



# HONPA HONGWANJI MISSION OF HAWAII

STATE HEADQUARTERS

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## COVID-19 Memo #6

### Directives, Recommendations and Guidelines from Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Headquarters including Reopening Guideline Information (May 21, 2020)

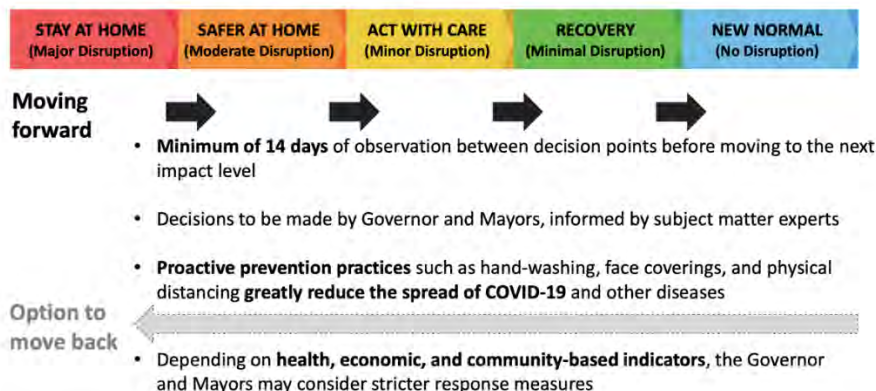
Many of you are probably waiting to hear the date that we can fully reopen our temple doors and everyone can come back to temple all at once. However, that will not be the case. It is more prudent to open slowly and always keep in mind that if something unexpected happens we may need to pull back. At minimum for the rest of this year, COVID-19 will affect our operations and activities as Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii.

It is a difficult decision. We want to reopen and be able to gather as a Sangha at our temples both because we want and because we need to. Fortunately, in Hawaii, we are doing very well because mostly everyone has cooperated with government proclamations and followed the recommendations out of respect and aloha for each other. Let us persevere and have patience. We have progressed from “Stay at Home” to “Safer at Home” and about to enter “Act with Care.” However, though the number of deaths are low and the number of infections are decreasing that does not mean that we are out of the woods yet and this is a consistent message from medical and health experts at the federal, state and county levels.

### 5 Phases of Reopening

The State of Hawaii has come up with a 5 phase reopening procedure. Please refer to the charts below which are excerpts from the Governor’s presentation.

#### How We Move to the Next Impact Level






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(Impact level may vary by County)

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# Impacts to Daily Life from Stabilization to Resilience

(Impact level may vary by County)

Impact to Daily Life	STAY AT HOME (Major Disruption)	SAFER AT HOME (Moderate Disruption)	ACT WITH CARE (Minor Disruption)	RECOVERY (Minimal Disruption)	NEW NORMAL (No Disruption)
 Face Coverings	Follow recommended Safe Practices				
 Stay at Home	Stay at home except for essential activities	High-risk populations* and kūpuna recommended to stay at home		High-risk populations and kūpuna exercise caution when in public	
 Gatherings	No gatherings	No gatherings over 10 and maintain >6ft physical distance	Gatherings up to 50 and maintain >6ft physical distance	Maintain >6ft physical distance	

\*High-risk populations are currently defined by CDC as: persons 65 years of age and older; people of all ages with underlying medical conditions (particularly not well controlled), including people with chronic lung disease or moderate to severe asthma, people who have serious heart conditions, people who are immunocompromised, people with severe obesity, people with diabetes, people with chronic kidney disease undergoing dialysis, and people with liver disease; people who live in a nursing home or long-term care facility.

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## Impact Level: Act with Care

(May vary by County)

STAY AT HOME (Major Disruption)	SAFER AT HOME (Moderate Disruption)	ACT WITH CARE (Minor Disruption)	RECOVERY (Minimal Disruption)	NEW NORMAL (No Disruption)
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### Health Description

- New cases and/or clusters are manageable within system capacity
- Improved capacity utilization for testing, hospitals, contact tracing



### What this means for the people of Hawai'i

- Start with reopening of medium-risk businesses and operations, then move to high-risk businesses and operations based on indicators
- High-risk populations and kūpuna should continue to stay at home when possible



### What other states are doing

- When cases are "clearly declining," several states plan to open higher-risk businesses, with continued telework where possible

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Summarizing, even though we are moving towards “Act with Care” for “Houses of Worship” (“Churches”) not much has changed except for Oahu with the City and County of Honolulu’s Drive-In Services have been allowed since May 15, 2020. Please refer to the Honolulu Mayor’s website for details. Other counties may be implementing similar allowances soon with permission from the Governor so please keep abreast of County proclamations too. The State has extended restrictions with modifications until June 30, 2020.

Generally,

- Follow Federal, State and County regulations and recommendations.
- Remember that reopening can vary from County to County.
- Always consider that many, if not most, of our membership belong to the high risk category of over 65 years of age. Also, please be conscious of the safety of ministers and other lay staff who will be exposed frequently to other people.

- Remind everyone that if they are sick not to come to temple.
- Begin making plans and preparations for reopening by making informational signs to be posted including physical distancing indicators/markers for standing and sitting, having a supply of safety and good hygiene supplies like facial masks, hand sanitizers and disinfectants, etc. including procedures for cleaning of facilities of commonly touched areas like door knobs and tables and chair by users of the temple after or before each use.
- Start identifying among your temple users low risk groups of smaller numbers that require less physical interaction at their activity which could more safely begin returning to the temple.
- Come up with a plan for notifying membership in the event that there is a COVID-19 outbreak at the temple and you must cease.
- Be mindful that depending on the circumstance we may have to curtail some activities.

Specifically,

- The following are permitted:
  - Bedside / Makuragyo services and other end of life services
  - Funeral services

Temple Hondo / Main Sanctuary can be used for the above mentioned in-person services, but must be conducted with less than 10 people, with physical distancing, and other precautions as dictated by the Federal, State and County mandates. Consider the use of social media so others (beyond the 10) may witness or participate in these services.

- Online Sunday services and memorial services including weddings can be held. Please refer to the State's Eighth Supplementary Proclamation (page 33) for details.
- Online religious education programs like classes, discussion groups and other activities or programs which are entirely online are permitted.
- Online meetings can be held. However, be conscious of limitations and safety including security and privacy issues.
- Drive-Thru ceremonies and activities like commencement exercises by schools and preschools are permitted with safety and health precautions and guidelines being followed.
- For Oahu only, Drive-In Services utilizing temple parking lots for Sunday services and memorial services and other ceremonies like weddings and Baccalaureates, etc. are permitted on the condition that health and safety requirements and guidelines are observed.
- Live Streaming or officiating from the Main Sanctuary for online services and Drive-Thru services are permitted. However, only people directly involved in recording and broadcasting and no more than 10 people are allowed in the sanctuary at any given time.

Other things to be aware of: discourage use of service books, gatha books, common incense burner and containers which are touched by multiple people. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii Service Book can be found online. Also, group singing and chanting contribute the spread of aerosols in the air and thus is not recommended. Recommendation is that only the minister chants and sings. CDs and other recorded music/songs may be used.

In addition:

- All air travel except for emergencies is suspended until further notice.
- Social Services as designated by the State and County like the distribution of food, meals and other essential necessities needed by the disadvantaged and elderly are permitted, but please follow DOH guidelines and procedures for food safety. Also, child-care services for essential workers and educational entities like schools are allowed provided they follow safety and health guidelines and requirements.
- HQ staff including BSC continues working remotely from home until further notice.
- All temples are also asked to comply with minimum basic operations and employees who are conducting essential work must practice good hygiene and safety measures like physical distancing, wearing of face masks, etc. As much as possible, a staggered employee schedule is recommended.

We hope that the information provided can serve as a guide in making good choices and decisions, but please know that it cannot cover every scenario. You, the clergy and lay leaders at the local temple level, may need to make decisions and choices based on the circumstances and needs of your temple or local area. Please keep yourself updated on not only federal and state requirements, but also county ones including what may be unique to your temple. The Honpa Hongwanji Mission of Hawaii website is continually being updated with memos and important resources that may be of value to temples, affiliates, members and people in your community. Please check it regularly. Challenging as it is, we must remain alert and flexible. Ministers and temple leaders, please use your best judgement and discretion. Let us be safe, patient with each other and innovative and flexible. Let us go to the Buddha-Dharma for guidance. Thank you very much.

Respectfully,

Rev. Eric Matsumoto, Bishop and Dr. Warren Tamamoto, President