

【7th edition】

Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)

Countermeasure Guidelines

The novel coronavirus is said to be in its third wave as infections increase throughout the nation. The government has already declared a state of emergency for the following 11 prefectures.

1/8~2/7 (31 days): Saitama, Chiba, Tokyo and Kanagawa

1/14~2/7 (25 days): Tochigi, Gifu, Aichi, Kyoto, Osaka, Hyogo and Fukuoka

This is an update to the infection prevention countermeasure guidelines and a renewed call to attention for each church and their respective pastors.

(1) The Basics of Infection Countermeasures

- The spread of infection varies depending on the geographic area. Just as before, the final decision regarding these countermeasures is given to each church's lead pastor and church board.
- It is necessary for there to be common understanding regarding infection countermeasures for any branch sites and congregations of internationals meeting within your church.
- It is important to respect and allow each church member to decide whether they will attend in-person worship services during the pandemic.
- If there is a case of infection within your church, follow the direction of your local board of health while also informing the JAG Riji (General Secretary or Director of Administration) as quickly as possible and follow their guidance.

(2) Strengthening Infection Countermeasures

- Church pastors and boards should frequently review new **countermeasure guidelines that local governments publish** and enact them accordingly.
- In the case of a **fever, even a low grade one**, care should be taken and you should not attend church in-person.
- In areas where infections are spreading, temperatures should be taken. (Some churches have purchased temperature-reading devices or are asking church members to take their temperatures at home and record it)
- When entering or exiting the church everyone should use **alcohol based hand sanitizer**.
- As a rule **masks** should be worn in the sanctuary.
- Practice **social distancing** by placing appropriate space between seating.
- Avoid **physical contact** such as shaking hands and giving hugs during the worship service or other gatherings.
- Do not have cloth towels for repeated use in restrooms but instead use **paper towels, personal handkerchiefs, etc.**
- During worship services and gatherings, or at least before and after the event, open doors and windows often to **ventilate the space**.
- For each worship service or gathering, be sure to **use an alcohol solution to sterilize the sanctuary, musical instruments, chairs, doors handles and knobs**.
- If infections continue to increase, we encourage the use of the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare's COCOA (COVID-19 Contact-Confirming Application).

(3) Regarding holding worship services or various gatherings

- Worship service and various gatherings
 - In order to avoid the “Three Cs” (closed spaces, crowded places, close-contact situations) it is necessary to continue limiting the amount of time and attendees for meetings as well as continuing the practice of “**shortened worship**”, “staggered worship” or “online worship”.

This is especially encouraged in areas affected by the state of emergency.

- Communion and fellowship meals
 - When having communion devise ways of staying within the infection countermeasures.
 - Do everything possible to avoid distributing food or having meals.

(4) Regarding holding Japan Assemblies of God (JAG) related events

- Reinstating in-person functions at the JAG headquarters is still under consideration.
 - Please transition to meeting online or something comparable.
- Use of the JAG headquarters lodging is closed for the time being.
- Deciding what manner to hold district meetings, retreats, training seminars and worship gatherings is entrusted to the individual districts and their committees.

(5) Other

- If there is any confusion about making a decision please contact your district superintendent or a district committee member.
- In the case that a natural disaster occurs during the pandemic it is best to be prepared for an evacuation by having necessary infection countermeasure items packed and ready to go.
- There is various information regarding the novel coronavirus on the JAG website, (<https://j-ag.org/>) so please encourage your church members to view it. (“synchronized prayer”, guidelines, practical examples, notices, “relay message” videos etc.)