



TEMPLE BETH AM

REOPENING OF TEMPLE BETH AM

Action Plan

TBA REOPENING TASK FORCE

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Keeping Everyone Safe

Introduction

At Temple Beth Am, it is our priority to keep our members, our employees, and their families healthy, especially in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. At the same time, we wish to maintain and strengthen the spirit of community which makes Temple Beth Am a special place. We pursue these goals guided by Jewish ethics and values: 1) ***Pikuah Nefesh*** – “Safeguarding Life” is a bedrock principle of Jewish law, and supersedes most other obligations or *mitzvot*. To this end, we must ensure that any steps towards restoring physical proximity prioritize the protection of life. 2) ***Sakanat Nefeshot*** – “Endangering Life”. Members, staff, and clergy should not be in positions where they will be unduly endangering their own lives or the lives of their families due to pressure to restore activities. We must honor the needs of those who have particular circumstances requiring them to reduce risk to themselves or to those with whom they live.

As we navigate these extraordinary times, we recognize that Jewish life has always made adjustments in times of emergency and crisis. We need to accept that this crisis may last for well over a year, and that we will need to continue to change our expectations and operations. We will need continued flexibility in Jewish practice informed by our commitment to authentic modes of interpretation of our tradition. We also recognize our members are connected to others outside our community, and our policies and activities affect the broader rate of infection.

In reopening our facilities, we will abide by governmental guidelines and requirements set by the State of California, The County of Los Angeles, and the City of Los Angeles. We must balance public health concerns with the needs of our sacred community. This *Reopening of Temple Beth Am* action plan details how we plan to reopen our facilities and resume in-person services and other functions while keeping everyone as safe as reasonably possible. This plan, which specifically implements requirements of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health’s (LACDPH) protocols for Places of Worship, and draws upon the White House’s Opening Up America Again Guidelines,¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)² and Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) guidance, State of California guidelines for Places of Worship, professional Jewish organizations, community groups, local authorities, and medical experts, highlights the responsibilities of clergy, staff, lay leaders, and members.

Even though it is now legally possible for us to gather, albeit with many restrictions, that does not mean that we necessarily should allow such gatherings. Our congregation contains many members who would be considered high-risk, and *halachah* allows us to fulfill all *mitzvot* without gathering in person. Therefore, mere legal permission to gather is just the starting point for determining when such gatherings ought to take place.

While this action plan sets forth various protocols to ensure your safety, it’s up to you and everyone in our community to be diligent and use good judgment in implementing these protocols. By releasing this *Reopening TBA* action plan, we hope to clearly communicate our plans to reopen, highlight protocols in

¹ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/openingamerica/>

² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/php/faith-based.html>

place to ensure your safety and establish a level of comfort for everyone as we make it possible for you to re-enter our congregational home.

We understand that some members will choose not to re-enter the building for some time to come. We encourage, support, and honor that decision, and would especially encourage those with higher risk from COVID-19 infection to avoid attending anything at TBA (or elsewhere that gatherings take place). These groups include:

1. Adults over age 65
2. Those with pre-existing respiratory issues
3. Those sharing a household with people described above.

We understand that every person's situation is different and encourage those with specific risks or concerns to speak confidentially with our Executive Director.

Reopening of TBA Timeline

Due to the evolving nature of the COVID-19 pandemic, creating an exact timeline for resuming operations is not feasible. We will continue to monitor applicable state and local guidance, practices within the Jewish community, and surrounding religious and non-religious organizations to determine next steps for reopening services, programs, in-office staff operations, and outside events.

At this time, we've created a tentative phased approach for allowing members to pray in person and asking our employees to return to work.

REOPENING TBA

Phase One

Our facility has essentially been closed since Governor Newsom issued the Safer-At-Home Order for the entire State of California on March 19, 2020. All services and programs have been conducted online via livestream, Zoom, and other platforms. On May 25, 2020, Governor Newsom modified the Safer-at-Home order to allow houses of worship to re-open in accordance with specific guidelines. However, after a spike in COVID-19 infections in California, the State of California issued revised rules for Places of Worship on July 6, 2020 which significantly curtailed permitted activities. The City of Los Angeles has followed the State's approach. Therefore, in Phase One, we will begin to allow worship services to take place outdoors on Ziering Field, with limited attendance. Most participation will remain online. Onsite attendance will require pre-registration, as well as compliance with all guidelines, including social distancing and wearing a mask.

During Phase One, in accordance with the *Los Angeles County Dept of Public Health's Protocol for Places of Worship: Appendix F ("County Protocol")*, **staff who can carry out their work duties from home** will be directed to do so, and to the extent possible, TBA will increase opportunities for staff to work from home - especially for those who are most vulnerable. Staff who need access to files or equipment in the building to conduct their work may do so according to the policies and procedures in this plan. For example, the facilities team may begin preparing for future phases of the plan and financial staff may

work in the presence of essential files. Other staff who feel it is important to be in the building for their work should discuss this with the Executive Director before returning to the building and follow applicable schedules. **Phase One will be an opportunity to test and refine our protocols.** During Phase One, all adult education and other programs will remain online. Camp Keshet on-site programming has been cancelled.

All staff will be provided with a copy of WORKPLACE POLICIES AND PRACTICES TO PROTECT EMPLOYEE (STAFF) HEALTH from the County Protocol and will be required to follow TBA protocols as outlined below under “Keeping Employees Safe”.

During Phase One and until further notice, all nonessential visitors during business hours are prohibited and any interviews should be conducted virtually. For business-critical visits (e.g., material deliveries or maintenance contractors), TBA will take steps to safeguard employees and visitors by:

- Requiring that visitors affirm their health status before being allowed to enter.
- Requiring visitors to go directly to their assigned work area without unnecessarily interacting with others.
- Requiring visitors to practice social distancing and wear a mask while on-site.

Phase Two

During Phase Two, we expect to gradually phase in larger allowable attendance at services. According to the state and local orders issued on May 26, 2020, the maximum attendance permitted for worship services is capped at 100 people or 25% of building capacity, whichever is smaller. Larger outdoor services, still requiring social distancing and the wearing of masks, were permitted as of June 18, 2020. We will consider expanding our allowable attendance, though likely not to the maximum allowable for some time. The first larger gathering will likely be outdoors on Ziering Field, where household members might sit together in designated areas while socially distancing from others. During this phase, pre-registration will still be required for services and the number of registrants will be capped. Other in-person programming may be considered, in accordance with regulatory guidelines. Social distancing and mask wearing protocols will remain in place. Employees who are able to do so should continue to remain home and work remotely. Those who do need to work in the building will be limited in number, continuing to follow the protocols described above. Meetings and classes will remain virtual, and only essential visitors will be allowed into the building.

Phase Three

Under Phase Three, we will reach sustainable limits for participation in services and programs, both indoors and outdoors. It is hard to say what this new normal will look like, but we will maintain social distancing and other policies to protect health until such time as they are no longer required. The office may reopen to all employees, though opportunities to work from home will still be allowed for those whose jobs permit it. We will observe governmental guidelines related to occupancy and capacity given our square footage.

Considerations

It's important to note that these phases are tentative and are subject to change based on State and local guidance, leadership judgment, and the pandemic itself. Should an employee or congregant test positive for COVID-19 after the office reopens, we may modify our plan to protect our employees and congregants. In addition, if cases of COVID-19 spike again in our State or the City of Los Angeles, we will consider whether to remain open.

We recognize that each individual will need to make a personal decision as to when he or she is comfortable returning to TBA. Please reach out to our Executive Director Sheryl Goldman if you have questions or concerns.

Keeping Employees Safe

The following protocols will be put in place immediately and will continue through at least Phase 2 and possibly into Phase 3:

- **Building entry log and screening** — Upon arrival, all employees must report into the Security Desk or to the Director of Facilities or other designated individual so that attendance may be recorded. If you arrive in the building and no one is present at the Desk, text Kash at 818-588-1747. Follow directional signs to travel through the building as well as within the interior office suites.
- **Symptom checks will be conducted before staff enter the facility;** staff will not be allowed to come into the office if they report or exhibit symptoms of possible COVID-19 infection, or are feeling sick. By checking in, staff acknowledge that they are fever-free, and are not exhibiting other signs of possible illness, including shortness of breath, cough or loss of sense of taste or smell. When possible, a temperature check will be taken upon entry. If symptoms are present, staff will need to follow DPH guidance for self-isolation and testing for COVID-19. If you test positive, please report immediately to your supervisor.
- **All work areas are separated by at least 6 feet or by partitions. Those working in classrooms or larger common areas must maintain a minimum of 6 feet of separation.**
- **Doors to the main office entry areas will be propped open during the workday when feasible.** In order to avoid having to pass each other in the hallway, all staff should only proceed clockwise through the administrative suite. Arrows will be placed on the floor to remind people of this policy. Only one person should be in the mailroom/copier room at a time. Only one person should be in the admin kitchen area at a time.
- **Elevator** - Only one staff person may be in the elevator at any time.
- **Office restroom** – Only one person should be in the restroom at any time; a system will be developed to monitor occupancy. Sanitizing wipes will be available for use before using the toilet, if desired. As always, hands should be washed after using the restroom. A paper towel may be used to open the door to exit. Custodians will be instructed to disinfect the restrooms on a regular basis.
- **When possible, each staff person will be assigned his/her own office supplies and equipment.** Staff will be instructed to wipe down the touch-areas on the copy machine and postage machine before and after use.

- **Prohibition of in-person meetings**—During this phase, TBA bans in-person meetings. Instead, employees should conduct virtual meetings. Employees who are in the office should avoid gathering in groups.
- **Face Coverings** - all employees must wear masks/face coverings at all times while they are in the building, unless they are in their own private offices. Employees may bring their own, which should be washed daily. Alternately, disposable masks will be provided to all employees upon request.
- **Additional PPE will be provided to staff** whose responsibilities include cleaning and disinfecting, including gloves. Proper cleaning instructions will also be provided.
- **Staff will be required to take their lunch breaks at their own workspace**, or they may leave the premises for lunchtime. Staff should keep all food items stored in their own workspace, or speak to the Executive Director to make arrangements for cold storage. There will be no communal eating indoors or sharing of food during Phases 1, 2 and possibly 3 of this plan.
- **Common areas will be cleaned regularly by the custodial staff.** When possible, individuals should take responsibility for disinfecting their own workplace, as well as office equipment that must be used by others. Cleaning supplies will be provided.
- **Mail, Packages and Deliveries**— All deliveries to TBA will be logged and sorted in the Security office. One designated person from each office will retrieve mail from a designated spot and distribute, taking precautions by wearing gloves, using hand sanitizer or both.

TBA may add to this list of workplace procedures as we gradually return to more normal operations. Congregants and employees should monitor our communications to ensure they're up to date on all health and safety procedures. All staff will be trained on the policies and procedures outlined in the *Reopening TBA* Plan and other relevant guidance. Training will focus upon workplace infection-control practices, the proper use of personal protective equipment, steps the employee must take to notify the business or operation of any symptoms of COVID-19 or a suspected or confirmed diagnosis of COVID-19, and how to report unsafe working conditions.

Keeping Members and Clergy Safe

The success of our *Reopening TBA* action plan relies on how well everyone follows social distancing and health and safety protocols. As such, the following protocols have been implemented to ensure your health and safety. Please bring any concerns regarding the following protocols to the *Reopening TBA* Task Force.

Social Distancing Protocol

All those on TBA's campus should follow social distancing best practices, including but not limited to the sanctuary, lobby, meeting rooms, restrooms, outdoor areas, common areas and office spaces. Specifically, everyone is asked to:

- Stay 6 feet away from others (who are not cohabitating family members) whether praying, walking, working, or otherwise engaged³.

³ This will be enforced through policy, supervision, ground markings, signs, and physical barriers as appropriate.

- Avoid conversations and tasks that require close face-to-face contact with others when possible.
- Avoid physical contact with others whenever possible (e.g., handshakes, hugs).
- Avoid touching surfaces that may have been touched by others when possible.
- Avoid gathering when entering and exiting the facility. Everyone should also only enter and exit designated areas and avoid lingering in common areas.
- Only one person, or one group of family members, may use the elevator at any one time. If the elevator is occupied, please wait until the elevator is vacated before entering.
- Follow any posted signage regarding COVID-19 social distancing and other health and safety practices.

Masks/Facial Covering

All persons entering the TBA building are required to bring masks and wear them while on the TBA campus. Those unwilling to wear masks will be required to leave. The only exceptions to this policy are:

1. Mask wearing by clergy may be dependent upon other barriers in the space; they will follow prevailing regulations. They are asked to put on masks upon the conclusion of their prayer-leading.
2. Employees in their individual offices alone, with the doors closed or no more than slightly ajar.
3. Children less than 2 years old and others medically unable to wear a mask

TBA will maintain a small inventory of disposable masks as a backup for those who enter the building. Inventory quantities will be regularly tracked and documented but cannot be guaranteed.

Health and Safety Protocols

General Health and Hygiene

To help everyone to remain healthy, TBA has hand sanitizer (at least 60% alcohol) and disinfecting wipes available throughout the building. It is suggested that you wash their hands more frequently than normal, and all staff will be allowed frequent breaks for this purpose.

Furthermore, while the strategies highlighted in this document can protect you from COVID-19, it's important to follow CDC guidance at all times. For more information, click [here](#).

Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocol

TBA facility staff and outside contractors will clean common areas and other frequently touched surfaces throughout the day, along with high-touch areas that are used for worship, such as microphones and surfaces on the *bimah*. CDC-approved sanitizing chemicals and procedures will be used. The frequency of this cleaning may change depending on the situation.

A checklist of items to be cleaned and sanitized, and the frequency at which this is to be done, will be maintained by the Director of Facilities.

Restroom Usage

In Phases One and Two only one person will be permitted to enter each restroom at a time. Restrooms on all floors will be designated as "gender neutral". Everyone will be reminded (via signage) to wash

their hands before exiting the restrooms, using a paper towel to open the door if desired. Hand sanitizer will also be made available immediately outside of the restrooms. Disinfecting wipes will also be available to wipe down toilet seats and faucets if desired - taking care that these not be flushed down the toilets.

Custodians will be scheduled to wash and sanitize faucets and toilet handles in bathrooms regularly when the building is in use. This will include all surfaces likely to be touched within the bathrooms.

Drinking Fountains

Drinking fountains will be turned off to avoid use. Members and staff are encouraged to bring their own water bottles when entering the building for any reason.

Mezuzah

Kissing or physically touching the *mezuzot* on and within the building is discouraged. A symbolic gesture in that direction is recommended instead.

Reporting/Notification Protocol

Any person who was in the building and subsequently experiences COVID-19 symptoms or has tested positive for COVID-19 must immediately notify TBA's Executive Director or Head of School. Members, Guests, and Employees who test positive for COVID-19 or believe they have been exposed are instructed to follow the advice of a qualified medical professional and self-quarantine. We will assist with contact tracing and informing those who may have been exposed, keeping the identity of the person infected confidential. This information will be tracked separately from personnel records, and names will not be released unless requested specifically by the public authorities. If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the building, TBA will notify the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health and other applicable public authorities, as well as impacted members, guests, and employees within 24 hours. TBA will take all appropriate measures to disinfect the areas impacted per LACDPH and CDC guidelines.

Services and Programs Attendee Screening Protocols

The first and most important screening procedure is conducted by anyone contemplating entering the building before they leave home. **If you are ill in any way, we urge you to stay home** and participate in our activities through virtual means. This especially includes anyone with fever, achiness, cough, or other upper respiratory symptoms.

During Phases One and Two of the Reopening, all those entering the building for services or programs will be required to pre-register to ensure compliance with attendance limits and for contact tracing purposes. The pre-registration process will require a self-certification of health and agreement to follow the procedures (below) while within the building.

In addition, TBA will require a second health screening at the front door, asking all those entering the building to confirm they are not currently experiencing any COVID-19 symptoms such as fever, achiness, cough, or upper respiratory issues. During Phases One and Two, and possibly beyond, everyone entering onto the premises will also be required to have their temperature checked. Any person refusing to submit to a temperature check, or with a temperature over 100F, or otherwise visibly ill will be asked to leave discretely and immediately. People waiting to be screened will line up outside the building on markers (placed on the ground) 6 feet apart. All information gleaned from the screening will

be treated as confidential medical information—specifically, the identity of anyone exhibiting a fever or other COVID-19 symptoms will only be shared with the TBA leadership with a true need to know.

Safe Ritual Procedures

Limited Attendance

During Phases 1, 2 and 3, attendance at services will be limited to a predefined number and increasing as our procedures mature and it is perceived by the Reopening TBA Task Force that it can be safely managed. A registration system will be used to control the available participation, though special priority may be given for Daily Minyan for those in mourning or observing a *yahrzeit*. Special exceptions from the general participation request process can be made by the clergy for those participating in bar/bat mitzvahs and/or leading the service.

Seating

When services commence in the sanctuary, specific seats will be marked out to maintain at least a six foot distance between family units. Family units living in the same house may sit together, but all others must be distanced at all times. Initially, we expect to seat one or two households per row in pews, and seat individuals on the separate chairs. Allowable seats will be indicated with colored tape. Seating on Ziering Field will be arranged by household, with instruction provided by a staff person or volunteer upon entry for services or other gatherings.

Entry/Exit

We will maintain a safe, socially-distanced environment from the front door until exit. Separate entrance and exits will be clearly marked to provide for continuous social distancing. Members will check in before they enter the building and will be informed of important health and safety requirements. Entrance to the TBA building will be through the left-most building door in front of the Security desk. The door will remain propped open during services, or opened manually by a designated greeter. Pathways will be designated for safe passage through the Lobby to the right-most entry door to the sanctuary, which will be marked “enter only” and left open. The members will proceed to an allowable, marked seat through the rightmost aisle. When they leave, members will proceed to the center or leftmost aisle (looking toward the front) and back to the rightmost door. A pathway to the rightmost main entry door will be marked. Basically, people just need to remember to “keep right” and signs will be posted to that effect.

Siddurim

TBA recommends that congregants bring their own *siddurim* to services, or alternatively to download applicable apps/PDFs in advance (TBA will provide assistance with these). For Shabbat services only, a limited number of *siddurim* and *chumashim* will be available for usage. The books will be distributed and collected/returned in a manner which will allow them to be unused for a week thereafter to avoid surface infection potential.

Singing

The Task Force recognizes the important role of singing/chanting in TBA services. However, in its July 6, 2020 guidance, the State of California Department of Public Health prohibited indoor singing and recommended no singing take place outdoors either. When singing resumes, masks will likely be required in order to mitigate the risk posed by voice projection. Also, clergy may encourage more limited, quieter singing than has traditionally occurred in TBA services. Further, a 10-foot radius around

the *bimah* will be clearly marked, within which no one may enter while a clergy member (or anyone else) is leading services. Clergy will continually reassess the feasibility of singing in an effort to maintain the *ruach* of our services while adhering to State and County protocols encouraging any services involving singing to be done outdoors.

Aliyot

Standing microphones will be placed at the front of the left and right aisles. *Aliyot* will be conducted from those microphones, so as to maintain distance from the clergy on the *bimah*. Nobody except clergy will be allowed on the *bimah*, and the clergy will not leave the *bimah* (including backstage areas) during the service. Single-use photocopies of the blessings will be provided to those who are honored with *aliyot*.

Clergy on the Bimah

Spacing of at least ten feet will be maintained between the clergy at all times. In general, they will use separate microphones and shtenders/lecterns throughout the service. During Torah reading, the person reading the Torah will be the only one at the Shulchan. Only clergy will touch the Torah. Hakafot around the congregation will be suspended until further notice.

Children

In the initial phases, all children in the building must remain under constant supervision of their parents, as there will be no childcare provided. Children will not be permitted to roam the facility unsupervised at any time.

Compliance and Enforcement

It is essential to everyone's health that our procedures be followed consistently while in the buildings, Ziering Field and the rest of the campus. Staff and volunteers will endeavor to monitor compliance as people enter the campus, and there will be printed signs and announcements reminding everyone of the rules and procedures. While there may be announcements and even designated staff or volunteers to politely remind people to comply with our procedures, it will still be up to everyone to make sure that they and their family are in full compliance. Those who refuse to comply with TBA protocols -- such as social distancing and mask wearing -- may be asked to leave the campus. Maximizing our chances of staying safe is wholly dependent on each of us complying with safety protocols.

Communication of These Procedures

TBA will communicate the relevant safety procedures to members and potential guests through various media, including:

- Email
- Kol Ha'am Newsletter
- Social Media
- Website
- Signage in the Building
- Oral announcements

Signage

TBA will display signage and other markings in public areas to help communicate the safe procedures described here, including:

1. Requirements for social distancing and wearing of masks
2. Requirement that anyone feel the least bit ill turn around and go home
3. Encouraging those who are vulnerable to stay home
4. Traffic patterns to maintain at least six feet between people
5. Seating allowed in all venues
6. Safe use of the restrooms

Conclusion – Looking Forward

TBA looks forward to a future of approaching a more normal prayer, learning, community-gathering, and work environment. The COVID-19 pandemic has created uncertain times and resulted in unprecedented changes. As communicated throughout this *Reopening TBA* action plan, we are prioritizing the health of our community every step of the way as we consider reopening our doors.

We will execute our plan cautiously, following applicable federal, state and local guidance. We also understand that each member and employee has different needs and situations as our doors begin to reopen. The clergy and staff are always available to help. Reach out to clergy by calling 310-652-7354 x210 or email snemetz@tbala.org if you would like to make an appointment. If you have any concerns about returning to the building, contact our Executive Director Sheryl Goldman at sgoldman@tbala.org.

Finally, we ask that everyone remain patient and understanding of the fact that the COVID-19 pandemic may require our *Reopening of TBA* plans to change. The membership and employees will be given as much notice as possible in the event of an unforeseen setback or building closure.

Together, we will get through this situation with a stronger, more connected, and more healthy TBA family. Let us continue to pray for peace, for strength, and most importantly for life.

Kol Yisrael Areivim zeh l'zeh

All of Israel are responsible for one another

Talmud Shevuot 39a

Date: 071320 subject to change in accordance with regulatory guidelines