



## A 'how to' guide to physical distancing in your church

This information has been prepared drawing on information from public health authorities and is correct as at 17 November 2020. It has been adapted with permission from information developed by the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

**If you print this document, please check regularly for the latest [Synod updates](#).**

**This fact sheet outlines physical distancing requirements that all churches must adhere to in order to meet current State and Federal government requirements.**

### The importance of physical distancing

In line with the Queensland Government's roadmap to easing restrictions, Queenslanders will gradually enjoy more freedom to gather in groups and participate in community activities.

A key condition of this increased freedom is the requirement to practice physical distancing.

### What is physical distancing?

Physical distancing, also called "social distancing", means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Physical distancing is an important way to slow the spread of viruses. The more space between you and others, the less chance there is that you will breathe in micro-droplets caused by sneezing, coughing and exhaling.

To maintain appropriate physical distancing, people need to keep 1.5 metres away from others whenever possible.

There are many things you can do that will assist you to maintain your physical distance:

- avoid physical greetings such as handshaking, hugs and kisses
- use touchless payment methods (such as tap and go) instead of cash where possible
- travel at quiet times and avoid crowds
- avoid entering crowded spaces and large public gatherings.

It is critical that churches identify and control situations where people may gather to ensure physical distancing requirements are observed. This includes services, weddings, funerals and baptisms.

As well as physical distancing, it is critical that we all maintain good hygiene practices to prevent the spread of viruses. This includes staying at home if you are unwell, washing your hands regularly, covering coughs and sneezes and following cleaning protocols.

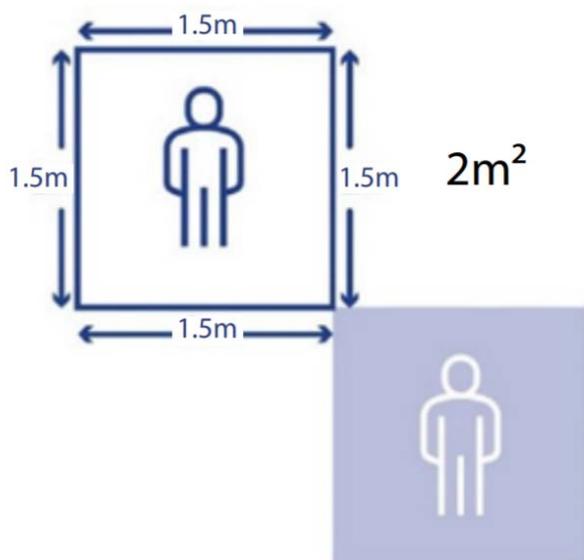
### Revisions

Document number		D/1.1.1.13			
Version	Approval date	Approved by	Effective date	Policy owner	Policy contact
3.0	11.12.2020	General Secretary	11.12.2020	COVID Coordinator	COVID Coordinator
Next scheduled review		11.12.2021			



## How to calculate maximum numbers?

It is a requirement to apply both the two square metres of space per person rule and the 1.5 metres between people to work out the maximum number of people who can be in enclosed space at one time.



### Step 1

Check the maximum number allowed under the current restrictions. \*On 17 November 2020 the maximum number is determined by the one is to two square metre rule.

Apply the two square metre requirements.

For example, if you had a room that was 150 square metres in size, you should only allow 75 people in the room, to allow each person to have two square metres of space.

Important – Only measure the space that people will gather in.

### Step 2

Now you need to work out how to seat everyone ensuring there is 1.5 metres between people.

To do this you should:

1. Designate seating to ensure each person will be 1.5 metres from next person
2. Look at how people will move to their seats to ensure they can maintain 1.5 metres of space from others
3. Look at how to use entries and walkways to maintain 1.5 metres between people.  
(e.g. one door for entry and one for exits with a clockwise flow).

Based on the steps above you will now have 2 different totals.

The **lowest of these numbers** is the **maximum** number of people who can be in the enclosed space at any time.

For example, Church A has calculated the following:

**Step 1** – current restrictions (two square metres per person in a 150 square metre building) permits 75 persons.

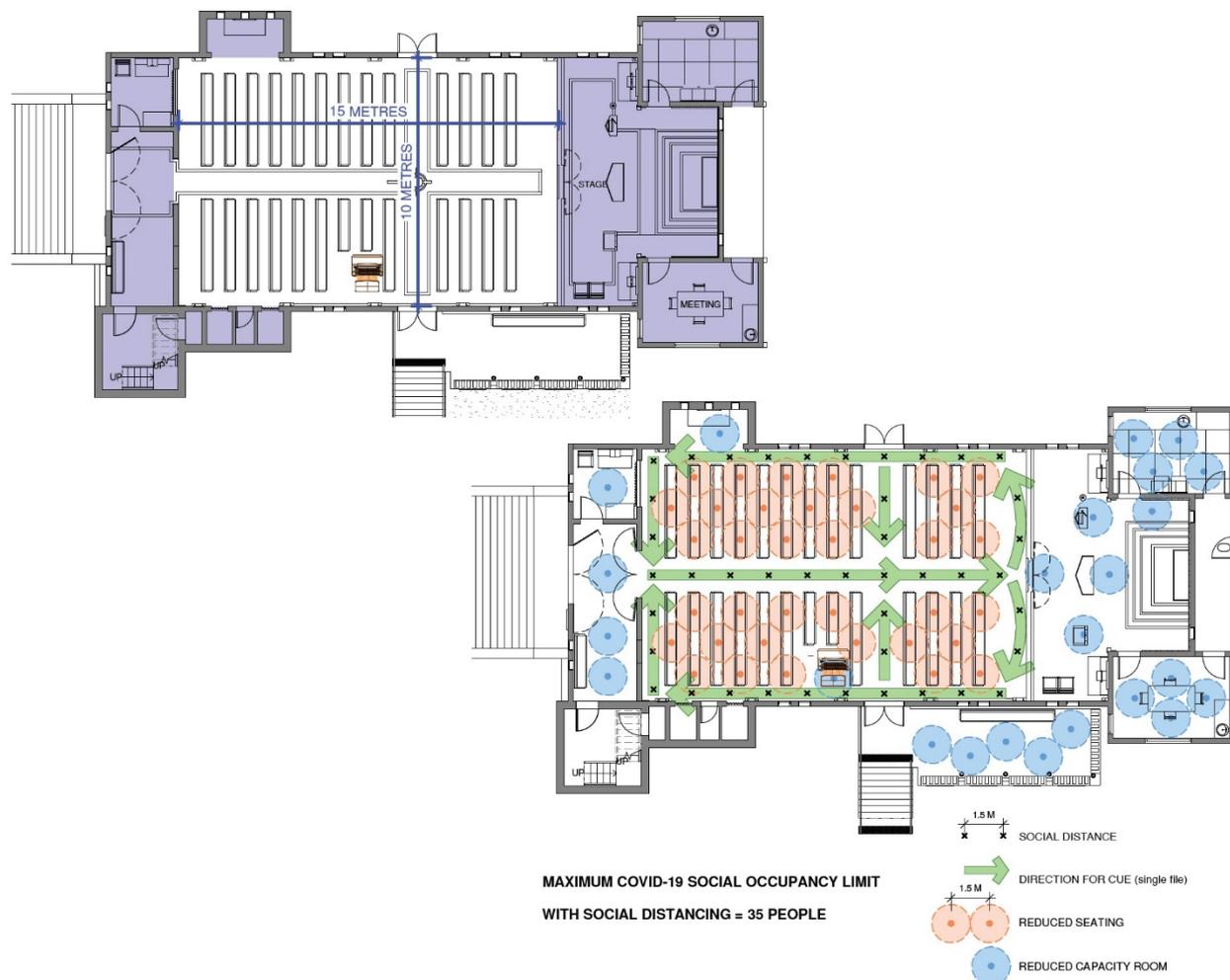
**Step 2** – 150 square metre space inside the church allows for 75 people per Step 1. Step 2 ensures 1.5 metres between seats in the pews. This allows for 66 people.

Based on this Church A can have a maximum of 66 people

**Remember you cannot exceed the maximum attendees as outlined in the [Public Health Direction](#) or the [Industry COVID Safe Plan for Places of Worship](#), if adopted by the Church Council.**



## Sample calculations:



## How to manage physical distancing requirements?

Churches can implement the following controls to ensure physical distancing requirements are observed:

- Use one designated person to collect contact details upon entry and another designated person to ensure entry and exit points don't become overcrowded
- Restrict access to smaller spaces and limit access to entries, walkways and areas where people gather
- Consider using floor markings or signs to guide how people position themselves, where they gather or queue such as at the entrance or around the church
- Use seat markers to designate seating and ensure each person will be 1.5 metres away from the next person

## What about family groups?

A family group, comprised of people living in the same household at the same residential address, are permitted to sit or stand together at closer than 1.5 metres. However the following control measures still need to be applied:

- Each family member in the group is to be counted individually in terms of maximum number of people
- Each person must be counted as an individual, this includes infants and young children



- The group may sit side-by-side, however physical distancing between the group and other people is to be maintained.

The examples below will assist you to consider what may be suitable for your church environment.

### Physical distancing markers



*Pew Marking*



*Isle Marking*



*Meeting Room*



*Reception Desk / Office*



*Bench restrictions*



## Physical distancing signage

The following signage is available.:



Love thy neighbour  
from a distance

Room occupancy

Please maintain a distance of

1.5m

To meet physical distancing requirements, the  
number of people who can gather in this room is:

00

Please maintain physical distancing and practise good hygiene.



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Our COVIDSAFE contact is:



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Our COVIDSAFE contact is:



Please do not enter if you:

- Have fever or symptoms of respiratory infection (cough, sore throat, shortness of breath).
- Have returned from overseas in the last 14 days.
- Are awaiting results of a COVID test or have been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the last 14 days.

Please maintain physical distancing and practise good hygiene.



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