



Victorian Association of
Performing Arts Centres Inc

A Safe Guide for Re-Opening Performing Arts Venues

Version **1.2**

Last Updated **June 21, 2020**

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Aims: Summary Considerations

- The VAPAC Executive has worked with Members, State and National peak bodies and agencies to develop a set of principles and guidelines mapping a safe path to welcome audiences, producers and hirers back into our venues.
- They are designed to be readily implemented and scalable to the resources available.
- They aim to mitigate risk and provide venues and staff with certainty regards COVID Safe operations.
- They provide a consistent message and benchmarking for Local Government, Audiences, Hirers and other Stakeholders regarding COVID Safe operations in venues.
- The COVID-19 environment will entail a gradual and phased process of return to operations requiring us to manage risks and physical distancing for sometime.
- Health and Safety is a critical factor for audiences considering returning to performing arts venues.
- VAPAC have sought legal advice and referenced Government guidance where appropriate.

Guiding Principles

- Adhere to Government Advice.
 - Currently all venues must enforce the venue density restriction of *Four-Square Metres (2m x 2m) per person* as well as the distancing restriction of *1.5m between each person*.
 - Duty of Care: Venues must use all reasonable endeavours to ensure a safe environment for both workers and patrons.
 - Each venue must prepare its own specific COVID Safe Plan.
 - Risk mitigation measures must be effective, manageable, consistent and tenable.
 - Communication to staff, patrons, hirers and touring companies must be transparent.
 - Training and support programs must be in place to empower staff and provide confidence for return to work.
 - Staff, patrons, performers, producers and hirers must adhere to the venue's guidelines. Effective communication is essential.
 - Venues must review and adjust their operations based on changing circumstances including regulations.
 - When and how to reopen your venue must be driven by a realistic assessment of your venue's ability and resources to implement and sustain safe practices that conform to your COVID-Safe Plan.
 - Venues must continue to comply with Disability Access requirements and continue best practice access when implementing mitigation measures.
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About

Document Structure

- Part A:** **A1: Operations & Risk Management | A2: Return to Work & Staff | A3: Tech | A4: Back of House | A5: Contracts**
- Part B:** **B1: Audiences & Distancing | B2: Front of House | B3: Ticketing**
- Part C:** **Check Lists and Resources**
- Part D:** **External Reference and Resource Links**

Review

This is an evolving set of guidelines that will be updated as necessary. Update triggers may include:

- If the Victorian or Federal Government introduces, amends or revokes its COVID-19 orders, directions, regulations or public health laws.
- If the Federal or State Health Department releases new guidance or amends its existing guidance on COVID-19.
- If the National or State WHS regulator releases new guidance or amends its existing guidance on COVID-19.
- If there is a confirmed case in the Performing Arts Sector - include learnings.
- VAPAC Member Implementation Feedback / Issues encountered.

Acknowledgements

VAPAC Inc. acknowledges and thanks the following for their contributions to this document: VAPAC Working Party and Members – Greg Diamantis, Tammy Ryan, Robyn Till & Tina Rettke; Katherine Connor (PAC Australia); Evelyn Richardson & Kim Tran (Live Performance Australia); Sally Bennett (Arts Centre Melbourne); Marshall McGuire & Jessie Upton (Melbourne Recital Centre); Nicole Beyer (Theatre Network Australia), and Anne Robertson (PGAV).

Guidelines Produced by Ross Farnell Cultural Consulting for VAPAC Inc. 2020.

Disclaimer

This resource has been prepared by the Victorian Association of Performing Arts Centres (VAPAC Inc.) in consultation and partnership with other peak bodies to support the sector during COVID-19.

This document has been developed in the jurisdiction of the State of Victoria. Users of this resource are encouraged to adhere to the advice and recommendations of their Local, State & Territory and Australian Government, public health authority guidelines and their various stakeholders.

The content of this guide is for reference purposes only. It is current at the date of publication and has been developed using the best available information at the time. This content does not constitute legal advice and should not be relied upon as such. Legal advice about your specific circumstances should always be obtained before taking any action based on this guide.

Each venue should create their own specific COVID Safe Plan and related documentation. Any risks related to performing arts centres or other venue re-openings are borne by those venues.

PART A: 1. OPERATIONS

Risk Management & Mitigation

IDENTIFY → ACCESS → CONTROL → REVIEW/ REVISE

Work Health and Safety

Eliminating the risk of exposure to COVID-19 by arts workers and audiences comes under Work Health and Safety (WHS) laws that require you to "take care of the health, safety and welfare of your workers, including yourself and other staff, contractors and volunteers, and others (clients, customers, visitors) at your workplace". This is your duty of care.

Updating Risk Management Protocols and Procedures

- Safe Work Australia strongly recommends undertaking a risk assessment of your workplace as part of creating an overall 'COVID Safe' plan.
- Venues must identify the level of risk to the health of employees as well as to patrons from exposure to COVID-19.
- This should be done in consultation with health and safety representatives (HSRs), if any, and employees, so far as is reasonably practicable.
- The 'Best Work Practices for Staff & Volunteers' and 'Response Plan - Confirmed Cases of COVID-19' sections below provide guidelines for identifying your risks and updating procedures accordingly.
- Venues should ensure that all staff are ready for work, inducted and trained on new health and safety practices to be implemented in your workplace. [SEE A2: RETURN TO WORK](#)
- Mandatory Control Measures will need to be put in place as part of your updated Risk Management, addressing the key focus areas of these guidelines.

COVID-19 Impact Assessment

The impact of COVID-19 on the arts sector and venues has been severe. If venues are not able to fulfil their core purpose over a prolonged period, the organisation's viability can be seriously damaged. To reduce the risk of damage to the organisation, a Business Response Plan (BRP) should be prepared.

- Identify the impact COVID-19 causes to your critical functions.
- Determine what the impact will be on not performing the centre's functions beyond a certain point: How long can the theatre remain dark? What is your recovery priority?
- What resources are needed to be introduced or adapted to continue?
- How might a critical incident related to COVID-19 impact your venue/ organisation/ staff; and,
- Ensure that any statutory requirements are fulfilled.

Key areas of consideration for your Business Response Plan are covered in this document, including venue operations, staffing, audience experience, production facilities and contracts. You will also need to consider key activity areas such as Programming, Touring Productions and Hirers.

COVID Safe - Response Plan

The Venue Manager should consider the following:

- Assemble a COVID Safe Response Team to produce and oversee a COVID Safe Plan for the Centre.
- Appoint and support a COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator with the necessary resources.
- Ensure the COVID Safe plan aligns to the venue's strategy and includes involvement from stakeholders.
- Ensure a robust communication strategy in place to:
 - provide up-to-date reliable information to staff;
 - provide up-to-date reliable information to stakeholders; and
 - clarify the venue's procedures and policies.
- Test your venue's COVID Safe Response Plan and its processes. Update if necessary.

COVID Safe Response Team

Establish clear lines of responsibility for managing the venue's COVID Safe Preparation and Response.

In many venues your Response Team will be the same small core team that manages and operates your venue. However, the specific COVID Safe Team members and their responsibilities should be identified and defined.

Roles and Responsibilities of the Team include:

- Assessing the impact of COVID-19, the impact of the Response Plan and assessing current priorities;
- Ensuring that the organisation continues to meet its legal and regulatory responsibilities;
- Directing the overall response to any incident;
- Ensuring support for the role of the COVID-Safe Compliance Coordinator;
- Composing and communicating messages to staff, patrons, stakeholders and to the media.
- The COVID Safe Response Team should meet to manage:
 - Emergency Response
 - Incident Management
 - Recovery
 - Resumption

COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator

Compliance with measures implemented to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is the responsibility of every individual who works in or visits your venue, including management, workers and patrons.

Consider appointing a staff member with appropriate training in risk management and COVID-19 health and safety guidelines as the venue's COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator. The role should be supported with the resources required to carry out the job.

This role should be incorporated into an updated COVID Safe Plan and Emergency Management Procedures.

Duties Include:

- Implement, coordinate and communicate Safe Audience health and safety guidelines;
- Ensure health risk management implementation and compliance;
- Brief and manage staff regarding health and risk implementation and compliance for all events;

- Be responsible for decision making regarding risks, safety and compliance for patrons, performers, producers and the event itself;
- The COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator should work with the COVID Safe Response Team to adapt these and applicable regulatory guidelines to suit the particular needs, physical layout and resources available within your specific venue.
- [SEE: COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator - ROLE](#)

Response Plan - Confirmed Cases of COVID-19

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 in advance. The infected person may be a patron, a staff member or visiting producer/hirer, performers or crew.

Refer also to: [Safe Work Australia Response Resources](#)

- Ensure your emergency contact lists are up to date and includes all staff, your local Public Health Authority and out of hours contacts for your cleaning company and facility maintenance.
- Ensure your local Public Health Authority / Local Government has the most relevant contact information for your venue – Add your COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator.
- Should the infected individual contact your venue directly, have a checklist of questions ready to ask the infected individual to allow your response plan to be as effective as possible:
 - Have they notified the local Public Health Authority? If not, provide them with that contact information.
 - Confirm what date they were in the venue, and which performance they attended including the time (in case there were multiple performances that day).
 - Did they attend other local establishments before or after their attendance at your venue?
 - Where did they enter the venue, did they use the restrooms, the lift, pick up tickets from the box office, 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. [SEE Communication Plans](#).
- Confirm with your cleaning contractor/ staff 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 capacity to respond if needed.

Isolation Area

Consider establishing a clearly identified Isolation Area in your facility to assist your response plan.

An isolation area should ideally be a room where the door can be closed and has a window for ventilation. Only the minimum amount of furniture should be placed in the room to facilitate easier cleaning and disinfecting when the room has been used and it should contain the following:

- Hand sanitiser
- PPE including gloves and surgical facemask
- Detergent and/or wipes and Tissues.
- Waste bags or waste bin with lid (pedal bin or non-touch mechanism).

Staff Infection

If a staff member is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, their supervisor/manager must immediately notify the relevant, documented public health authorities as well as their venue's COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator.

If the Staff member is still on site when they identify as showing symptoms:

- The first aider, or other pre-designated responder should escort the individual to the isolation area, remaining at least 2m away from the patient and ensuring that all other individuals on the premises maintain a 2m distance as well.
- The patient should be given a facemask if available whilst walking to the isolation area and when exiting the building and be advised not to touch any surfaces, objects or people.
- Once in the isolation area the first aider can assess the individual to see if they well enough to return home and contact their GP by phone from home and isolate there.

In all instances, then:

- Determine what areas of the venue were visited, used, or impacted by the infected worker ('Impacted Areas').
 - Note. You may be required to immediately close your venue and cancel all events until the safety of the venue has been determined by health authorities, or the venue has been fully sanitised. Take the advice of your local Health Authority.
- Assess whether the worker's role put them within two metres of other workers, patrons or performers, including whether their duties create specific transmission risks such as food handling, bartending, or box office.
- Work with the local health department to determine which other workers or patrons had close contact with the infected worker.
- Notify the Impacted Workers / Patrons / Performers that they may have had contact with an infected worker and advise them to monitor their health and self-isolate as required or advised by the health authorities.
 - See 'Patron Infection'
- Any worker who tests positive for COVID-19 should remain in home isolation for not less than 14 days after symptoms begin. The worker should follow health authority guidance.
- Impacted Workers who have been in close contact with a person who tests positive, but who are not presently symptomatic should not come to work for 14 days after their last close contact, and quarantine themselves.

Patron Infection

If a patron is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 either during or after their attendance at your venue, the Venue Manager must immediately notify the relevant, documented public health authorities.

If the Patron is still on site when they identify as showing symptoms:

- The first aider, or other pre-designated responder should escort the individual to the isolation area, remaining at least 2m away from the patient and ensuring that all other individuals on the premises maintain a 2m distance as well.
- The patient should be given a facemask if available whilst walking to the isolation area and when exiting the building and be advised not to touch any surfaces, objects or people.
- Once in the isolation area the first aider can assess the individual to see if they well enough to return home, contact their GP by phone from home and isolate there.

With the health authorities you will need to:

- Determine what areas of the venue were visited, used, or impacted by the infected patron ('Impacted Areas').
 - Note. You may be required to immediately close your venue and cancel all events until the safety of the venue has been determined by health authorities, or the venue has been fully sanitised.
- Assess whether the patron was within two metres of other workers, patrons or performers.
- Work with the local health department and use Patron Contact Tracing data to determine which other patrons and workers the infected patron was in close contact with. ('Impacted Patrons').
- Notify the Impacted Patrons / Workers / Performers that they may have had contact with an infected patron and advise them to monitor their health and self-isolate as required by the health authorities.

Communication Plans – Response

- Establish an internal incident management process. This may include quick response online meetings.
- Ensure all staff and contractors can be notified immediately and effectively. Identify the how and by who.
- Identify and list all stakeholders who need to be told and by who.
 - This may include performers, musicians, production teams, touring parties and contractors who have visited your venue in the 14 days prior to the confirmed case being reported.
 - This will include cleaning contractors.
- Ensure ready access to patron tracking data, staff work schedules and venue visitor contact sheets.
- The venue should develop a set of pre-agreed statements for possible scenarios which may include:
 - Confirming that a patron / staff member who has been at your venue is suspected to have / has COVID-19;
 - Cancellation of an event or series of events;
 - Closure of the venue;
 - What your venue is doing to ensure the safety of all who attended;
 - What your venue is doing to ensure the venue can be re-opened safely / future events.
- Keep all of your stakeholders regularly updated as the situation unfolds.

A2: RETURN TO WORK

INFORM → LISTEN → REVIEW → RESPOND

It is recommended to develop a Return to Work Plan (RtW) in consultation with your staff and stakeholders. Processes you may consider include:

- Establish the guiding principle for your RtW Transition.
- Undertake consultation – gauge staff sentiment. Consider a survey of all staff.
- Conduct a RtW Workshop with all staff and volunteers – you might use online tools to facilitate.

- Transition Plan – What does good look like in the future? e.g. A hybrid workplace incorporating work from home and work on site arrangements?
- Flexible work arrangements – your workers’ level of comfort with public transport for example.
- Continue to monitor and survey staff sentiment as your venue re-opens.

Staff

Consider the following when writing your RtW plan, and when consulting with Staff before re-opening:

- What are the staffing levels required to open the centre with COVID-19 protocols in place? If they have increased, put in place the necessary resources.
- Ensure appropriate training, upskilling and briefing of staff in new or changed COVID-19 related roles and responsibilities. See Training below.
- Consider employee well-being including their mental health: consider how staff may feel coming back into the building and the strong staff social network that exists around many arts centres.
- Assess how increased levels of absenteeism could affect critical activities and how this could be prevented, cross-training to ensure cover on roles.
- It may be necessary to update Human Resources policies and procedures to bring them in line with any new guidelines or practices adopted following the emergence of COVID -19.
- A support plan for workers should be put in place by:
 - Providing ongoing communication to ensure workers are kept up to date on all the necessary information, including any changes to their working environment and to provide reassurance that all necessary safety and hygiene measures are being introduced and monitored.
 - Open door policy for workers to be able to discuss any concerns they may have.
 - Provide information on available sources of support and advice.
- Venues should recommend that all staff download, install and run the COVID-Safe App on their mobile devices before returning to work.

Staff Training

Induction & Safety Training

- All staff will require induction into new health and safety protocols before they recommence work in your venue.
- Audience facing and other front of house staff may require additional training and updated duties.
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures will need to be reviewed, updated and implemented.

Union

- Where appropriate and relevant, ensure your union representative is consulted on any changes to work practices.

Online Training / Induction Resource

- It is preferable to provide standardised online training for staff in basic COVID-19 health and safety protocols before they return to your venue.
- Return to Work – Online Training: The Victorian Government has made a general Coronavirus training module available to all businesses. See [Business Victoria](#).

- **VAPAC – ACM Training.** VAPAC has arranged with Arts Centre Melbourne, a Registered Training Organisation, to develop and deliver online training / induction sessions and provide follow up resource materials for Managers, Front of House and Box Office, and Tech Managers / Back of House staff that can be used by all Victorian Member venues. VAPAC will inform Members of dates and availability.

Best Work Practices for Staff & Volunteers

- **Staff Screening:** It is recommended by [Business Victoria](#) to check the ongoing health of all staff on each day they work at your venue. This is to protect the health and safety of your staff and your patrons.
 - Standard staff health check questionnaire. [SEE PART C: CHECK LISTS](#)
- **Sick Workers and Volunteers.**
 - Workers must notify their supervisor and stay home from work if they have symptoms consistent with COVID-19 – such as fever, cough, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or shortness of breath. As per the advice for all Victorians, even if your workers have only mild symptoms like tiredness or a sore throat, they should attend a coronavirus (COVID-19) testing location
 - Advise your workers that if they take their temperature using a thermometer and it is 37.5 degrees or above, they are considered to have a fever and should not come to work.
 - Symptomatic Workers. If a worker exhibits any symptoms of COVID-19 at any time their supervisor must send them to a designated isolation area and activate [the Response Plan - Confirmed Cases of COVID-19](#) protocols immediately.
- **Physical Distancing.** Where practical workers must comply with 1.5m physical distancing. Where it is not possible to undertake work tasks and maintain physical distancing, other control measures need to be implemented.
- The **'Four Square Metre Density Rule'** does NOT apply to workplaces/ spaces that do not have public access, although all workplaces are encouraged to apply the rule wherever possible and encourage staff to remain 1.5m apart. For example:
 - Minimise the number of person-to-person interactions that need to be completed within 1.5 metres.
 - Minimise the number of individuals involved in activities that need to occur within 1.5 metres of each other. eg. Essential work in bio-box, wings, grid, box office.
 - Put in place control measures to limit close contact between workers/ other people for longer than 15mins face-to-face cumulative over the course of a week or more than 2 hours in a shared closed space. If this is not possible, utilise PPE.
 - Provide personal protective equipment (PPE) where necessary (e.g. gloves, masks, glasses).
 - Form a “work team” in which people routinely work together, but they keep their distance from everyone else.
- **Hand Washing & Personal Hygiene.** Induction to include training in effective, frequent hand washing with soap or use of sanitiser.
- **Cough and Sneeze Etiquette.** Workers should cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available, followed by thorough handwashing.

Volunteers

Before reinstating any volunteer programs, or if you are a Volunteer Presenter, ensure that you comply with public health authority guidelines and Workplace Health & Safety legislation regards volunteering. In the interests of your volunteers' health and wellbeing, your organisation may choose to delay re-opening to the public or implement a staged return to roster.

- Prepare written guidelines for your volunteers so that they are aware of your organisation's COVID-19 precautions and measures.
- Provide your volunteers with a copy of these guidelines and prominently display them in their work areas.
- Discuss the guidelines and your volunteer return to work strategies with your volunteers to ease any issues, concerns or anxieties they may have.
- Seek guidance from your insurance provider before reinstating volunteer programs.
- Volunteers and Workers aged over 70 years are classified as Vulnerable Workers. Seek guidance.
- Follow government regulations regarding those in the community who have been advised to self-isolate due to age and health conditions.
- Continue to involve and communicate with volunteers and investigate how you can use this period to utilise, train and upskill your volunteers from home. COVID-19 information for volunteer involving organisations can be found at [Volunteering Australia](#).

PPE for Staff

In general, government advice is that control measures such as good hygiene and physical distancing are more effective than PPE, and in most instances, PPE is not required.

- Face Coverings / Masks.
 - Face masks are not mandated or recommended for general use by workers by the Australian Government, unless required for other safety purposes.
 - Face covering requirements should be task-specific only and include instruction on proper use. For example, first aiders may need N-95 or equivalent face coverings when dealing with potentially sick workers or patrons.
 - The venue should have compliant masks available for workers/ patrons if needed.
- Staff Choice
 - Some audience-facing staff may feel more comfortable in their workplace tasks if they are wearing a mask. They should be allowed this option, with proper training.
- Sneeze Guards/ Screens
 - Perspex screens for box office stations, foyer bar or other similar audience facing workstations are not mandated.
 - Venues should consult with staff regarding their comfort level regarding such screens and if they believe they will assist, implement accordingly.
- Gloves
 - If gloves are already worn as part of routine food preparation, this practice should be continued together with the usual food safety requirements. See *Victorian Hospitality Industry Guidelines* in PART D: EXTERNAL RESOURCES
 - If using them, workers should be trained in the proper use of gloves, including frequency of disposal.

- Utilise gloves for First Aid, isolation or temperature checking activities.
- Cleaning Staff
 - Gloves are recommended when cleaning and disinfecting.
 - Emptying foyer bins/ other front of house clean up duties.
- PPE for Technical Staff:
 - Crew fitting radio microphones to performers and similar tasks will be required to encroach on physical distancing in order to undertake their work. Recommend PPE such as wearing of gloves and masks for crew undertaking this work.
- Sanitising
 - Equip each staff member utilising common touch equipment with their own supply of an alcohol-based disinfectant and hand sanitiser.

A3 & 4: Technical and Back of House

As with all workplaces, the technical, production, performance and back of house / administration areas of venues must also comply with the current physical distancing regulations.

The '[Four Square Metre Rule](#)' does NOT apply to workplaces/ spaces that do not have public access, although all workplaces are encouraged to apply the rule wherever possible and encourage staff to remain 1.5m apart.¹ As the Stage, for example, is a workspace without public access, the density ruling does not apply.

Combined with increased protocols, risk management, cleaning and sanitisation this will necessitate a change to work practices. It will also increase the time taken to perform most technical duties, from bump in to rigging and staging.

Venues will need to work with their technical crew to establish workable protocols based on the guidelines and calculate the extra time that will be needed to undertake tasks.

Consider the following:

- Where it is not possible to undertake necessary work tasks and maintain physical distancing, or staff need to work in confined areas such as the Bio Box, other control measures should be implemented. [SEE Best Work Practices for Staff & Volunteers.](#)
- Where crew and staff must work in close proximity, you should minimise the time that they are in close contact. Where it is practical and safe to do so, review tasks and processes that usually require close interaction and identify ways to modify these to increase physical distancing.
- Where there is unavoidable close contact between workers/ other people for longer than 15mins face-to-face cumulative over the course of a week or more than 2 hours in a shared closed space utilise PPE.
- Remove excess gear that may be stored in wing space, loading docks and etc. to maximise the space available to maintain appropriate distancing.
- Consider locking 'open' all doors that are not required to be closed to limit surface contact.
- Ensure all back of house/ CAD plans are up to date, so you can provide clients / touring companies the opportunity to be familiar with the workspaces before arrival.
- Update back of house Risk Assessments with any COVID Safe plan updates.

¹ This ruling is provided by DHHS: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/business-sector-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#what-is-the-four-square-metre-rule>

- Allow extra time for pre-rig, bump ins and rehearsals to allow for updated work practices.
- All access points and separate workspaces should display clear signage about health and safety protocols in place. [SEE Signage](#)

Touring Productions / Hirers / Third-Party

- Inform all touring companies and hirers of your COVID Safe plan and venue health and safety requirements and protocols before they arrive at your venue.
- Ensure touring companies and hirers sign-off that they have read and agree to abide by your COVID-Safe plan and updated protocols. [SEE A5: Contracts](#)
- Have touring companies provide the Venue with their own COVID Safe plan before arriving at your venue. Technical staff and your COVID Compliance Coordinator should review such third-party plans and ensure consistency with your own practices and compliance.
- Producer plans should take into consideration distancing requirements for their performers, their touring party, and from your audience both on and off stage.
- This information should be made available and be reviewed by both parties in a timely manner in the pre-production meeting process, and allow for the resources to finalise before the production.

The following measures are recommended throughout your back of house areas:

Ingress / Egress

- Compulsory staff / production crew / performer sign-in to the building register for each event to allow Contact Tracing.
 - By signing in staff and crew agree to venue health and safety protocols and work practices.
- Have available a short Production/Performer Declaration Form with contact details and health screening questions including disclosure of illness, COVID-19 type symptoms in the past 14 days and any overseas travel. Utilise if / as you deem necessary. [SEE PART C: CHECK LISTS](#)
- Hand sanitiser stations provided at all entrance points including Stage Door, Green Room and Loading Bay/ Dock, and other areas as appropriate.
- These stations should allow no-touch activation if possible.
- Provide signage at all entrances regarding venue / back of house protocols for staff and visiting production crew to observe.
- Supervisor to brief all touring production personnel regarding venue policy and process on arrival.
- All new ingress/ egress and emergency exits should remain accessible for people with disabilities.

Dressing rooms, Green Room and Rehearsal Rooms

- Display room capacity limits set according to distancing guidelines at entrance to each room.
- Provide hand sanitizer stations inside each space.
- Provide distancing floor decals in high traffic areas such as backstage corridors, crossovers and dressing room mirror/ sink areas.
- Establish restroom occupancy limits and entry controls for toilets within dressing rooms and backstage.
- Only one set of occupants per hire.

Loading dock.

- Control occupancy to enable distancing within area limits.
- Ensure crew levels do not exceed spatial limits.
- Provide hand sanitizer / wipes to all appropriate areas

Fly Floor / Grid:

- Disinfect touchable surfaces, weight stacks and ropes, control panels after each production.
- Hand sanitizer stations and regular handwashing.
- Provide hand sanitizer / wipes to all appropriate areas

Closed Bio Box / Control Room

- Investigate ways to increase air flow and reduce number of personnel.
- Where possible do not allow touring company personnel access.
- Disinfect touch surfaces and high use equipment after each use.
- Routinely disinfect common touch points in control and production areas.
- Provide hand sanitizer / wipes to all appropriate areas / crew.

Orchestra / Pit

- Investigate ways to increase air flow and reduce number of personnel in Pit or On Stage.
- Consider installing sneeze guards/ mute shields between musicians.
- Limit number of musicians/ personnel to enable social distancing of 1.5m.
- Provide hand sanitizer / wipes to all appropriate areas
- Colour code equipment to identify when it has been used and needs to be cleaned for re-use.

Administration

- Identify the appropriate capacity per office/meeting space based on 1.5m distancing.
- Remove 'hot desk' options if appropriate sanitising/cleaning is not possible between uses.
- StagAlger employee start/finish times, or working from home days, or alter business hours to effectively manage arrival/departure times and the capacity of workspaces.
- Provide appropriate signage about good hygiene practices
- Provide hand sanitiser at the entry of administration and box offices.
- 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. Sitting side by side (1.5m apart) or offset seating is preferred.
- Request contactless delivery for any goods arriving at the venue.
- 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. For examples and further information see *The Arts Wellbeing Collective*.

- Limit shared food e.g. birthday cakes, ‘family-style’ staff meals, etc.
- Manage hygiene, sharing of utensils and crowding in common areas like lunchrooms.

Other

- Eliminate all backstage tours until further notice.
- Eliminate buffet style catering for production staff in green rooms and etc. Use individual packaging for food and beverages.

On Stage – Personnel / Performers

- The ‘Stage’ area is considered a ‘workplace’. Therefore, the four-square metre density rule does not apply, but where possible physical distancing of currently 1.5m should be maintained.
- Develop, communicate and manage clear limits to the number of personnel allowed on stage at any one time, including performers and production staff. Technical Supervisor to monitor.
- You will likely need to apply performer limits to large ensembles such as Choirs and Orchestras. Work with them and their own COVID-Safe plan to manage close contact performer numbers safely both on stage and in back of house.
- When rehearsals and performances are conducted, performers should maintain 1.5 metres distance from each other, hand hygiene practices should be strictly followed, and the sharing of microphones or of instruments that are played with a mouthpiece should be avoided. Rehearsal and performance areas should also be cleaned with increased frequency.
- Informed Consent – Close Proximity: Ensure producers/ touring party / hirers have appropriate controls and strategies in place regarding close proximity performers, and if appropriate have written, informed consent from performers to work in scenes that require close contact, and what control measures are in place.
- Ensure the stage, wings and surrounding back of house is included in daily / each event cleaning schedules, including all touch surfaces and equipment.
- Minimise use of communal areas including Green Room.

Equipment & Props

- Identify, list and create a risk management / hygiene strategy for all high touch / high risk and ‘shared’ staging, performance and technical equipment.
- This may include headsets, microphones, headphones, props and sets as well as audio and LX desks and equipment.
- Work with your technical team to establish practical, safe equipment protocols and training.
- Sanitise all high-risk equipment before / after each use with an alcohol-based disinfectant.
- Consider a system of colour coded tape on all equipment to quickly identify when equipment has been cleaned and is ready for next use.
- Restrict items like headsets and microphones to single allocated use by individuals only. Consider colour coded or other tape identification method for each item/ person allocated.
- Where possible, artists should provide their own microphone / headsets for hand-held or close use.

- If body-worn radio mics are required (i.e. lapel mics) artists should be instructed by the venue technicians to fit their own microphone and should ensure that their clothing has a fixed collar/lapel position and a waistband/belt.
- The venue will provide appropriate PPE for crew when fitting equipment such as radio microphones to performers if this is necessary.
- Require cast to handle hand-held props out of a sanitised bag and return them to the same bag when finished.
- **Quarantine of Microphones & related high-risk equipment:** There is currently no clear advice on such requirements, including the time COVID-19 may survive on different surfaces.²
 - VAPAC will seek to issue updated advice if and when it comes to hand.
 - Venues may wish to put in place a precautionary quarantine on such equipment of up to 72 hours.

Mechanical Services – Air Ventilation

- Current [SWA advice](#) indicates that there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be spread through HVAC systems.
- A working HVAC system is an essential safety measure for most buildings, including theatres.
- If your HVAC system was shut down for a period of time during ‘lockdown’, it should only be restarted after inspection and maintenance in accordance with relevant regulations and standards.
- Consult your HVAC engineer/ maintenance contractor to assess your system’s filter effectiveness and fresh air circulation rate. If advised, increase filter cleaning frequency and increase fresh air to recirculated air ratios.

Cleaning & Sanitising

Cleaning and disinfecting common contact surfaces will help to slow the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19). General requirements and suggestions on cleaning and disinfecting procedures can be found in the Department of Health and Human Services’ (DHHS) and Safe Work Australia guidelines.

- All ‘high-touch areas’ of the venue where there is regular human contact with surfaces should be cleaned *and* sanitised after each public event / performance. Both steps are essential.
 - In some instances, high touch surfaces may need to be cleaned during events, such as after interval.
- Every venue clean must be documented by those performing the clean, utilising a venue Cleaning Check List which will be signed off by the Manager/ Duty Manger.
- The check list will itemise all venue areas and its key surfaces for quick reference and cross-checking by cleaners/contractors and managers.
- The Check List should include a clear identification of both Cleaning and Disinfecting techniques and products to be used. This may include electrostatic cleaning where available.
- Disposable cleaning products and items should be disposed of safely after use.

² <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorian-public-coronavirus-disease-covid-19#doesntbspcoronavirus-covid-19-survive-on-surfaces>

Fabric Theatre Seats

- Venues should focus on frequently touched surfaces and should consider regular inspections of venue seating and undertake spot cleaning as and when required.
- For fabric chairs, clean the touch surfaces of the item that can be wiped with a damp cloth. Not all surfaces are amenable to frequent cleaning.
- For soft or porous surfaces like fabric or leather, seek advice from the manufacturer of the item to be cleaned about which products can be safely used.
- If you are considering using a general disinfectant spray for porous fabric seats after each use/ performance – check the time that it would need to be in contact with the surface to be effective, otherwise it may not be practical. Also check with manufacturer re material safety.
- If soft or porous surfaces require regular cleaning, it may be more effective to use a removable washable cover or a disposable cover and replace these as regularly as you would clean the surfaces.

A5: Contracts

Venues should review and update contracts with hirers, producers and tour coordinators in order to manage risk pertaining to COVID-19, and to clarify new venue, staff, health and safety, duty of care, box office, ticketing and performer responsibilities, protocols and processes.

Venues should both update templates for new contracts and seek to add Addendums to existing event contracts.

VAPAC has taken legal advice regarding the following suggested clauses and updates and they are considered sound. However, venues may wish to seek legal advice regarding their own final contracts and clauses. The following information is provided as a checklist of items to consider (and not as legal advice).

- Ensure that the contract is consistent with, and acknowledges, the ticketing terms and conditions relating to COVID-19 including in respect of refund policies and safety precautions and protocols.
- Add specific ‘Cancellation of Show/ Event due to COVID-19 or other Pandemic Event’ clause. ‘Force Majeure’ may not be applicable, for example, where the Producer / Hirer is able to perform, but the venue is not able to, or determines not to, open. Be specific.
- This clause should invoke a similar ‘no blame’ set of cancellation or rescheduling processes as Force Majeure, if either party is unable to fulfil their performance / host contract due to COVID-19 or other Pandemic Event.
- Be clear about the circumstances that may require your venue to close and cancel events, such as: a venue specific COVID-19 outbreak; updated advice or regulatory restrictions from Government or the relevant Health Authorities to the sector; or by order of the relevant Health Authorities to your specific venue/ location.
- Add clause specific to all hirers, touring parties, their crew and performers agreeing to abide by the venue’s COVID-Safe plan, work protocols and procedures and to take responsibility for failures to do so. Ensure that there is scope to provide the hirer with updated protocols and procedures as requirements and circumstances may change.
- Add an ‘I have read and agree to the Venue’s COVID-Safe plan’ sign-off page.
- Add clause requiring hirers and touring parties to submit their own COVID-Safe plan regarding their management of performers and crew at your venue no less than 30 days before the performance date, for approval by the venue.
- Add clause noting that both parties will need to allocate extra time and resources in pre-production to implement COVID-Safe plans and venue induction.

- Make sure that the responsibilities of the venue owner and the hirer are clearly spelt out and detailed. This may include a specific schedule detailing what the venue owner and its staff will supply and do and what the hirer must supply and do.
- Add clause noting Patron Limitations in your venue as per current Government Regulations and your estimated patron/ seating capacity. Note this is subject to change with regulations. Indicate that Patron Limitations will be applied by the venue according to its own interpretation of the Regulations and its own COVID-Safe plan and policies.
- Include a clause allowing the venue owner to exclude individuals or classes of individuals from attending the venue including the hirer's personnel. This is intended to provide a discretion to the venue owner to make an on the spot judgement to exclude a person with symptoms. Depending on the detail included in the COVID-Safe plan, you may also consider including rights to have the hirer's personnel submit to screening questions and temperature checks.
- Add updated Ticketing T&C's to your contract as an addendum. To be agreed by all parties.
- Are you seeking to recoup increased compliance, cleaning and associated COVID-19 costs from hirer charges? If so, specify. This may include specific amounts payable if there is a COVID event arising from the performance (e.g. the costs of a "deep cleanse" of the venue).

Addendums to Existing Contracts

Venues should supply to those holding pre-COVID-19 contracts an Addendum containing the necessary COVID-19 operational clauses as suggested above.

Advise those with existing contracts that the Addendum is required to comply with Government and Health Authority Regulations that have come into force since the original contract was agreed. Compliance with Regulations is incumbent on both parties, not only the venue, and there are penalties for non-compliance.

If there is any dispute, check your contract for an obligation on the hirer/performer to comply more generally with laws or to follow directions or policies of the venue owner. This may provide a basis for requiring them to adopt the new conditions or enabling you to impose them.

Rescheduling Stage Productions. See [COVID-19: VAPAC observations regarding Rescheduling Stage Productions](#).

Cancellation of Existing Contracted Shows

Due to restricted venue and performer capacity many contracted shows will need to cancel their events due to lack of financial and / or logistical viability within COVID-Safe protocols.

Each venue will need to create a consistent and clearly communicated policy regarding cancellations that takes into consideration the following:

- If the cancellation is taken as a 'Force Majeure' event where neither party is able to fulfil the contract due to circumstances beyond their control are all deposits refunded? Consider rolling over deposits to a future date.
- If ticketing and marketing costs have already been incurred by the venue, are they passed onto the hirer?
- What other obligations do the parties have to each other in the event of the cancellation?

Ensure that the policy is incorporated as terms in any new contracts and that it is justifiable under, or consistent with, existing contracts.

Be pro-active in relation to contact and communication with hirers where their booking is at risk. If you reach agreement on a particular approach that is not reflected in your terms and conditions, document that agreement as amending or replacing the existing agreement.

PART B: 1. PATRONS & DISTANCING

This section provides recommendations and considerations for managing your duty of care to your patrons, audiences and the general public in the staging and managing of your events and venues.

Auditoria – Managing Restricted Capacity

- Ensure you do not exceed currently published State Government restrictions on venue capacity. Check industry news and [DHHS for updates](#).
- In Victoria concert venues and theatres will be allowed up to 20 seated people per separate space from 22 June 2020*. Distancing and Density restrictions apply. (*Correct as at June 21, 2020)
 - The next review of capacity is scheduled for 12 July 2020. This is subject to change.
- Each venue will need to calculate both its maximum capacity and individual seating plans based on the social distancing guidelines. Currently these are Four Square Metres per person density limitation (2m x 2m) and 1.5 metres between each person where they are not of the same family or household.
 - Maximum allowable auditorium capacity applies to patrons only.
 - Theatres with multiple seating tiers (e.g. stalls and balconies) with separate entries will be able to seat up to 20 people per tier* (subject to the density requirements of one person per four square metres). (*This advice is subject to Government restrictions and may change. Please check current rulings when implementing).
 - Outdoor concert venues, theatres or auditoriums will also have to meet gathering limits and the one person per four square metre rule.
 - Groups are limited to 20 people and there must be at least 1.5 metres between each group.
 - Venues and facilities can have the number of staff reasonably required to operate, [in addition to the limit in place for patrons](#).
 - Workers are excluded from the calculation because employers have a duty to provide a safe workplace.
 - The limit does not include other staff members throughout the building who do not conduct their work in the auditorium.
- Unless advised otherwise, the capacity limits exclude performers on stage (including orchestra performers) and backstage personnel (e.g. stage management). They are in workspaces separate to public spaces.
- Venues will need to separately calculate the best way to achieve required distancing for each performance space and their foyers, and will need to take into account access, egress, sight lines and ticketing management of patron numbers.

- Negotiate with the hirer/producer whether audience members are permitted to leave their phones on (but on silent) to ensure that the COVID-Safe app is effective for anyone using it.

The following is recommended for managing restricted capacity:

- All venues should utilise Allocated Seating for all events and performances.
- Seat allocations should be completed in advance to allow for pre-show management of seating and social distancing.
- Consider removing 'walk ups' and 'door sales', or limiting the number available, to ensure required distancing for seat allocations.
- There is no simple hard and fast rule such as 'killing every second seat'. Venues will need to manage patrons booking single tickets, as couples, as family / household groups and many other scenarios.
- Depending on your stage/seating configuration, it may be necessary to kill the first few seating rows in order to create a 'moat' between performers and audience, thereby providing a safer environment for all. Liaise also with touring companies and performers. [SEE: Touring Productions / Hirers / Third-Party](#)

Multiple Venue/ Auditorium Facilities

- Maximum capacities will be restricted to the current regulated numbers and distances available in any common areas where all patrons and visitors from multiple venues might congregate at any one time – e.g. Foyers. This space will dictate your baseline capacity. Combined venue numbers should not exceed this capacity.
- If common area congregation can be avoided either through physical separation within the space or staggered event / opening times, then each venue in the facility could operate to the maximum numbers allowed.
- If the facility has multiple entrances to different venues, then each must be managed according to the *Ingress/ Egress guidelines*. To facilitate consider:
 - Designating some entrances as exits only. Configure auto-doors accordingly.
 - Do you have the resources to actively monitor patrons and visitors using multiple entrances, including patron tracking requirements and screening?

Managing ticketing and box office seating scenarios. [SEE B3: TICKETING.](#)

Ingress / Egress

Car Parks / Arrival Points: Patrons' experience of the venue often begins before the main entrance; in the carparks and approaching paths, stairs and elevators. Where venues are in control of these assets, they need to manage patrons at these early points before they arrive in their venues to ensure health and safety social distancing guidelines are observed.

If the venue has narrow approaching pathways, stairwells or lift access, all of these will require public signage regarding distancing, and lifts will require signage and monitoring regards reduced capacity and floor markings for safe queuing.

Sanitising Stations. Stations with sanitiser containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol must be provided at all points of ingress and other well-marked and illuminated locations throughout the venue. These stations should allow no-touch activation if possible. Supervisors must check adequate supplies. Avoid creating congestion areas with sanitising stations. Ensure numerous locations throughout the facility.

Separate Egress/ Exit. Where possible, venues should create a patron exit separate from the entrance, to avoid ‘two way’ congestion. This may require temporary modification of an emergency exit, which would still need to comply with the venue’s emergency procedures and regulatory requirements.

If a venue is not able to provide this, it should ensure event timing does not result in large numbers of people leaving while others are arriving and may need manage patron movement with staff.

Entrance Queues. Additional space may be required to accommodate patrons waiting to enter the venue.

The line waiting to enter can be managed using common methods such as lines marked on the ground, rope and stanchions in combination with staff who provide information about anticipated wait time and entrance procedure and also enforce social distancing. The area where patrons wait should have signage showing the event’s health rules, including social distancing guidelines.

To avoid queuing it is recommended to open auditorium doors as soon as possible once the venue / box office is open, and at least 30 minutes prior to the performance, placing patrons within the controlled allocated seating environment.

Timed Ticketing – Virtual Queuing. Venues may consider utilising timed ticketing to stagger arrivals where this is practical. However, given there is a single performance start time for most theatre events, the capacity to stagger arrivals over any helpful time period is likely to be limited.

Scheduled Egress from Nearest Exit to Last. Consider managing egress from auditoria in the same way passengers unload from an airplane. Patrons nearest the exits should leave first, by row or section. This will require Ushers to ensure that patrons understand the procedure *before the performance commences*.

Exit / Entrance During Show. If a patron needs to exit the auditorium during a performance for any reason, they are able to move past other patrons seated in their aisle as long as there is no sustained contact. The same applies to re-entering.

Patron Compliance. It is the responsibility of the individual patron to ensure they observe physical distancing protocols as directed by the Australian, State and Territory Governments. Individuals are liable for fines if they do not comply with restrictions placed by the appropriate Chief Health Officer.

Venues do have the right to refuse entry or ask a patron to leave if they are not complying with CHO advice or with the published terms and conditions of venue entry including safety regulations.

NB: It may be difficult to distinguish which patrons are required to observe social distancing and which are not (eg. Families from the same household).

Emergency Evacuation. The need for physical distancing creates significant challenges when planning to evacuate a crowd during an emergency. External emergency evacuation assembly points will need to be able to accommodate the patrons / performers while maintaining distancing between unrelated groups.

NB: The goal of maintaining distancing between people becomes a secondary consideration if there is a clear and imminent danger requiring an emergency evacuation. Emergency exit plans should reflect that moving patrons away from the most urgent hazard is the priority.

Patron Screening - Options

Patron Screening measures are NOT mandated by the Government or Health authorities at this time.

To provide a duty of care that minimises the risk of transmission and to provide a level of reassurance to all entering your venues, you may wish to put in place health screening options. For many venues, self-disclosure will be considered adequate.

Consider the following:

Health & COVID-19 Exposure Screening

- Put in place signage at all entrances advising patrons and visitors that disclosure of COVID-19 symptoms or risk of exposure is a requirement of entry.
- Advise ticket holders of these terms and conditions at the time of purchase. [SEE](#) Warnings, Advice, T&C and Consent on Tickets.
- Develop a short Visitor Declaration Form with visitor / patron contact details and a series of health screening questions including disclosure of illness, COVID-19 type symptoms in the past 14 days and any overseas travel. Utilise if / as your management or staff feel is necessary.

Temperature screening

- Temperature screening is NOT mandatory for patrons, workers or visitors to your venue, and they are not a reliable indicator of COVID-19. Known controls such as good hygiene and physical distancing are more effective.³
- To assist with identifying any *suspected* cases with patrons or workers, venues may choose to have contactless temperature screening devices available.
- In this case, the COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator/ other staff should be trained in their safe and effective use and appropriate PPE should be provided to staff.

Patron Tracking

Contact tracing capability for all venue attendees is essential to risk mitigation and regulatory compliance. In the case of any suspected COVID-19 infection the venue must be able to immediately and accurately contact all attendees and advise them to undertake the appropriate measures.

- DHHS mandate that Venues keep records and contact details for all persons coming into the venue for 15 minutes or more, including those under 18 years of age.
- All ticket holders must be able to be traced to their allocated seat, including for 'free' events via event registration and ticketing.
- Those purchasing tickets for 2 or more attendees should be requested to keep the name and contact details of all other patrons in their group and provide these to the venue if required.
- All non-ticket holding venue attendees including patrons, workers, performers, production and touring staff and contractors should immediately sign in to an 'on site' register at Reception / Box Office / Stage Door, providing full name and phone contact details. Any person not doing so should be refused entry.
 - Venues should consider use of electronic sign in or paper-based registers. Use of common touched equipment such as iPads or pens will need transmission management / regular sanitising.
- On Site registers for each event must be kept for 28 Days, and then destroyed as per Privacy legislation.
 - Privacy laws related to the collection, storage, access and transfer of personal data must be observed.
- Venues should recommend that Patrons and all visitors download, install and run the COVID-Safe App on their mobile devices before attending the event.
 - Venues are not legally able to make this a condition of entry.

³ <https://www.health.gov.au/news/health-alerts/novel-coronavirus-2019-ncov-health-alert/what-you-need-to-know-about-coronavirus-covid-19#temperature-checks->

- Patrons cannot be compelled to provide contact details, but they can be refused entry if they do not.
- [SEE also: Warnings, Advice, T&C and Consent on Tickets](#)

Disability Access

Venues must continue to provide full accessibility for all of their patrons including those with disabilities. This includes:

- wayfinding and accessing new entries, egress points and emergency exits;
- communicating new programs and procedures;
- food and beverage access;
- sitting in different parts of the theatre, sometimes with companions;
- sightlines, captioning, Auslan interpretation, audio-description;
- access to backstage as artists and workers with disabilities.

Foyers

Like their auditoria, each venue will need to calculate the maximum capacity of its Foyer areas and manage those spaces according to current physical distancing guidelines. For venues with smaller foyer areas this may present difficulty, and in such cases foyer capacity may determine maximum allowable audience rather than seating capacity.

- Where they are available venues should look to open up ancillary venues, function rooms or break out spaces to serve as additional 'foyer areas' that provide better distancing options for patrons.
- Venues with multiple performance spaces should only program concurrent events where there is ample foyer capacity for the patrons of all operating auditoria to safely access those areas, including restrooms.
 - In these instances, events should be timed so that patrons from multiple events arrive and leave the venue at different times with ample separation.
 - Interval timing may also be staggered to reduce patron numbers in common foyer areas. However, an overlap factor may need to be allowed for.
- In the first instance, running concurrent events should be avoided until single events can be managed successfully.
- Provide accessible hand sanitizing stations.
- 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.
- Foyer furniture should be arranged in a format that is consistent with social distancing.
- Provide touch free bins throughout the venue.

See also: [Pre and Post show and Interval in B2: FRONT OF HOUSE.](#)

Lifts

- 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. See [Safe Work Australia – Lifts.](#)

- 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 other patrons requiring assistance.
- Venues may consider advising that only patrons with mobility or other needs should use lifts.
- All control panels / buttons require regular sanitising.

Box Office & Cloaking

- Where there are no physical barriers between box office staff and patrons, a clear protective ‘sneeze shield’ may be installed, however this is not mandatory for short term contact. Consult Staff.
- Patron distancing should be preserved by opening limited box office point of sale stations and providing floor marking for appropriate queuing distances.
- On-site ticket purchase and pickup can be either eliminated or greatly reduced by accepting only electronic tickets purchased by phone or online.
- Create a ‘minimum distance’ from box office barrier so patrons do not ‘crowd the desk’.
- Contactless pay-and-go is recommended.
- POS terminals should be assigned to one worker where possible, and they should be sanitized between each user and before and after each shift. Workers who handle money should wear gloves.
- 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
- Adopt single-use tickets for cloaking

SEE also: [B3: TICKETING](#)

Toilets/ Restrooms

- Venues will need to calculate the allowable capacity of each restroom amenity according to current physical distancing requirements and limit occupancy accordingly.
- In addition to signage, during high demand times – pre-show, interval, post-show – venues will need to actively monitor and control occupancy with front of house staff.
- Unless additional portable toilet facilities are added, this will likely result in patrons waiting outside the restroom doors. The area where they are waiting will require monitoring to preserve appropriate space between patrons and should include visible floor decals to guide patrons.

Messaging - Patrons

Consistent and clear messaging by each venue as well as sector-wide can accomplish two essential goals:

(a) patrons will learn that message and,

(b) transparently demonstrating new operational and sanitary practices will help us encourage theatre-goers back into public venues.

Those who have most frequently attended and participated in arts events will be the first ones ready to re-engage with the arts and with our venues. This makes communicating with our existing audiences crucial; they will be the first to return to our theatres.

Each venue should make decisions on how best to communicate with their patrons and will have their own individual marketing channels and capabilities.

It is important that each venue produces a clear pre-opening campaign to its patrons, stakeholders and partners, including lapsed and former patrons as well as current. This could be followed by individualised EDMs and messaging pre and post show to ticket holders for each event regarding ways in which the venue has responded to health and safety, and what to expect when they arrive at the venue.

[SEE: Audience Sentiment: COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor](#)

Changing Experience Expectations

For the foreseeable future there will be a 'new normal' in the performing arts experience we can offer our patrons.

There may be some level of health screening when entering venues, restrictions on where you can sit and with whom; restrictions on mingling in the foyer or at the bar; new ways of behaving at interval; no meeting with performers over drinks at the end of show and no touring backstage. This marks significant change in the patron experience.

There is likely to be discomfort regarding this cultural change.

We need to take our audiences on the journey with us and communicate in a way that creates understanding and allows our patrons to appreciate that the new way of doing things in our venues is necessary for them to enjoy the theatre they love.

- Consider ways to replace some of these temporarily lost venue experiences with digital add-ons to performances: meet and greets via social media for example.

Signage

Display clear signage about protocols and steps you are taking to improve hygiene and cleanliness. For example:

- Maintain 1.5 meters from fellow visitors and staff
- Use the supplied sanitiser upon arrival and departure
- Our cleaning process includes ...
- We are required to take contact details for contact tracing
- Graphics and signage on hygiene practices and social distancing are available from the Safe Work Australia and the Creative Victoria websites (and may also be available through your local council). Display this signage in staff areas as well as public areas.

Accessibility

All communications should take into account accessibility, ensuring your message is able to be understood by everyone in your diverse community. This will include:

- Multi-lingual: Who are the key non-English speaking sectors of your community? Ensure your communications speak also to them.
- Hearing Impaired.
- Sight Impaired.

B2: FRONT OF HOUSE

Pre-Show

Audiences traditionally arrive for performances over a one-hour period, and this 'staggered arrival' should be used to advantage.

- To manage foyer congestion, it is recommended to open auditorium doors as soon as possible once the venue is open, and at least 30 minutes prior to the performance, placing patrons within the controlled allocated seating environment.

Interval

Interval presents a challenge for managing distancing in common area foyer facilities, so changing the way intervals are managed is recommended. Consider the following options:

- Patrons choosing to leave the auditorium will need to observe the 'closest to exit leaves first' protocol used for show finish to avoid aisle congestion.
- Patrons' use of restrooms and foyer bar will need to be managed according to the guidelines for those facilities.
- Venues should consider longer, staggered intervals, or alternatively, no interval.
- If the producer agrees and the performance will not suffer, then do not have an interval.
- The venue may consider making it clear to patrons that it is OK to leave and return during the performance to use toilets. This may be the better option during social distancing.
- If there is an interval, consider extending the duration from the standard 20 minutes to 30 minutes, and staggering the interval across two 15-minute halves: for example, 'interval part A rows AA to M' / 'interval part B rows N to ZZ'.
- Alternatively, the production may lend itself to two shorter intervals, again divided by audience bloc to minimise foyer/ restroom traffic.

Post-Show

Egress from auditoria should be managed the same way passengers exit an airplane at the end of their flight.

- Inform patrons before the performance commences that post-show exit will be managed in an orderly 'row by row' manner starting with the row closest to the exit.
- The use of the venue's public address system within the auditorium is recommended to communicate and manage this process effectively.
- Patrons in disability access seating and their companions may be requested to leave first.
- Do not offer Foyer Bar or 'Meet and Greet' opportunities post-show unless you are confident that physical distancing can be safely managed.
- Manage distancing in toilets post-show by positioning front of house staff to guide and manage patrons, including queuing.
- Establish direct exit routes
- Eliminate post show backstage access.
- Eliminate stage door waiting for guests.

Merchandise

If you / the producer decides to offer Merch post-show the following should apply:

- **Queuing.** Mark merchandise sales lines on floor, with barricade, or rope and stanchion, managed by front of house staff / merchandise staff to provide information and enforce distancing.
- **Touchless.** No trying on merchandise. Only sellers may touch items for sale.
- **Contactless Payment.** Point of sale systems that use card, Apple Pay or a similar app. Eliminate the need for workers to touch patron credit cards.
- Create a 'minimum distance' from merch desk barrier.
- **Final Sale.** No returns or exchanges. All sales are final.
- **Spacing.** Merchandise sellers must be located where they do not block safe distancing for other patrons in the foyer areas looking to exit or use amenities.

Food & Beverage

Third-Party Contractors

External caterers, foyer bar operators and all other third-party providers must provide the venue manager with a COVID Safe Plan which is compliant with the relevant industry body / code of practice.

They must be provided with and acknowledge receipt of the venue's own COVID Safe plan and provide written acceptance of the health and safety measures in place on site.

Foyer Bars

If managing your own Foyer Bar service, or working with a third-party provider, review the *Hospitality Industry Guidelines for COVID-19*. [SEE: PART D: EXTERNAL RESOURCES](#)

You will need to consider:

- **Queuing.** Provide a safe distance barrier in front of the bar counter.
 - Create a one way in / one way out circular patron flow.
 - Provide safe distancing floor markers.
- **PPE / Hygiene.** There is no need for serving staff to wear face masks or gloves, unless required for other safety or food handling purposes.
- **Pre-Packaged Beverages.** Consider replacing all pouring of wine and other beverages into open glasses with the / Pre/ service of piccolo and other bottled beverages where the patron may then fill their own glass. This eliminates a number of touch points.
- **Bottled Water** should replace open drinking fountains or 'pour your own' water stations.
 - Availability of water may be part of your liquor licence requirement. Check compliance.
- **Pre-Ordering.** While pre-ordering reduces congestion at interval, consider the use of pre-packaged and unopened beverages, for example piccolo bottles of wine, or bottled beer. Glasses of wine should not be pre-poured.
- **Point of Sale Terminals.** Contactless pay-and-go is recommended. Consider non-acceptance of cash.

Refreshments in Auditoria

Consider eliminating refreshments / beverages in the auditoria, reducing transmission risk and post-performance sanitising and related cleaning tasks.

Cafes / Bistros

If a venue is wanting to provide food / bistro service to patrons, they should consult the relevant *Hospitality Industry Guidelines for COVID-19*. [SEE:PART D: EXTERNAL RESOURCES](#)

- External caterers – see third-party providers above.

B3: TICKETING

Managing your ticketing system and seating allocation will assist the venue to effectively manage physical distancing in the auditorium.

Access to accurate event patron data from ticketing will assist patron contact tracing for all events.

The systems put in place to manage restricted seating will depend on the back-end capability of each venue's ticketing system, their venue maps and their box office resources.

The following principles are recommended:

- Build and sell all events as 'allocated seating only'.
- Eliminate general admission seats to retain control over seating / distancing.
- Eliminate 'non ticketed' events;
 - Free events should still be 'put on sale' and pre-booked to create an accurate registration door list including contact details.
- Remove or provide for limited only 'door sales'.
 - Pre-booking allows your box office staff to allocate with appropriate physical distancing.
- All ticketing purchases should be made either online or via phone sales.

Seating Allocation

Each venue should calculate maximum auditorium capacity based on required distancing and use this data to build or block out a new version of their venue seating map with restricted seating. This may be a new 'event type template', with indicative seats 'killed' and rows made unavailable.

Due to the complexity of patron group types, numbers and needs, this initial seating map is likely to be at best a basic guide to seating availability.

Therefore, it will be essential to pre-manage bookings and seating allocations for every event.

The following processes are recommended:

- Investigate if your ticketing system is able to be configured by your provider and box office manager in a way that can manage Dynamic Seat Mapping that will handle requests for group bookings which exceed the social distancing limitations incorporated into your restricted seating map.
- If your system does not have this capability put shows on sale using a Restricted Seating Map. Sell all tickets as 'venue seat-allocated' tickets only without patron choice of seat or automatic allocation. All tickets are allocated and issued by box office.
- Patrons may call Box Office for seating allocation at the time of purchase.

- Online Ticketing Point of Sale interface could include a ‘mandatory’ text box field for patrons to input specific seating requirements. For example, ‘Family group of 2 adults and 3 children to sit together’; or ‘3 Adults of family to sit together’; or ‘1 individual seat’.
 - If booking as a Family / Group, the ticket purchaser must declare that all members of the group are of the same Family/Household.
 - If they are not, patrons will need to book individually to ensure social distancing is observed.
 - Groups are limited to 20 people and there must be at least 1.5 metres between each group.
- This information can be used by Box Office staff to re-allocate seats for best in house fit with request and distancing requirements.
 - Box Office staff can manually process each online purchase matching seating allocation against social distancing and patron requests.
 - Email / SMS confirmed Seats/ Tickets to Patrons.
- Venues would need to close off ticket sales for each show with enough time and resources to allow all ticket requests from that day to be allocated and electronically sent before patrons arrive at the venue.

E-ticketing – Contactless Scanning

- Patrons should be encouraged to use scannable e-tix / mobile device tix wherever possible, reducing physical contact between box office staff, ushers, and patrons.
- Consider using self-check-in electronic kiosks at the theatre doors to reduce staff – patron contact.
 - Traditionally handheld ticket scanners may be mounted on stands to reduce distance and contact between patrons and ushers. These may still need to be ‘staffed’ and managed.
- Patrons may use ‘print at home’ ticket options, which may be scanned or ‘sighted’ by the usher, but not physically collected or handled.
- Ushers should actively monitor the transaction/ scan process to ensure all patrons in the auditorium are accounted for and traced. The aim is to be thorough, but to minimize direct patron / staff contact.

Warnings, Advice, T&C and Consent on Tickets

Patrons must be provided with essential information and updated terms and conditions about their attendance at your venue. This should take the form of both ‘consent’ to entry and advice regarding COVID Safe operational health and safety processes your venue has put in place.

Updated Terms and Conditions should comply with the *Ticketing Code of Practice – Live Performance Australia*.

The following are example terms and conditions for addressing COVID-19 risks and responsibilities. *VAPAC has taken legal advice and had legal input into these example terms and conditions*. They should be adapted to ensure that the terms/language used are consistent with the venue’s standard terms and conditions (for example: “Ticket Holder”, “venue”, “event”, etc).

- Information relating to COVID-19 is available at: <https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus> and <https://www.australia.gov.au/>
- They have familiarised themselves with the symptoms of COVID-19 (including via government published health information and guidelines) and that they will not attend at the venue if they have any of the symptoms of COVID-19.
- During the period of 14 days prior to the event they have:

-
- been free of all symptoms of COVID-19;
 - not been outside of Australia; and
 - not come into contact with anyone displaying the symptoms of, awaiting the results of testing for or diagnosed with COVID-19.
 - They may have their temperature taken and may be asked COVID-19 health screening questions on arrival at the venue. They agree to submit to having their temperature taken and will answer all such questions fully and truthfully.
 - To provide all reasonable information requested of them for the purposes of contact tracing for COVID-19, that such information may be provided to health and other authorities and that such information may be retained by the venue for up to 28 days after the event. Such information may include, without limitation, personal contact details, seating location and the names and contact details of accompanying ticket holders.
 - For clarity, save as otherwise provided in the venue’s privacy policy and the other terms and conditions of sale, the venue undertakes not to share this information with any third party other than authorised Government health or other authorities, and only as required in the event of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 contact at the event.
 - They will notify the venue immediately if they develop any symptoms of, or are diagnosed with, COVID-19 within 14 days of attending the venue.
 - They will comply with all social distancing and other health and safety protocols in place at the venue, with all directions of venue staff and with all laws applicable to them relating to COVID-19. For clarity, such compliance includes complying with any directions or instructions contained in signage or markings at the venue.
 - They will not sit in any seat within the venue other than the seat allocated to them (including as indicated on their ticket).
 - If they fail to comply with these terms and conditions, they may be directed to leave the venue and must comply with any such direction immediately and without protest. In such circumstances, the Ticket Holder agrees that they will not be entitled to any refund and will have no other claim against the venue.
 - If booking more than one ticket, the ticket purchaser:
 - declares that all holders of those tickets are part of the same household as the ticket purchaser; and
 - must bring these terms and conditions to the attention of each other ticket holder.
 - For clarity, patrons must not book for group members who are not of their household. Such persons should be advised to book separately.
 - The Ticket Holder must take all other reasonable steps, having regard to generally available information relating COVID-19, to reduce the risk of exposure or transmission of COVID-19 on the part of the Ticket Holder and other persons at the venue. The Ticket Holder must make their own assessment of their health or vulnerability in respect of COVID -19 before attending the event and accepts all risk in that regard.
 - The venue may cancel the event at any time and without notice if it determines (in its unfettered discretion) that the event should not proceed for reasons of public safety including, without limitation, due to risks associated with COVID-19.
 - The venue has a refund policy in place for any ticket holder unable to attend as a result of complying with these terms and conditions. *See Refunds.*
 - **Disclaimer and exclusion:** The Ticket Holder enters the venue and attends the event at their own risk and will not make any claim or take any action against the venue in respect of any injury or damage

they may suffer arising out of the Ticket Holder contracting COVID-19 or the consequences of any actual or suspected contact with a person with COVID-19.

- **Warning:** adhering to social distancing guidelines is the responsibility of each individual. Patrons not adhering to the guidelines, including providing false information are breaching the directions issued by the Chief Health Officer for which penalties may apply.⁴

Venues should:

- 'Advise' patrons that installing and running the COVID-Safe App is recommended for people attending all public events, and they strongly urge their patrons to do so.
 - NB: you may not legally make this a requirement of purchase or entry.
- Provide purchasers with contact details to use if they suspect an infection after the event.
- Send all ticket holders an electronic reminder of these health and safety terms and conditions on the day of the event.

Ticketing Exchanges & Refunds: COVID-19

It is recommended that venues do all they can to encourage anyone showing symptoms or who has had possible contact with a COVID-19 case to cancel their attendance for the safety of all other patrons and staff.

This should include the offer of refunds and exchanges. Audience Outlook sentiment data shows that 'exchange only' offers are a disincentive to audiences returning post COVID-19.

Clearly articulate your refund policy with both audience members and the producer/ hirer. Ensure it is consistent across all events. Ensure you have producer / hirer agreement to these refund policies in your hire and performance contracts.

NB: These recommendations provide for Refunds due to illness/ suspected illness, in instances where the Ticketing Code of Practice does not.

We recommend:

- The Venue offers a full refund or exchange to any ticket purchaser who, since their ticket purchase, has developed any of the recognised symptoms of COVID-19.
- The Venue offers a full refund or exchange to any ticket purchaser who, since their ticket purchase, has come into contact with anyone displaying COVID-19 symptoms or a confirmed case of Coronavirus.
- The Venue offers a full refund or exchange to any ticket purchaser who determines not to attend the event in order to comply with the terms and conditions of sale or directions or instructions given at the venue.
- Refund or exchange in these circumstances should be available up until 'last minute'.
- The Venue offers a full refund or exchange for any tickets to shows Cancelled due to COVID-19 related instances.

⁴ https://www.business.vic.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/1903718/Hospitality-Industry-Guidelines-for-coronavirus-COVID-19.pdf

Hirer and Community Shows

Venue hire by community groups, schools, dance schools and commercial hirers is a key generator of income for the majority of VAPAC venues.

- To recoup venue, staff, equipment and other production costs, hirers must look to maximise capacity and these events often operate on the assumption of 90% plus houses.
- For most VAPAC venues these events will be incompatible with social distancing limitations on seating in their auditorium, and numbers of performers backstage/ dressing rooms.
- Until venues are able to operate at full capacity without social distancing, and until non-traditional arts audiences have a high level of comfort with attending large indoor venue events, these types of events will most likely not be viable.
- These limitations and restrictions need to be discussed and communicated early with both regular hirers / producers, and with governing and funding bodies including Local Government.
- The severity of impact on annual budgeted revenue and the knock-on effects for programs, staff and operations in the short, medium and long term will need to be addressed by each venue and their Council or other funding bodies. Consider this in your Covid-19 Impact Assessment.
- **Live Streaming to increase audience 'capacity'**: Consider utilising a hybrid 'restricted audience capacity' and live streaming model to enable larger audiences of family and friends to view the performance, with paid digital access.
 - NB compliance with numbers of performers onstage and backstage will still need to be managed in line with the guidelines and government regulations.

PART C: CHECK LISTS / SIGNS

Master Check List

Before you open your doors, has your Arts Centre/Venue completed the following requirements:

<input type="checkbox"/> Developed a business COVID-19 Response plan
<input type="checkbox"/> Appointed a COVID-19 Compliance Coordinator and a COVID-19 response Team
<input type="checkbox"/> Updated your Occupational health and safety risk assessment and Emergency Evacuation Plans
<input type="checkbox"/> Implemented your COVID Safe operating procedures and control measures as outlined in your risk assessment and check lists
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicated your plan to all staff, updated policies and practices and provided appropriate training / Return to Work process
<input type="checkbox"/> Undertaken a deep cleaning of the premises
<input type="checkbox"/> Set the venue up for appropriate number of people and physical distancing
<input type="checkbox"/> Put in place signage and record keeping
<input type="checkbox"/> Communicated your plan to all staff and provided appropriate training.

Creative Victoria Checklists & Resources - LINKS

[Before you open - checklist for venue owners/managers](#)

[Once you are open - checklist for venue owners/managers](#)

[Once you are open - checklist for staff and volunteers](#)

[Visitor and Patron Contacts Log / Contact Tracing Register](#)

[Staff Coronavirus Health Questionnaire](#)

COVID SAFE PLAN & RESPONSE - CHECKLIST

- COVID-Safe Response Team formed. Roles and personnel identified.
- COVID Safe Response Plan developed by Response Team. Reference to available sector and industry guidelines including VAPAC for assistance.
- Risk Management Protocols and Procedures developed, tested and updated.
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures developed, tested and updated.
- COVID-19 Impact Assessment and Business Response developed.
- COVID- Safe Compliance Coordinator appointed and resourced.
- Confirmed Cases Response Plans developed. Items to consider:
 - Emergency contact lists up to date including all staff, local Public Health Authority and out of hours contacts for your cleaning company and facility maintenance.
 - Public Health Authority / Local Government has the most relevant contact information for your venue – Add your COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator.
 - A checklist of questions to ask the infected individual including:
 - Have they notified the local Public Health Authority? Provide contact information.
 - Confirm what date they were in the venue, and which performance they attended.
 - Did they attend other local establishments before or after attendance at your venue?
 - Ask them to trace their movement through the venue. Where did they enter, did they use the restrooms, the lift, pick up tickets, buy anything from the bar?
 - Confirm how you plan to notify relevant patrons, producers/hirers and other stakeholders, Draft a notification. Update contact details.
 - Ensure your cleaning contractor/ staff has the capacity to respond if needed.
- Staff Response Plan. See VAPAC Guidelines *Staff Infection*.
- Patron Response Plan. See VAPAC Guidelines *Patron Infection*.
- Isolation Area established.
- Communication Plans developed. See Guidelines

FRONT OF HOUSE - CHECKLIST

- COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator has reviewed Event. Policy, processes, logistics, resources in place.
- All staff completed health screening questionnaire. Signed in.
- Staff briefed on Event and any specifics re health and safety / operations.
- Any hirer, producer, third party personnel briefed on COVID-Safe plan.
- Patron / Venue signage in place re health and safety, conditions of entry, floor decals, occupancy limits and so forth – see guidelines.
- Venue Clean Checklist sighted, complete.
- Sanitising stations; separate egress/exit & other COVID-Safe Plan measures in place – checked.
- Contact Tracing process / record sheets / register in place. Staffed & monitored.
- Patron Arrival: controlled external areas managed, signage.
- Ingress / Egress managed. Patron tracing process in place. Patron agreements to terms of entry on display.
- Pre-Show: Foyer protocols and logistics in place. Auditorium opening early. Patrons from multiple venues managed in common areas. Lifts / Stairs managed, F&B.
- Toilets / restrooms. Signage, management, staffed or monitored if necessary.
- Box Office: Venue seating allocated with distancing. Contactless payment, distancing logistics, signage. Contactless cloakings.
- Ticketing: e-tix and scanning in place – contactless.
- Foyer Bar – Café / Bistro. Any third-party contractors briefed. COVID-Safe Plan both parties agreed. Hygiene and distancing in place as per Hospitality Guidelines. Type of service on offer managed for health and safety.
- Auditoria – Seating allocated for distancing. Patrons informed of exit and interval procedures and during show protocols.
- Interval. Confirmed any alterations to timing and length of interval with producers, hirers and audience. Foyer logistics in place.
- Post Show. Exit from auditorium and venue managed with distancing. Staged unloading of auditorium. Any foyer activities including Merch managed for distancing. Direct exits.

BACK OF HOUSE - CHECKLIST

- Back of House work practices and protocols updated with COVID Response Team and Technical staff. COVID- Safe Plan compliance.
- Control measures developed for all confined workspaces including bio box, wings, dressing rooms and orchestra pit.
- Control measures developed for work requiring teams in close proximity.
- PPE, sanitizer and other equipment made available as per updated protocols.
- Back of house venue signage in place re health and safety, conditions of entry, floor decals and occupancy limits for all separate spaces.
- Venue Clean Checklist sighted, complete.
- Sanitising stations in place – checked.
- Contact Tracing process / record sheets / register in place. Staff, crew, performers, producers, hirers. Process monitored.
- Staff daily health screening questionnaire in place. Completed. Monitored.
- Third-party personnel health screening questionnaire. Completed. Monitored.
- Back of house plans, drawings up to date for touring companies / hirers.
- Hirer, producer, third party personnel briefed on venue COVID-Safe plan. Agreed.
- Hirer, producer, third party COVID-Safe plans sighted and reviewed. Pre-production process.
- Excess gear and clutter removed from all workspaces.
- High touch surfaces identified and cleaned regularly – between uses.
- On Stage protocols and limitations documented and monitored. Personnel numbers, performers in close proximity, musicians, technical equipment processes.
- Administration area protocols, work practices, hygiene and wellbeing measures established.
- Equipment & Props risk management process created, tested, in place. See guidelines.

CLEANING & SANITISING CHECKLIST

Refer also to these resources:

Safe Work Australia Guidelines

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/doc/how-clean-and-disinfect-your-workplace-covid-19>

DHHS Guideline – Cleaning and disinfecting tips for non-healthcare settings.

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/cleaning-and-disinfecting-reduce-covid-19-transmission>

Surfaces such as those listed below should be regularly cleaned and disinfected using approved and applicable products. This list is not exhaustive, and each venue should complete a full audit of each area and its high-touch surfaces in order to create their own Check List.

- FRONT OF HOUSE / PUBLIC AREAS (Foyer, corridors, lifts, stairs)
 - Door handles, handrails, door push plates
 - Bike rack or other external barricades and fittings the public may touch
 - Handrails for stairs, ramps, auditorium raked seating and escalators
 - Lift/ Elevator buttons – inside and out, all levels
 - Reception desks and box office / ticket counters
 - Telephones, Point of Sale terminals, and other keypads
 - Tables and chairs, including highchairs and booster seats, foyer lounges
 - Beverage stations, water fountains, vending and ice machines
 - Rubbish receptacle touch points

- RESTROOMS (front and back of house as well as potable units)
 - Door handles and push plates
 - Sink taps and counters, and toilet handles
 - Lids of containers for disposal of women’s sanitary products
 - Soap dispensers and towel dispenser handles
 - Air dryer units – on buttons
 - Baby changing stations
 - Rubbish receptacle touch points

- BACK OF HOUSE. (Admin, Dressing Rooms, Production Areas, Green Rooms)
 - Individual office and other room furniture
 - Door handles, push plates, doorways, railings
 - Light switches and thermostats
 - Cabinet handles
 - Telephones, computers, other keypads, mouse
 - Backstage and technical equipment including all microphones, lapel and headsets.
 - Rubbish receptacle touch points

- FOOD & BEVERAGE.
 - See Hospitality guidelines.

COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator - ROLE

It is recommended to incorporate a role such as this into your COVID Safe Plan and Procedures.

The responsibilities of the COVID Safe Compliance Coordinator can be divided into two areas:

1. Preparation and Planning
2. Day to Day Tasks

Actioning of the tasks listed below are not the sole responsibility of the COVID Safe Coordinator. Managers, supervisors, staff, contractors and patrons must all take responsibility to ensure guidelines are being followed. The following is a suggested outline of the role only to be adapted by each venue to their needs.

Preparation and Planning

Administration

- Update organisational Health & Safety and Risk Assessments to reflect changes.
- Update Human Resource policies to reflect changing work practises and procedures.
- System in place to identify/report any areas of non-compliance with new working policies.

Staff Communication

- Return to Work process managed and implemented
- All staff receive induction training
- Communication plan identified to be able to circulate key information and any relevant updates to workers.

External Communication

- Plan is in place to ensure up to date information is communicated to all external stakeholders including:
 - Producers, hirers, groups and artists
 - Suppliers, Contractors, visitors and audience members
 - General Public

Venue - Public Area

Analyse the customer journey through the premises to allow for physical distancing to be maintained, including:

- points of entry and exit,
- queuing systems both internally and externally
- ticket purchasing and scanning,
- how patrons are expected to move through the venue,
- using toilet facilities,
- hand sanitiser stations
- Café and Bar

- emergency procedures
- assistance facilities including first aid, customer services, disability access,

Cleaning / Hygiene

- Identify person with responsibility for ensuring new cleaning schedules are being adhered to.
- Update cleaning schedules to allow for more regular cleaning/disinfecting, concentrating particularly on high contact areas/surfaces.
- Order supplies, ensure there are sufficient stock levels before the venue is allowed to open:
 - Products necessary for good hand hygiene
 - Cleaning products including detergents, disinfectants, disposable cleaning cloths
 - PPE

Signage

- Signage to be erected in all appropriate locations to encourage new working practices including:
- Social/Physical Distancing o Good Hand Hygiene
 - Respiratory Etiquette
 - Symptoms of COVID-19
- Room capacity signage.

Day to Day Tasks

- Encourage and ensure compliance with social distancing requirements.
- Encourage and ensure good hygiene rules are being observed.
- Oversee daily checks to ensure adequate supplies of:
 - Products necessary for good hand hygiene including hand soap and sanitiser
 - Cleaning products including detergents, disinfectants, disposable cleaning cloths
 - PPE
- Check hand hygiene products are refilled on regular basis.
- Check signage and floor markings are in place and undamaged.
- Ensure isolation area is ready for use.
- Be available to assist with any contact tracing requests should a case of COVID-19 be confirmed.
- Ensure contact details of all those visiting the venue are being recorded to aid contact tracing if necessary.
- Be the point of contact for issues or queries arising around COVID-19 and new procedures.
- Communicate any changes in working guidelines/practices to all relevant parties.

Signage – Posters - Stickers

Creative Victoria Return to Business Resources

The resources listed below are available to download and print from:

<https://creative.vic.gov.au/coronavirus/return-to-business>

Door signs

Floor Sticker

Posters

- Slow the Spread
- Cough and Sneeze
- Wash hands

Signs

- Physical Distancing
- Keep 1.5m
- Please Stand Here
- Protect yourself and Others
- Screen to protect you and team

PART D: EXTERNAL RESOURCES

Health

Coronavirus Hotline – Victorian DHHS (Department of Health and Human Services)

1800 675 398

About COVID-19 / Coronavirus

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/coronavirus>

COVID Safe App Guidance:

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces/other-resources/covidsafe-app-guidance>

The Workplace - Staff

Safe Work Australia

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/covid-19-information-workplaces>

Safe Work Australia signage and posters:

<https://swa.govcms.gov.au/doc/signage-and-posters-covid-19>

COVID-19 at the Workplace Infographic

<https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-04/COVID-19-Infographic-Suspected-or-Confirmed-Cases-a3.pdf>

Worksafe Victoria

<https://www.worksafe.vic.gov.au/>

Preventing infectious diseases in the workplace – Worksafe Victoria

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) and preventing infectious diseases in the workplace.](#)

Training for workplace COVID-19 safety:

<https://ministers.dese.gov.au/cash/fast-tracking-upskilling-australian-workers-covid-19-safety>

National COVID-19 Coordination Commission

Online tool to help businesses reopen and be COVID Safe.

<https://www.pmc.gov.au/nccc/resources/planning-tool-help-businesses-reopen-and-be-covidsafe>

Food & Beverage

Hospitality Industry Guidelines for COVID-19

<https://www.business.vic.gov.au/disputes-disasters-and-succession-planning/coronavirus-covid-19/hospitality-industry-guidelines-for-coronavirus-covid-19>

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>

Restrictions

DHHS – Entertainment and Culture Restrictions

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/entertainment-and-culture-restrictions-covid-19>

Directions Issued by the Chief Health Officer

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/victorias-restriction-levels-covid-19>

Office of the Victorian Information Commissioner

<https://ovic.vic.gov.au/>

PPE Guidance

Procurement of PPE

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/procurement-personal-protective-equipment-workplaces-coronavirus-covid-19-environment-frequently>

Use of PPE

<https://www.dhhs.vic.gov.au/appropriate-use-personal-protective-equipment-coronavirus-covid-19-workplaces-coronavirus-covid-19>

Sector & Partner Resources

PAC Australia – Guidelines for COVID-Safe Theatres

<https://paca.org.au/covidsafetheatres/>

Creative Victoria – Arts & Culture Return to Business

<https://creative.vic.gov.au/coronavirus/return-to-business>

PGAV – Guide to re-opening public galleries in Victoria

<https://pgav.org.au/PGAV-Guide-to-re-opening-public-galleries-in-Victoria~5179>

AMaGA Victoria – Re-opening Museums and Galleries During COVID-19 guidelines

<https://amagavic.org.au/news/story/amaga-victoria-reopening-museums-and-galleries-during-covid-19-guidelines>

Australia Council – ‘re-ignite’ – A Framework for the Arts and Cultural Sectors in a COVID-19 Environment

<https://www.australiacouncil.gov.au/programs-and-resources/RE-IGNITE/>

The Arts Wellbeing Collective

<https://www.artswellbeingcollective.com.au/>

Arts Access Victoria

<https://www.artsaccess.com.au/>

VAPAC Observations regarding Rescheduling Stage Productions – COVID-19

<https://vapac.org.au/covid-19-resources/>

Appendix 1

Audience Sentiment: COVID-19 Audience Outlook Monitor

<https://www.thepatternmakers.com.au/blog/2019/4/5/audience-outlook-monitor-wave1-keyfindings>

This information is taken from the nationwide study of audience sentiment being undertaken by Patternmakers for the cultural sector. It is based on Baseline Data from Survey 1 – May 2020. It will be updated with information and sentiment pattern changes in July and September (Phases 2 & 3).

Based on data from 23,000 respondents across 159 surveying organisations, the baseline data points to significant hurdles for the Performing Arts sector, especially for larger venues.

While aggregated data from all cultural sectors shows that 85% of respondents plan to attend arts events as they did pre pandemic, for the Performing Arts sector the figures are less encouraging. Baseline data shows just 14% of audiences would be 'very comfortable' attending a 100-seat venue with safety measures in place today. This drops to 7% for venues seating over 1000 people.

Smaller venues of less than 50 people and outdoor venue programming is clearly more attractive to our audiences at this time. Those who are planning to attend live events are doing so for events in January 2021 or thereafter.

- 96% of survey respondents say venue safety measures will affect their decision to attend.
- Baseline data shows just 14% of audiences would be 'very comfortable' attending a 100-seat venue with safety measures in place today (May 2020) This drops to 7% for venues seating over 1000 people.
- This trend is accentuated by age, with older arts goers aged over 65 and 75 more likely to stay away until there is no risk.
- Measures that are seen to negatively impact the theatre experience may be a barrier.

96% say venue safety measures will affect their decision to attend.

This trend is accentuated by age, with older arts goers aged over 65 and 75 more likely to stay away until there is no risk. For theatres presenting seniors' musical theatre programs such as 'morning melodies', this barrier to attendance signals real issues in terms of programming viability in the short and medium term.

Measures that are seen to negatively impact the theatre experience may be a barrier.

Notably, while audiences want to see increased disinfecting and other venue safety measures in place, others such as mandatory wearing of face masks or temperature checks are actually discouraging of some audience members. Measures that are seen to negatively impact the theatre experiences may be a barrier.

Normal communication channels would include:

- Web site
- Social media platforms
- Ticketing portals – online purchasing sites and links
- e-tickets – embedded information and links
- Mobile apps
- Venue signage
- Front of House and Box Office staff welcoming patrons to the venue – having clear messaging and guidelines available and being willing to discuss and put patrons at ease regarding new restrictions.