# SAFE IN SOUND

## REOPENING CHECKLIST FOR THE LIVE ENTERTAINMENT INDUSTRY



esa event safety alliance

NIVA NATIONAL INDEPENDENT VENUE ASSOCIATION

*in partnership with*

APAP | Coalition of Performing Arts Centers | NITO NATIONAL INDEPENDENT TALENT ORGANIZATION

Live events were among the first sectors of the American economy to close at the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, and they are only now starting to reopen, usually at reduced capacities. The long layoff has had a devastating effect on concerts, festivals, sporting events, theatrical performances, corporate activations, and all the people whose livelihood depends on these activities.

The following checklist and explanations will help you understand your risk mitigation decisions as you reopen and increase occupancy limits. There will be challenges: many people are vaccinated, but the United States has not yet achieved herd immunity; everyone owns a face covering, but convincing them to wear it requires effort; physical distancing is well known, but people want to be together after more than a year apart.

We are not epidemiologists, we are event industry professionals, so we have followed the science from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other public health experts.

Even in this unsettled economic, social, and public health environment, the one non-negotiable goal is putting life safety first. Everything else involves choices. The guidance below is by no means exhaustive.

This checklist is intended to help you make reasonable health and safety choices under your own circumstances. In addition to the CDC guidance, which supplements state and local health and safety laws, organizations should work in conjunction with their local authorities, including applicable health departments, and stay current on local health conditions, as guidance and circumstances can vary from locale to locale.

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# GUIDANCE FOR FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF AND PATRONS

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## AIR CIRCULATION

Fresh, moving air is the best-known way to prevent the risk of infection from another person's aerosolized droplets. Consistent with CDC's Guidance for Organizing Large Events and Gatherings and its Events and Gatherings Readiness and Planning Tool, hold events outdoors where feasible. For indoor events, open doors and windows to the extent consistent with venue security. Consult an HVAC technician to maximize ventilation in buildings per CDC guidance. Use fans to increase air movement. Install air filters with a MERV-13 rating or higher to provide maximum protection.

*The primary means of transmitting coronavirus is our own aerosolized droplets, meaning the air we inhale when someone breathes, coughs, shouts, sings, or sneezes near us. Therefore, the more the air around us is circulating and being exchanged with fresh air, the fewer potentially infected droplets we will inhale from the people around us.*

## FACE COVERINGS

Require all production and crowd-facing staff to wear correctly fitting and effective face coverings at all times during an event where it is practical. Face coverings should cover the nose and mouth with no gaps. Require face coverings for patrons when not consuming food or beverages.

*Face coverings are the simplest, cheapest, most readily available means of substantially reducing the risk of transmitting coronavirus from one person to another, and everyone can contribute to their own health and safety.*

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing is a space of at least six feet (two arms lengths) in between persons of different household groups. To encourage patron physical distancing, consider staggered entry times through your ticketing service and create physical barriers if possible. Examples of barriers include blocking out seating, creating a modified pod layout, pedestrian barricade or bike rack, and floor markings. Encourage groups not to mingle with other groups. Eliminating intermissions will discourage group gatherings at congestion points. Review your floor plan or seat plan to separate performers on stage from the closest seats or guests.

*Physical distancing rules are likely to relax over time, whether based on "COVID fatigue," increased vaccination percentages, or loosening state or local requirements. Nonetheless, events where people engage in behaviors such as interacting with others from outside their own household, singing, shouting, not maintaining physical distancing, or not wearing masks consistently and correctly, can increase the risk of transmission. Increasing air flow and fresh air exchange between unrelated persons, as well as encouraging physical distancing, makes it less likely guests will come in contact with someone else's aerosolized droplets. This is a healthier situation even when there is no pandemic.*



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## TEMPERATURE CHECKS

Roughly 40% of infected people are asymptomatic carriers, and a significant amount of virus transmission occurs when people who do get sick are still pre-symptomatic. However, temperature checks and screening at the point of ingress may serve as a deterrent to people who might otherwise decide to attend an event even when they are not feeling well. They also signal the venue's commitment to safety, as long as they do not increase crowd density outside venue doors.

*There is limited scientific value to temperature checks with inexpensive thermal scanners and requiring guests to answer health screening questions outside the point of entry. Visible measures at the point of entry do, however, reinforce that health and science are taken seriously at this venue or event.*

## FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Reduce exposure to unmasked guests by limiting food and beverage services to outdoor locations if possible. Applying CDC guidance for bars and restaurants, replace reusable menus with app-based or disposable paper menus. Eliminate buffet-style service in favor of single serve and disposable items.

*Exposure to aerosolized droplets is greatest when people are unmasked, such as when eating or drinking, so an excellent way to prevent the risk of transmission during that time is to move food consumption outdoors.*

## HEALTH IMPLEMENTATION

Have an onsite health coordinator and a clear and concise written internal COVID-19 safety plan that is consistent with local, state and federal guidelines. Update employee handbooks with this information and discuss how you safely address non-compliance. Train staff to enforce health and safety rules by teaching them the basic science regarding transmission and infection and how to communicate the venue's expectations of guests. Consider making a live pre-show announcement or a pre-recorded announcement to patrons that communicates your venue's protocols. Post health-related rules for guest conduct wherever such rules are currently posted. CDC also has resources for guests attending large events.

*Most states that have lifted health and safety mandates do not prohibit privately-operated venues from enforcing their own more stringent requirements. Good guest service begins with explaining the reason*

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Chamber Music America

CMA COUNTRY MUSIC ASSOCIATION

Technical Standards Program ESTA

ConsERT The Consortium of Eastern Regional Theatres, Inc.

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*for house rules.*

### TOUCHLESS EXPERIENCES

Where possible, use touchless soap, paper towel and hand sanitizer dispensers. Use hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol. Encourage all guests to pre-purchase tickets for events and use touchless payment and ticketing options when available. Explore clear bag or security screening technology that does not require divesting of personal items and minimize contact with guests.

Where possible, provide mobile ordering for food and beverage services. For show programs and merchandise, use disposable or digital app-based versions. Consider transitioning to cashless transactions where possible and legally permitted to speed up lines.

*Although surface contamination is now understood to be far less of a source of transmission than aerosolized droplets (and changing restroom fixtures can be costly), the pandemic has revealed weaknesses in many people's ordinary hygienepractices. Handwashing is a healthy practice and prevents the spread of viruses.*

### ROUTINE SURFACE CLEANING

Create a cleaning schedule and procedure for high touch surfaces, high traffic areas, and other areas where people gather per the most recent CDC guidelines. Use cleaning supplies listed by the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Conservation as effective against COVID-19.

*Although surface contamination is now understood to be far less of a source of transmission than aerosolized droplets, better cleaning is relatively cheap, and the pandemic has revealed weaknesses in many venues' ordinary hygiene practices.*

## GUIDANCE FOR BACK OF HOUSE STAFF AND PERFORMERS

In addition to the preceding Front of House guidance, the following guidance applies to Back of House operations.

### VACCINATION, TESTING AND QUARANTINE

Coronavirus vaccines are available throughout the United States to anyone 16 and older, and PCR tests remain highly accurate and free. Encourage and promote vaccination within your organization and among event staff and participants. Use the CDC's COVID-19 vaccine tool kit. Employers and contractors may require proof of vaccination, a negative test result, or both as a condition of entering the event site. Any person who has been exposed to someone with COVID-19 must fulfill all quarantine requirements per CDC guidelines before entering the venue.

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Charlotte Auto Show

CHORUS AMERICA

IFEA International Festivals & Events Association IFEA World

ILEA INTERNATIONAL LIVE EVENTS ASSOCIATION

League of Historic American Theatres

Majestic Collaborations Majestic Inc

If your state or local guidelines are requiring tests or vaccination to attend events, verify that all test results are from the preceding 72 hours (or in accordance with the current CDC guidelines).

*Vaccination substantially prevents the risk of infection. A PCR test can confirm that a person is not an asymptomatic carrier who might infect other people on site. Vaccination and a recent negative test are the best means of preventing an asymptomatic infected person from arriving for work and infecting other people.*

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Promote physical distancing backstage by reducing occupancy of spaces with limited air circulation, such as dressing rooms, mix positions, and recording booths. Ensure dressing rooms are marked for physical distancing, and have artists and crew consider using their van or bus as an alternate dressing area. Stagger load in and staff call times. When conducting pre-production of an event, communicate with all parties the venue's procedures and expectations prior to arrival. Performers should observe physical distancing when not on stage. For performers on stage, it may be important to position in a way that allows general air flow to pull air away from other performers. Seat wind and brass players so there are no other performers between them and the direction of air flow.

*The need to prevent the risk of breathing in someone else's aerosolized droplets is no less back of house than in the audience area.*

## FACE COVERINGS

Require that all staff and performers, including vaccinated staff, wear properly fitting face coverings unless one would prevent them from doing their job. Communicate before people arrive on site the venue's expectation that other than performers on stage, face coverings will help ensure the venue site is safe.

*Currently, it is unknown if vaccinated people can be asymptomatic carriers of COVID-19. Face coverings add an additional level of protection to staff and performers.*

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NAMM believe in music

ncpc North Carolina Presenters Consortium

NC F&E North Carolina Association of Festivals & Events

PAR PERFORMING ARTS READINESS a community served by LYRASIS

Portable Sanitation Association International

## HOSPITALITY/CRAFT SERVICES/CATERING

Eliminate buffet-style backstage catering. Use single serve items like disposable plates, cups, plastic eating utensils and pre-packaged food. Discourage the sharing of food and drink items and encourage physical distancing while people are eating and drinking per CDC's restaurant guidance.

*Breathing someone else's air is a risk during this pandemic; sharing someone's else's saliva is a risk all the time.*

## HAIR, MAKEUP AND WARDROBE

Follow CDC guidance for hair salons that applies to artists' event-related hair, make-up and wardrobe prep areas. Clean dressing rooms before, during and after each artist.

*Physical distancing in these areas is often impossible, which puts a greater emphasis on avoiding airborne virus transmission and maintaining good sanitization practices.*

## BACKLINE

Encourage artists to supply their own performance-related personal items, such as microphones, cables, and backline equipment. Where this is not feasible or industry standard, venue staff should clean house equipment before the event, between acts, and after the performance.

*Every piece of equipment is a high-touch surface, so it should be cleaned and sanitized accordingly.*

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