

California Bans Singing in Church



The State of California has banned singing in any indoor religious services, even with masks on, under new *guidelines* issued by the Department of Public Health to control the spread of the coronavirus. Places of worship must therefore discontinue singing and chanting activities and limit indoor attendance to 25% of building capacity or a maximum of 100 attendees, whichever is lower. A choir practice without masks was blamed for an acute outbreak of coronavirus in Washington State in March.

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The new guidelines state (emphasis added):

Even with adherence to physical distancing, convening in a congregational setting of multiple different households to practice a personal faith carries a relatively higher risk for widespread transmission of the COVID-19 virus, and may result in increased rates of infection, hospitalization, and death, especially among more vulnerable populations. In particular, activities such as singing and chanting negate the risk-reduction achieved through six feet of physical distancing.

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chanting activities and limit indoor attendance to 25% of building capacity or a maximum of 100 attendees, whichever is lower. Local Health Officers are advised to consider appropriate limitations on outdoor attendance capacities, factoring their jurisdiction's key COVID- 19 health indicators. At a minimum, outdoor attendance should be limited naturally through implementation of strict physical distancing measures of a minimum of six feet between attendees from different households, in addition to other relevant protocols within this document.

California had begun re-opening places of worship a few weeks ago, as the state had succeeded in slowing the spread of the disease. But a surge of cases since early June – coinciding with the eruption of the Black Lives Matter protests – has caused the state to reinstate many restrictions.

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