



South African Hindu Maha Sabha

THE NATIONAL BODY FOR HINDUS IN THE REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA
Founded by Swami Shankaranandji on 31st May 1912

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Covid 19 - Regulations/guidelines for Temples and priests

The South African Hindu Maha Sabha welcomes the government decision to open places of worship and the strict regulations that have to be followed. The declaration of the National Day of prayer against Covid-19 on Sunday 31 May 2020 coincides with the 108th anniversary of the establishment of the South African Hindu Maha Sabha.

The SA Hindu Maha Sabha, in consultation with the Purohit Council of the Shree Sanathan Dharma Sabha of SA, Arya Samaj South Africa, and other religious and faith based organisations has developed the following guidelines for places of worship which plan to open on 1st June 2020.

It important that the following protocols must be strictly enforced at ALL religious gatherings:

- i) The maximum number of persons attending cannot exceed 50 including priests and temple officials and staff. By using digital media like Whatsapp an advanced register of attendees can be developed, and if capacity is reached this can be communicated to the congregation to avoid possible unpleasant situations.
- ii) A Covid-19 subcommittee should be established.
- iii) Mandir personnel to be on standby to administer and apply strict discipline.
- iv) All devotees must wear masks.
- v) Appropriate social distancing (1.5 metre) must be observed.
- vi) A register of all devotees attending, including names, ID numbers, phones numbers and addresses must be kept.
- vii) It would be useful to keep a log of where everyone sits.
- viii) Acquiring and using a temperature scanner to screen all attendees must be mandatory.
- ix) The premises must be sanitised before and after each prayer/religious gathering.
- x) Hand sanitiser must be provided for all devotees before and after the prayer.
- xi) Any ritual/activity that may expose devotees to risk must be avoided.
- xii) There should be a designated person/committee responsible for overseeing sanitising procedures, maintaining the register, liaising with public health officials, and helping to identify and notify contacts if necessary.
- xiii) Two members/officials of the Temple must be on duty at the entrance to provide hand sanitisers for cleaning hands.
- xiv) No-one is permitted to socialise after the prayer
- xv) Priests to control and regulate all rituals and poojas and must have mask and gloves.
- xvi) All offerings must be made by priest.
- xvii) Washing, cleaning and dressing of murtis must be under strict supervision whilst maintaining the rules.
- xviii) If any person has any flu like symptoms including, but not limited to, sore throat/continuous coughing/fever, they should not visit the Temple and they are to self-quarantine until the symptoms disappear.
- xix) People who have comorbidities should be advised to worship from home.



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- xx) No sharing of any books, musical instruments or any other personal items.
- xxi) No sharing of Prasad or fluids is permitted.
- xxii) If anyone does use the toilet, it is expected that he/she must wash their hands with soap and water and make sure the bowl is empty after flushing.
- xxiii) Toilets to be cleaned as often as possible. More support staff to assist.
- xxiv) Regulatory signs to be erected. Eg, The management reserves the right to disallow a devotee from entering the premises if he/she does not adhere to the Covid 19 rules.
- xxv) Signs for masks, hand wash, etc.

PLEASE NOTE THESE PROTOCOLS AND REGULATIONS DO NOT, IN ANY WAY, REPLACE THE RULES SET OUT BY THE GOVERNMENT. THEY ARE MERELY ADDITIONAL AND SPECIFIC INTERVENTIONS TO KEEP US ALL SAFE. IF MANAGEMENT IS UNABLE TO COMPLY WITH THE ABOVE PROTOCOLS, IT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TO DEFER OPENING OF THE TEMPLE.

Regards

Ashwin Trikamjee

