

# Guidelines for Re-opening Movie Theaters



*\*Guidelines are updated frequently to align with modifications from the CDC and executive orders.\**

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The purpose of these guidelines is to allow the public to enjoy movie theaters while providing standards that encourage public health and safety. As with all other matters concerning COVID-19, the responsibility of slowing or stopping the advance of this disease is a responsibility shared by all, including facility owners, staff and patrons.

These guidelines were developed based upon social conditions and other information concerning COVID-19 as of May 29, 2020. The health and safety measures outlined in this plan were formed utilizing CDC and SCDHEC recommendations at this time. It is recognized, however, that the information and circumstances concerning COVID-19 remains fluid and variable. Therefore, these guidelines are subject to change in correspondence with new knowledge of COVID-19 or changing social conditions. The foundation guideline for businesses and employers remains the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)'s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\)](#)

## GENERAL

**NOTE:** Until further notice, the maximum occupancy of any indoor facility is limited to no more than 50% of the occupant load as determined by the Fire Marshal. The 50% maximum occupancy limit for theaters applies to each individual screening room. For example, if a movie theater has two screening rooms and each room has 100 seats, then each room's maximum occupancy limit is 50 persons.

In general, it is recommended that movie theaters develop social distancing plans and modified operational protocols, as well as consistent sanitizing procedures, in order to provide a reasonably safe and comfortable environment for both staff and patrons. Below is a list of recommended activities specifically created for movie theater facilities as they prepare to reopen for business.

## SOCIAL DISTANCING

- Six-foot spacing markers should be used for all queuing areas or waiting lines in common areas (e.g., concessions, entrance gate, restrooms, etc.).
- Cashless transactions, such as pre-ordering tickets and concessions, should be encouraged.

## SANITATION

- Commonly used surfaces, such as doors, handrails, etc., should be cleaned and disinfected frequently.
- Restrooms should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular and frequent basis. Restrooms must provide soap and hot water and/or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol.



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- Theaters should be cleaned and disinfected on a regular basis, with extra attention paid to armrests and cup holders.

### **SIGNAGE/COMMUNICATION**

- Posters, signs or other visual communication tools should be displayed throughout the facility to remind patrons of social distancing requirements and other steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This should include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.
- Compliance with social distancing should be encouraged through periodic announcements or audio recordings.
- Where feasible, require staff who interact directly with patrons to wear face masks or cloth face coverings. Patrons should be encouraged to wear cloth face coverings. Note: People should not wear cloth face coverings if they are under the age of two, have trouble breathing or any inability to tolerate wearing it, or if they are unable to remove it without assistance. Gloves should be worn by staff as appropriate for serving concessions and for cleaning.

### **CONCESSIONS**

- Concessions areas must comply with all SCDHEC standards and additional protocols as required by the State. It is highly recommended that concession areas follow the [State's applicable recommendations for re-opening and operating restaurants](#).

### **SEATING**

- Patrons must adhere to six-foot social distancing requirements for anyone not in the same party. Seating assignments or arrangements should be made to allow for proper social distancing.

### **SHOW TIME SCHEDULES**

- Theater show time schedules should be modified to account for reduced capacities. Schedules must include adequate buffer times between show times to allow patrons to enter and exit the screening room with limited interaction.
- It is recommended to develop schedules that allow sufficient time between show times for seats and other surfaces in the screening room to be cleaned and disinfected as needed.
- Consider one-way entrance to and exit from each screen room.

### **ENTRANCE/EXIT PROCEDURES**

- Where possible, provide separate and clearly marked points of entry and exit for patrons.
- Entrance areas should be marked to follow social distancing guidelines allowing 6-foot space between parties. Staff should assist with crowd control by reminding patrons to maintain social distancing when queuing at the ticket counter, concession counter or other common areas.

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- Individuals should not be allowed to congregate in common areas or parking lots.

### **STAFF SAFETY**

- If possible, facilities may utilize any of the COVID-19 screening methods recommended by the CDC.
- Staff must conduct daily symptom assessments (self-evaluation). Staff should not enter the facility if they have been sick or if they are feeling sick. Anyone who experiences symptoms associated with COVID-19 or otherwise becomes ill must be required to leave.
- Staff must follow all hygiene guidelines. Staff must wash hands for no less than 20 seconds after each restroom use and as needed throughout their shift.
- Staff must follow recommended social distance guidelines when possible, while still abiding by required safety precautions set forth by the facility.
- Staff should sanitize all multi-use and sharable equipment used to complete job duties, before and after each shift using an EPA approved chemical.

### **DISCLAIMER**

The information provided in this document is for general informational purposes and to help you make informed decisions. Notwithstanding any and all Federal and State requirements, re-opening and resuming activities are at your own discretion.

Although all information in this document is provided in good faith, we make no representation or warranty of any kind, express or implied, regarding the adequacy or completeness of these guidelines.

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