



Now that the State of California is moving into Phase 3 of opening up, it is a good time for us to consider whether or not we want to reopen our brick and mortar meetings, continue with our virtual meetings, or some combination of the two. Although many of us are craving the person to person contact that is the meat and potatoes of our meetings, there are also members who still need to be cautious about venturing out into public. It would be important that our groups' decisions do not leave any of our members out in the cold with no meeting resources whatsoever, regardless of age or underlying health conditions.

I have had two discussions with San Joaquin County's Office of Emergency Services (OES) this last week. The two most important take-aways from those discussions are:

- a. AA and NA meetings are essential under healthcare, and when they cannot be done remotely should be done with proper health and safety protocols.
- b. I was directed to use the protocols set by the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) for "religious or cultural settings". These protocols can be found at :

<https://covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-places-of-worship.pdf>

These protocols are dated May 25, 2020 and are the most current in effect.

Following is a laundry list of considerations for groups to kick around at their business meetings when deciding how and when to reopen. Some, none, or all of them may fit your group's needs. Each group has the freedom to set the conditions for reopening their meetings so long as they remain true to the 12 Traditions of AA. If we are thoughtful about this process, we can have our in-house meetings and safety, too. Part of our recovery is that we become responsible and productive members of our society, not just of our groups or our AA Community.

These are some of the important factors and possibilities for our groups to take into consideration when making our choices.

1. **PLAN:** CDPH recommends that we establish a written, meeting-place COVID-19 Plan, designate a person at each meeting place to implement that Plan, and to regularly evaluate the meeting place for compliance. If the group sends Delta Central Office a copy of its plan, we can put a note next to your meeting indicating the level of compliance with County and State Guidelines as follows: "Non-Compliant", "Partially Compliant", and "Fully Compliant". If a group chooses not to send a plan, we will simply label it a "Compliance Unknown". This keeps every group on the schedule, and also informs the members of the level of risk they experience in attending a meeting.
2. **LOCATION:** We could consider outdoor meetings at a nearby park. Have everyone bring their own seating and arrange yourselves at 6' intervals. Outdoors is inherently safer than enclosed rooms.
3. **DISTANCING:** We might arrange the room so that seating is at 6' intervals, and ask that people not alter that arrangement, thus maintaining the recommended physical distancing. This may mean limiting attendance to the capacity of the rearranged seating. It may also mean that members who come after the capacity has been filled be directed to the website to find online meetings to attend. Oldtimers could make room for the newcomer if deemed necessary.

(NOTE: If your meeting room is ventilated by any type of fans, ceiling mounted or floor models, remember that **"social distances" are impossible to maintain once those fans are turned on**. Outside ventilation by opening windows is safer, since it dilutes the virus load of the air in the room. Unfortunately, a heat wave like the one we've recently experienced, would make this option uncomfortable.)

4. **SELF SCREENING & MONITORING:** We could request our members self-screen for temperature and other symptoms. Some groups have decided to post a door monitor to screen for obvious symptoms, and to help maintain the desired distancing and occupancy in the room.
5. **TABLES:** We could remove tables to reduce infectious surfaces and to improve distancing.
6. **FACE COVERINGS:** We may require that members wear masks, scarves, bandanas, etc. while in the rooms.
7. **COFFEE SERVICE:** We may consider suspending coffee service, asking members to bring their own beverage in closed containers, and to refrain from bringing any food.
8. **7TH TRADITION:** Leaving the 7th tradition basket on the table, or having a trusted servant pass it rather than passing it from member to member might help. We could explore digital, “no touch” forms of donations such as Venmo and Zelle
9. **CLEANING:** We could create a service position for disinfecting the room after each meeting. (Perhaps the same person who would normally do the coffee?) Make hand-sanitizer, and/or soap and water available to all members. Perhaps disposable gloves for the cleaner and anyone who passes recovery literature, etc.
10. **AFTER MEETING SOCIALIZING:** We might ask members to leave the room right after the meeting to continue their socializing outside. This allows room for the trusted servant to disinfect the room for the next meeting. Also, remember outside is generally safer than inside, period.
11. **ZOOM MEETINGS:** We might decide to continue our Zoom meetings in tandem with brick and mortar meetings, or try our hand at a hybrid Zoom/in house meeting. (This one is tricky, but some techies out there might make it work. Blue tooth speakers and web mics are useful for this purpose.) Please remember that it is still not safe for many of our members to come out to our meetings.
12. **INSURANCE:** If your group has insurance coverage, consider the insurance consequences of reopening. There are several aspects to this twelfth consideration.
 - a. The constraints listed below are a response to questions asked about your insurance *coverage*. The simple answer is this. If your meeting is not in compliance with the State and County guidelines, your insurance will not cover any injury or property damage that occurs during that meeting.
 - b. Your policy is probably property and liability insurance only. It will not cover illnesses such as the Corona Virus under *any circumstances*, whether or not the meeting is in compliance with all the State and County requirements. So, if someone in the meeting contracts the Virus, you are not covered, end of story.
 - c. If you are holding a meeting in a building which is otherwise staying closed (a church, for instance), this meeting is legally out of compliance with building owner, State and County guidelines. If any injury or property damage were to happen during that meeting, your insurance would not cover it.

June 10, 2020