

Reopening Our Doors

Prepared by Beth Tzedec's Reopening Taskforce. *Last updated Tuesday, August 11, 2020.*

Reopening a synagogue as busy as Beth Tzedec safely and securely is a massive undertaking, with many moving pieces. The Reopening Taskforce, with input from medical professionals and public health authorities, has created this manual to help guide us as we move forward with reopening our doors. We hope that this will allow us to gradually return to "normal" while protecting the health and safety of all of our members, staff and guests.

Please note that this is a living document. It will continue to be updated, amended and modified as the situation in Toronto evolves and we learn more about protecting our community from COVID-19. You can stay abreast of any changes and updates on the Beth Tzedec website, [here>>](#)

The Reopening Taskforce, chaired by Lawrie Lubin, also Co-chair of the Building Committee, includes:

- Dr. Anna Day—Respirologist
- Lorne Hanick—Ritual Director; Representing the Spiritual Leadership Team
- Naomi Kramer—Member of the Board of Directors and Engineer
- Moshe Micha—Chair of the Security Committee
- Marvin Miller—Past President, Ushering Committee and Insurance Advisor
- Barry Phillips—Chair of the Ushering Committee and Pharmacist
- Dr. Coleman Rotstein—Infectious Disease Specialist
- Brian Segal—Member of the Board of Directors and Lawyer
- Dr. Rebecca Shalansky—Family Doctor and Public Health and Preventative Medicine Resident
- Oscar Zimmerman—Vice President of Beth Tzedec, member of the Executive Committee and Insurance Advisor

Ex- officio

- Debbie Rothstein – President
- Bernie Gropper – Chair of the Board and Lawyer

Staff

- Randy E. Spiegel – Executive Director

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General Guidelines for Reopening

1. **As a community dedicated to *pikuah nefesh*, the preservation of life, we prioritize the health and well-being of every member of our *kehillah*.** We each have an obligation to protect our community by wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing and practicing good hygiene.
2. **We will continue to take guidance and advice from medical professionals and public health authorities.** The work of our Reopening Taskforce has and continues to be guided by evidence-based recommendations and input from experts in their respective fields.
3. **As an inclusive and intergenerational congregation, we must be necessarily cautious.** We must give special consideration in our decision making to those who are particularly at-risk of contracting COVID-19, including seniors and those with compromised immune systems.
4. **Beth Tzedec is more than just a building.** The work of the synagogue continues, and this crisis has demonstrated our community's willingness to come together remotely to *daven*, to learn, to connect and to engage in *hesed* projects. While physically distant, we have stayed spiritually and socially near to one another, and we are committed to maintaining that nearness with ongoing virtual programs, services and opportunities.
5. **The uncertainty of the current situation requires flexibility.** The nature and spread of COVID-19 makes it impossible to predict how long we will have to live with the current precautions in place. We will update and revise our operating procedures as needed.

Timeline for Reopening

We are prepared to begin a partial reopening the week of August 17, 2020. We will begin with *Minhah*/*Ma'ariv* services. It is our intention to expand to include *Shaharit* on Mondays, Thursdays and Shabbat, at dates still to be determined.

Daily minyan and Shabbat services will continue to be broadcast live [online](#).

For the foreseeable future, other programs, meetings and learning opportunities will continue to exclusively be offered online.

Health and Safety Protocols

These protocols will guide Beth Tzedec staff, leadership, members and guests in maintaining the health and safety of our building.

General Health and Hand Hygiene

Practicing good hand hygiene is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 at Beth Tzedec, at work and at home. This includes:

- Using hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the building and after touching objects that have been touched by others.
- Regularly washing your hands for at least 20 seconds throughout the day with warm water, particularly before and after contact with food and communal objects.
- Covering coughs and sneezes with your elbow.
- Avoiding touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth.

To help everyone remain healthy, we have hand sanitizer available throughout the building. Additionally, staff members will disinfect key areas such as faucets and door handles regularly.

Physical Distancing

Everyone on the grounds of Beth Tzedec should follow physical distancing best practices, including:

- Staying two metres away from others while praying, walking, working or otherwise engaged.
- Avoiding conversations and tasks that require close face-to-face contact with others when possible.
- Avoiding all physical contact with people who are not in your "bubble", as per provincial guidelines.
- Avoiding touching surfaces that may have been touched by others.
- Avoiding gathering when entering and exiting the building.
- Following any posted signage regarding COVID-19 physical distancing practices.
- Disinfecting any surfaces touched with wipes, if possible.
- Avoiding touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Avoiding nonessential gatherings.
- Avoiding use of common areas. When that's not feasible, limiting the number of individuals in common areas at all times.

Masks and Face Coverings

In compliance with [City of Toronto By-Law 541-2020](#), all those aged two and up are required to **bring and wear a mask or face covering** that covers your nose, mouth and chin, without gapping, within the building.

There are special exemptions for those who cannot wear a mask. Those who are eligible for such an exemption must provide this information when pre-registering for services.

Exceptions include:

- persons with an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering;

- persons who are unable to place or remove a mask or face covering without assistance;
- employees in designated spaces not open to the public, or behind a physical barrier;
- persons who are reasonably accommodated by not wearing a mask or face covering in accordance with the Ontario Human Rights code.

Cleaning and Disinfecting

All shared spaces, including the restrooms, will be regularly cleaned and sanitized after use. Maintenance staff will maintain a time log of when various areas were cleaned and by whom.

Service attendees are encouraged to bring their own siddur and *humash* when feasible. Beth Tzedec *siddurim* and *humashim* will be in rotation every 72 hours, to allow the virus to dissipate without cleaning. For daily minyan, tables or trolleys will be pre-arranged with the required number of *siddurim* needed each day and rotation maintained. Attendees will be asked to pick up their books one at a time and to place the books in a pre-designated area at the end of the service or when otherwise not required.

Shabbat *siddurim* can be re-used after 72 hours, as the virus will have had sufficient time to dissipate.

Restrooms

Service attendees are encouraged to limit their use of washroom facilities. Restrooms will be thoroughly cleaned 2-3 times per day and the number of users in each restroom will be limited to ensure that everyone can maintain a two metre distance from one another. Every other stall will be closed and non-operational, to help maintain physical distance between users.

Attendees must wash and disinfect their hands after using the restroom.

Food Service

All communal food service is suspended until further notice.

Signage and Communications

To better communicate our health and safety practices, we will be limiting non-essential signage and new signage will be displayed, highlighting instructions related to practicing healthy hygiene and safe physical distancing protocols. We will also use tape or ground markings to indicate two metres of separation between those entering and exiting the building.

The touch-screen functionality of our digital screens will be disabled for the foreseeable future.

Besides the use of signage, we will circulate the latest rules and policies to members of our community via email, our website and physical handouts to everyone entering our building.

COVID-19 Exposure and Confirmed Illness Protocol

Members, guests and employees who test positive for COVID-19 or believe that they have been exposed are instructed to follow the advice of a qualified medical professional and public health regarding self-quarantine. They will not be permitted in the building.

All attendees are asked to notify Beth Tzedec immediately if symptoms appeared or they tested positive for COVID-19 within two weeks after attending a service.

If anyone who has been in the building tests positive for COVID-19, Toronto Public Health will be alerted immediately, appropriate precautions will be taken and deep-cleaning procedures will be triggered.

Attending Services

As we begin our partial reopening, [we will continue streaming services online](#) in conjunction with opening our doors to a limited number of *daveners*.

Who Should and Shouldn't Attend Services

Adults and children may attend services as long as they register online. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian at all times.

You should **not** attend services if:

- You are experiencing any flu-like or COVID-19 symptoms (including fever, cough, muscle aches, tiredness, difficulty breathing, sore throat, diarrhea, conjunctivitis or loss of smell or taste).
- You have been exposed to anyone with COVID-19 in the last 14 days.
- You have travelled outside the country within the last 14 days.

Individuals who are over the age of 70, individuals who are immunocompromised or individuals who have a chronic condition that would make them more likely to have complications from COVID-19 may wish to consult their physician before attending.

Registering to Attend Services

Services are open to those who pre-register via [this online form](#) and commit to complying with the health and safety protocols outlined in this manual, which may be updated at any time. Those unable to register online may call Florence Bendelac at 416-781-3514, ext. 213.

Weekday services have a strictly enforced maximum capacity of 20 people. When we expand to include in-person Shabbat services, the maximum capacity for Shabbat morning services will be 40 people.

Registration must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. on the day preceding the service you wish to attend. For Sunday services, registration must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. on the preceding Friday. Priority will be given to those who are *aveilim* or who are saying *kaddish*. After registering, please check your inbox for a confirmation email from Beth Tzedec.

In the event that the number of registrants exceeds the number of spots available, we will hold a random draw. If you are not selected, you will receive an email or phone call prior to the service and will be given priority to attend the following service. **There will be no walk-ups permitted.**

Everyone who registers to attend services must agree to the Exclusion of Liability Waiver available [here](#). Everyone who attends or uses the facilities of Beth Tzedec Congregation assumes all health risks related to contracting COVID-19.

Entering and Exiting the Building

Everyone entering and exiting the building **must** have registered for a service or made an appointment. Everyone must complete a form in the event that efficient contact tracing is necessary. In the interest of security, **attendees will be asked to provide photo identification.**

Large bags and purses – including *tallit* and *tefillin* bags – will not be permitted. We ask you to please leave them at home or in your car. Personal items, including *tallitot* and *tefillin*, can be carried in a transparent bag.

Security will have a daily list to allow access to the building. Everyone entering the building will be asked screening questions and security will ensure that everyone is wearing a mask over their mouth and nose.

The screener will ask questions as directed by Toronto Public Health, including:

- Are you experiencing any of the following symptoms?
 - Fever
 - Cough
 - Difficulty breathing
 - Sore throat; trouble swallowing
 - Runny nose
 - Loss of taste or smell
 - Nausea, vomiting or diarrhea
 - Feeling generally unwell
- Have you been in close contact with someone who is sick or has confirmed COVID-19 in the past 14 days?
- Have you returned from travel outside of Canada in the past 14 days?

The answers to the screener's questions will be kept confidential and both a hard copy and digital records will be maintained by the administration. All forms will be retained for liability purposes.

To minimize socializing in the building, **we will open the doors 15 minutes before *davening* on weekday minyan and 30 minutes before *davening* for Shabbat.** We ask that attendees leave the building as soon as possible following services.

All attendees will be asked to use hand sanitizer upon entering and exiting the building.

All attendees will be required to bring and wear a mask or face covering that covers their nose, mouth and chin upon entering the building, and to keep it in place for the duration of their time in the building.

Davening Safely

Attendees will be limited to the marked and available seats.

There can be **no sharing, kissing or touching of ritual objects**, and all attendees must bring their own kippah, *tallit* and/or *tefillin*, as appropriate.

Singing and loud speech can generate respiratory droplets which may travel further than two metres. As directed by the Ontario Chief Medical Officer of Health, **indoor singing is suspended**. Humming while wearing a face mask, while not recommended, may occur.

Ritual-specific protocols will be determined and shared by the Spiritual Leadership Team.

Attendees who do not follow the procedures described above will be asked to leave the building and may not be permitted to re-enter until further notice.

Broadcasting Services

As services continue to be broadcast online, please note that all attendees may find themselves in view of the camera. We will do our best to ensure that attendees are aware of which areas of the room may be broadcast and/or recorded, but cannot guarantee that you will not be in view of the camera.

Celebrating Your *Simḥah*

The safest way to proceed with lifecycle events such as *b'nai* mitzvah will be determined on a case-by-case basis in partnership with the Spiritual Leadership Team. Members with an upcoming *simḥah* are encouraged to contact [Lorne Hanick](#) to begin planning their celebration.

Creating a Safe Work Environment

All staff members will abide by the guidelines and expectations outlined throughout this manual.

Working from Home

Staff members will continue to work from home for as long as possible. If a staff member must come to the building, they should work in their own space and leave as soon as possible to continue their work off-site. This will remain in effect until a change is recommended by leadership.

Desks and Workspaces

Each staff person has an individual workspace or office. While in your own workspace, a mask need not be worn. Some work areas will require additional protection, which will be provided.

Shared Spaces and Items

A mask must be worn in all common areas, including the copy room and restrooms. Staff members are expected to maintain at least two metres of physical distance between themselves, members and guests at all times.

Shared items, such as the copier, microwave and coffee machine, should be wiped down thoroughly before and after each use.