

GUIDANCE FOR SINGERS

on a safe return to work in houses of worship

BostonSingersResource.org



As houses of worship reopen in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and across the region, many will include music in their reopening plans. The following questions are suggestions of what singers might ask to evaluate risk when invited to return to their church or temple jobs. Boston Singers' Resource encourages singers to think about what their risk is and to use this list as a guide.

Additionally, BSR hopes singers will make decisions about reentering the workforce with their health and safety in mind. Singers with conditions that make them vulnerable to infection, or who live with others who are vulnerable, should not feel pressured to return to public singing prematurely.

Current research suggests that singers need more than six feet between them in order to avoid infection. There is no consensus on what safe distancing is for multiple singers; we have heard suggestions as far as 40 feet. Singers should not assume that all decision makers at houses of worship are fully familiar with the research regarding singers and infection and should be prepared to educate others and advocate for their own safety if necessary.

This is not medical or legal advice, and we remind singers that there is no way to completely eliminate risk. We encourage singers to consult with their doctors and family about their decisions, and to keep up to date on scientific research surrounding singing and COVID-19.

What follows is a list of questions for singers to use in evaluating risk in returning to work at houses of worship.

EQUIPMENT

Will all singing equipment (microphones, music stands, printed music, etc) be used solely by the singer throughout the service?

Will there be easy access to disinfecting supplies before, during and after the service?

Will singers be required to wear robes or special attire? If so, will provisions be made for frequent cleaning?

Will singers be responsible for any equipment set-up (including chairs, mics, sound system). If so, are cleaning products provided to keep those items clean?

MASKS

Will other musicians be masked?

Will clergy/worship leaders be masked?

Will singer have the option of masking if able to sing while masked?

SPACING

Will musicians have room to maintain adequate spacing between singer and accompanist?

Will other singers or wind players be present? If so, will additional spacing be available?

**It is not clear what amount of space will make this safe. Exercise caution.*

Will processions or other ritual action bring other participants within six feet of the singer?

FACILITIES

Will bathrooms be available? Are they cleaned regularly?

Will handwashing stations be available?

Who is responsible for disinfecting the musicians' area?

Will areas used to access musicians' area (for example, the stairs to the choir loft) be cleaned regularly?

Is there a safe space to wait before/between services without crowding?

Have any plexiglass barriers been added to the worship space?

Has the ventilation system been assessed? Are there provisions for enhanced ventilation?

Will additional parking be available for singers who want to avoid public transportation?

Is there a separate entrance for staff or will all workers use the same entrance as the congregation?

ATTENDEES

Will worshipers be encouraged to sing?

**It is not clear if singing in groups, even with physical distancing, is safe.*

Will worshipers be required/asked to wear masks?

Will there be any screenings (questions, temperature checks, oxygen level screenings, etc) before entry?

How many attendees are permitted?

PERSONNEL

With whom should the singer share concerns about cleaning, spacing, or other protocols?

Who is responsible for notifying musicians if a person present at worship is later found to have COVID-19?

Is compensation the same as before the pandemic? Are there any changes to contract/employment agreement?

During this time we urge singers to use caution in public singing and advocate for their own safety and the safety of their community.

For additional resources visit BostonSingersResource.org