COVID-Safe Theatre Guidelines

First Revision

www.paca.org.au

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Regarding COVID-Safe Theatre Guidelines   28 July 2020

To whom it may concern

PAC Australia has prepared a guideline document (COVID-Safe Theatre Guidelines) to inform theatre organisations in their individual Covid-19 safety plan developments. In my opinion, COVID-Safe Theatre Guidelines provide a framework which will assist in developing plans that meet Australian state and territory public health orders, restrictions, and guidelines to facilitate theatre events that meet all regulatory requirements for controlling Covid-19.

Warm regards,

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[PAC Australia](#) is the national peak body representing and supporting performing arts presenters, venues and creators in Australia by providing leadership, building capacity and facilitating relationships that strengthen the connection between the art and the audience.

Our 220+ members include arts centres, independent producers and producing companies with representation from remote and regional towns, to major capital cities across Australia.

INTRODUCTION

These performing arts venue guidelines aim to provide national consistency and a common framework, recognising that there may be different approaches and timelines across states and territories to easing restrictions and implementing social distancing measures. The need for a set of national guidelines acknowledges that venues operate and engage with stakeholders at local, state and national levels, but the expectation is that these guidelines will be adapted by local and state authorities to accommodate their specific legislative requirements.

This document is designed to inform your organisations' COVID-Safe Plan; it is not a replacement for developing your own plan. These venue-specific guidelines will form part of a larger suite of guidelines developed by other peak bodies addressing specific artform requirements, touring and rehearsal conditions.

The guidelines contained in this document will need to be adapted to suit your own venue configuration and operating requirements. For example, in some circumstances, opening a venue earlier than usual to allow more time to get patrons into the venue and seated may be appropriate, whereas for other venues, limited foyer space and direct street frontage may indicate that venues should be opened simultaneously to the house opening.

This document also does not take audience sentiment into account. For example, temperature testing upon entry may increase the likelihood of patrons attending a performance, or conversely, may dissuade attendance[1]. Regardless, with the health and safety of all persons visiting or working in your venue at the forefront, inducing a sense of comfort in attendance should not result in any change of behaviour or a relaxed approach to observing physical distancing and other control measures in place.

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[1] Temperature testing is not a universal requirement and will be at the individual organisations' discretion (unless directly advised by local authorities).

Transmission of COVID-19

Currently, it is understood that COVID-19 spreads in the following ways:

- Direct contact with a person while they are infectious
- Direct or indirect contact with respiratory droplets (such as when a person coughs or sneezes)
- Direct contact with objects and surfaces which are contaminated by respiratory droplets

There is also new evidence suggesting the virus may be spread by airborne transmission as well as faecal transmission.

Vulnerable Groups

The Commonwealth Department of Health has identified that people in the following close contact settings may be most at risk of contracting COVID-19:

- Travellers who have been overseas.
- Those who have been in close contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19.
- People in correctional and detention facilities.
- People in group residential settings.

While every person has the same risk of contracting COVID-19, however some persons are a higher risk of more serious illness/complications if they are infected with COVID-19. These people at higher risk include:

- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people aged 50 years and older with one or more chronic medical conditions

- People aged 65 and older with chronic medical conditions

- People aged 70 years or older

- People with compromised immune systems.

WHS Laws and Safe Work Australia

These guidelines incorporate guidance provided by Safe Work Australia in relation to appropriate control measures that should be implemented in workplaces to eliminate and minimise risks related to the transmission of COVID-19 in the workplace.

These guidelines are not enforceable or legally binding. However, your duties under WHS Laws are enforceable, and failure to comply may result in enforcement by the respective WHS Regulator in each jurisdiction.

The guidelines should be read in conjunction with any specific advice from your local public health authority. They are also not a substitute for independent legal advice, and it is recommended that organisations obtain appropriate advice relevant to their particular circumstances.

If any guidelines outlined in this document introduce new health and safety risks, or impede existing protocols in place, you must manage these risks accordingly, and it should be noted in your existing risk assessment plans.

Duty of Care

Venues are required to observe social distancing guidelines and use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a safe environment for both workers and patrons, minimising the risk of transmission of COVID-19 as much as possible. Venue staff are empowered - within the extent of their usual authorities - to monitor the behaviour of any person within the building, however you must consult with staff regarding appropriate methods to monitor/respond to any instances of non-observance of social distancing measures, or any other control measures you have put in place. This consultation must also include instruction/training on managing the escalation of incidents.

Workers should be trained in processes and procedures to support physical distancing, including on what to do if others in the workplace do not follow physical distancing requirements, such as when to call police. Management must consider the risks and whether security personnel may be required. Ongoing reviews of the effectiveness of control measures must be undertaken and steps takes to adapt or introduce additional control measures if existing arrangements are not effective and reliable.

Taking the steps outlined in this document will mitigate the risk of transmission, demonstrate to stakeholders and government that you have undertaken appropriate steps, and provide compelling evidence that you did not breach your duty of care to provide reasonably healthy and safe premises.

Implementing the control measures outlined in this document must not cause other unsafe working conditions for staff, patrons or visitors. For example, if equipment requires multiple people to lift it safely, it should continue to be done this way, while taking whatever steps possible to minimise physical contact or close proximity.

To comply with your duty of care, organisations must, so far as is reasonably practicable:

- Provide and maintain safe systems of work.

- Ensure that the handling and storage of plant, structures and substances does not pose risks to health and safety.

- Provide the necessary training, information, and supervision for workers, patrons and other visitors to protect against risks to health and safety.

- Provide adequate facilities for the welfare of workers, patrons and other visitors.

- Ensure that the health of workers and the conditions at the workplace are monitored for the purposes of preventing the transmission of COVID-19.

Venues should appoint a Risk Mitigation Coordinator to oversee the implementation of the control measures outlined in this guide, and to respond to additional decision-making requirements regarding risk, safety and compliance.

Workers may be asked to complete the [healthdirect Coronavirus (COVID-19) Symptom Checker](#) (or other self-assessment tool) prior to coming to work.

It is also a requirement under WHS laws[2] that organisations have a duty to consult with workers and their representative on any matters that affect them.

Policy Alignment

In addition to the measures outlined in this document, venues should review other policies, including seeking independent, legal advice prior to amending those policies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Privacy policy – e.g. how you intend to use patron data in relation to contact tracing.

- Risk assessment and WHS policy – see above.

- Ticketing terms and conditions including your refunds policy – e.g. if you wish to impose additional limits on the sale and refund of tickets, conditions of entry, etc.

- Communications policy – e.g. when and how to manage contact with the media.

- Emergency response policy – e.g. when social distancing is not required in the event of evacuation; how to manage providing First Aid etc.

Social Distancing Rules and Capacity Limits

Until advised otherwise by government, the social distancing requirements outlined in this document are based on the relevant sqm and 1.5m rules:

- The sqm rule indicates that the maximum capacity permissible in any space will be defined by allowing a specified number of square metres per person. At the time of writing, each state and territory require 4sqm per person, with the exception of Western Australia which requires 2sqm per person. Using 4sqm as the example, the capacity of a room will be calculated by measuring the length of the room and the width of the room, multiplying the length by the width to calculate the square metreage, then dividing the area by 4 to determine the maximum number of people allowed.

- The 1.5m rule requires a minimum of 1.5m space between individuals, noting that persons from the same household do not need to observe these limits.

The three-stage framework for lifting gathering restrictions provided by the federal government[3], to be implemented on a state by state basis, outlines when gatherings of specific sizes will be permitted, and where.

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[2] Refer page 10: https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2003/guide-to-the-model-whs-act.pdf
[3] https://www.health.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/2020/05/3-step-framework-for-a-covidsafe-australia-3-step-framework-for-a-covidsafe-australia.pdf

For the sake of identifying capacity limits in the auditorium, the position taken is that the limit includes patrons only and includes stalls, dress circles and balconies, but does not include staff (e.g. ushers) who are required to perform their duties in the auditorium/space. There may be exceptions based on the public health orders in each state and organisations should refer to these orders when making the final determination of their maximum auditorium capacity.

There is currently no specific advice on whether the capacity in the auditorium should include performers on stage – however this will also depend on the configuration and design of the stage / house e.g. thrust stages and flat floors provide a higher risk than a proscenium arch with an orchestra pit between the audience and performers. Unless advised otherwise, the capacity limits exclude performers on stage (including orchestra performers) and backstage personnel (e.g. stage management). Performers will be subject to separate capacity limits while on stage or back of house, depending on their distribution throughout dressing rooms and other backstage areas.

If you have more than one performance or function space operating at a time, opening, interval and exit times must be programmed to avoid exceeding capacity limits in shared foyers.

Review

It is anticipated that amendments will be issued to these Safety Guidelines as the response to the pandemic evolves. It will be important for organisations to regularly review their COVID-19 Safety Plans to ensure their efficacy and responsiveness to the changing environment.

The following circumstances (though not a conclusive list) may provide a trigger-point for an organisation to review their COVID-19 Safety Plan:

- If the State or Territory government introduces, amends or revokes its COVID-19 orders / directions under biosecurity, public health or emergency management legislation.

- If the Federal, State or Territory government amends biosecurity and / or public health laws relating to COVID-19.

- If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- If the Federal, State or Territory Health Department releases new guidance or amends its existing guidance on COVID-19.

- If the National, State or Territory WHS regulator releases new guidance or amends its existing guidance on COVID-19.

Organisations should take steps to identify the relevant authorities and reliable sources of information within their jurisdiction to be able to monitor updates, so that any necessary changes can be implemented in an appropriately timely manner.

Front of House

General

- The venue has a duty of care to ensure the relevant social distancing measures are in place and front of house staff may be required to assist patrons with social distancing.

- Temperature testing of workers and patrons upon entry has not been mandated by the Australian Government at this time.

- Also refer to the section on Cleaning Guidelines for front of house spaces.

- Training in appropriate COVID-19 management skills is available (refer to Resources).

- Equip each front of house staff member with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser.

- Ensure call times allow for additional time to adhere to distancing and cleaning requirements.

- Event staff must be briefed on the particular requirements of that event e.g. additional measures in place due to specific risk related to the artform, audience, or nature of performance.

Audience / patron movement

Entering and exiting the building, and moving through public spaces:

- All control measures must ensure that disability access is maintained, including maintaining sightlines/access to any new way-finding instructions when moving through the venue.

- Signage must be provided at the entrance of the building, indicating the maximum number of patrons permitted in the venue at a time. Additional signage must be provided at the entry to individual spaces throughout the venue – e.g. separate foyers, function rooms, washrooms.

- If queues or clusters of patrons are likely to form outside the venue prior to opening the building doors, the venue must provide signage, ground decals and bollarding to allow distanced queuing.

- Identify any building entrances and exits that can be used for single-direction entry / exit.

- Utilise additional entry/exit doors into the venue where available and safe to do so (e.g. can foyer emergency exit doors be used?) and advise preferred entry points for patrons on their tickets or in confirmation/welcome emails. If you do identify additional entry/exit doors that can be utilised, note whether they remain universally accessible for all patrons.

- Depending on the size of your foyer spaces, and the expected size of the audience, you may need to open the building and auditorium entrances earlier than usual to allow less

queuing for washroom facilities, ticket collection or bar sales. (See below about opening auditorium doors earlier).

- Provide signage, floor decals and bollards to indicate distancing requirements in the foyers where queuing takes place, including the box office, bars, auditorium doors, washrooms and merchandise stands.

- Use both foyer paging (audio) and monitors/signage (visual) to reinforce audience queuing and movement requirements, and ensure this information is accessible for all patrons.

- Where appropriate, provide outdoor heating to allow patrons to gather in outdoor spaces during pre-show/interval, to minimise the number of patrons in limited foyer spaces.

- Provide hand sanitiser stations at all entry and exit points, and throughout foyers, particularly in areas that may have high touchpoints or traffic flows.

- Use foot operated doorstoppers to chock open doors (where safe and appropriate for emergency exit doors) to avoid patrons touching doors.

- There is no requirement to provide 4 square metres of space per person in lifts, however you must still ensure, as far as you reasonably can, that people maintain physical distancing in lifts and lift waiting areas. Clear signage should be displayed in lift cars requesting patrons to observe social distancing and outlining the maximum number of passengers able to use the lift. Priority should be given to patrons with accessibility requirements, and to other patrons requiring assistance.

- Signage should be displayed at the entry point to escalators, advising that physical distancing should be maintained.

- Additional signage about good public hygiene practices should be available in appropriate places around the venue. Include the appropriate phone number that patrons can call if they later suspect or confirm a COVID-19 infection (this is likely your local public health authority).

- Venues must implement a method to record patron contact information, whether the event is ticketed or not, for contact tracing purposes if needed.

- For private events, a list of attendees with contact information should be provided by event organisers in advance. Organisations should include a brief privacy statement to the event organisers, advising how the contact information collected will be used, stored and destroyed.

- If bag searches are a standard security protocol at your venue, utilise the inspection protocol whereby patrons open their own bags and follow the direction of security staff. If security staff need to touch the patrons' belongings, they should wear latex gloves which are regularly changed.

- Foyer furniture should be arranged in a format that is consistent with social distancing (noting that not all patrons are required to distance from people within their own group).

Remove foyer furniture that is excessive to the room's adjusted capacity. Note that patrons with accessibility requirements may need priority access to furniture.

- Staff/cleaners should regularly clean washrooms and monitor stock levels throughout the event.

- Provide touch-free bins throughout the venue.

<u>Entering, exiting and seating in the auditorium</u>

- Only front of house staff should open and close auditorium doors to minimise patron contact.

- Ticket ripping should be eliminated to avoid contact– utilise scanners or simply sight tickets upon entry.

- Consider, where appropriate, devising a phased/staggered plan for seating patrons in the auditorium (similar to plane boarding) based on the specific configuration of your venue. This may be aided by pre-queuing, foyer paging announcements, or instructions provided to audiences upon entry to the building.

- Provide signage at exits requesting patrons disperse swiftly to avoid crowding near exits.

- Intervals may need to be extended to allow for safe flow of audience traffic, depending on your audience capacity.

- Negotiate with the hirer/producer as to whether audience members are permitted to leave their phones on (but on silent) to ensure that the COVIDSafe app is effective for anyone using it. An alternative option would be to request phones be turned to airplane mode and then have Bluetooth turned on.

Counters – concessions, ticketing and cloaking

- Equip each front of house staff member with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser, or ensure a touch free hand sanitiser station is available at points of sale.

- Provide signage, floor decals and bollards to indicate distancing requirements wherever queuing takes place, including the box office, bars, auditorium doors, washrooms and merchandise stands.

- Utilise contact-free payments (e.g. Tap and Go) for all merchandise, bar and concession sales.

- Installing Perspex screens at appropriate points of sale may slow the sales process and extend time spent in queues; therefore, venues should independently evaluate whether they provide sufficient benefit.

- Merchandise stands should include signage that all sales are final, and goods purchased cannot be returned (unless faulty).

- Contact with patrons' personal belongings should be minimised as much as possible, but may be unavoidable with cloaking facilities. An option may be to provide trays for patrons to place their belongings in which are then used to transport the items onto cloaking shelves (similar to the trays used at security screening points at airports).

- Adopt single-use tickets for cloaking, or implement a digital option such as using phone numbers or scannable codes.

- Refer to Food & Beverage section for staff POS requirements.

Ticketing

- Include text during the sales process asking patrons to confirm that they agree to only attend the event/performance if they are in good health.

- Note any revised or preferred building entry requirements e.g. patrons entering the auditorium via Door X will be asked to enter the building via the southern foyer entrance.

- Encourage audience members to download and register details in the COVIDSafe app.

- Provide a contact number for patrons to use if they suspect an infection after the event – this is likely your local public health authority.

- Clearly articulate your refund policy with both audience members and the producer/hirer. Ensure your refund policy is consistent across all performances and events, to avoid patrons potentially being eligible for refunds for some performances/events but not others.

- Wherever possible, only use contactless (e.g. Tap and Go) payments for counter sales and utilise print at home, or e-tickets.

- Equip ticketing staff with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser, or ensure a touch free hand sanitiser station is available at points of sale.

Food & Beverage

The measures outlined below apply to all food and beverage services – including patron service, function catering, back of house and staff catering.

Venues operating cafes, restaurants or other dining options should refer to the relevant Safe Work Australia guidelines for hospitality.

Also refer to the section on Cleaning Guidelines contained in this document.

- Include appropriate measures outlined in the Front of House section above regarding queuing at bars, counters etc.

- Consider replacing fresh food with pre-packaged options for over the counter sales.

- If your current policy does not permit beverages in the auditorium, consider revising it, to reduce patron time spent in crowded foyers. Further consideration will be required regarding the additional cleaning, sanitation, and safety requirements of permitting consumption in the auditorium.

- Serving staff should wear latex gloves, which are changed at regular intervals.

- Equip each staff member with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser or ensure there are touch-free hand sanitising stations available within easy reach.

- Buffet food service should be avoided, even if sneeze/cough guards are in place.

- Patrons should be individually served plates, cutlery and other such items, rather than allowing them to access these items from a shared stack/container. Likewise, shared condiments should be avoided.

- Limit the use of straws – if they're needed, use pre-wrapped straws.

- Avoid using fountain water stands to avoid used bottle tops contaminating the taps. Where possible, provide hands-free stations. Alternatively, use signage to indicate appropriate containers that can be used, and how to use the fountain without contact – though the preference is to not use any shared units.

- Caterers and other third-party providers must provide their COVID-19 Safety Plan and acknowledge receipt of the venue's own plan, along with acceptance of the safety measure in place on site.

- Apply appropriate distancing of tables and chairs in communal dining/drinking spaces.

- Avoid reusable, plastic menus and use boards or monitors instead. Single-use paper menus may be acceptable.

- Assign one point-of-sale position per staff member, and clean/sanitise the equipment between shifts. If a single point of sale per staff member is not possible, use regularly replaced gloves, hand sanitisers, and regularly wipe down the equipment. For touch screen devices, provide staff with their own stylus to avoid direct hand contact and limiting the need to regularly clean the unit.

- Staff should not handle the patron's ID if they are required to verify a patron's age.

Back of House

- All control measures must ensure that disability access is maintained, including maintaining sightlines/access to any new way-finding instructions when moving through the venue.

- Event staff must be briefed on the particular requirements of that event e.g. additional measures in place due to specific risk related to the artform, audience, or nature of performance.

- Equip each staff member with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser or ensure there are touch-free hand sanitising stations available within easy reach.

- Provide hand sanitiser stations throughout back of house areas, including at stage door and loading dock entrances, wing space, corridors and control rooms. Consider areas that may have high touchpoints or traffic flows.

- Existing site inductions should be revised to include the COVID-19 requirements in place at your venue.

- Use signage to indicate the maximum number of persons permitted in each individual space at a time: dressing rooms, rehearsal and warm up rooms, green room, stage door, loading dock, bio box/control room etc.

- Use signage to limit crossover in enclosed areas i.e. one person to a narrow corridor at a time, or do not enter dressing rooms unless space restrictions can be met.

- Identify all shared equipment that requires sanitation/cleaning between users/uses e.g. follow spots, paging mic, battery packs, microphones, consoles etc, and develop a procedure for identifying sanitised equipment. Example: sanitised radio mics are placed on a specific, labelled table; use colour-coded tape or stickers to identify when equipment has been cleaned and is ready for next use.

- Require crew members to be responsible for the same equipment where feasible, to avoid cross contamination

- Provide staff with their own personal safety equipment, where PPE is required (e.g. safety masks)

- Remove excess gear that may be stored in wing space, loading docks etc to maximise the space available to maintain appropriate distancing.

- Identify existing spaces around the venue that can be used to create a temporary increase in dressing room facilities.

- Consider any fixed or temporary spaces that can be utilised in neighbouring buildings or outside spaces (e.g. tents, demountables), with easy access to back of house/stage door, that can be constructed to maximise dressing room space for events with large numbers of performers e.g. dance schools.

- Identify any alternative spaces in the venue that can be used in lieu of the orchestra pit, to allow appropriate performer distancing.

- Provide signage about good public hygiene practices throughout back of house spaces, including workplace specific practices in place at your venue e.g. "Dressing rooms are cleaned and sanitised between uses".

- Incoming production companies and hirers should provide their COVID-19 safety plan in advance of arrival, and discuss their specific requirements/plans with the venue.

- Incoming suppliers/sub-contractors/service providers should provide their specific COVID-19 safety plan.

- Performers, crew and other back of house staff may be asked to declare they are well and fit for work, and that they agree to abide by the safety guidelines set out by the workplace. Alternatively, ensure that your hirers COVID-19 Safety Plan addresses this requirement.

- All persons entering back of house spaces (excluding venue personnel) must be recorded upon entry, including performers, crew, suppliers, etc.

- Provide performers with bagged, clean towels and laundry bags for used costume items before transfer to wardrobe facilities.

- Ensure performers are provided with sufficient space to keep their wardrobe, makeup, props and personal belongings separate.

- Ensure call times allow for additional time to adhere to distancing and cleaning requirements.

- Refer to the [Cleaning Guidelines](#) outlined later in this document.

- Display Support Act and Arts Wellbeing Collective resources, visible to all performers, crew and staff.

The need for social distancing must not cause other unsafe working conditions for crew. For example, if equipment requires multiple people to lift it safely, it should continue to be done this way, while taking whatever steps possible to minimise physical contact or close proximity. Where it is not practicable to maintain physical distancing between workers, implement appropriate control measures such as the use of PPE, face shields, screens, etc.

Office & General Administration

- Remind staff to maintain good personal hygiene.

- Remind staff to stay away from the workplace if feeling unwell.

- Digitise paperwork where possible.

- Identify shared equipment that requires sanitising/cleaning between users: box office terminals, EFTPOS terminals, reception desks, conference tables, staff kitchen equipment.

- Remove 'hot desk' options if appropriate sanitising/cleaning is not possible between uses.

- Identify the appropriate capacity per office/meeting space based on the 4sqm rule.

- Stagger employee start/finish times, or working from home days, or alter business hours to effectively manage arrival/departure times and the capacity of workspaces.

- Consider installing physical barriers (e.g. partitions) between workspaces where 1.5m distancing isn't possible.

- Provide appropriate signage about good hygiene practices.

- Provide hand sanitiser at the entry of administration and box offices.

- Provide hand sanitiser at reception, and require all visitors (e.g. people attending meetings) to sign in and provide contact details on arrival.

- Provide ALL staff with an action list of required responses if they or someone from their household have been exposed to, or have contracted COVID-19.

- Minimise face to face meetings where possible (utilise online meeting facilities) – this applies both to staff and external stakeholders.

- Staff/attendees that do need to attend meetings in person should be seated a minimum 1.5m apart and avoid sitting face to face, particularly if the table provides less than 1.5m distance between attendees. Sitting side by side (1.5m apart) or offset seating is preferred.

- Request contactless delivery for any goods arriving at the venue.

- Any contractors on site (deliveries, maintenance work etc) should be given clear instructions on any relevant protocols for the areas of the venue they will be accessing, and their attendance on site must be registered, along with contact information.

- Manage staff mental wellbeing through appropriate consultation, making signage and printed/online materials available, and designate an appropriate contact within your organisation or department for communicating staff concerns.

- Limit shared food, e.g. birthday cakes, 'family-style' staff meals, etc.

- Adopt cashless payment methods for petty cash, including pre-paid debit cards.

- Anyone who feels unwell should not attend work and seek medical advice if required.

- Refer to the Cleaning Guidelines provided in this document

Training

- In some instances, venue staff should <u>undertake external training</u> in COVID-19 specific safety practices, particularly your appointed Risk Mitigation Coordinator.

- Additional training/updates for staff holding First Aid certificates should be undertaken to understand changes to delivering First Aid in the COVID-19 context.

- Venues should ensure that all staff are consulted/briefed on new health and safety practices to be implemented in your workplace. Event staff must be briefed on the particular requirements of that event, e.g. additional measures in place due to specific risk related to the artform, audience, or nature of performance.

- Supervisors and team leaders should undertake training in identifying mental health issues with a specific COVID-19 emphasis so they can refer affected individuals to, and assist in providing, support. This training must include preventative measures organisations must implement, along with response measures.

Internal Communications

It is important to communicate to all staff that they should:

- Follow all directions and instructions given in relation to minimising or eliminating the risk of COVID-19 in the workplace.

- Follow physical distancing and hygiene protocols.

- Contact their supervisor, and not attend the workplace if they are displaying symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell.

- Report any suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 to their supervisors.

- Report any patrons or visitors to the workplace who are not observing social distancing requirements.

- Use PPE as instructed.

- Take reasonable care for their health and safety outside the workplace (in respect of COVID-19 transmission).

Employers should display signage in prominent locations throughout the workplace which outline the <u>symptoms of COVID-19</u>, and inform workers who to contact/what to do if they begin feeling any of these symptoms at work (also refer to section: <u>Outbreak Plan</u>).

External Communications

The guidelines outlined in this section are not related to marketing or measuring/accommodating audience sentiment about attending your venue. This section relates to communications you should devise regarding your organisation's COVID-safe plans and responses.

Advance communication

Patrons are required to observe social distancing requirements, and good communication before and during an event will ensure they can confidently do so.

By the time audiences are permitted to attend public performances or events, the required distancing measures will likely already be socialised by the public, however it is important to communicate what audiences should expect when attending your venue.

- Include text during the sales process asking patrons to confirm that they agree to only attend the event/performance if they are in good health. On the day of the performance, venues may request the patrons complete the [healthdirect Coronavirus (COVID-19) Symptom Checker](#) (or other self-assessment tool) prior to attending the venue.

- Clearly articulate your refund policy with both audience members and the producer/hirer. Ensure your refund policy is consistent across all performances and events, to avoid patrons potentially being eligible for refunds for some performances/events but not others.

- Confirmation emails (or a letter accompanying hard tickets) should include your social distancing plan, including when the venue doors will be open, whether the bars and cloaking services will be open, if you will be conducting temperature checks on entry, how audience members will be asked to queue and exit the venue, and any other relevant rules you will be asking them to observe.

- Note any revised or preferred building entry requirements e.g. *patrons entering the auditorium via Door X will be asked to enter the building via the southern foyer entrance.* Ensure that access requirements are accounted for when providing instructions.

- Encourage audience members to use the COVIDSafe app, and include a reminder that they must have the app open and running in the background in order for it to be effective.

- Provide a contact number for patrons to use if they suspect an infection after the event.

These communications can be made available on your website, through EDMS, on your social media channels, ticketing purchasing sites or via text messaging – refer to your privacy policy for how patron contact information can be used.

During the event/performance

- Ensure appropriate signage is displayed at entrances and throughout the venue about public hygiene practices and capacity limits.

- Provide signage indicating alternative entry points.

- Use both foyer paging (audio) and monitors/signage (visual) to reinforce audience queuing and movement requirements and ensure this information is accessible for all patrons.

- Ensure all types of communication at the event (oral, visual) take into account the needs of hearing or vision impaired patrons.

- Where appropriate, display a reminder to switch on the COVID-19 app and have it running in the background, including why this is useful for contact tracing.

Post-event

Outbreaks of COVID-19 in your workplace may be reported on in the media, and subject your organisation to scrutiny. It is important to establish your communication strategy ahead of time, in order to manage the relationship with all stakeholders and any interested parties reporting on the matter.

Refer to the following Outbreak Plan section for how you may need to contact patrons, authorities and other stakeholders post-event.

Outbreak Plan

What to expect when a patron has been at your venue and is subsequently diagnosed with COVID-19: ***https://paca.org.au/coronavirus-patron***

The key to managing a local coronavirus outbreak when any person diagnosed with COVID-19 has been at your venue is ensuring you have a plan in place <u>in advance</u>. Noting the infected person may be a patron, a staff member, or a visiting producer's/hirer's performer or crew member.

- For contact tracing purposes, ensure you have implemented procedures for recording contact information for non-ticketed events, ticketed events, visiting companies' staff, and any other visitors to your venue:
    - o Collect patron and visitor contact details in accordance with the relevant state/territory record keeping requirements (refer <u>state-by-state contact tracing requirements</u>)

- o Consider ways to collect details of other patrons in a group booking

- o Consider using QR code sign ins for all patrons

- Ensure your contact lists are up to date and include all employees, contractors, your local Public Health Unit, and out of hours contacts for your cleaning company.

- Ensure your local Public Health Unit has the most relevant contact information for your venue – appoint a representative to be a designated contact for this purpose.

- Should the infected individual contact you directly, have a checklist of questions ready to ask the infected individual (or provide this list to your local Public Health Unit so they are aware of your organisations' specific circumstances.)

  - o Have they notified the local Public Health Authority? If not, provide them with that contact information.

  - o Confirm what date they were in the venue, and which performance they attended, including the time (in case there were multiple performances that day).

  - o Did they attend other local establishments before or after their attendance at your venue?

  - o Where did they enter the venue? Did they use the washrooms? Ride in the lift? Pick up tickets from the box office? Use the cloakroom? Buy anything from the bar? Ask them to trace their movement through the venue.

- Confirm how you plan to notify relevant patrons, producers/hirers and other stakeholders, or how your local public health authority will do this on your behalf, and how contact tracing will be conducted. If you are asked to contact any stakeholders, having your notification pre-emptively drafted will assist if you are in crisis-response mode.

- Confirm with your cleaning company that the nature of your operation may require them to mobilise on short notice in the case of a diagnosed patron at the venue, and ensure they have the qualifications and capacity to respond if needed. Ensure your cleaning company have their own COVID-Safety Plan in place and have the necessary qualifications and equipment to undertake the cleaning and disinfection process.

- Clean and disinfect the areas where the person has been in the venue, and prohibit other persons from entering those areas until the process is complete. Depending on the timing and location of these areas, you may need to implement an evacuation.

- Implement a procedure to investigate and review existing procedures in the wake of the infected person being in your venue.

- Along with the above measures, venues should establish a specific procedure for managing staff illness.

  - o If a staff member contracts COVID-19, identify whether staff who worked alongside this person will be asked to self-quarantine, and identify whether you have the necessary contingencies in place to fulfil the duties of anyone absent from work.

- o Staff members who have a suspected or diagnosed case of COVID-19 must provide medical clearance before returning to work.

- o Staff members who have been in close contact with a person who tests positive, but are not presently symptomatic, should quarantine for 14 days and seek medical advice and testing.

Cleaning requirements

Organisations should review the COVID-19 cleaning requirements outlined by Safe Work Australia, which outline:

1. Cleaning requirements during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Suitable cleaning and disinfecting solutions.
3. A checklist of standard precautions for cleaning.
4. Recommended cleaning by surface type (e.g. fabrics, metals, concrete, etc).
5. Recommended cleaning by item (e.g. carpets, chairs, computer hardware, surface plates, etc).

Review: Safe Work Australia – [How to Clean and Disinfect Your Workplace](#).

Resources

Touring Guidelines
https://paca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Touring-Guidelines-FINAL-2020.08.05.pdf

Guidelines for Auditions, Rehearsals and Performances
https://paca.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Guidelines-for-Auditions-Rehearsal-and-Performances-FINAL-2020.08.05.pdf

Summary of state-by-state health restrictions
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/other-resources/covid-19-public-health-directions-and-covidsafe

Guide to the Work Health and Safety Act
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/system/files/documents/2003/guide-to-the-model-whs-act.pdf

State-by-state WHS regulators
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/whs-authorities-contact-information

State-by-State Incident Notification COVID-19
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-05/Incident_notification_fact-sheet_COVID19_26_May2020.pdf

Safe Work Australia signage and posters:
https://swa.govcms.gov.au/doc/signage-and-posters-covid-19

How to clean and disinfect your workplace:
https://swa.govcms.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/how-to-clean-disinfect-your-workplace-covid19.pdf

Training for workplace COVID-19 safety:
https://ministers.dese.gov.au/cash/fast-tracking-upskilling-australian-workers-covid-19-safety

COVIDSafe App Guidance:
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/other-resources/covidsafe-app-guidance

Safe Work Australia resources for hospitality outlets:
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/industry-information/hospitality/covid-19-your-workplace?tab=tab-toc-employer

Online tool to develop your own COVID Safety plan:
https://www.pmc.gov.au/sites/default/files/files/my-business-covidsafe-plan.pdf

Victorian Guide to Re-opening Venues
https://vapac.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/VAPAC_A-Safe-Guide-for-Re-Opening-Performing-Arts-Venues_V2.0.pdf

Queensland Guide to Re-opening Venues
https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0015/132414/covid-safe-industry-plan-live-performance-venues-theatres.pdf

Audience Outlook Monitor:
https://www.thepatternmakers.com.au/covid19

Mental health outreach:

Lifeline	Support Act
https://www.lifeline.org.au/	https://supportact.org.au/
13 11 14	1800 959 500

Mental Health in the Workplace
https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/topic/mental-health

State & Territory Coronavirus Helplines

National Coronavirus Helpline	1800 020 080
NSW Health Department Helpline	1300 066 055
QLD Health Department Helpline	13 432 584
VIC Health Department Helpline	1800 675 398
SA Health Department Helpline	1300 232 272
WA Health Department Helpline	08 6373 2222
TAS Health Department Helpline	1800 671 738
ACT Health Department Helpline	02 5124 9213
NT Health Department Helpline	08 8922 8044