

Reopening Our Doors

Prepared by Beth Tzedec's Reopening Taskforce. *Last updated Tuesday, August 24, 2021.*

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 reopen 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 document 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 and its variants. You can stay abreast of any changes and updates on the Beth Tzedec website.

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

- Dr. Anna Day—Respirologist
- 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—past Vice President of Beth Tzedec

Ex- officio

- Debbie Rothstein – President
- Patti Rotman – Chair of the Board

Staff

- Randy E. Spiegel—Executive Director
- Lorne Hanick—Ritual Director, representing the Spiritual Leadership Team

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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 hand 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 and its variants, including seniors and those with compromised immune systems.
4. **Beth Tzedec is much more than a building.** The work of the synagogue has continued throughout the pandemic. This crisis has demonstrated our community's ability 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. 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 and its variants makes it impossible to predict how long the current precautions will remain in place. We will update and revise our operating procedures as needed.

Timeline for Reopening

We began the process of reopening for in-person services in **June 2021**. We have offered indoor and outdoor Shabbat services, as well as outdoor *Minhah/Ma'ariv* services on Sundays through Thursdays. [Registration is required].

We have now reopened for in-person 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 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 community.

General Health and Hand Hygiene

Practicing good hand hygiene is essential to preventing the spread of COVID-19 and its variants 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.

Hand sanitizer is 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 .
- Avoiding touching surfaces as much as possible.
- Avoiding gathering when entering and exiting the building.
- Following any posted signage regarding physical distancing practices.
- Disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
- Avoiding touching your face, especially your eyes, nose and mouth.
- 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.

NEW In addition, all attendees of outdoor *minyanim* will be required to wear a mask while on the Beth Tzedec grounds.

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

- persons with an underlying medical condition which inhibits their ability to wear a mask or face covering;
- 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. Maintenance staff will maintain a time log of when various areas were cleaned and by whom.

Restrooms

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 traffic flow within 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 and post on our website.

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 and appropriate precautions will be taken.

Attending Services

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.

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.

NEW Vaccine Verification

To protect the health and safety of our community, all those who participate in in-person programs and services must verify their COVID-19 vaccination status.

As of Sunday, August 15, 2021:

- **No one 18 years or older will be permitted to enter the Beth Tzedec building or grounds without first verifying that they have been fully vaccinated against COVID-19** at least 14 days prior to entry with a vaccine approved by Health Canada.
- **Children and teens ages 12 to 17** (or an adult on behalf of such a person), must verify that they have received at least one vaccine for COVID-19 approved by Health Canada at least 14 days prior to entry.
- **Children under the age of 12** are not required to verify their vaccine status.

In the event that someone cannot provide the requisite verification that they have been fully vaccinated, they must provide evidence that they tested negative for COVID-19 in the 72-hour period before participating in Beth Tzedec programs and services. This does not apply to children under the age of 12.

Registering to Attend Services

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

NEW

Registration must be submitted no later than 2:00 p.m. on the day preceding the service you wish to attend. For Sunday and Monday 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 and its variants.

Entering and Exiting the Building

Everyone entering and exiting the building **must** have registered for a service or program. 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.**

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 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 grounds, and to keep it in place for the duration of their time on the property.

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. Singing or 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 Simhah

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 *simhah* are encouraged to contact [Lorne Hanick](#) to begin planning their celebration.

