



Guidance for Providing Funeral Luncheons

July 1, 2020

A Minnesota Department of Health June 12 document [Guidance for Providing Food](#) now permits serving food at events such as funeral luncheons. Note that due to the less-controlled nature of such luncheons, the maximum number of attendees is 25% of the normal seating capacity of the space or 250 persons (whichever is less).

Funeral luncheons are optional. There is no obligation to serve food. Parishes are urged to examine carefully whether they have the resources to maintain adequate sanitization and social distancing during these events and only allow a luncheon if it can be done safely.

Every precaution should be taken that the luncheon staff/volunteers not be in a high-risk category in age (65+) and have no known underlying medical conditions that would have an impact on their health in the event they should contract COVID.

When a funeral luncheon is hosted in a facility of the parish, and before people exit to the site of the luncheon, it is highly recommended to make an announcement providing instructions to minimize the potential risks of infection and to maximize the safety of everyone.

Key Requirements

- Develop and implement a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.
- Clearly communicate luncheon protocols to all attendees.
- Ensure a minimum of 6 feet of distance between participants not in the same family unit throughout the luncheon.
- Limit attendance to no more than 25% up to 250 persons.
- Require staff/volunteers to wear masks at all times and strongly encourage attendees to wear masks when not eating or drinking.
- Depending on size of tables, limit to 4 persons, or 6 if part of one family unit.
- Have sanitation stations at all entrances and exits.
- Post signs or posters near doors and inside the church with reminders of social distancing requirements.
- Anyone who is sick or is showing symptoms of sickness, or anyone who has a household member who is sick or is showing symptoms, should not attend the luncheon.
- Informal gatherings on church grounds after funeral luncheons are not to be allowed.

Food and Beverages

- Preference is to have food catered in and served by catering staff. Consider having pre-packaged boxes or bags for each attendee. Avoid offering any self-serve food or drink options, such as buffets, salad bars, desserts and drink stations.

- Set tables ahead of luncheon by staff/volunteers.
- Use disposable food service items including utensils and dishes. If disposable items are not feasible or desirable, ensure that all non-disposable food service items are handled with gloves and washed with dish soap and hot water or in a dishwasher.
- *Guidance for Providing Food and Beverages for On-Site Consumption at Indoor and Outdoor Gatherings* <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/foodgather.pdf>

Shared Objects

- Discourage people from sharing items that are difficult to clean, sanitize, or disinfect.
- Limit any sharing of food, utensils, tools, equipment, or supplies by staff/volunteers.
- Ensure adequate supplies to minimize sharing of high-touch materials to the extent possible; otherwise, limit use of supplies and equipment to one group of staff members or attendees at a time, and clean and disinfect them between uses.

Promote Healthy Hygiene Practices

- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) should be provided to all staff/volunteers (masks, gloves, etc.)
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- Have adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap and hand sanitizer with at least 60 percent alcohol.
- Provide physical guides, such as tape on floors and signs on walls, to ensure that individuals remain at least 6 feet apart.
- Adult liability waivers are preferred for all volunteers. *(Per Catholic Mutual)* See attachments.
- Create a list of attendees and volunteers (for tracking). *(Per Catholic Mutual)*
- Provide and post procedures in advance, floor markings for direction of entry and exit (controlled flow).
- Provide hand sanitizers throughout the facility, and post signs on social distancing, COVID safety, and handwashing.
- Individuals should wash their hands after removing their gloves or after directly handling used food service items.

Restrooms

- Consider limiting the number of people who occupy the restroom at one time to allow for social distancing.
- Do not allow lines or crowds to form near the restroom without maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from other people. It may be helpful to post signs or markers to help attendees maintain the appropriate social distance of at least 6 feet.
- Ensure that restrooms are:
 - Cleaned and disinfected regularly, particularly high-touch surfaces such as faucets, toilets, flush handles, stall doors, doorknobs, countertops, diaper changing tables and light switches.
 - Clean and disinfect restrooms periodically, based on frequency of use, with EPA-approved disinfectants against COVID-19.

- Adequately stocked with supplies for handwashing, including soap and water or hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol (for staff and older children who can safely use hand sanitizer), paper towels, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.
- If portable toilets are being provided, also provide portable handwashing stations and ensure that they remain stocked throughout the duration of the event. If possible, provide hand sanitizer stations that are touch-free.

Ventilation

- Ensure ventilation systems operate properly. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible, for example, by opening windows and doors. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk to staff or attendees (e.g., risk of falling or triggering asthma symptoms).
- If portable ventilation equipment like fans are used, take steps to minimize air from them blowing from one person directly at another person to reduce the potential spread of any airborne or aerosolized viruses.

For additional resources and information

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/considerations-for-events-gatherings.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/business-employers/bars-restaurants.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

<https://www.cdc.gov/handwashing/when-how-handwashing.html>