-in-TAS app, which is mandatory from 1 May 2021
- How to assist people in vulnerable categories to consider their attendance and participation
- How to ensure that persons who are unwell do not attend
- How to ensure social distancing is maintained, including on entering and exiting the building
- What changes to worship will be required to ensure the safety of all attendees, including eliminating/minimising the touching of shared items (eg microphones, books, pulpits, collection plates)
- How to ensure personal hygiene and building cleanliness meet minimum standards. See new Safework Australia guide linked to Recovery Checklist at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8852/recovery-acton-plan-checklist>
- Ensuring that bathrooms are properly provisioned with soap, disposable handtowels and sanitiser
- What signage may be required to ensure the observance of all measures by attendees at all times
- How you will respond to unwell people attending, and attendees with suspected/confirmed Covid-19

To assist in preparation for Worship Services and gatherings, see Recovery Checklist at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8852/recovery-acton-plan-checklist>

As of 25/03/2021

Is singing permitted at gatherings?

There is no restriction in Government Health advice on communal singing. Normal venue limits and gathering size limits apply.

The most important preventative measure is for singers and musicians to not attend worship, rehearsals or performances if they are unwell or have any symptoms.

When rehearsals and performances are conducted, performers should:

- Remain 1.5 metres apart wherever possible
- Strictly follow hand hygiene practices
- Avoid sharing microphones or instruments that are played with a mouthpiece.

These areas should also be cleaned with increased frequency.

As of 25/06/2020

Can food & drink be served at Weddings, Funerals, Religious Gatherings & Community Halls?

Food and drink services may be provided (whether self-catering or privately catered for) in the context of a wedding, funeral or religious ceremony or gathering providing all cleaning and social distancing guidelines can be met.

Caution must be exercised if you intend to share food, including adherence to the guidelines which can be found in Section D “Kitchens” in the Recovery Checklist at:

<https://victas.uca.org.au/download/668/faq/8852/recovery-acton-plan-checklist>

As of 02/07/2020

Should face masks be worn at gatherings?

The current guidelines issued by Tasmania State government is that masks are not recommended for general use where there is low community transmission of COVID 19, unless you are caring for someone suspected or known to have COVID-19.

As of 11/06/2020

Maximum Capacity Signs

All church buildings should display signage showing the maximum number of people who can be accommodated in any space. Once you have calculated the maximum numbers for each space, you may take advantage of the templates

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created to make your signage. These are available at <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions/>

What face-to-face gatherings are permitted away from church?

Gatherings may be held in a private household, but remain limited to up to 40 people at any one time, not including residents of the household. Before visiting, you should always check the residents' willingness to receive visitors.

Inside public venues, the physical distancing requirements (1.5meters and 2 sqm per person) must be maintained. Attendee information must be collected to support rapid contact tracing, if required, through the Check-in-TAS app, which is mandatory from 1 May 2021.

Outdoor gathering limits are now 500 people, providing social distancing and personal hygiene requirements can be met.

Consideration should be given to holding Church Council and congregation committee meetings via teleconference and/or videoconference where appropriate to do so.

As of 02/07/2020

VULNERABLE TASMANIANS

What are the current recommendations about vulnerable people?

The Tasmanian Government recommends that vulnerable people are encouraged to continue to stay home and protect their health, or take extra precautions when out and about. This advice applies to:

- People aged 70 years and older
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people over 50 with chronic medical conditions
- People with certain conditions which compromise their immune systems.
- People with certain chronic medical conditions.

This does not mean that these people are unable to leave home or to visit others.

But members of these high-risk groups should take extra precautions to avoid unwell visitors, including unwell children who might not fully understand physical distancing boundaries.

As of 11/06/2020

COMMUNITY/CHURCH HALLS

Under what circumstances can Community/Church Halls be used?

Before using any church owned buildings, or allowing any other group to use church-owned buildings, please complete the Recovery Action Plan Checklist at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/all-you-need-to-know-answers-to-your-frequently-asked-questions>

Community/Church Halls and similar such buildings may be used for some purposes, providing a minimum floorspace of 2 sqm per person is available and all other physical distancing and hygiene requirements can be met.

A COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan must be in place before any gathering to comply with minimum COVID-19 safety standards. A sample Safety Plan has been prepared by WorkSafe Tasmania.

Attendee information must be collected to support rapid contact tracing, if required, through the Check-in-TAS app, which is mandatory from 1 May 2021.

SUPPORT GROUPS - If hosting a support group, the maximum number of people who can be present is determined by the minimum floorspace of 2 sqm per person is available and all other physical distancing and hygiene requirements can be met.

BUSINESSES - If an organisation or individual rents space, the government guidelines for the conduct of that particular category of business would apply. These can be found at <https://coronavirus.tas.gov.au/families-community/current-restrictions>. If in doubt, seek advice from presbytery or contact uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au.

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RENTED & HIRED FACILITIES - Who is responsible for ensuring properties are COVID compliant?

- If you hire or licence out property to more than one organisation or group on a casual or non-exclusive basis (eg support groups, community groups, classes) using our standard Hirer Agreement <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/forms-and-resources/> whether one-off or recurring, the responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance, including cleaning to standard before and after every use, remains with the congregation as the responsible body.

However, you may pass on the reasonable additional cost of cleaning or other necessary Covid-19 safety measures to the Hirer if you notify them in advance of the additional cost.

- If you rent out property to one organisation or group on an exclusive use basis (under a Lease or Licence), the responsibility for maintaining all COVID-19 compliance falls to the tenant.
- For current State Government Directions for the management of premises, refer to https://www.coronavirus.tas.gov.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0021/126273/Management-of-premises-No.-5-23-Oct-20.pdf
- If in doubt, seek advice from your presbytery or contact uca.legal@victas.uca.org.au.

As of 25/06/2020

MARKETS

Can we hold garage sales and/or markets?

Markets and garage sales may operate, and should follow these simple guidelines:

- The market operator is responsible for ensuring the two square metre rule is applied to indoor spaces
- Customers should keep 1.5 metres in between them and other people who are not part of their household
- If the garage sale is being held at a private residence, then household visitor limits would apply

As of 10/12/2020

SAFE (DIGITAL) MINISTRY

What safety measures should be adopted for ministry within the digital space?

The Culture of Safety Unit has prepared some guidelines for local leaders and communities, offering commentary and interpretation of how our existing Child Safety resources and policies, and the Uniting Church Code of Ethics, continue to shape our digital ministry practices. To view the guidelines visit: www.victas.uca.org.au/safe-digital-ministry

As of 21/05/2020

HOLY COMMUNION

Can we celebrate Holy Communion together?

Assembly Standing Committee has approved temporary pastoral measure guidelines for congregations and faith communities to enable the celebration of Holy Communion as part of online worship. These guidelines have been extended to 30 November 2021 and can be found at: www.assembly.uca.org.au/news/item/3163-temporary-arrangements-for-holy-communion

For some thoughts on how to conduct Holy Communion in a COVID-safe manner read Rev Dr Sally Douglas' November 19 article at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/how-can-we-keep-holy-communion-covid-19-safe/>

15/04/2020

CORONAVIRUS FUNERALS

Are there any special requirements for holding the funeral of someone who has died of Coronavirus?

The Victorian and Tasmanian governments each have guidelines for cases of suspected or confirmed COVID-19. These mean that some cultural and ministry funeral practices need to change, especially how families interact with the body of a person who has (or may have) died with COVID-19. Ministers need to consider how their

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ministry practice may need to alter and should discuss with Church Councils ahead of time how families can be supported in this situation.

As of 17/04/2020

MINISTERS IN HIGH RISK GROUPS

What if a minister is part of a Coronavirus high risk group?

Ministry agents in high risk groups are encouraged to have clear contingency arrangements in place in case of potential situations where they may need to consider their involvement.

As of 10/12/2020

RENT RELIEF REQUESTS

What do we do if we are approached by tenants for Covid-19 rent relief?

Rent relief is not automatic. Our Property Services and Legal departments have compiled guidelines for handling rent relief requests, both commercial and residential. If you wish to support a rent relief application, there is a form which needs to be completed and sent to the Tasmanian Office tas.office@victas.uca.org.au before any rent relief can be offered.

Details available on the first info sheet at:

www.victas.uca.org.au/resources/property/forms-and-resources/

As of 21/05/2020

WORSHIP RESOURCES

Where can I access worship resources to help me keep connected?

Our worship resources page, which caters for all people across our Synod, is updated each week. Available at: <https://victas.uca.org.au/resources/covid-19-worship-resources/>

As of 6/04/2020

OP SHOPS

How do we keep our Op Shop Covid-safe?

Op-shops can safely operate provided that social distancing and required hygiene and cleaning measures are put in place for staff, volunteers and visitors. Op-shops are required to have a COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plan to comply with minimum COVID-19 safety standards.

A sample [Safety Plan](#) has been prepared by WorkSafe Tasmania.

Op Shops run by Uniting VicTas should consult Uniting for current guidance. In all Op Shops, staff and volunteers who fall into any of the vulnerable groups (see p3, **Vulnerable Tasmanians**) should be encouraged to take extra precautions.

You may of course choose to adjust how you operate your shop, such as operating only on a case-by-case basis by request to support local needs and/or in partnership with local community services.

Gloves should be worn when handling cash and any donated goods.

Donated goods should be received contactless where possible. Donations should be stored in a location where workers won't have contact with them for a period of up to 72 hours. All items should be cleaned in line with COVID cleaning practices as soon as practical. Hands should be washed regularly whilst, and immediately after, handling any donated items.

In line with social distancing requirements, the number of persons in an Op Shop at any one time should be limited, using a rule of one person per 2 sqm, including staff and volunteers, and people should remain a distance of 1.5m apart wherever possible. It may be helpful to mark this distance on the floor near service counters as a reminder to visitors.

As of 09/07/2020





SYNOD STAFF

What if we need to contact someone from Synod Ministries and Operations?

Many Synod staff are returning to the Synod offices, which are now located at Wesley Place. Please note that whilst email addresses and mobile phone numbers remain unchanged, office telephone numbers have now changed and the old 9251 telephone numbers are no longer valid. Wesley Place UCA Reception: **(03) 9116 1400**

As of 25/03/2021

CONGREGATION WEBSITE TRAINING

Will training sessions for new congregation websites still go ahead?

These have been postponed indefinitely. Congregations and presbyteries that have booked training days will be contacted with alternative dates when this becomes possible.

As of 27/03/2020

ZOOM VIRTUAL MEETING LICENCES

What does it cost for a Zoom meeting licence?

If you plan on using Zoom frequently and/or require full functionality, Synod Ministries and Operations along with other Synods have negotiated with Zoom to purchase a bulk deal. As such we are able to provide Zoom licences for a cost of just \$7.93 per month. If your presbytery or congregation is interested, please contact:

Shweta.Paliwal@victas.uca.org.au.

You will need to provide: Number of licences required and the details of the contact person (including their email address)

As of 20/04/2020

FIRST AID PRECAUTIONS

In the event of someone needing first aid treatment, are there any additional precautions required?

Anyone administering first aid should use general droplet and contact precautions, namely a face mask for the person they are treating which they should encourage the person to apply themselves, a face mask and gloves for the first aider, and goggles for the first aider (if available).

In the event that a first aider has a reason to suspect a person is infected with COVID-19, they should try to limit their contact with that person as much as they can, meaning they should avoid physical contact (e.g. checking pulses and performing physical assessments) unless absolutely necessary, such as performing CPR or putting people in a recovery position if they are unconscious and/or struggling to breathe.

As of 11/06/2020

JOB KEEPER PAYMENTS

The JobKeeper payment scheme came to an end on 28 March 2021. The Synod met eligibility criteria for the second extension period from 4 January 2021 to 28 March 2021 with maximum fortnightly payments of \$1,000 for tier 1 or \$650 for tier 2 staff applicable for that period.

It is expected that final reimbursements relating to the March pay runs will be made to congregations before the end of April 2021. If you need further information contact payroll, or visit the relevant section of the ATO website:

<https://www.ato.gov.au/General/JobKeeper-Payment/In-detail/JobKeeper-Payment-resources/>

As of 15/04/2020





COVID SAFE APP

Should we encourage downloading the Federal Government's Covid-Safe tracing app?

Synod Ministries and Operations would strongly recommend that all people in ministry download the Covid-Safe tracing app and also encourage all Uniting Church members to do so. As worship services recommence, this is a simple measure to help maintain the safety of our members as they start to gather again.

As of 14/05/2020

Are there any Covid-safe methods for cleaning piano/organ keyboards?

The AustralianMusician.com.au cites recommendations from The Piano Technicians Guild General Recommendations:

The keys are the most important part. Generally speaking, most disinfecting wipes or sprays should be safe to use on the keys. If the keys are dirty, try using Cory Key-Brite to clean and then follow up with the disinfecting wipes or sprays.

- Use alcohol-based disinfectants, do not use bleach-based disinfectants or any product containing citrus.
- If using a spray or liquid bottle, use a disposable towel like WYPALL L30. Put the disinfectant on the towel and not the piano.
- After use, immediately put the towel or disinfectant hand wipe in the trash and wash your hands. Do not use reusable towels or cloths which could spread germs.
- Always follow up with a dry towel and never leave any liquids on the piano or keys.

As of 16/07/2020

