



COVID Safety Protocols Update Changes Effective on August 17, 2021

Based on the recommendations of the Temple's COVID Task Force, the following key practices will be in place, effective Tuesday, August 17, 2021, and will be revised as circumstances change.

These changes were adopted keeping Jewish values in mind and taking into account guidelines from health officials. If you have questions, please contact Executive Director Samara Sheray at (260) 744-4245 or cavadmin@templecav.org.

Worship Services

The Temple will continue to offer both in-person and virtual options for worship services for the foreseeable future to accommodate those who are not fully vaccinated or who are still uncomfortable participating in indoor public activities.

Masks and social distancing

As of August 1, 2021, Allen County has been designated a "red" (high) area for community transmission of COVID-19 by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). The CDC advises both those who are fully vaccinated and those who are not vaccinated: "To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#)."

Based on the current health guidance, the Temple will continue to require masks at services, meetings, and other events, within the following protocols:

For those who are fully vaccinated:

- Masks are required but there is no requirement to social distance.
- **Congregants and guests are asked to please sign a *brit* (a covenantal agreement) attesting that they are fully vaccinated.** By stating that you've been fully vaccinated, you may move more freely around the building and attend events without social distancing. While masks currently are required at the Temple and Rifkin Campus, signing the *brit* will enable you to be mask-free in the building at such time as conditions and health guidelines change.
- Please return your *brit* as soon as possible by email, U.S. mail, or fax so we have it on file to assist us when you attend Shabbat and High Holy Days services, as well as other events. [Sign the brit electronically](#) or [print out a copy to return](#).

For those who are NOT fully vaccinated (due to a medical condition, individual choice, or children under 12):

- Masks and social distancing are required in the building. For worship, another option is virtual attendance.
- **Important note for the High Holy Days:** Due to space limitations in the Goldstine-B'nai Jacob Chapel, only fully vaccinated individuals may attend traditional services in person. We encourage those who are not fully vaccinated to attend traditional services for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur on Zoom or YouTube. However, sufficient seating will be available in the Sanctuary at the Reform services to allow for social distance seating for those who are not fully vaccinated.

In addition, other changes to safety guidelines include:

- There will no longer be a need for reservations and assigned seating for services or capacity limits when attending in person.
- Meetings and groups such as mah jongg may resume as long as all participants are fully vaccinated and masked.
- **Important note for Religious School:** Masks will be required for those participating in Religious School activities, including teachers, students, and parents.
- A sign will be posted on the front door to inform non-congregants such as guests, workers, delivery persons, etc. that we require them to wear a mask, as well as social distance if they are not fully vaccinated.

Food at Temple Events

The new guidelines allow for a return of Oneg Shabbats, the Rosh Hashanah Reception, Break-the-Fast, Corned Beef Fundraiser, and noshes at meetings. Please note the following guidelines:

- The making and serving of food is not a health issue as pertains to COVID. Therefore, food prepared in congregants' homes is acceptable, as is serving oneself from a buffet table.
- Masks are required when attending events at the Temple where food and beverages are served. Masks may be removed when seated at a table to consume food and beverages, but should be worn at all other times.
- Anyone not fully vaccinated will be asked to social distance while their mask is removed to eat. This includes children.

Future changes to our safety protocols

The following circumstance would prompt a re-examination of the above guidelines:

- A change in the CDC guidelines.
- A change in the caseload status of Allen County.
- A need to enhance precautions due to an upsurge of the Delta variant.

Guidelines from the Central Conference of American Rabbis

It is a mitzvah to preserve one's own health and well-being (*sh'mirat haguf*). The COVID-19 vaccines approved by the FDA (Pfizer, Moderna, and J&J) qualify as *r'fuah b'dukah*, proven treatment, and it is therefore a mitzvah to get vaccinated unless one has a medical reason that makes it unsafe.

It is a mitzvah to adhere to standards of safety that avert obvious dangers (*sakanat nefashot*) to others or to oneself. Jewish tradition has long presumed that recognized medical experts are reliable. For this reason, all congregations should adhere to whatever public health standards apply to their area. Since, in the US, the CDC is the recognized standard in this area, their guidance is preferable to local (e.g., county-level) standards. The community is not obligated to go beyond the standards set by the public health authorities, but of course, it may choose to do so, using whatever procedures (e.g., synagogue board decisions) it ordinarily uses to set communal policy.

Out of concern for *sakanat nefashot*, a congregation may choose to require that individuals attending in person show proof of vaccination. If the congregation chooses to do this, they should be as generous as possible in accommodating the needs of those who must remain virtual attendees. The congregation is not required to accommodate the needs of individuals who have chosen not to be vaccinated because of some reason other than medical contraindications.

We strongly urge our congregations to resume their regular pre-pandemic schedule of in-person services, and to use all-virtual minyanim in ways that enrich and enhance communal prayer and study, not as replacements for face-to-face gatherings.