

A STRATEGY FOR PHASED REOPENING



Know God • Serve Others • Reach Our World

May 8, 2020 (Updated 5/20/2020)

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What is Our Phased Reopening Strategy?

While Ridgecrest Baptist Church has continued meeting as *the Church*, though virtually, it is our desire to reopen the physical building as soon as possible. However, as we have over the past several weeks, we will continue to submit to our local and national government's recommendations for resuming mass gathering meetings. Our phased reopening strategy will allow Ridgecrest to resume physical meetings through a gradual process to ensure the health and safety of all attenders is given appropriate attention.

The reopening strategy will be a three-phase approach that will focus on the safe development of a healthy group environment on our campus. The three-phase approach will require flexibility as we move towards each phase in accordance with local and national recommendations.

New Normal

The phased reopening strategy is not a return to pre-pandemic normal. While Ridgecrest previously worked very hard to provide a clean and safe environment prior to the pandemic, we have identified additional measures to take to make our facility as clean and safe as possible.

This reopening strategy will rely upon every church member/attender to take specific actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19. They include physical distancing, wearing cloth face coverings, handwashing, cleaning surfaces, and staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine. We will only be able to safely maintain our reopening efforts if all of us commit to maintaining these Five Core Actions.

This three-phased approach is designed to have flexibility within each phase to reduce the likelihood of relapse to a previous phase and avoid threats that may prevent movement to the next phase. As local or national guidelines change, Ridgecrest will continue to change within the framework of the phases. For example, it may be determined that items within Phase 1 may need to continue into Phase 2 to further prevent the spread. We are thankful to have a body of faith that is willing to take the necessary steps to create a safe and healthy environment.

Vision Driven

Ridgecrest's vision to Know God, Serve Others, and Reach Our World is crucial in the application of the phases. As we begin to reopen the facility, know that the vision directly impacts which activities are conducted in the framework of each phase. This does not suggest certain activities are more important than others but does ensure each activity has the proper amount of oversight to provide a safe environment.

Understanding COVID-19 & the Five Core Actions

COVID-19 is a respiratory illness. Current information about symptoms can be found on the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/). It is thought to mainly spread

through droplets expelled when someone breathes, talks, sings, coughs, sneezes, etc. In most instances of transmission, close contact (sometimes called “face-to-face interaction”) is believed to be responsible for spreading the virus when an uninfected individual breathes in droplets from an infected individual. Close contact is when a person is within 6 feet of another person for a prolonged period of time (thought to be around 10 minutes).

Although it’s not thought to be the primary mode of transmission, COVID-19 can also spread when a person touches a surface where droplets have settled and then touches their nose, mouth or eyes. These two main types of transmission are the basis for the core actions individuals can take to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

1. Physical Distancing

Physical distancing (also called social distancing) means keeping space between yourself and other people who do not live with you. To practice social distancing:

- **Stay at least 6 feet from people who are not part of your household**— “Farther is better.”
- Do not gather socially in groups above the size indicated by the Phase.
- Stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings as indicated by the Phase.

2. Cloth Face Coverings

When outside the home, **the wearing of cloth face coverings (masks) by all individuals unable to consistently maintain 6 feet of distance is strongly encouraged and at times required.**

Within each phase various cloth face covering instructions will be provided.

[The CDC has guidance on how to make, wear and care for a cloth face covering.](#) Our Sew Missions team can also provide help in making a mask as they have made over 1000 for our community.

3. Proper Handwashing

Washing your hands with soap and water for 20 seconds helps to remove the virus from your hands if you come in contact with the virus. If soap and water is not available and your hands are not visibly soiled, hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol can be used.

Ridgecrest will have sanitizer stations available; however, washing hands prior to arrival on campus is recommended. Wash your hands before touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because this is one way COVID-19 enters our bodies. [The CDC website has more information on when and how to wash your hands.](#)

4. Cleaning Surfaces

Regularly disinfecting surfaces with soap and water or EPA-registered household disinfectants (including bleach and cleaners containing at least 7% alcohol) helps to prevent transmission from droplets that may have settled on surfaces or have transferred to commonly used surfaces through touch, such as door handles and light switches.

5. Stay Home if Sick or You are Instructed to Isolate/Quarantine by a Medical or Public Health Professional

If you are sick or instructed to stay home, stay home. The strategies listed above rely on people staying home when they know they feel sick or have been told to isolate/quarantine. If you feel sick and are concerned, contact your doctor's office to determine if you need to be seen. If possible, ask church staff or church members to deliver needed supplies instead of going to the store. If you live with others, [follow CDC guidance for caring for someone who is sick at home](#). COVID-19 affects each individual differently, so please take extra precautions to ensure others are not infected.

Benchmarks

Decisions about how to move through the phases will not be made based on any one number or figure. Decisions will be made based on local and national government recommendations as well as various factors regarding our church facility specifically. All of these factors must be considered when determining when and how to proceed through the reopening process.

Support for Employees & Ministry Leaders

Ridgecrest Baptist Church cares deeply for its employees and volunteers. In order to protect safely while in a phased reopening, this document contains general guidance and strategies to support the Ridgecrest family.

COVID-19 Coordinators

Ridgecrest will identify several staff and volunteers to serve as COVID-19 coordinators. It will be their responsibility to lead the implementation of strategies to reduce the spread of COVID-19. These individuals will be people who will take action to implement the recommended measures, stay aware of changes to recommendations, and have the authority to reinforce the need to follow the measures on an ongoing basis throughout the reopening phases.

COVID-19 Safety Signage

Prior to the beginning of phase 1, safety signage displaying information on the basic ways we can all do our part to protect each other's safety will be seen across the church campus. These signs which include information for staff, volunteers, and attenders will be displayed at main entrances, worship center entrances, and other locations throughout the facility.

COVID-19 Communication & Support

The Executive/Discipleship Pastor will coordinate with all staff, volunteers, and COVID-19 Coordinators to ensure all policies and procedures are up to date. Email communication will be sent weekly to include practical strategies and policies to be implemented to help protect our employees and church attenders.

General Planning & Preparedness Guidance for Ridgecrest

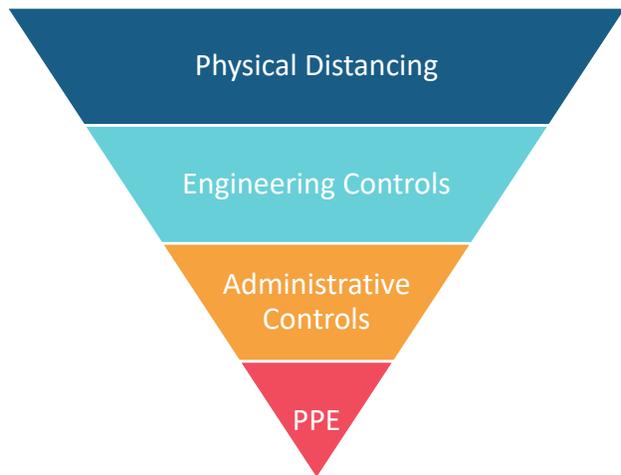
Ridgecrest will follow a modified hierarchy of controls in order to protect employees and church attenders. The largest control will be used whenever possible, with the later controls being used when physical distancing cannot be maintained.

Guidance from OSHA

The following guidance is adapted from [Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19](#) from OSHA.

Physical Distancing

- Employees, whose job allows, will be encouraged to work from home.
- Employees are discouraged from using other employees' equipment, including phones, desks, offices, etc.
- Surfaces in shared spaces will be routinely cleaned and sanitized throughout the day.
- Regular housekeeping practices, including routine cleaning and disinfecting of surfaces, equipment, and other elements of the work environment will be conducted daily.



Engineering Controls

- Seating around the facility will be taped off to clearly identify social distancing minimums.
- Traffic flow signs will be utilized to reduce heavy traffic through entrances, aisles, and hallways

Administrative Controls

- Sick workers are required to stay at home.
- Virtual communications will continue to be the preferred method of meeting.

PPE

- Employees will be provided cloth face masks for use when physical distancing cannot occur.
- Employees will be provided clear training and instruction for wearing cloth masks when necessary.

Introducing the Phases

This section includes information for each of the three phases. Phase One will begin approximately 2-3 weeks following the Governor's order to lift the ban on mass gatherings. Phase One includes more detailed information regarding reopening, while the other two phases serve as a broad framework that will be enhanced throughout the reopening process. Any ideas or recommendations can be communicated to the COVID-19 coordinators to relay to church for future decisions and policies.

Mid-phase adjustments may be issued in order to protect phase progress.

The phased reopening strategy is not a return to pre-pandemic normal. While Ridgecrest previously worked very hard to provide a clean and safe environment prior to the pandemic, we have identified additional measures to take to make our facility as clean and safe as possible.

This reopening strategy will rely upon every church member/attender to take specific actions to reduce the spread of COVID-19:

1. **Physical distancing**
2. **Wearing cloth face coverings**
3. **Handwashing**
4. **Cleaning surfaces**
5. **Staying home if you are sick or instructed to isolate/quarantine.**

We will only be able to safely maintain our reopening efforts if all of us commit to maintaining these Five Core Actions.

There are general guidelines that apply to all three phases. These general guidelines provide information that expands on the Five Core Actions, outlining specific ways individuals, higher-risk individuals and the church can protect health and safety as we reopen.

General Guidelines for Everyone Throughout All Phases

This section provides general guidelines for all phases. **A good practice is for individuals to assume they are infectious and that others are infectious as well, regardless of whether they exhibit symptoms.**

Individuals (Including Employees, Volunteers, Church Members, and Regular Attenders)

Use Physical Distancing Whenever Possible

- While on Ridgecrest property, stay at least 6 feet away from others not from your household whenever possible. Remember "farther is better."
- Non-contact greeting only (No handshakes, hugs, etc.)
- Masks are available at welcome center.
- No handouts (bulletins, flyers, etc.)
- No meals, food, or self-serve coffee stations.

- Giving stations will be available but offering plates will not be passed.
- Multiple services will be offered to allow for social distancing (9:00AM & 10:30AM).

Continue to Practice Good Hygiene

- It is **strongly recommended** (and at times required per the phase guidelines) **that you wear a cloth face mask** when unable to consistently maintain 6 feet of physical distancing while on campus.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer stations that are located throughout the church.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Sneeze or cough into a tissue or the inside of your elbow. Dispose of tissues after a single use.
- Ridgecrest will regularly disinfect frequently used items and surfaces using soap and water or EPA-registered household disinfectants.
- Hymnals and Bibles will be removed from the pews.
- Pens and Connect Cards will be removed from the pews.

People Who Feel Sick or Have Been Told to Isolate/Quarantine Should Stay Home

- Temperature check on all staff and volunteers (Anyone with temperature 100.4 or above will be asked to return home).
- Stay home if you feel sick or have been told to isolate/quarantine due to potential exposure, illness or while awaiting test results.
- If you are concerned about your health, contact and follow the advice of your medical provider.

Higher-Risk Individuals

While this document provides guidance to allow our church facility to reopen, **individuals must consider their personal risk and determine whether to increase their interactions at church as the phases progress.** Throughout all phases, higher-risk individuals are strongly encouraged to follow the guidance specifically for them. In Phase One and Phase Two, this means to stay home as much as possible. In Phase Three, this means resuming public interactions with physical distancing. **Higher-risk individuals are encouraged to attend the 9:00AM service in an attempt to prevent them from coming in contact with someone who has been exposed to COVID-19.**

Higher-risk individuals include those age 65 and over, and those with serious underlying health conditions, such as high blood pressure, chronic lung disease, diabetes, obesity, asthma, and those whose immune system is compromised.

Phase One (Beginning June 7)

Phase One will include all the general guidelines, but will also include the following:

- Families will sit at designated spots to ensure social distancing.
- Attenders are encouraged to reserve their seat on our website, app, or by calling the church office.
- No food or coffee stations.
- Only bathrooms outside worship center will be open for emergency use only.
- All rooms will be limited to 50% capacity (Worship Center, Chapel, etc.).
- Life Groups will continue meeting via virtual platforms or will meet off-site adhering to social distancing guidelines (Outdoors up to 20 people as of 5/20).
- Preschool, Children and Student Groups will continue meeting via virtual platforms or will meet off-site adhering to social distancing guidelines (Outdoors up to 20 people).
- Masks are required for all volunteers and staff.
- Masks are strongly recommended for all attenders.
- Doors under steeple and to the right will be used as entrances.
- Doors to the left of the steeple to circle drive will be used as exits.

Phase Two

Phase Two will include all the general guidelines, but will also include the following:

- Families will sit at least 6 feet away from other families.
- No food or coffee stations.
- Bathrooms outside worship center as well as in preschool and children's ministry areas will be open.
- All rooms will be limited to 50% capacity (Worship Center, Chapel, Children, Preschool, etc.).
- Life Groups will meet off-site adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Preschool and Children life groups and worship will be limited to half of the previously recommended space required (10 children/room→5 children/room).
- Preschool and Children's volunteers will be limited to those under 65 years old and with no pre-existing conditions.
- Preschool and Children Check-In will be conducted through text with label picked up at station.
- Masks are recommended for all attenders.

Phase Three

Phase Three will include all the general guidelines, but will also include the following:

- All rooms will be limited to 75% capacity.
- Life Groups will meet on-site adhering to social distancing guidelines.
- Preschool and Children's volunteers will be limited to those under 65 years old and with no pre-existing conditions.
- Preschool and Children Check-In will be conducted through text with label picked up at station.
- Masks are recommended for all high-risk attenders.