

Announcement

October 24, 2020

FOR SPECIAL FULL-TIME SERVANTS IN THE FIELD IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

1. This announcement replaces the announcements dated May 29, 2020, and October 1, 2020.

2. The branch office regularly monitors the level of infection risk for COVID-19 throughout the branch territory. You are to be commended for obediently adhering to the most recent direction provided, which is based on the level of risk in your area. After considering the situation in your area, we wish to provide the following adjustments. Please note that this direction could be modified if the risk of infection changes.

- **Leaving home for outdoor activities:** You may leave your home to enjoy outdoor activities, such as a drive, hike, or walk in isolated areas, as long as this does not involve spending the night away from your home. Use good judgment when considering how far you will travel so as to reduce the risk of exposing yourself to the virus. Please review the guidelines provided in the *COVID-19 Safety for Households* document before engaging in any activity away from your home.
- **Social gatherings:** Special full-time servants may attend or host *only outdoor* gatherings with others in special full-time service *who live on the same property*, if this is permitted by the local authorities.
 - The number of those in attendance should not exceed six, including the host, and must allow for proper physical distancing at all times.
 - Those who are experiencing cold or flu-like symptoms, are sick, or who may have been exposed to COVID-19 within the past 14 days should not participate.
 - Face masks must be used whenever guests come within six feet of each other.
 - None at the gathering may enter the residence of another special full-time servant.
 - All must keep a dated log of the gatherings they attend and of those that were present, which will assist in the event that contact tracing is needed.

Unless specifically directed otherwise, attending other organized social gatherings in person of any type is not permitted.

3. The following precautions continue to be required for all special full-time servants:

- **Shelter in place:** With the exception indicated in the heading above entitled “Leaving home for outdoor activities,” remain in your home or on your property and do not leave unless there is an essential need (e.g. resupplying groceries, medical appointment, an assignment at the direction of the branch office). For those with increased risk, please seek assistance with necessary tasks if possible so as to remain at home.

- **No outside guests should be permitted in your residence:** Visit with friends and family using electronic means, such as *FaceTime*, *Skype*, or *Zoom*.
- **Practice physical distancing at all times:** If you must come in contact with anyone other than your mate or roommate, maintain a distance of at least six feet apart.
- **Use of face coverings:** Face masks should be worn when in public or in any location where you may encounter others besides your mate or roommate. Face coverings are not a substitute for physical distancing. There is no objection to removing your face covering when in an isolated outdoor setting, but it should be with you and worn when others are nearby.

4. **Necessary Personal Needs:** It is preferred that you and your mate (if married) continue to care for your personal needs yourself. To assist you with haircare, a series of instructional videos are available on jw.org. If you are unable to care for your personal needs yourself, you may arrange for a publisher to come to your home in order to cut or style your hair, provide chiropractic, podiatric, or wound care, etc. For your safety, please follow the attached guidelines for you and for care providers. Please note that those assisting with such necessary personal needs are not considered “guests” as described in Point 3 above.

5. Those who have risk factors such as diminished health due to age or other preexisting medical conditions should understand their increased risk and therefore acknowledge the need to take additional precautions.

6. If you have needs that you cannot or should not care for, please make these known to your congregation elders and request assistance. Your elders are in contact with the circuit overseer who may arrange for additional assistance. These appointed men love you and take seriously their responsibility to be a “hiding place from the wind” for you.—Isa. 32:2.

7. If you have questions regarding your theocratic assignments, please contact the appropriate branch department as noted below. For health concerns, contact the Health Care Department.

- Construction servants, Assembly Hall servants, and Bible School Facility servants should contact the Support Section in the Local Design/Construction Department.
- Special pioneers, circuit overseers and their wives, field missionaries, and field instructors and their wives should contact the Field Ministers Desk in the Service Department.
- Remote servants and full-time commuters should contact the Bethel Office.

8. It is our desire to keep published direction to special full-time servants consistent throughout the branch territory. However, specific direction may vary among regions or residence types. We greatly appreciate your cooperation with such arrangements.

9. We keep you dear brothers and sisters in our prayers and are confident that Jehovah will provide you with practical wisdom.—Prov. 3:21-26.

FOR ELDERS IN THE UNITED STATES BRANCH TERRITORY

1. Thank you for your kind and loving efforts to ensure that those serving in your congregation who are enrolled in special full-time service continue to take the necessary practical steps to remain safe and healthy. We encourage you to include these servants as you intensify your efforts to ensure that all in your congregation remain safe and are well cared for. Help these dear ones to continue to apply the kind reminders outlined in this announcement.
2. If you find yourselves unable to fill any urgent need, please work with your circuit overseer who can make additional assistance available through the arrangement organized by the Disaster Relief Committee in your area.

Personal Service Guidelines

- All necessary services should be arranged by appointment.
- Those present should be limited to the minimum necessary.
- Neither the special full-time servant nor the care provider may be sick or have been exposed to COVID-19 in the past 14 days.
- Prior to the visit, all who will be present should take their temperature and cancel the arrangements if any have a temperature above 99.5°F/37.5°C.
- All must wash and disinfect their hands immediately before and after the service.
- All must wear acceptable face coverings which cover the nose and mouth.
- No service that requires removing the face covering may be provided.
- The service provider must also wear a face shield or safety goggles in addition to a face covering.
- All the equipment used, including chairs, tables, tools, smocks, etc., should be cleaned and disinfected before and after providing the service.
- Any person not receiving the service should maintain six feet physical distancing.
- The special full-time servant and the care provider should maintain a log of their daily contacts.
- No food or beverages should be shared, and the care provider should leave immediately after finishing.
- If possible, the service should be provided in an outdoor or open-air setting and the care provider should avoid entering the residence.

In addition, all safety standards established by the secular authorities are to be followed.