

The National Endowment for the Arts is offering the following guidance, based on a review and compilation of promising measures that arts organizations are taking to address COVID-19 to date. The list is not prescriptive or comprehensive. It does not supersede guidance from local, state, and national public health authorities.

1. **Social distancing** – The six-foot minimal distance between people, as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, should be maintained in the following settings:
 - Audience seating (e.g., leave vacant seats between audience members; cap attendee/visitor levels; consider outdoor programming to take advantage of large, open spaces).
 - Queues to view an art exhibit, to use restrooms, or to purchase/collect tickets or refreshments.
 - Places of entry and exit, foyers, and other common areas – use floor markings.
 - Transportation of staff and artists to and from venues.
 - Staff and volunteer work arrangements.
 - Artist workshops, readings, rehearsals, or performances.
 - ▶ **Caution:** Choirs and other singing and musical group activities may be especially vulnerable, due to possible emission of aerosols in close proximity.

On Ingress/Queuing

“Event organizers should consider ways to schedule staggered ingress in order to minimize lines for wandering, bag check, and ticket scanning. Virtual queuing is a modern version of the familiar concept of metered access to the front of a line. Consider the following to spread arrival time and manage demand at the entrance:

- Events with a specific start time could schedule patron arrival times.
- During the ticketing process, patrons could select their ingress time and location, which can be coordinated with public transportation or rideshare vehicles.
- A limited number of unscheduled entries is recommended to accommodate patrons stuck in traffic or physically unable to sit in a seat for a long time.”

(From the Event Safety Alliance’s Reopening Guide: <https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>)

On Restricting Contact, Capacity, and Access for Museums

“As part of your museum’s phased approach, consider how you can limit person-to-person contact, monitor the number of visitors, and restrict or prohibit access to certain areas of the museum. Your plan may include:

- Online ticket sales only if this is an option for your museum. Alternatively, limit cash and paper receipt transactions. ‘Touchless’ payment options are recommended.
- Providing digital visitor guides and materials instead of physical copies at the museum.
- Regulating interactives (e.g., touchscreens) by providing disposable stylus pens, or if unavailable, signage or physical barriers to prohibit use. As your plan progresses, you may consider installing hand sanitizing stations near these spaces for safer usage.

On Restricting Contact, Capacity, and Access for Museums (continued)

- Capacity restrictions for visitors including timed tickets for entry and monitoring traffic flow (e.g., only allowing a certain number of visitors in a space at a given time).
- No or limited access to theaters, cafés, high-traffic areas, and particularly tight spaces in the museum. If you have multiple entrances, consider limiting access to only one or two.
- Cancelling or restricting group visits, guided tours, public programs, and special or private events until safe to offer them, and then limiting the number of participants.
- Using signage or barriers to enforce physical distancing guidelines, including at ticketing and information desks, in shops/cafés, and for security guards.
- Establish one-way flow through the museum and within galleries, to facilitate distancing.
- For outdoor spaces, closing restroom facilities and picnic areas, marking trails to encourage one-way travel, and closing off parking on streets next to your facility.”

(From American Alliance of Museums, “Considerations for Museum Reopening”: <https://www.aam-us.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Considerations-for-Museum-Reopenings-5.27.2020.pdf>)

On Studio/Classroom Considerations for Dancers

- “Create a space for dancers to place their bags so that social distancing can be maintained among belongings.
 - These areas need to be cleaned after each dancer removes their bag.
- Floor work and the touching of floors should be avoided as frequent cleaning between use of a studio is otherwise necessary.
 - If floorwork is necessary, you may want to consider spacing out class and rehearsal times to allow for time to disinfect the floor (see further information below on proper cleaning of floors).
- Shoes can be a potential transmitter of disease. Street shoes should be removed prior to entering any studios. All dance shoes should not be worn outside of the studio.”

(From Dance USA, “COVID-19 FAQ for Dancers and Dance Companies Returning to Studios”: https://dance-usa.s3.amazonaws.com/page_uploads/COVID%20FAQ%20-%20MAY%202020.pdf)

On Special Considerations for Musicians

- “The authoritative guidance requiring not less than six feet (two meters) of social distance may have to be expanded for singers and [instrumentalists]. Musicians often breathe deeply and expel aerosols further than people engaged in non-physical activities. Their performance spaces, including on stage and in orchestra pits, should be arranged to maximize social distancing while allowing at least some of them to perform together.”

(From the Event Safety Alliance’s Reopening Guide: <https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>)

2. **Sanitizing** – Staff should be encouraged to wash their hands frequently with soap and water, for at least 20 seconds. When cleaning surfaces, wear disposable gloves and use soap, water, and then disinfectant. For the latter, diluted bleach or solutions with alcohol (at least 70%) may be used. Consider these specific actions:

- Establish clear cleaning protocols for equipment, rooms, and surfaces.
- Offer hand sanitizers and, if possible, disposable masks to audiences/visitors, staff, and artists.
- Require or encourage use of masks.
- Set up handwashing stations.
- On a frequent basis, clean restrooms and wipe down high-touch surfaces.
- Prohibit touching of exhibits.

On No-Touch Surfaces and Deep Cleaning

- “In places where payments occur, such as concession stands, no-contact payment platforms could be used. Theaters may plan to transition away from paper tickets and move as many audience communication materials as possible (programs, flyers) to a digital format. The more shared objects or surfaces that are eliminated, the more risk is minimized...”
- “Improving ventilation and filtration in theater spaces does not necessarily require significant capital investment. Theaters should consult with their building managers and local HVAC experts to learn more about their individual ventilation systems and understand the capacity of their existing system for enhanced ventilation and filtration. Importantly, when bringing a building back online after a long absence, facilities managers should re-commission their HVAC systems and check water quality for bacteria growing in stagnant water systems.”

(From the *Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater*, a collaboration between the American Repertory Theater at Harvard University and the Health Buildings Program at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health: <https://americanrepertorytheater.org/roadmap-for-recovery-and-resilience-for-theater/>)

On Sanitizing Dance Flooring

- “Most vinyl dance flooring cannot be cleaned with bleach solutions. Ammonia based or pH neutral cleaners that are generally used do not disinfect properly for COVID-19.
 - It is recommended that once a day, the floors should be cleaned as usual, followed by a cleaning with 90+ alcohol in a sprayer to spread the solution. The mop pad should be washed with bleach in the washing machine between uses.
 - Disinfecting the floors with this alcohol solution should ideally happen prior to every class or rehearsal.”

(From Dance USA, “COVID-19 FAQ for Dancers and Dance Companies Returning to Studios”: https://dance-usa.s3.amazonaws.com/page_uploads/COVID%20FAQ%20-%20MAY%202020.pdf)

Best Practices Tip Sheet for Arts Organizations Re-engaging with Audiences or Visitors (June 2020)

3. **Going virtual** – Many organizations already are using digital and social media platforms to offer live or archived arts content to audiences, to rehearse or plan for future arts events or exhibits, and to hold conferences, webinars, and peer learning opportunities. As the need to “go virtual” increases, the following actions can help arts organizations make the transition more smoothly:

- Set clear goals for each virtual arts event or curated arts experience—e.g., artistic objectives, audience size.
- Evaluate your budget to determine which products and services make sense for your organization, and which can be sustained over time.
- Consult peer organizations—arts and non-arts alike—to learn what works for them.
- Revisit subscription models to account for new/alternative content and to optimize revenue streams.
- Offer virtual educational programs, learning modules, or online summer camps to engage with children and youth.
 - ▶ **Caution:** When considering virtual options for arts engagement, be mindful of audience groups that may not have access to the technology platforms used. In addition, some labor contracts may place restrictions on creation of new programming and presentation of archival content.

On Making Online Learning Events Accessible

- “Do your students need accommodations, such as real-time captioning or sign language interpreting?”
- Is there a convenient way for students to request accommodations via phone or email?
- Are videos captioned?
- Is the platform accessible for a person who uses screen-reading software, such as a person who is blind or has low vision? Are videos audio-described?
- Have you communicated with the vendors of the online platforms to understand what their capabilities are for accessibility?”

(From National Endowment for the Arts, “Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities”)

4. **Communicating** – The above strategies will work effectively only if arts organizations communicate clearly and often to staff, artists, audiences, and visitors—reassuring them that their safety is paramount, and sharing the full range of opportunities for participation. Here are some ways to accomplish this goal:

- Use email, social media, and signage to inform staff, artists, and the public about the organization’s evolving plans to ensure safety.
- Place signs at appropriate spots in and outside the venue to promote hygiene and social distancing.
- Make announcements before live arts events and during intermissions, to request full compliance with protocols for hygiene and/or social distancing; where possible, involve artists and performers in these communications.
- Update staff and be available to discuss flexible attendance and sick leave policies.

On Clarifying Space Restrictions to Business Partners

- “Describe clearly the limitations of your venue to artists, booking staff, promoters, agents and managers - Make your venue layout, Inventory, Staffing Roster, Event Plan and any specific agreed public health guidelines available to artists, booking staff, promoters, agents and managers so they fully understand the limitations at your venue prior to any booking being confirmed.
- Factor in extra costs and communicate to artists and booking teams and ensure communication about possible variation in capacity due to changes in restrictions and any force majeure contractual considerations.
- If material changes a new offer/contract will need to be issued and shows to be rescheduled or cancelled at no cost to venue/promoter if restrictions caused by government guidelines mean that the event is unable to proceed as originally booked.
- Ensure that direct or indirect artist bookings are suitable for your venue layout.
- Ensure your event plan adequately describes the type of artists/genre of music programmed and their associated audience profile.
- Identify any supplementary risk analysis due to specific performer requirements and involve stakeholders when assessing.”

(From Music Cities Together, “Reopen Every Venue Safely: Protocols and Guidance”—contact REVSinformation@gmail.com)

Selected Sources:

- CDC’s COVID-19 prevention guidance for
 - Individuals: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/prevention.html>
 - Gatherings and community events: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/large-events/index.html>
 - Community and faith leaders: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/checklist.html>
 - Schools and youth programs: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/index.html>
 - Businesses and workplaces: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/businesses-employers.html>
- Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide: <https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>
- Roadmap for Recovery and Resilience for Theater: <https://americanrepertorytheater.org/roadmap-for-recovery-and-resilience-for-theater/>
- Reopen Every Venue Safely (REVS) protocols and guidance from Music Cities Together: contact REVSinformation@gmail.com
- COVID-19 resources and information for the museum field: <https://www.aam-us.org/programs/about-museums/covid-19-resources-information-for-the-museum-field/>

Best Practices Tip Sheet for Arts Organizations Re-engaging with Audiences or Visitors (June 2020)

- “COVID-19 FAQ for Dancers and Dance Companies Returning to the Studios”: https://dance-usa.s3.amazonaws.com/page_uploads/COVID%20FAQ%20-%20MAY%202020.pdf
- COVID-19 resources at the Arts Education Partnership: <https://www.aep-arts.org/who-we-are/covid-19-resources/>
- “Best Practices for Using Art Supplies Hygienically During the COVID-19 Outbreak”: <https://arttherapy.org/blog-best-practices-using-art-supplies-during-covid-19-outbreak/>
- Musical instrument cleaning guidelines: <https://www.nfhs.org/articles/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/>
- “Resources for Choral Professionals During the Pandemic”: <https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/>
- “Tips for choosing a webinar platform for your museum or organization”: <https://cuseum.com/blog/2020/4/8/tips-for-choosing-a-webinar-platform-for-your-museum-or-organization>
- “Resources to Help Ensure Accessibility of Your Virtual Events for People with Disabilities”: <https://www.arts.gov/accessibility/accessibility-resources/resources-to-help-ensure-accessibility-for-your-virtual-events-for-people-with-disabilities>
- Academy of American Poets’ best practices for virtual events and readings: <https://poets.org/text/best-practices-virtual-events-and-readings>