



COVID-19 Workplace Guidelines & Protocols

Any dance, opera or theatre production, where an Artist is engaged under an Equity contract, should be guided by these protocols, which come into effect as of September 21, 2020.

These protocols shall be considered to remain in force until such time as Equity considers they are no longer required.

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Please direct and comments regarding these protocols to communications@caea.com

When in doubt or with a question about the workplace application of these protocols, email an Equity Business Representative at busrep@caea.com.

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Health and Safety Plan

Preamble

Equity prioritizes the health and safety of Artists¹ working under our policies and agreements. We acknowledge that COVID-19 (or Coronavirus) will remain a present threat until a tested and reliable vaccine is widely available. Until such time as COVID-19 is no longer a threat, Equity is working to make sure that any return to live performance work is carefully planned to ensure Artists' health and safety.

Equity's COVID-19 health and safety workplace guidelines and protocols are based on the following three provisos:

- 1. The Engager is legally required to provide safe and sanitary working conditions;**
- 2. The Engager is legally required to ensure compliance with all municipal and provincial Occupational Health and Safety regulations; and**
- 3. The Engager must comply with the health and safety plans provided by any third-party rehearsal or performance venues they use, who themselves are legally obligated to provide safe and sanitary conditions.**

To ensure these legal requirements are being met, Equity requires all Engagers to have a current COVID-19 health and safety plan and submit this plan to Equity for review in advance of contractually engaging Artists working under an Equity contract. These plans must be kept up-to-date and reflect any changes to provincial or municipal guidelines.

Equity will review these plans to ensure that Artist's safety is prioritized; however Equity is unable to endorse or approve these plans as the legal responsibility to ensure compliance with provincial and municipal Occupational Health and Safety regulations remains with the Engager.

In order to equip the Artist to make an informed choice in signing the contract, Engagers are required to make their COVID-19 health and safety plan available to Artists at the time of contracting. Engagers will respond promptly to any concerns raised by Artists. If an Artist is unable to sign a contract due to health and safety concerns, pre-existing health concerns, if they live with vulnerable individuals, or for any other reason, the Engager may not penalize or discriminate against them now or in the future for exercising this choice. Should any Artist feel that their concerns are not being addressed appropriately, they are encouraged to contact an Equity Business Representative to discuss the situation.

If an Artist was contracted prior to the requirement to provide a COVID-19 health and safety plan, then the COVID-19 health and safety plan must be sent to them at least two weeks before the beginning of rehearsals and the same opportunities afforded to them to ask questions and seek assurances before the start of rehearsals.

¹ The collective term Artists includes (but is not limited to): Actors, Singers, Dancers and other Performers; Production Stage Managers; Stage Managers; Assistant Stage Managers; Apprentice Stage Managers; Directors; Assistant Directors; Fight Directors; Choreographers; Assistant Choreographers; Intimacy Directors; Dance Captains; and Fight Captains.

Health and Safety Plan

Artists are cautioned against signing any waiver or indemnity absolving the Engager of responsibility for workplace safety. Engagers carry the legal responsibility of ensuring compliance with all mandated provincial and municipal health and safety regulations. It is the Engager's responsibility to ensure they have appropriate venue-specific plans that meet these regulations and that all in that space are following their plan. Equity asks any Artist being asked to sign a waiver or indemnity to contact one of Equity's Business Representatives to discuss further.

If a member of Equity is asked to work without a COVID-19 health and safety plan being made available to them, they should contact an Equity Business Representative immediately. This may be considered a breach of an agreement or engagement policy.

During rehearsals or performances, should an Artist perceive a risk to their health and/or safety, and they report this perceived risk to the Engager, the Artist shall not be required to proceed with work until such time as the situation is resolved. In the absence of the Engager, the Artist should report their concerns to the Stage Manager.

Engagers are required to notify Equity within one business day should any Artist in a production become ill with COVID-19, be at risk of COVID-19 exposure, or be required to self-isolate. Existing sickness, injury, cancellation and termination clauses of respective agreements and policies will apply.

The Stage Manager cannot be tasked with creating or enforcing an Engager's COVID-19 health and safety plan, unless specifically contracted to do so. They should not be asked to take on additional tasks related to identifying health and safety risks, enforcing protocols, or be assigned additional COVID-related cleaning duties.

Artists cannot be asked to take on additional health and safety related tasks, unless they agree to doing so at the time of contracting (examples of acceptable tasks might include cleaning their own props or washing their own costume).

It is the Engager's responsibility to enforce their health and safety plans and the health and safety plans of any rehearsal or performance venues they are using (if not their own). Should any violations take place, the Engager should be notified immediately. If any Artists are concerned that health and safety protocols are not being followed, they should speak with the Engager and/or contact one of Equity's Business Representatives.

Governing Principles

Until there is a tested vaccine for COVID-19 we can only put in place protocols to reduce the risk of transmission. Therefore any health and safety plan is built upon a number of principles:

For Artists

1. All Artists must take personal responsibility and adhere to all guidelines and best practices including:
 - a. Wherever possible maintaining physical distancing (current 2 metres or 6 feet)
 - b. Maintaining frequent hand washing and use of disinfectant hand gels
 - c. Avoiding touching the face
 - d. Minimize touching surfaces
 - e. Use masks and other forms of personal protective equipment (PPE)
 - f. Sneezing into elbow/sleeve or a tissue

2. All Artists must monitor themselves daily for any symptoms of possible illness. Any suspicion of illness requires individuals to self-isolate and seek medical assistance. No Artist should attend the workplace if they have any of the following symptoms:
 - a. Fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius
 - b. Cough, usually dry
 - c. Shortness of breath
 - d. Sore throat
 - e. Headache
 - f. Chills
 - g. Congestion
 - h. Unexplained muscle and joint pain
 - i. Nausea or vomiting
 - j. Loss of sense of smell
 - k. Diarrhea

3. Artists have a responsibility to follow all of the guidelines as outlined in the Engager's COVID-19 health and safety plan. Professional behaviour in the workspace includes following COVID-19 guidelines and Artists have an active role to play to keep the workspace safe for all by following protocols. Any violations of health and safety protocols will be dealt with by the Engager, who has the responsibility to enforce their own policy.

Governing Principles

For Engagers

1. Any workplace health and safety plan should achieve the following:
 - a. Minimizing contact between Artists and wherever possible maintain physical distancing guidelines. Where it is not possible to maintain physical distancing guidelines, take precautions to minimize aerosol transmission between Artists through use of masks and other PPE, barriers, increased ventilation etc. In all cases, provincial regulations with respect to physical distancing or touching must be respected.
 - b. If staging/choreography/intimacy will require the Artist to work in close contact with others, they must be notified of this prior to signing a contract. If this was not agreed prior to the contract being signed, the Artist has the right to refuse to work in close proximity and an alternate arrangement must be found without any penalty to the Artist.
 - c. Avoiding bottle-necks and pinch points where larger numbers of Artists come together, for example staggering starting/ending times, lunches and breaks, etc.
 - d. Marking out spaces in rehearsals rooms and/or backstage to help in observing 2 metre distancing between Artists.
 - e. Regular cleaning of any surfaces that Artists come into physical contact with - the regularity of this cleaning will be spelled out by provincial and municipal Occupational Health and Safety guidelines. This is not a Stage Management responsibility.
 - f. Reducing or eliminating any sharing of items between individuals (e.g., props, microphones, headsets for Stage Managers/creatives, makeup, costumes, food, cigarettes, water bottles, cups, utensils, vaping devices, etc).
 - g. Daily self-monitoring by all Artists for any symptoms. It may be appropriate to ask Artists to take their temperature daily before leaving their homes, or you may wish to have some mechanism to check individual temperatures before Artists enter the space (ideally contactless). Anyone with a temperature above 38 degrees Celsius should be sent home immediately and should seek medical attention. This is a good example of a [self-monitoring form](#). The process of taking temperatures, collecting self-monitoring forms, or sending Artists home is not a Stage Management responsibility.
 - h. Self-isolating by any Artists with symptoms while they seek testing and/or medical attention. Self-isolating may also be required for any asymptomatic Artists who have been in contact with a suspected carrier of COVID-19.
 - i. Reporting of all confirmed cases of COVID-19 to the Public Health authorities is an obligation, and Engagers will be responsible for following any requirements subsequently imposed on them by their Public Health authority.
 - j. Complying with the requirement to notify Equity within one business day should any Artist in a production become ill with COVID-19, be at risk of COVID-19 exposure, or be required to self-isolate.

Governing Principles

2. The following are **not** stage management responsibilities (note this list is not exhaustive - see Appendix A for more Stage Management concerns):
 - a. Creating a COVID-19 health and safety plan
 - b. Implementing a COVID-19 health and safety plan, or
 - c. Enforcing compliance of a COVID-19 health and safety plan.

Engagers will be responsible for hiring suitable qualified personnel for these roles.

Checklist for Engagers

Constructing a Health and Safety Plan by the Engager

Note this list is not exhaustive, but will help you consider a range of concerns.

Have you:

- Referred to the relevant Occupational Health and Safety guidelines for the province and municipality in which you are working?
- Referred to any health and safety guidelines for the rehearsal and performance venues?
- Considered how rehearsals can be scheduled so that only those required are in the room/building? Is it possible to minimize the number of people required at one call?
- Considered audition protocols that will reduce face-to-face contact - either through individually scheduled audition times and/or use of video submissions?
- Determined how will you handle media interviews, publicity events, off-site costume fittings, etc?
- Considered how company members will travel to and from rehearsals/performances? What provisions can be made to make this safer?
- Considered ingress/egress for any venues you are rehearsing and performing in?
- Determined what records you will need to keep for the purposes of contact tracing? Who will maintain these records?
- Gathered emergency contact details for all Artists - [Equity's Voluntary Emergency Medical Information Sheet](#)
- Considered how all workers, including Artists, staff, technical staff, creatives can work in bubbles to minimize contact between different groups?
- Determined what protocols are in place should someone in the company show signs of illness or be diagnosed with COVID-19? How will you ensure the health of other company members? What requirements are needed before anyone returns to the workplace?
- Determined who has authority to cancel rehearsal, cancel a performance, insist on isolation for an individual(s) or the entire company?
- Determined what regular cleaning and deep cleaning protocols will be implemented in rehearsal and performance spaces (including dressing room spaces)? Who will be responsible for doing this cleaning? (note: this cannot be a Stage Management duty)
- Determined what additional safety considerations will be in place, if singing or playing of wind instruments takes place?
- Considered how to handle non-compliance of protocols?
- Please see Appendix A for Stage Management specific planning questions.

Industry Specific Resources

Rather than reproduce an exhaustive list of guidelines, dos and don'ts, we refer you to a number of excellent resources below to guide you in creating a suitable plan.

Canada

Actsafes Safety Association - [Resources for the Arts](#)

ACTRA National - [Safety on Set Materials](#)

ACTRA Toronto - [COVID-19 Return to Work](#)

Alberta Government - [Guidance for Live Music, Dance and Theatre](#)

Event Safety Alliance - [Reopening Guide](#)

IATSE Stagecraft Safety Committee - [COVID Reopening Recovery Plan](#)

Quebec Government - [Performing Arts Guidelines](#)

Toronto [Stage Three Guidelines including Live Performance](#)

UBCP/ACTRA - [FAQ Document](#)

Worksafe BC - [Arts and Culture: Protocols for Returning to Operation](#)

Worksafe BC - [Performing Arts Protocols for Returning to Operation](#)

Workplace Safety & Prevention Services (Ontario) - [Workplace Safety & Prevention Services
Guidance on Health and Safety for Television, Film and Live Performance Sector during
COVID-19](#)

Other Countries

American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) [Return to Stage and Performing Arts Playbook](#)

British Equity - [Returning to Work in Live Performance](#)

Dance USA - [Resources Related to the Coronavirus](#)

Performing Arts Center Consortium (USA) - [Guide to Reopening Theatrical Venues](#)

Canadian Company/Venue Plans

(This list is not exhaustive, but provides some examples)

Arts Club Theatre - [COVID-19 Safety Measures](#)

Pacific Opera Victoria - [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#)

Industry Specific Resources

Provincial Guidelines

[British Columbia](#)

[Alberta](#)

[Saskatchewan](#)

[Manitoba](#)

[Ontario](#)

[Quebec](#)

[Nova Scotia](#)

[Prince Edward Island](#)

[Newfoundland/Labrador](#)

[New Brunswick](#)

[Northwest Territories](#)

[Nunavut](#)

[Yukon](#)

Other Resources

Alberta - [Workplace Guidance for Business Owners](#)

BC Municipal Safety Association - [COVID-19 Psychological Support Toolkit for Employers and Workers](#)

British Columbia Provincial Health Officer - [Advice to businesses considering private testing of asymptomatic workers](#)

Ontario - [Develop your COVID-19 Plan](#)

Toronto Public Health - [Self-Assessment Form](#)

Toronto Public Health - [COVID-19 Guidance for Workplaces](#)

Template for Developing a COVID-19 Safety Plan

(Adapted from the Ontario Government [Develop your COVID-19 workplace safety plan.](#))

1. Information

How will all Artists be informed of policies, procedures and protocols? How will workers know to keep themselves safe from exposure to COVID-19? What information will be shared before the contract starts, on the first day of rehearsals, throughout rehearsal/performance?

- [List measures here]
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2. Screening

How will you screen for COVID-19 at the start of rehearsals? On a daily basis?

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-

3. Controlling Transmission Risk in the Workplace

Physical Distancing and Physical Separation

- [List measures here]
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-
-

Template for Developing a COVID-19 Safety Plan

Cleaning

- [List measures here]
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Personal Protective Equipment

- [List measures here]
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-
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Other

- [List measures here]
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4. Containment

What will you do if there is a potential case of COVID-19 or possible exposure to COVID-19 within your company? What measures will you take?

- [List measures here]
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-

Template for Developing a COVID-19 Safety Plan

5. Currency

*How will you ensure that you stay up-to-date with changing provincial health regulations?
How will your plans adapt as new information becomes available?*

- [List measures here]
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6. Monitor

How will you monitor that your plan is working? How will you deal with non-compliance of protocols? Who will be responsible for ensuring compliance with policies and regulations?

- [List measures here]
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[Click HERE for copy of Template in Word.](#)

Appendix A

Concerns raised by Equity Stage Managers re: Producing Theatre During COVID-19

Note that Equity's Stage Manager members have a number of concerns about how health and safety will be maintained within the workspace and where responsibilities will fall. Equity Stage Managers Michelle Chan, Al Gadowsky, Sang Sang Lee, Molly Pearson, Rachel Dawn Woods, in consultation with other members of the Stage Management community, have compiled the following list of questions and concerns about going back to work during COVID-19. These questions should be used as a launching point for Engagers in creating protocol and procedures.

General Questions

- **Actor/Company Responsibility** - Will the Engager have a company discussion on cohorting? If no, what will that mean? If yes, who's in the cohort and what activities are the members of the cohort comfortable with? Will this discussion happen before the first day? Will there be a contract or document that needs to be signed by performers/company members with hygiene/illness/personal responsibility/physical distancing/masking guidelines that the Engager is asking them to follow? How will the Engager take responsibility for making sure that members of the company are cleaning and sanitizing after themselves and making sure that they are following the safe practices guidelines outlined for us all to remain safe such as proper hand washing, mask wearing and immediate reporting of any symptoms they may be feeling?
- **Face Shields** - What guidelines will be put in place around the use of face shields? Currently, there is no scientific proof that a face shield offers the same protection as a mask. In fact, some doctors say that face shields do not keep droplets close enough to the person or cover enough of the spray for it to be as effective as a mask. If someone feels inclined to wear both a mask and a face shield, they could, but they should not be allowed to wear a face shield instead of a mask.
- **Hand Sanitizer and Hand Soap** - Who is responsible for supplying hand soap and sanitizer? What if it is out of stock? Could hand sanitizer machines be installed in the rehearsal room and backstage areas where hand washing is not easily accessible?
- **Masks** - Will masks be required in the building even if not already mandated by provincial or municipal health guidelines? What if someone forgets their mask at home? Are masks being provided within the building? Can these be mandatory in the rehearsal hall? Can they also be worn in any room that does not have good airflow? What will be done if a company member cannot medically wear a mask? Is proof required? Does this prevent them from being a part of the production?
- **Scheduling** - If a company member is feeling ill and is required to stay home, how will this impact scheduling? Will we be required to suspend rehearsal until we hear back the COVID-19 test results? Will there be any extra rehearsal time added to our overall schedule to accommodate any absence, etc.? Will understudies/swings be engaged so that rehearsals can continue if someone is missing?

Appendix A

- **Physical Distancing** - Who will be enforcing this in the building? What if two people give each other a hug because they haven't seen each other in forever? How is physical distancing enforced if someone is not taking it seriously? Can a third party be hired to help with reminding people of the safety protocol?
- **Temperature Checks, COVID-19 Tests, Health Questions** - Are company members being tested and questioned daily upon arrival? Whose job would this be? Is this list of questions following provincial guidelines? This should NOT be Stage Management's responsibility. How long will it take to get results from COVID-19 tests? Will work stop until results are returned? Ideally, the temperature checks and questioning would happen before entering the rehearsal/performance area to prevent possible infection of those already in the space.
- **Venue/Facility Cleaning** - Sanitizing of door knobs, handrails, elevator buttons, keycodes, green room and dressing room areas, etc. These should not be a part of Stage Management's job. These need to be disinfected regularly throughout the day.

The Rehearsal Hall

- **Actor Space in Rehearsal Hall** - Will there be a designated space in the rehearsal hall for each Performer's personal belongings i.e., script, water bottle, pencil? This is to prevent touching of their personal belongings by others and to prevent possible cross contamination.
- **Closed Rehearsal Hall** - Will the rehearsal hall be completely closed to outside people? No meet and greet, filming run throughs for designers (instead of having them come see a run), etc.
- **Direction** - Are shows being directed to abide by physical distancing requirements on stage? Who is responsible for deciding what is acceptable safe blocking and what is not? What is the process if a company member disagrees with the decision about safety onstage?
- **Rehearsal Costumes** - Will rehearsal costume pieces be used during rehearsals? If so, will they need to be laundered after every wear? Who would be responsible for the laundering? Is this the responsibility of Stage Management, as it will add to prep time - waiting for load(s) in the washing machine and the dryer.
- **Sanitizing the Inside of the Rehearsal Hall** - Who will be responsible for cleaning and sanitizing the rehearsal hall? What will this frequency be? Depending on the production greater frequency may be required.
- **Stationary Items** - Will communal stationary items like pencils and highlighters be provided for use to the company? If so, who will be required to sanitize all stationary items after each use/ at the end of day?
- **Water, Coffee and Cups** - Having communal water jugs, coffee pots, coffee/tea mugs and water cups encourages multiple people to touch the same objects, increasing high touch surfaces. Can all company members be told to bring their own water bottles, travel mugs, coffee and water?

Appendix A

Illness Within the Company

- **During Rehearsal** - What is the protocol if a company member, i.e., Performer, Director, Stage Manager, is feeling ill? Are we asking for mandatory COVID-19 testing for the entire company if one member is sick? What if a staff member of the theatre becomes infected with COVID?
- **During Run of Show** - What would be the protocol in place if during the run a Performer feels unwell? Do we have understudies in place to be able to continue with the run? Do we need to have everyone tested? Do we carry on with understudies or wait until we know if we are safe to do so? Who do we contact first if this situation arises? Will there be written protocol to follow for guest SMs as well?
- **Stage Management/Crew Unwell** - What happens if one of the Stage Management team feels unwell? Do we stay home? Who takes on our responsibilities if this happens? If during rehearsal, does it fall to other team members? If during the run, how do we carry on if we are down a member? Can a swing/understudy Stage Manager be contracted to shadow all Stage Management team members, and who can step in if any of the Stage Management team falls ill? What if a crew member is ill? Do we carry on? Do we have a swing/understudy crew member who can step in? Do we require emergency rehearsal if anyone needs to be replaced? Who is the point of contact to help make all these decisions? What is the chain of communication on who needs to be contacted and involved in all the questions and above decisions?

On Stage

- **Building Spaces** - Will additional precautions/guidelines be put in place about the use of common or shared spaces in venues i.e., the Green room or shared bathrooms? Will there be restrictions on who has access to building spaces? How will this be enforced? Will there be new policies about backstage visits or guests to the dressing room or green room? Will significant others and children be allowed to visit during breaks? Will rehearsals for each company be limited to one room (no secondary space) to limit cross contamination?
- **Costuming/Makeup/Wigs/Wardrobe Running** - Will special precautions be taken with cleaning of costumes? What about helping Performers into a wig? Makeup? Quick changes? How will costumes and wigs be laundered? Many currently are only vodka sprayed. Is that adequate? How will footwear and hats be cleaned? Can a costume go back onstage between scenes without being laundered?
- **During Technical Rehearsal** - Is the crew required to wear masks if they are within 2 metres of actors? Are masks worn backstage by Performers when not onstage? Who will be responsible for tracking or disposal of these masks? Whose job is it to disinfect backstage areas? Will we be required to finish rehearsal early to accommodate this? Are there any special considerations that need to be taken if microphones will be worn? Do backstage crew need to wear gloves if they are in contact with props/set pieces/costumes?

Appendix A

- **Food Onstage** - Will real food or liquids be used and consumed onstage? What will the protocol be around preparing and eating it? What about food that is shared onstage?
- **Number of Company Members** - Will there be a cap on the number of Performers in a company or the number of crew backstage, as per municipal or provincial guidelines?
- **Sanitizing of Props** - Depending on the show, this is a massive undertaking. It can't be guaranteed that Stage Management will be able to keep on top of this, along with the rest of their job. Hiring of additional staff to be in the room to track and disinfect used props. It is important that this job does not go to an apprentice as it distracts from their ability to observe Stage Management in the rehearsal room. It is not fair to put this already vulnerable position at greater risk.
- **Singing and Wind Instruments** - Are singing and playing of wind instruments allowed by provincial health guidelines? If they are part of a production and not allowed, is there a work around?
- **Washrooms/Dressing Rooms** - Will Performers all need their own personal dressing rooms? What will be done about crew/company members all sharing the same washroom? Who is responsible for the regular cleaning of these spaces?
- **Valuables** - How will the collecting of valuables work? Can Performers have access to lockable drawers/cupboards in their dressing rooms to prevent others from having to touch their personal belongings?

Canadian Actors'

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