



16 April 2020

Closure of places of worship and offering dana – 16 April 2020

This is an update on the impact of Covid-19 rules on temples and monasteries in NSW. Rules in other states may differ slightly. **For future updates to the rules, see the links at the end of this.**

1. All places of worship have to be closed. Essential services can be maintained and livestreamed to the community, but the temple must remain closed to the public and only the minimum number of people needed conducting (and filming) the service can be there. Numbers are not fixed, and a 'commonsense' test applies. For a guide to livestreaming go to buddhistcouncil.org/covid19/
2. Weddings are permitted with a maximum of 5 people, funerals with a maximum of 10 (excluding those officiating).
3. Where temples and monasteries are the home for monks and nuns, the rules are same as for any other household. Social distancing is not required (but may be wise), but hygiene/handwashing are very important.
4. Temples and monasteries can still operate as bases for charitable and community services – for example providing food to people isolated at home. In this case they are treated as workplaces, and people must observe social distancing (1.5 metres apart, 4 sq m per person). When people are providing community support (e.g. delivering food) it may be helpful to have an official letter from the temple stating that this is an essential service.
5. Where lay people provide meals for sangha: sangha may consider whether the Vinaya allows practices to change during this emergency. If lay people continue providing meals to sangha we suggest:
 - Prepare the dana offering beforehand and bring it to the temple/monastery.
 - Leave food in a clean, secure place that allows you to maintain social distancing.
 - Do not remain at the temple after offering. Remember the temple is closed.
 - Have the minimum number of people delivering food.
 - Consider having dana provided by a core group of people, with the minimum number delivering food at any one time. Those delivering food could have an official letter from the temple stating that they are providing essential support.
 - Do not prepare or deliver food if you are unwell.
 - If food is prepared at the temple, be sure to practise strict hygiene and social distancing in preparing and serving food.

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Resources

For up to date information about the epidemic, government rules and how you can protect yourself and others

- [Coronavirus Australia](#) app for Android and IOS (from the government)
- [Coronavirus Help Information Line](#) (1800 020 080).
- [The web sites listed here.](#)

Food safety

<u>Vic Health advice on food safety</u>	<u>https://www2.health.vic.gov.au/public-health/food-safety/food-businesses/covid-19-and-food-business</u>
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Latest updates on government restrictions

<u>Australian government</u>	<u>https://www.australia.gov.au/</u>
<u>NSW government</u>	<u>https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19</u>

Resources on the coronavirus epidemic

<u>NSW Health (English language)</u>	<u>https://preview.nsw.gov.au/covid-19</u>
<u>NSW Health translated resources</u>	<u>https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/translated-coronavirus-covid-19-resources</u>
<u>Federal Dept. of Health resources (English)</u>	<u>https://www.health.gov.au/resources/collections/coronavirus-covid-19-campaign-resources</u>
<u>Federal Dept. of Health translated resources</u>	<u>https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/translated-coronavirus-covid-19-resources</u>
<u>Resources from SBS</u>	<u>https://www.sbs.com.au/language/coronavirus</u>

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