



Guidelines for Performing Arts Venues

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

The CDC offers a readiness and planning tool for event planners and administrators to help protect staff, volunteers and attendees and slow the spread of COVID-19. [Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#)

These guidelines are intended for application in non-health care settings. 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 Guidelines that Apply to All

All venues need to determine how best to minimize the spread of COVID-19 in the venue. In order to re-open and successfully remain open for business, everyone individually and collectively must actively participate in the core recommendations:

1. Self-isolation – if you are sick, stay home.
2. Practice social distancing of at least six feet distance to the greatest extent possible.
3. Wash hands frequently (20 seconds with soap and water or use of a sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol).
4. Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects (e.g. keyboards, phones) and surfaces (e.g. handrails, workstations, sinks) and remove unnecessary frequently touched surfaces.
5. Avoid touching of eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
6. Wear a cloth face covering (do not use on children under two years old, people with difficulty breathing, or people who cannot remove the mask themselves).
7. Cover mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and throw used tissues away immediately after use.
8. Avoid using other employees' phones, desks, offices or other work tools and equipment when possible, or disinfect them before and after use.
9. Minimize the use of soft surfaces like cloth covered chairs or area rugs that are more difficult to clean or disinfect.

Guidelines Specifically for Performing Arts Venues

Performing arts venues are encouraged to develop social distancing plans for ticket lines 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 performing arts venues as they modify their business operations.

Any scenario where many people gather together comes with a risk of transmitting COVID-19. In addition to the above referenced general guidelines, the following are put forth for your consideration to further reduce the transmission of this virus:

1. Before resuming business operations, check the building to see if it's ready for occupancy.
 - a. Ensure that ventilation systems in your facility operate properly. For building heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC systems) that have been shut down or on setback, review new construction start-up guidance provided in ASHRAE Standard 180-2018, Standard Practice for the Inspection and Maintenance of Commercial Building HVAC Systems.
 - b. Increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans and other methods. Do not open windows and doors if doing so poses a safety or health risk for current or subsequent occupants, including children (e.g., allowing outdoor environmental contaminants including carbon monoxide, molds, or pollens into the building).
 - c. Evaluate the building and its mechanical and life safety systems to determine if the building is ready for occupancy. Check for hazards associated with prolonged facility shutdown such as mold growth, rodents or pests or issues with stagnant water systems, and take appropriate remedial actions.
2. In venues where food is served, follow the [AccelerateSC Guidelines for Restaurant Opening](#). If serving food/beverages, develop a plan developed to safely serve and comply with all DHEC food safety requirements.
3. Encourage individuals who are not part of the same household to stay at least 6 feet apart before, during and after the event by addressing traffic flow, seating layout or availability of seating or blocking off rows or sections.
4. Install clear shields or use other physical barriers where possible to separate employees and patrons.
5. Ensure a social distancing plan is in place. Identify realistic capacities for your facility based on line length, waiting areas, pre-shows, and capacity, adjusted to allow for 6 feet of physical distancing between individuals.
6. For larger events, consider staggering the arrival times of guests by assigning arrival time windows to prevent overcrowding at venue entrances.
7. Post visible guides or cues, such as decals/tape on floors and signs on walls, to promote social distancing in congregation areas such as entrances, exits and restrooms as well as in and around the venue to indicate what 6-foot social distancing looks like.
8. Establish one-way traffic flows, where possible.
9. Develop or in some cases discuss with parking lot owner a transportation/parking plan to limit contact between attendees. (Ex. Placement of signage in parking lot/parking garages encouraging social distancing & mask usage or staggered arrivals times and/or rideshare drop-off times or various parking locations).
10. Compliance with social distancing should be encouraged through periodic announcements or audio recordings.

11. Maintain a schedule for increased routine cleaning and disinfection for high traffic areas and bathrooms. Frequently clean and disinfect all high touch surfaces that cannot be eliminated (for example by propping or holding a door open or removing the lids off of trash cans). Follow the [CDC Guidelines for Cleaning and Disinfecting](#).
12. Remove soft surfaces that can be removed (for example, area rugs, unneeded furniture, etc.).
13. Purchase and maintain adequate supplies such as soap, water, hand towels and/or hand sanitizer for attendees and/or staff to maintain hygiene and to avoid sharing materials.
14. [Post signs and reminders](#) at entrances and in strategic places providing instruction on [hand hygiene](#), [COVID-19 symptoms](#) and [cough and sneeze etiquette](#). This should include signs for non-English speakers, as needed.
15. Require the wearing of masks or face coverings as a condition of admission or participation in accordance with applicable state, county and local laws/ordinances.
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.
16. Encourage performers to bathe or shower and get prepared (hair and makeup) as much as possible at home, not at the theater.
17. Disinfect key backstage areas two hours before cast arrives.
18. Minimize in person rehearsals where possible.
19. Plan backstage activities to allow for distancing between employees and cast members.
20. Follow all recommended guidelines for sanitizing shared equipment, including microphones stands, and other equipment shared by staff and/or performers.
21. Minimize wardrobe changes and plan them to allow distance between performers.
22. Alter choreography and blocking to allow for distance between performers.
23. Change out towels on a daily basis, and increase towel service and deliveries.
24. Stagger dressing times and reconfigure flow of show to minimize quick, large-scale cast transitions.
25. Temporarily eliminate or reduce direct performer/guest interactions during the performance and intermission, as well as after the performance (e.g., playbill signings).
26. Temporarily eliminate or reduce any performances in which performers go into the audience or audience members are encouraged to go on-stage.
27. Conduct ticket sales online or through touchless payment systems or provide hand sanitizer at booths/tables where payments will be transacted. Use electronic tickets instead of paper. This includes all vendors and participating organizations.
28. Participants in the theater should have their symptoms checked each day they are performing in the venue.
29. Cancel group visits, guided tours and public programs.



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30. Communicate with partner organizations, such as vendors, to ensure they are aware of all your COVID-19 safety protocols. Ensure all organizations are aware of and follow safety protocols, particularly those that share the venue facilities, such as food vendors.
31. Ensure that staff and attendees have received communication regarding all safety protocols and COVID-19 related policies. (Ex. external communications such as social media, TV, print, radio, etc. regarding safety protocols, PPE expectations, etc.)
32. Actively encourage employees and/or patrons who have had a fever of 100.4 or greater in the last 3 days or who have any [symptoms associated with COVID-19](#) to refrain from attending any event.
33. Designate a staff person responsible for responding to all COVID-19 related situations and concerns.
34. Develop a plan for how to handle if someone gets sick with COVID-19. Plans can include items such as an isolation area to separate anyone who has COVID-19 symptoms, how to safely transporting anyone who is sick to their home or to a healthcare facility, or working with law enforcement and emergency medical staff for assistance, etc.

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.

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