

Stephen Wise Free Synagogue

Re-Opening COVID-19 Operations and Worship Protocols

August 24, 2020

WORSHIP PROTOCOLS

Overview

Stephen Wise cares about the health and safety of its entire community. The purpose of this Stephen Wise Free Synagogue COVID-19 Operations and Worship Protocols is to communicate and implement approved procedures that follow / relate to guidelines established by New York State for the reopening of New York City. The Protocols are designed to facilitate a safe and phased recommencement of synagogue services and operations with the goal of reasonably reducing the risk of transmission of the novel coronavirus among members of the synagogue community. Stephen Wise consulted with medical, human resources and legal professionals from within our community, and engaged industrial hygiene and air systems experts. Our advisors included industrial hygiene consultant, Jack Springston, CIH, CSP, FAIHA of ATC Group, mechanical engineering consultant, Jordan Fox, PE, of Cosentini Associates, regarding air supply and exhaust in the sanctuary and throughout our building, as well as with Sal Lifrieri of Protective Countermeasures regarding security and safety and with Jim Philbin of Kaese Architecture, our owner's representative.

To prepare for the complexities of reopening, Rabbi Hirsch guided a review of Shabbat and High Holy Days services and synagogue goals. Sandra Divack Moss guided an in-depth review of daily and special event operations, and together with Jose Fernandez, performed a thorough review of building systems and maintenance procedures. The consultants will continue to guide members of the senior management team as plans for reopening the many facets of Stephen Wise Free Synagogue are developed and refined.

This document was created to provide the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue, its clergy, staff, congregants, contractors, volunteers and attendees with precautions to help protect against the spread of COVID-19 as religious services, offices, schools and programs reopen or increase activity. The information contained below is subject to change as the available science and guidance evolves and is updated. Separate documents have been or are being created for office work, schools and service programs.

When reading this document, note that the term "visitor" means an individual whose visit is related to the business, operation or membership of the synagogue and its operations.

General comments:

- Stephen Wise Free Synagogue is happy to welcome you back, but if you are feeling sick, please stay home and watch or listen to our services.
- Members who are in an at-risk category are encouraged to attend remotely by live stream or using the dial-in phone number to further reduce the risk of exposure.
- Please make a reservation for attendance at services.
- Everyone attending a service will need to complete a brief health screening for each visit to the synagogue.

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- When you are at Stephen Wise, you will be required to wear a face covering and you should not remove it at the synagogue.
- Members should remember to wash their hands before and after leaving Stephen Wise. If washing hands is not possible, members should use hand sanitizer, which will be available in the lobby and throughout the building.
- Members of the congregation should maintain at least six feet of distance from other members, religious staff or volunteers when walking in or out of gatherings, classrooms or the building.
- If you feel the urge to sneeze or cough, cover your nose and mouth using a scarf, handkerchief or the inside of your shirt. If you're able to delay the sneeze or cough, leave the building and wash your hands and face thoroughly before returning.

What you can expect from the synagogue and its staff when you visit / attend:

- Stephen Wise Free Synagogue is and will continue to intensify cleaning, disinfection and ventilation.
- Stephen Wise is regularly monitoring its ventilation systems to ensure they operate properly.
- Stephen Wise is increasing circulation of outdoor air, as much as possible, by opening windows and doors. Note: windows and doors will not be opened if they pose a safety risk to children or adults.
- Frequently touched surfaces and objects will be cleaned and disinfected at least daily and in between uses, to the extent possible. Stephen Wise will monitor a schedule of increased routine cleaning and disinfection.
- If multiple worship services are offered, those services will be scheduled far enough apart to allow time for cleaning and disinfecting of high-touch surfaces between services.
- Items that are not easily cleaned, sanitized or disinfected will be stored away until after the pandemic. This includes High Holy Day prayer books, tallitot, kippot and more.
- Stephen Wise's facility manager will continue reviewing safe and correct application of disinfectants used at the synagogue with the maintenance staff. Additional training for maintenance staff will be implemented during the summer of 2020 before the schools reopen.

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- Cleaning products should not be used near children. If for some reason there needs to be cleaning/disinfection tasks performed near or around children in the building, staff should ensure that there is adequate ventilation when using any cleaning/disinfection products to prevent children or themselves from inhaling potentially hazardous vapors.

Throughout the stay-at-home period this past spring, the synagogue was not completely shut down. Stephen Wise’s maintenance staff were at the synagogue seven days a week performing essential safety services and took steps to ensure that all water systems (for example, the bathroom fixtures and water cooler) were used multiple times daily to minimize the risk of diseases associated with stagnant water. (Note: the water feature on the rooftop playground has not been opened for 2020 use).

The chart below has two columns: **NY State Mandatory Minimum Requirements for Religious and Funeral Services** and **SWFS Additional Requirements and Best Practices**. Stephen Wise Free Synagogue worship protocols consist of both the elements required by New York State and those specific added requirements and best practices listed below by Stephen Wise Free Synagogue (SWFS). The document includes information about Physical Distancing, Protective Equipment, Hygiene, Cleaning, Disinfection, Communication, and Screening.

Guidelines for Religious and Funeral Services	
NY State Mandatory Minimum Requirements for Religious and Funeral Services	SWFS Additional Requirements and Best Practices
<p>Physical Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For any religious or funeral service, limit the congregant/attendee capacity to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In Phase 1 regions, no more than 10 people for any services occurring indoor or outdoor. ○ In Phase 2 and 3 regions, no more than 25% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area for services occurring indoor; or no more than 25 people for services occur outdoor. ○ In Phase 4 regions, no more than 33% of the maximum occupancy for a particular area for services occurring indoor; or no more than 50 people for services occurring outdoor. 	<p>Physical Distancing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure that attendance at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue does not exceed capacity limits, Stephen Wise will ask members to register in advance to attend all services. • Stephen Wise will provide for remote service options (e.g., live streaming and dial-in), whenever possible. • The Stephen Wise building can accommodate only one service at a time. We may rent a separate building is rented for specific services.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any time employees, volunteers, and/or attendees must come within 6 feet of one another (or 12 feet., if singing), they must wear acceptable face coverings, unless they are members of the same household. Limit activities involving singing (e.g. choir, soloist, cantor, musical ensemble), unless 12 feet of separation can be provided between individuals or additional distancing or physical barriers can reduce transmission of respiratory droplets. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seating arrangements will maintain required six feet of physical distancing (e.g., leaving every other row of pews empty and cordoning off unavailable chairs). Seating will be set up for singles, doubles, and so on as fits best in the sanctuary rows — arranged so that members of the same family or household who reside together can sit together. Worshippers should sit in seats that coincide with the number of people who reside together in their same household; therefore, a distance of six feet should be maintained from other parties. Clergy will sit separately in the sanctuary so that they are at least six feet apart in all directions and are not sharing stations or seats without cleaning and disinfection between use. Clergy may sit with members of their same household. All attendees are required to wear face coverings upon entering the synagogue building and throughout worship services. Stephen Wise asks members to wear face coverings when they travel to the synagogue and to remove the face covering only upon arrival at their own homes. Four additional podiums with custom plexiglass surrounds will be used during services. Each clergy person, b’nai mitzvah celebrant, or other participant on the bimah will be assigned a specific podium — and those podiums will be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. The cantor will sing behind a plexiglass surround and will be more than twice the required 12 feet away from the congregation. We are considering using pre-recorded or remote singing by choir members.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Even as congregants will be wearing face coverings, they are not permitted to sing aloud during services. Only clergy and b’nai mitzvah celebrants may sing from behind their respective plexiglas podium surrounds. • Efforts to reduce bi-directional foot traffic will be made by filling the front seats first. • Stephen Wise will take steps to dismiss the congregation after services in an orderly fashion and we will pace the departure to prevent the interaction between parties at distances less than six feet. • Gatherings in groups outside or inside the synagogue should be discouraged, except among groups that already live together. • Only one member of the clergy will touch sacred books on a given day. • The congregation may bring their own prayer books to services, and must then take them home after each service. • The synagogue has the option of storing prayer books away until after the pandemic or it may provide a rotation of books that can be made available to worshipers during services. • For Shabbat worship, a rotation of “Mishkan T’filah” prayer books will be used. Each worshiper is instructed to pick up a book from a designated table in the back of the sanctuary and return the prayer book to the same designated book table where the books will then be covered and remain untouched until the next Shabbat.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prohibit holding or shaking hands of members in different households during services or prayers. • Prohibit the use of small spaces (e.g. elevators, vehicles) by more than one individual at time, unless all individuals are wearing face coverings. If occupied by more than one person, keep occupancy under 50% of maximum capacity. • Establish designated areas for pickups and deliveries. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For worship on the High Holy Days, the prayers contained in “Mishkan HaNefesh” will be displayed on screens for all to see and prayer books will be stored away until after the pandemic. • Information about downloading or purchasing the prayer books “Mishkan T’filah” for Shabbat or the two-book set “Mishkan HaNefesh” for the High Holy Days is available from the CCAR Press. • On occasion, disposable printed or cleanable laminated copies of specific passages may be distributed to worshippers or prayers may be posted on screens. • Services will be held outdoors if possible (e.g., graveside-only funerals). • Children present at worship services should remain with their parents or guardians and refrain from congregating or interacting with children from other parties while on the premises. • Use of perfumes and colognes should be discouraged to prevent those who might be sensitive to such products from sneezing or coughing. • Receiving lines are prohibited. • The maximum capacity of the elevator is three persons. Everyone over the age of two must wear a face covering when riding the elevator.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated areas for pickups and deliveries have been established at the ramp and center door.
<p>Protective Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide workers with an acceptable face covering at no cost to the worker and have an adequate supply of coverings in case of replacement. • Acceptable face coverings include but are not limited to cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks and face shields. • Face coverings are required at all times except while seated, provided all individuals are 6 feet apart except for immediate household members. Faith leaders, officiants, volunteers, and/or attendees must be prepared to don a face covering if another person unexpectedly comes within 6 feet (e.g. when walking to seats). 	<p>Protective Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone over two years old entering the synagogue must wear a face mask. (Members will be encouraged to use their own cloth face coverings. Note: cloth face coverings should not be placed on: children younger than two years; anyone who has trouble breathing or is unconscious; or anyone who is incapacitated or otherwise unable to remove it without assistance.) • All staff and visitors are advised to wear face coverings in common areas including elevators and lobbies and when traveling around the office. • Stephen Wise employees and contractors will be given disposable face masks at no cost to them, and the synagogue will maintain an adequate supply of coverings in case they need replacements. • Members and visitors to the synagogue are expected to supply their own face coverings. Acceptable face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth (e.g. homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks and face shields. • As stated above in our general comments section, when you are at Stephen Wise, you will be required to wear a face covering and you should not remove it while at the synagogue. This extra precaution has been implemented by Stephen Wise as one of many best practice improvements to the NYS minimum requirements.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and may not be shared. Consult the CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of personal protective equipment (PPE), as well as instructions on use and cleaning. • If providing gowns or other garments, ensure they are cleaned and laundered between uses. • Train workers on how to don, doff, clean (as applicable) and discard PPE. • Limit the sharing of objects (e.g. religious texts, collection plates) as well as the touching of shared surfaces (e.g. pews, instruments, doors, railings); or, require individuals to wear gloves when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or require individuals to sanitize or wash their hands before and after contact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Everyone is prohibited from sharing face coverings worn at the synagogue. Members should consult the CDC guidance for additional information on cloth face coverings and other types of personal protective equipment (PPE); the guidelines include instructions on their use, cleaning and disinfection. • Wait to take off your face covering until you return home. • To limit touching of door handles, the left-hand door to the sanctuary will be kept open as much as possible to enable members to enter the sanctuary for services without touching shared door handles. This door will also remain open and used for exiting the sanctuary during worship services. After services, congregants will exit the sanctuary from the rear rows first, through the middle doors and directly out of the building’s main middle doors. • Stephen Wise will remove religious texts and encourage congregants to bring their own copies of “Mishkan T’filah” for Shabbat. • Stephen Wise will instruct congregants and guests as to how to download the prayer book or excerpts and Torah portions onto their internet-enabled devices as needed. • Note that this year CCAR is offering free and low-cost Shabbat and High Holy Days resources at: www.ccarnet.org/publications.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the choir or musical ensemble meet enhanced distancing measures, they will be encouraged to wash their clothes at home and bring their own instruments. Whenever possible, instruments and microphones will not be shared. • Service practices will be adapted to minimize close contact between individuals. • Candle lighting, kiddush and motzi will be performed by one person on the bimah. These ritual items will be cleaned and disinfected before and after use. • Stephen Wise clergy will sanitize or wash their hands before and after contact with shared objects or surfaces.
<p>Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adhere to hygiene, cleaning, and disinfection requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH) and maintain cleaning logs on site that document date, time, and scope of cleaning. • Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on site, including handwashing with soap, water and paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. Hand sanitizer must be placed throughout the location. 	<p>Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand sanitizer stations have been placed at strategic locations throughout the synagogue.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide and encourage participants to use cleaning/disinfection supplies before and after use of shared and frequently touched surfaces, followed by hand hygiene. • Ensure distancing rules are adhered to in restrooms by reducing capacity, where feasible. • Regularly clean and disinfect the location or facility and conduct more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high risk areas used by many individuals (e.g. restrooms) and for frequently touched surfaces, using Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) products identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19. If possible, consider increasing the volume of outside fresh air within the location or facility. • If cleaning or disinfection products or the act of cleaning and disinfecting causes safety hazards or degrades the material (e.g. religious artifact), put in place hand hygiene stations, supply gloves, and/or limit the number of individuals touching such material. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Wise will ensure distancing rules are adhered to in restrooms by reducing capacity where feasible and posting capacity limits. If the stalls are occupied, any lines forming will be formed in the hallway and those in queue must observe social distancing requirements. Restroom exhaust systems will continue to vent directly outdoors. • Wherever possible, Stephen Wise staff will increase ventilation of outdoor air (e.g., by opening doors and windows) while maintaining safety precautions. • If windows and doors cannot remain open due to adverse weather conditions, Stephen Wise will maximize indoor air quality by: • Turning on the heating, ventilating and air-conditioning (HVAC) system to maintain a comfortable temperature, and increasing fresh air to the system. Possible adjustments to the HVAC system are under review to introduce as much outside air as possible and minimize recirculation of “return” air. • Efforts will be made to monitor and maintain indoor relative humidity levels of between 40 and 60%. • Stephen Wise is testing high-efficiency particulate air (HEPA) filters to help reduce localized aerosol concentrations.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No shared food or beverages (e.g. buffet-style meals). For funeral-related services, prohibit touching, hugging or kissing the body of a deceased person who had confirmed or suspected COVID-19, per CDC guidance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any fans blowing from one person directly toward any other individuals will be disabled or removed. Fans in private offices may be used only if there is only one person in the office at the time. There will be no food or beverages served or provided for attendees before, during, or after a service at Stephen Wise Free Synagogue. Congregants are asked not to share food.
<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines, and that you will implement them. Post signage throughout the facility to remind individuals to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE and cleaning and disinfecting protocols. Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site. 	<p>Communication</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Wise has affirmed to New York State that the minimum mandatory guidelines set forth for religious and funeral services and reproduced in the left column of this document have been reviewed and will be followed. Stephen Wise will implement a communications plan for employees, volunteers and congregants that includes applicable instructions, training, signage and a consistent means to provide individuals with information. Stephen Wise will use its website, text, email and social media campaigns to communicate with all its constituents. The mandated New York State Business Reopening Safety Plan has been completed by the synagogue as a requirement for reopening and this completed plan is posted conspicuously in the first floor lobby.

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<p>Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement mandatory health screening assessment (e.g. questionnaire, temperature check) for employees, faith leaders, and volunteers (but not attendees), asking about (1) COVID-19 symptoms in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, and/or (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days. Responses must be reviewed daily and documented. 	<p>Screening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stephen Wise is requiring everyone entering the synagogue to complete a mandatory health screening questionnaire to check for (1) temperature, (2) potential COVID-19 symptoms experienced in the past 14 days, (3) positive COVID-19 tests in past 14 days, and/or (4) close or proximate contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 cases in the past 14 days. A special health screening app will be distributed to members of Stephen Wise in good standing for them to download onto their smartphones in order to provide an easy way for members to complete the health and screening questionnaire before each and every synagogue visit. Certification by members thorough the app before their arrival at the synagogue will help to prevent them from intermingling in close contact with each other instead of queueing at the door to be screened. Guests who arrive without having screened themselves will need to self-certify to one of our security guards. The security guards will be trained by the management of their company, ISA Safe; these individuals are familiar with CDC, DOH and OSHA protocols and wear appropriate PPE, including, at a minimum, face coverings. A log will be maintained of every person who enters the synagogue premises to help with contact tracing. Should we be able and willing to accommodate non-members at services, they will be asked to complete a health and screening questionnaire and provide their contact information upon arrival.

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If an employee or faith leader tests positive for COVID19, immediately notify state and local health departments and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts who had close contact with the worker, while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal law and regulations. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Wise will encourage b’nai mitzvah families to have their service attendees complete a screening and provide contact information prior to arriving at the synagogue on Saturday mornings so they can be logged and contacted for contact tracing if necessary. • Stephen Wise will immediately notify the New York City and State Health Departments of confirmed positive cases occurring at the synagogue facility and cooperate with contact tracing efforts, including notification of potential contacts who had close contact with the affected person, while maintaining confidentiality as required by state and federal law and regulations.