

Coronavirus: 10 Things Your Synagogue Can Do

With cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) appearing across the globe, many synagogues and their communities are feeling uneasy or even fearful. Since this outbreak is ever changing, we strongly urge clergy, lay leadership, and community members to keep themselves well-informed. Following are 10 tips:

1. Coronavirus Taskforce: Put together a taskforce of staff and lay leaders. Look inside your membership for people with medical and specifically, infectious disease experience. What are the implications of temporary building closures and/or social distancing? Consider what such steps would mean to your synagogue.

2. Set Infectious Disease Policies: Have you developed infectious disease policies and notified your constituencies about them? Promote the behaviors that help people protect themselves.

3. The Rabbinical Assembly Resources: Refer to [the Rabbinical Assembly paper](#) that covers the case of an individual who can't make it to an existing minyan, and visit their [webpage on halakhic guidance](#) on coronavirus protocols.

4. Monitor Updates on Key Websites: Programming is site specific so local school districts and health departments should be contacted for recommendations about building closings. Regularly check the [Centers for Disease Control](#) (CDC) website and search your [state's health department site](#), which works with the CDC to monitor and implement all recommendations. The CDC publishes a [guide for childcare agencies and K-12 schools](#). Sign up for alerts and bookmark websites. Federations will also have valuable resources.

5. FREE Informational Posters: Place copies of two free downloadable posters and our tip sheet strategically around the synagogue, in high traffic areas, restrooms and classrooms. [Click here](#) to access these materials.

6. Hygiene: Consider placing hygiene stations at the entrance to your building and other locations. Educate your employees, members, and constituencies about how to protect themselves and others before they enter your building. Maintenance staff should also be versed in proper cleaning procedures.

7. Tech Tools To Help You Stay Connected: Define your mission critical functions. Can your employees and congregants work and learn remotely? Consider signing up for a live streaming service such as [Streamspot](#) (offered at a discount for USCJ affiliates) or [Zoom](#) to live stream services or hold remote meetings or classes. The remote access tool [LogMeIn](#) can be used to provide remote desktop access for your staff. Facebook groups can be used as an additional means of communication about event or program cancellations.

8. Create a Phone Tree and Share It: Make a list of phone numbers of staff, lay leaders, clergy, and congregants to make it easy to reach out as needed. Having the names and numbers of close relatives/friends of your most vulnerable members (elderly, disabled, families with young children) is also an important resource to have.

9. Insurance Coverage: Talk to your insurance carrier about business interruptions, extra expense coverages, as well as any recommendations they may have.

10. USCJ Resources: Look for updated information on USCJ's [website](#), [The Commons](#), and in Leadership Matters.

