



the Fellowship of Independent
Evangelical Churches

Leadership in Lockdown



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Update on Law & Guidance for Places of Worship

- COVID guidance for places of worship updated
- Principles for safer singing
- COVID guidance for performing arts
- The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (All Tiers) (England) Regulations 2020

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Update on Law & Guidance for Places of Worship

[gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-during-the-pandemic-from-4-july/covid-19-guidance-for-the-safe-use-of-places-of-worship-from-2-december)

[gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing/covid-19-suggested-principles-of-safer-singing)

[gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/working-safely-during-coronavirus-covid-19/performing-arts)

legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2020/1374/contents/made/data.pdf

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Law on Gatherings

- Indoor Gatherings
 - Tier 1 – max 6 people
 - Tier 2 – household group only
 - Tier 3 – household group only
- Outdoor Gatherings
 - Tier 1 – max 6 people
 - Tier 2 – max 6 people
 - Tier 3 – household group only
- Against law to mix (i.e. swap groups) and mingle (interact between groups)
- Social distancing – 2m (or 1m with mitigations)

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Travel Between Tiers

- If you travel to a lower tier you still have to keep the law on gathering that applies where you live
- "Avoid travel to or overnight stays in Tier 3 areas other than where necessary, such as for work, education, youth services, to receive medical treatment, or because of caring responsibilities."

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Implications for Churches

- Open for public worship
- Can use for study groups/prayer groups
- Support groups up to 15
- Weddings up to 15 & Funerals up to 30 (excluding anyone working)
- Organised parent and child groups up to 15 (children under 5 not included in limit)
- Venue managers should ensure social distancing maintained

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Singing Indoors

- Congregation “should not participate in any activity that can create aerosols, including singing, shouting and chanting”
- Choir can perform indoors but must comply with law on gathering in groups appropriate to the relevant tier (i.e. Rule of 6 in tier 1 and household group in tier 2 & 3) and should observe social distancing (2m)
- Ensure gap at least 2m between performers and first row worshippers

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Singing Outdoors

- Choir can perform outdoors but must comply with law on gathering in groups appropriate to the relevant tier (i.e. Rule 6 in tier 1 & 2 and household group tier 3) and should observe social distancing (2m)
- Congregation can sing but should preferably be seated and 2m social distancing maintained at all times
- Can gather outdoors in grounds place worship but capacity determined by ability to maintain social distancing

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Singing Outdoors (cont.)

- Should liaise with person responsible for public open space and speak to local authority about large events
- Must undertake risk assessment that considers security & should manage arrival and departure so social distancing can be maintained

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Church Leaders' Liability

The required precautions:

7.—(1) The **gathering organiser** or (as the case may be) the manager in relation to a gathering takes the required precautions for the purposes of these Regulations by meeting both of the following requirements.

(2) The first requirement is that the gathering organiser or manager has **carried out a risk assessment** that would satisfy the requirements of regulation 3 of the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999(30) (whether or not the organiser or manager is subject to those Regulations).

(3) The second requirement is that the gathering organiser or manager has **taken all reasonable measures** to limit the risk of transmission of coronavirus, taking into account—

- (a) the risk assessment carried out under paragraph (2), and
- (b) **any guidance issued by the government** which is relevant to the gathering.

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Implications for Church Leaders

- You will likely commit an offence if you organise a gathering which will ignore the guidance (e.g. on singing or social distancing)
- There may be issues of insurance cover if you fail to meet your duties under the Health & Safety legislation
- fiec.org.uk/resources/a-winter-risk-assessment-review

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Opportunities for Churches

- Carol services with choir – “carol concert” events
- Outdoor carol services
- Door-to-door carol singing
- Street & community carol singing
- Hybrid service – some congregational singing outside & part service inside
- Online for people who would not/cannot attend physically

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