

VENUE REOPENING RESOURCES

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INTRODUCTION

2020 has brought an unprecedented pause to live music. We are currently enduring some of the greatest challenges we will face in our businesses, but eventually the show will go on - though not as we have known it previously. Given the contagious nature of COVID-19, venues, patrons, agents, artists, renters and crews must now operate under a new set of guidelines that pose challenges at every turn. These hurdles make it more important than ever that everyone do their part and work as a cohesive unit.

This document offers suggestions covering every facet of operating a venue and executing a show/event. It's segmented by pre-event, event and post-event activities in an effort to mirror how venues actually approach a show. This document will be most suitable for individual promoted shows, but there is information that is applicable to other events as well. It is an exhaustive reference that aims to provide as much information as possible to suit a range of venues and situations. With the understanding that every venue has different staffing, financial and technical resources, the below is meant to offer an array of options and ideas to be used a la carte.

Please keep in mind, we're all learning as we go, this is a work in progress and as an association of proud, hard-working independent venues, communication about what we learn along the way is vital to us all. Please don't stop sharing your experiences, ideas and findings on NIVA Slack channels, in Town Hall meetings and via other association tools.

ESSENTIAL AREAS FOR CONSIDERATION

Venue procedures, policies and codes of conduct must be revisited before reopening to include new health and safety measures that are essential for safe and legal operations. Rules and procedures will vary from venue to venue, however, some basic recommendations stand across all departments and functions. While this document focuses mostly on event execution some of it may apply to your regular office functions as well. In short:

- Social distancing is important - keeping 6 feet of distance or more is ideal.
- Masks should be worn by all staff and required of patrons when possible. Consider making face coverings a rule, not a suggestion. Then, there is no question of rights, liberty, etc. It is a rule of a private venue and must be complied with and adhered to as a new policy. Exceptions can be made if a patron has a medical condition that precludes the wearing of a mask.
- Proper hygiene procedures, including but not limited to frequent and thorough handwashing, must be followed by staff and encouraged of patrons.
- Cleaning must be thorough, done at regular intervals and fully documented.

Other key items to consider include:

- Ingress and Egress procedures, including temperature screenings
- Policies on turning patrons away that fail screening and associated refund policy
- Re-entry policy
- Changes to concessions, box office and patron transactions

- Set-up and execution of new social distanced seating and patron flow
- Guidelines on dancing during shows
- Artist relations and backstage procedures
- Building enhancements, including HVAC and restrooms
- Additional costs associated with event execution
- Internal and external communications of all changes

Guidance on many of these points are included in this document, along with additional items and resources that may be useful in planning and execution when the time comes for you to reopen.

PRIOR TO DAY OF SHOW

BOOKING AND CONTRACTING

There has already been a considerable increase in the amount of negotiation going into booking new shows with the revised economics dictated by social distancing and reduced capacities. However, the conversation with agents should not stop at the numbers. It's incredibly important for safety and operational expectations to be laid out in advance to ensure the artist is aligned. Consider writing venue rules into contracts - and talking through any rule conflicts.

Agents and artist management may also need to be sold in advance on the safety and overall venue plans for live shows. Just as with a patron, the better educated they are on the venue's efforts, the more at ease and open they will be to playing that venue. A venue could put together a Dropbox and populate it with information on cleaning, a social distancing seating chart, rules such as mandatory face masks and temperature screening, samples of the various tools and messaging used to communicate the new policies with patrons.

Areas of expected behavior of the artist should be discussed or put into writing, such as:

- Uniform hygiene requirements for all people entering the venue including temperature checks and mask requirements.
- Updated backstage and side stage guidelines.
- Expectations for artists bringing their own equipment and the loading procedures.
- Expected behavior on stage, including but not limited to: no stage diving, no entry into the crowd or barricade area during the performance and no items should be thrown from the stage (water, t-shirts, fried chicken or anything else!)
- If possible, eliminate group transportation as part of deals or artist/crew transportation by a runner to avoid extended exposure to your staff. Adding additional vehicles or using a third party vendor are options when this is unavoidable.

Having a contract addendum that you work on in conjunction with your buyer and production manager will help day of show operations go much more smoothly.

Please be aware when calculating expenses and contracting that there may be additional expenses to discuss such as staffing and overtime. Consideration should also be given to set length and the number of artists on a bill. Length of exposure time increases risk for staff, artists and patrons, and wearing a mask can become tiring after long periods, so keeping performances to a shorter period of time will increase comfort and safety for all.

PRODUCTION ADVANCE

The next phase of communication resides with the artist's team and the venue Production Manager (PM). When advancing the show with Artist's contact, the PM should make sure to go over all safety procedures and protocols. Even though this should be done when the Talent Buyer and Agent when booking and confirming, please reiterate any mandatory policies at this time. Clearly establish what is expected of your venue and what is expected of the tour. Should your venue require the Artist to strike their own gear after soundcheck or post-show, convey that the Artist and/or the touring crew needs to remove the gear themselves to reduce the risk of cross contamination. Changes to hospitality policies should also be clearly communicated at this time.

If using outside backline, staging or crew, ensure that any external contractors are aware of your venue's rules and are compliant with them, ideally in a signed agreement or contract amendment. If you use union labor, communicate with your local steward to make sure you are aligned.

To help the flow of information, the venue can put together a series of one sheets and information that production can use as part of advancing the show that is similar to the information that is shared with the agent at the time of booking. In addition to production's new guidelines/rules, this can also include accessible areas for media, patron policies and procedures, cleaning procedures in the backstage, on stage and FOH, etc. Marketing staff can work with the production department to create one consistent document that can be used for each show.

VENUE STAFFING

When planning for your venue to reopen, assigning a Health and Safety Coordinator is highly recommended. This does not have to be a new hire; it can be someone from your FOH or Security teams, or an HR Manager. There is a considerable amount of work required in preparing for and operating a show, and having a central source of information is key. In advance, this person should be in contact with the local public health department, and be up to date with city, state and county laws, general guidance on safe operations and potential developments on contact tracing. They should ideally become ServSafe trained if your venue serves food. Equipped with up-to-date information, they should be able to help the venue create a risk assessment and reopening plan, efficiently disseminate this information among the staff, conduct training on guidelines, and provide guidance on how to handle patron questions and on-site issues. Health and Safety Coordinators need to consider where any patron who becomes unwell with COVID-19-like symptoms will be treated and that area will be properly equipped as well as fully

cleaned and disinfected after each usage. You should also have a manager on-site who can be a reference point for any issues or complaints with the new procedures, that is or works in conjunction with the Health and Safety Coordinator.

You may also need to increase your security staffing, and cleaning staff. It is also a good idea to overstaff in all essential departments in the near future, as you want to encourage people who are not feeling well to not come to work. Ask staff to give you as much notice as possible if that is the case. However, if you are conducting temperature checks on site, you may have very little notice of someone unable to work, so being prepared in these cases will be key.

For all staff, recognize that more frequent breaks are likely necessary during an event. Wearing a mask for a prolonged period can be difficult, and time for more thorough and frequent hand washing will benefit all. Creating a schedule in advance with this in mind will help the evening flow more smoothly for your staff and managers. It is also suggested that management segment workers into groups to minimize contact with full staff during events, thus limiting the risk of full staff contact with COVID-19.

VENUE SET-UP

For the foreseeable future, it's very likely that the capacity of your room will be altered. If reserved seating is being used, the venue should be set up per local and national directives and recommendations for social distancing (currently 6' for patrons). A conservative calculation suggested by [FEMA](#) is 113 square feet per person, a more common recommendation is 36 square feet per person. By seating in groups you will be able to increase this number. You should refer to your state and local guidance to see if calculations are specified.

If possible, seated shows are preferred to standing as distancing is more easily adhered to and enforceable; temporary seating may be desirable if the venue does not already have it in place. In a general admission environment, where seating is not possible, the use of [stanchions](#), or any means to create social distancing between people and groups that doesn't violate fire code is recommended. These set-ups need to be in accordance with current local, state and CDC guidelines.

Under both scenarios, creation of a social distancing seating chart or standing chart should be created and placed on your website for patrons to get a better feel for new safety precautions. Examples can be found in the [Resources](#) section. This page would be in addition to any seating chart used to purchase tickets for a specific show. If possible, provide either view from seats with video or photos and include a shot of the entire venue from the stage with seats marked off to demonstrate social distancing arrangement. If a seating chart online is not possible, a visual description of this should be assembled and promoted.

A one way flow should be considered wherever possible throughout your venue. Stanchions, ropes or floor markings ([Painter's tape for delicate surfaces](#) may be a good option for hardwood floors) will help this process.

Consideration should also be put into the stage and production areas. Adding a plexiglass shield around FOH can help to shield your staff from patrons (and reduce drink spillage on the boards!), and plexiglass

between audio and lighting areas could help reduce risk where proper social distancing isn't logistically possible for local and touring production staff. Taping off distance lines as a reference point on stage may assist performers who are adhering to social distancing best practices.

Media is accustomed to having access to prime locations in front of the stage to take photographs, usually the first three songs. Production, FOH, Marketing have to work together to designate a new location for these journalists. The space should supply media with an unobstructed view of the stage, but be far enough away to comply with any social distancing policies. This area should be clearly marked specifically for the media. The venue needs to communicate the new rules to all media in advance and if possible, provide a view from the new approved location. If a view is not possible, supply the distance from the approved media area to the stage. The new location should also be forwarded to artist's management or Tour Manager in advance.

Restrooms should be converted to have as many touchless surfaces as possible, including soap and paper towel dispensers ([a hand dryer](#) may not be ideal), faucets and toilets. Foot pull door openers should be considered for entrances and stalls, and for any other doors in the venue that patrons must open frequently (propping open doors, wherever possible other than the restroom is advised). Blocking off every other stall is another measure that can be effective for additional distancing. The area where patrons are waiting will require monitoring to preserve (a) appropriate space between patrons and (b) an easily discernible line to avoid conflict about where the line begins

Areas that have keypads to secure them should be converted to fobs. Clock-in terminals for staff should also be converted to ID card rather than numerical entry, if possible.

Go through your bar inventory and discard any out of date product, including food and beer. A good rule of thumb is that the shelf life for a keg of pasteurized beer is about 90-120 days (or 3-4 months), and unpasteurized draft beer will last about 45-60 days (or 6-8 weeks) when stored at the proper temperature. Many import and domestic beers are pasteurized. Make sure to document all waste and account for it financially.

Increase the number of waste receptacles to decrease the number of discarded items on the floor, which will decrease your cleaning crew's contact with items.

Although COVID-19 is not transferred via water, water fountains run a high contact risk and should be disabled. If you have a bottle filling station, ensure that it's part of a regular cleaning process with food safe antibacterial spray, and that a new cup is used each time to reduce exposure from the mouth of a cup or bottle touching the tap.

Although it may be far from our minds in the summer months, as the colder weather approaches, coat check should be reconsidered. There are multiple exchanges that occur in these transactions between your staff and patrons when coat check is open, and it adds another potential line that will need to be distanced, so it may not be feasible if restrictions remain in place. If you want to continue with coat check, consider setting up plexiglass dividers for this space and a touchless payment system, or making it exact change only if cash is required. You could also add it as an upsell in advance if your ticketing system allows it which will eliminate onsite payment.

Finally, we will recommend cashless transactions several times in this document, and as a result, also recommend removal of ATMs, as your contracts allow. It's an area that would require constant disinfection and encourages further contact in transactions. The space made by it's removal may also open up room for an additional hand sanitizing station or waste receptacle.

HVAC

At the time of writing, there is no known transmission of the Coronavirus through an HVAC system in the US. US systems are generally more effective than those in the other countries where concerns have been raised. However, prolonged exposure to the virus increases likelihood of transmission, so attention should be paid to this area. Please make sure that your HVAC system is in good working order, with HEPA filters or a higher MERV rating installed. UV light installation is a preventative step that you can also explore. You can further reduce risk by increasing your air exchange rate (the amount of time all the air is replaced with outside air) to three times per hour (most HVAC systems are one time per hour). Further guidance can be found by [The American Society of Heating, Refrigerating and Air Conditioning Engineers](#).

CLEANING

Proper cleaning of your venue must become one of your highest priorities, before, during and after every event. Making sure that you have dedicated cleaning staff who are trained properly, have the right equipment and supplies, and are able to document their work is important for everyone that enters your venue and for reducing your liability. Try to schedule a deep clean and full sanitization before opening.

For sanitizing the entire venue pre- or post-show, an [electrostatic sprayer](#) could be an effective option. Many companies will charge a premium for this service, so it may be more cost effective to purchase the equipment directly for your venue. Small items, especially tech items like ticket scanners and ipads might best be sanitized with a [UV sanitizer](#) rather than chemicals.

For venues with a linen service, consider increasing your order to encourage single use of towels. For those using disposable products, increase par on those items as well. Try to remove anything you need to vacuum, including rugs and carpets in offices and green rooms. If you must vacuum, make sure that HEPA filters are installed, and that there is no one but the cleaner in the room while the floors are being cleaned. Consider replacing mats weekly.

Cleaning plans should be fully listed on site and in your reopening plan, including calling out use of CDC, EPA or Public Health Department approved chemicals. Either photos or video of cleaning staff working can be included in external communications to demonstrate to patrons the efforts being taken to keep the venue sanitized. Keep in mind, videos or photos can be shot and edited on smartphones for a cost-effective approach. Please make sure to have all cleaning processes documented, both in advance and during an event.

ORDERING SUPPLIES

A number of items will be required for the safe execution of events that were not previously needed. Some are optional or dependent on your venue's needs, but most will be mandatory for the safety of your guests and patrons. Many of these items are currently in short supply, so make sure to try to procure them well in advance of your first show date. A rough estimate of costs will be \$300-\$500 per show for PPE and additional cleaning supplies. Start-up costs including the below are estimated to be \$7000 (assuming wands not magnetometer).

- [Masks](#) (lots of them!) You will need to provide for your staff as well as for patrons that forget or damage their masks. This could be a branding opportunity, or you could sell them to guests.
- [Gloves](#) (lots of them, too!) Stock both latex and a latex-free alternative
- [Hand sanitizer](#) (with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol)
- [Sanitizing wipes](#) for quick cleaning of high touch areas during the show or backstage
- [Cleaning products and disinfectants](#)
- [Face Shields](#), at a minimum for security staff, though you may extend their usage to other staff in high contact areas. (\$5 - \$25)
- [Hand sanitizing stations](#) for the lobby and entrances (\$100 - \$200)
- [Hand washing stations](#) for the outside of your venue (\$100 - \$1000)
- [Plexiglass barriers for stationary staff](#) (\$100)
- [Bloodborne Pathogen Clean-up Kits](#) (\$10 - \$40 each)
- [No Contact Thermometers](#) (\$50++).
- [ID Scanner\(s\)](#) (\$1000)
- [Wands](#) (\$150) or [Magnetometer](#) (\$1500 - \$8000)
- [UV Sanitizers](#) (\$50 - \$100)
- [Stanchions](#) (\$40 - \$200 per piece)
- [Pop Filters for Microphones](#) (\$12 - \$80)
- [Electrostatic Sprayer](#) (\$1500-\$2500)

STAFF TRAINING AND COMMUNICATIONS

Staff training is vital to the success of shows moving forward. All staff should be educated on every new rule and procedure so they are able to successfully communicate with patrons, whether that be the screening process, refunds or why the venue has moved to package goods at the bar. All staff should have a handbook available at all times, possibly even on their phones. The handbook should be studied and signed by all staff. Make sure to update the employee handbook as guidelines change.

Training for all staff should also educate employees on COVID-19 including how the virus spreads and when people are most contagious. Training for all staff on the venue's health and hygiene plan is imperative to create a cohesive and consistent level of health safety throughout the venue. In addition to standard practices such as [the proper way to wear a mask](#), [washing hands](#) and [sanitizing work areas](#), additional measures such as temperature screening should be demonstrated and/or trained by a medical professional to ensure accurate use of equipment. The items covered in training should be reviewed in pre-shift briefings prior to shows. Managers and cleaning staff should be trained in how to handle bloodborne pathogens and proper protective gear should be stocked by the venue. F&B Management must provide access to their employees to have the applicable service/bar/food training, whether that is [ServSafe](#), [TIPS](#), or anything required by your state.

A clear policy surrounding staff illness should also be put into place, and a communications session with your team prior to their first shift about the measures you have taken to ensure their safety is imperative. We encourage you to have open conversations and support staff members who are uncomfortable with or unable to return to work. Also consider having employees participate in a site study to assess the risks and help to design safe practices to eliminate or reduce the risks.

Day of show, be sure to hold pre-shift meetings in the largest space possible (outside if available) and consistently remind staff about the core basics of handwashing, covering cough/sneezes, physical distancing, cleaning and disinfecting.

TICKETING

Work closely with your ticketing company and venue team to establish the best set-up for your reconfigured space based on state and local capacity guidelines. Groups of two or more can be sold together to expand usable space and if possible, explore other ticketing options including the possibility of creating one ticket per group to reduce contact at check-in. Please remember to continue to set up ADA sections in accordance with the law.

Ensure that all ticket buyers are aware of new protocols - you should update your terms of service for ticketing to reflect any new protocols, or update your terms and conditions. Online purchases can require a check box with these updated terms at the time of purchase. In addition, box office staff should have standardized verbiage to read to patrons prior to the end of all sales transactions that outline the rules and mirror the on-line ticket verbiage.

You should also establish and clearly communicate in advance what your refund policy will be for people who are rejected at the door or contact the venue in advance because they are not feeling well. Although a liberal policy may be abused, it could also increase safety for all. Credits could be offered instead of full refunds.

Prior to the show, the Box Office should send out a *Things to Know Before You Go* email blast to all ticket holders, explaining parking, arrival, rules and regulations, etc. as well as a guide to educate guests on how to access mobile tickets on your particular system, including general tips like adjusting screen brightness.

MARKETING

In addition to promoting a show to potential buyers, all patrons must now be informed of the safety plans of your venue in order to gain their confidence and compliance. Err on the side of over communicating, especially in the first 6 months of returning to business. Social distancing will be extremely hard on music/entertainment fans in a live concert setting. Venues need to be prepared to be heavy with strong messaging, but also they'll need to craft great brand messaging while doing so. Here are some ways to reach patrons before they attend a show:

- Place a link on the venue's home page to the new rules and call attention to that link or put the rules directly on the show's landing page.
- A virtual tour of the venue can help prepare the patron for what to expect at show time. The tour should start outside and take them through the entire process including: seeing a patron with proper face covering; new will call experience; screening measures; ticket scanning; bar service and being in the venue to get a feel for new seating configurations. For security reasons, be careful about how you set up the virtual tour. No keypad entries or backstage access points should be included.
- Create a pre-show campaign on social media with links to the new rules page, venue cleaning page, new social distance seating chart and home page, for ease in locating the information patrons need. The Social Media Marketing team should get organized and plan weekly posts regarding safety procedures by updating the venue's social media marketing content calendar. Be sure to track and test different strategies to see what resonates most with your audience. All social media channels should be constantly monitored in an effort to provide short response time to patron questions during this sensitive reopening time.
- Ticketing sites and mobile apps should link to health and safety rules, especially if there are entry rules such as mandatory facemasks while in the building and/or temperature screenings necessary for admittance.
- The media can be a valuable tool in helping to promote new rules, but can also be a valuable source in helping to promote a venue's efforts to keep patrons safe. Consider a press release disseminated to local media about all the new approaches; reach out to a reporter to be embedded into venue planning meetings. This aids the venue in expanding its reach and visibility, and it also tells the story to the public about the volume of hours, planning and thought that has gone into this process. Reach out to local radio or podcasts to be a guest to discuss the new experience. Keep in mind, early on in this process, venues are selling safety and peace of mind, not just shows. That peace of mind comes in the form first and foremost of the venue's maintaining cleanliness and having proper safety plans.
- Consider doing a pre-opening venue survey to current ticket holders and past patrons. Questions can include patrons' feelings on wearing masks; being screened for temperatures; how likely they are to return to the venue once capacity restrictions are lifted/modified; what their biggest concerns are attending the venue during this pandemic and what can the venue do to make them feel safe enough to return. This demonstrates to patrons the venue's interest in their input and safety. This can also be an opportunity to not

only gain knowledge, but impart information and reinforce your message using a different medium. A sample survey can be found [here](#).

DAY OF SHOW

LOAD IN AND HOSPITALITY

Like all other staff, the production crew should be expected to adhere to temperature checks if your venue is mandating them, and should wear masks. However, washable rubber padded work gloves are recommended in place of medical latex gloves, which aren't as effective for their work. Masks should be worn at all times, especially when working within 6 feet of any member of the touring party. In order to reduce chances of outside contamination, local production crew should be assigned a personal locker or cubby space to keep work gloves and tools. The more items can be kept in the venue and not taken home, the better. Be sure to keep a log of the safety measures that your crew is adhering to. If there are any concerns by the artist this can be used as reference.

It should also be requested that Artists and their crew wear masks at all times, except when performing at soundcheck or show. Gear should be wiped down as it comes out of the trailer/truck, additional time may have to be allocated for load-in as a result. This will also be the case during changeovers between artists. Utilize ramps and other equipment that reduce the need for multiple people. The venue should supply clean [pop filters](#) for vocal microphones. Artists can hold said filters throughout the day, and then return them to the venue in a sealed plastic bag at load-out. Disposable mic covers may also be used. Please check with the manufacturers of your microphones for additional guidance on cleaning. In house backline should also be fully sanitized after usage.

Backstage access should be limited to essential personnel only and masks should be required in all shared areas. Hand sanitizer stations should be added in all backstage rooms. All commonly used surfaces (eg - doors, handrails, knobs) backstage should be wiped-down and cleaned frequently throughout the day just as they are in public spaces, and hand sanitizer stations should be added in all rooms. The artist dressing room should be cleaned and sterilized both at the end of the night and first thing before the band arrives the next show day.

Buyouts are preferred to limit cross contamination and additional off-site interactions by venue staff. When hospitality is purchased and provided by the venue, single serve portions are recommended and the artist should unwrap any items themselves whenever possible. Any open food or drink items (eg - fruit, sandwiches, drink pitchers) should be covered. If you use an outside caterer, please make sure they are aware of your policies in advance - an updated contractor agreement is recommended.

BOX OFFICE AND TICKETING

The Box Office should have an ample supply of PPE as they will be interacting with guests. This area may already have plexiglass barriers installed to separate them from patrons for security reasons, but if not, they should be considered along with speakers for communication.

Mobile or digital tickets are highly encouraged, print at home options discouraged and will call highly discouraged or disabled as your system allows. No touch systems for cashless payments and scanning (QR or barcodes with self scanning portal) are preferred for on-site transactions.

Payment options include:

- Tap to pay
- Pay via mobile device
- Chip reader that is customer facing (sterilize regularly)

Encourage all guest lists to be delivered digitally, with email addresses if possible so that tickets can be emailed rather than picked up at the box office.

At the door, self-serve scanning terminals that are monitored at a distance are ideal; the next best alternative is having a security guard who is already facilitating entry for patrons rather than having one staffer who is scanning only. You could create signage with clear instructions at the entrance to reduce questions and interactions with box office staff.

INGRESS

Venues may already face challenges with queueing space, thus with the addition of the social distancing guidance of 6 feet, maintaining a safe and manageable line could become problematic. Consider the following to keep lines in check:

- Check to see if your ticketing platform offers assigned arrival times, as staggered arrival times can prevent longer lines. The offer of a specified time could promote advance sales, or could become a catalyst for a new mandatory means of entry. If your ticketing platform does not offer the option to assign arrival times, check into other online apps that allow for scheduling arrival times. We've tested these apps which are all free:
 - [Queue - Nightlife Done Right](#)
 - [QueQ - No more Queue line](#)
 - [NextME - Virtual Waitlist App](#)
 - [QLess](#)

All four were fairly similar in functionality, but Nightlife Done Right offered the ability to order from the bar as well, so if your POS doesn't offer that, it could be the best option for your venue. We'd also recommend checking in with other venues in your town/region and aligning with them so patrons don't have to download multiple apps.

- Allow patrons to queue with their quarantine groups, and not individually, to save space and speed up entry times.
- Use street/floor decals to designate where patrons should stand to maintain social distancing. Setting up circles can be less confusing for patrons than lines. Ideally these circles would be diagonally staggered and could possibly even have fun facts to distract from the wait or branding from sponsors.
- Utilize alternative entry points if possible. If you normally use one door, consider using others as this will allow for reduced lines and a faster processing time. Being creative can be key. Could you allocate one of the entries as a VIP entry and upsell the priority entry as an additional revenue source? Please note that special care should be taken to track accurate capacity when using multiple entry points when a pre-sale or ticketing system is not in use, especially when local order requires a reduced capacity as a means to re-opening.
- Develop a plan for inclement weather that will avoid patrons gathering together. Provide ample covering when possible.
- Make friends with your venue neighbors. Attend neighborhood meetings, join your local business association, talk to the businesses nearby, and consult with your city agencies. Get ahead of potential queueing issues and be considerate of other struggling businesses before blocking their access.
- Once patrons begin to line up for entry, someone needs to monitor all the venue's social media platforms to gauge patron response to the new system, answer questions and look for negative comments. Also, ask the band/artist team if they will share this so venue fans and artist fans are both being notified.

Once a patron has entered the venue, re-entry is discouraged as they will have to repeat processes at the door which will extend lines and increase exposure for your staff.

Signage is crucial for on-site communication at entry and beyond. Signs should be strategically located at various points outside for patrons to read while in line, as well as inside the venue. When possible, using an image over copy is preferred. Be sure the images or copy are large enough to read at a distance, clean, immediately identifiable. Keep in mind the various messages the venue needs to relay at different points outside and within the venue, which may include: instructions for the bar, bathroom, ticket scanning, line placement, social distancing, will call, box office etc. Please ensure they are multilingual if applicable to your venue.

HEALTH AND SAFETY CHECKS

Some venues were already ranked alongside the TSA when it comes to checking people at the door - others are more loose. To help the process be more efficient and organized, think about instituting the following:

- Maintain an ample supply of PPE at areas of entry:
 - Gloves - for use when touching is unavoidable

- Masks and face shields - in instances of close contact (social distancing cannot be maintained)
- Hand wash station and/or hand sanitizer for staff and patrons
- Create stations with one worker (with appropriate PPE) overseeing all parts of the process for each group.
 - Temperature check and/or health screening questions (if the venue chooses to do them)
 - In an ideal world, screening would occur 30 min after eating, drinking or exercising, or 4 hours after taking a fever reducer to take temperature. Any temperatures higher than 100.4 are of concern, and should be turned away, unless you have a secondary screening area with a medical professional set-up. Make sure door staff are aware of your refund policy.
 - Ticket validation (Again, mobile tickets and touchless scanning are preferred).
 - Banned items checks
 - ID checks (if it makes sense for your venue)

If your venue is in the normal practice of checking bags and for weapons, every effort should be made to uphold the same standards.

When possible, a no-touch solution should be attempted:

- Magnetometers are the best option if possible, but can be costly and cumbersome. If you do go this route, try to avoid any items going around the system that will require an additional check. Attendees can hold any metal objects in their hands above their heads if the system has a zone option.
- A less expensive option is handheld wands as they reduce the need for physical contact. This option does put your security staff in closer proximity to attendees.
- Pat-downs are highly discouraged. If staff does have physical contact with an attendee, gloves should be changed afterwards and searches should be conducted from behind to lower exposure risk.
- A no bag policy is preferred. If you want to allow bags in, mandating a small, clear bag is the best option. The majority of sporting events have already put this policy in place, so implementing this as a new policy should not be difficult.

ID CHECKS

Checking and enforcing age requirements will be one of the greater challenges security and the bar service team will have. Even with 20/20 vision, you can't read an ID from six feet away, and it's really hard to compare a photo with someone wearing a mask. Hand stamping is out and asking someone to put on their own wristband is challenging at best. At risk is your liquor license, which none of us can afford to jeopardize. Keep in mind that you have the right to refuse the sale of an age restricted product if you are making that determination in good faith. It's probably worth missing out on a few alcohol sales rather than take risks that could cause you to lose your license, especially if your venue is high risk for

violations. Check with local alcohol and beverage authorities to see if they have revised guidance for your area.

If possible, have a centralized area for ID checking at your point of entry or at the entry to a 21+ area.

Reducing the need for your bartenders to check ID's will speed up operations and reduce exposure.

- [ID scanner](#): They are not 100% accurate, but they are pretty close. They are expensive per unit, and be prepared to have a lot of batteries in stock for them. However, with this method you can scan most ID's without having your guard touch them.
 - A scanner will tell you if the ID is valid, but you still need to check the photo.
 - Use a plastic barrier in front of the ID checker (much like a grocery store checker), so that if a person is removing their mask to complete the ID check they are both safer. Having the patron hold up the id after scanning and placing it against the divider or use [equipment](#) that can hold an ID, but can be easily disinfected between IDs.
 - Consider setting up a height chart in your entry area for guards to refer to if you do not want masks to be removed at check.
- If your venue allows it, separating your venue into 21+ and all ages spaces is a benefit. It will prevent having to mark people with stamps or wristbands, and also allows separation from those who are drinking and lifting their mask more regularly from patrons that may not be comfortable with that behavior.
- If wristbands are required, have a member of the same group place the wristband on their friend. If staff is helping an individual, gloves should be changed or hands must be washed/sanitized between patrons.

FOOD AND BEVERAGE OPERATIONS

Although we are all sorely in need of as much revenue as possible upon reopening, it is worth considering limiting the amount of alcohol sales allowed per person to ensure safety. Drunk patrons were never fun before, but now people with lowered inhibitions and with a higher likelihood of vomiting is even riskier behavior in the current pandemic situation. Other ways to reduce this risk include not offering shots or neat drinks to patrons - all mixed drinks should require ice, and eliminating high ABV options for beer and wine.

In order to reduce exposure time and increase speed of service, consider limiting offerings in general at the bar to avoid confusion and patrons undecided on what to order. Replace menus with chalkboards or digital versions. Consider setting up [lanes](#) to enter and exit concessions. Utilize pre-packaged product i.e. mixed drinks, beer, soda, snacks as much as possible and remove all fresh garnishes. We always knew those limes and lemons were a bit questionable, but now they are definitely not worth the risk. Replace the fruit with liquid forms.

For patrons, consider a preorder or prepay app for concessions sales and alcohol, [Rooam](#) is an option if your POS does not offer one directly, though it can be costly if you aren't high volume.. If your venue is small enough and you have enough volunteers or staff, consider seat delivery of items or designate a pick

up area for paid items and place them in a bag or tray for patron pickup.

Cashless transactions are ideal and touchless payment methods are preferred. Here are some options for popular POS systems: [Clover](#), [Toast](#), [Aloha](#). If necessary, check presenters must be sanitized between each transaction and pens should be sanitized or single use. If patrons must order directly from the bar, there should be floor markings indicating the distance between people or groups. The service areas will get busy during a show, and having the markings will be helpful to maintain social distancing amongst guests.

Working behind a small bar or kitchen area can be difficult, and in those instances employees should wear a mask and wash/sanitize their hands frequently. The number of staff working should be limited if the allocated work space is very limited. There are two recommended ways to set up your bar service, Scenario one is to set up the bar cashier style where one bartender handles payments and the others make the drinks. The alternative is to have mirrored stations which are self-sufficient with a single POS terminal for each server or bartender and access to ice, product and a handwashing station. Marking the floors may help to remind staff to stay in their zones. Ensure all areas are sanitized between each shift in either scenario. To ensure the safety of your staff, have hand sanitizer at arms reach for all front of house staff, ideally wall mounted in work stations.

If your venue serves food or hosts private events with outside caterers, there should no longer be buffet lines, self-serve coffee stations or staff-managed stations for patrons or backstage hospitality. Make sure any disinfectants you are using are [Food Grade Safe](#). All condiments must be supplied in single-use disposable containers.

Management must administer pre-shift meetings with the staff to address areas of concern regarding cleanliness and sanitation that will maintain the health of your employees and guests. The F&B Management must also provide and implement a post-show cleaning schedule that includes extra precautions and sanitization with approved cleaning supplies and glove disposal station and use instructions in any food/drink commissary area. Management should also enforce that all laundry i.e. towels, aprons, etc. are covered and labeled “clean” or “dirty” if that applies to your establishment.

Outside of show days, set in place your house policies and procedures for deliveries and returns including designating a separate entrance and exit for them and check that all vendors understand these new policies. Suggestions include no contact invoices and that all deliveries must be checked in by F&B Management or designated liaison, and be labeled and dated. Kitchen and food service area doors should be labeled with Covid Warning per the CDC and your Local County Health Department. Make sure your vendors and suppliers know your requirements and make sure they meet them.

MERCH

One of the first and last areas patrons visit in the venue is the merch area. This space should be cleaned and wiped-down before load-in, immediately before doors open, periodically throughout the show, and then again after merch has been loaded out for the evening. Tours should be encouraged to bring their own sellers and use a touchless POS. If the venue is providing a seller, a touchless POS should be provided by the venue if possible to reduce risk and cash sales should be avoided. Any associated

processing fees from the POS should be communicated to the buyer so that they can be factored into the merch split.

Whenever possible, merch should be limited or available for online ordering and pick-up. All sizes should be clearly displayed rather than allowing handling of the items by patrons prior to purchase. Count-ins and count-outs should be avoided whenever possible. The merch line should be clearly marked with social distancing in mind. If organized properly, this may help extend your egress procedure.

MEET AND GREETINGS

In person Meet and Greetings should not be allowed. If the artist would like to hold a Meet and Greet that does not involve close proximity, there is an opportunity to use this early entry group as part of your staggered ingress, and allow them to remain in the venue when possible. There could also be an opportunity to suggest an alternative arrangement through streaming if your venue is equipped to do so.

SECURITY

If your venue is properly socially distanced, sightlines should improve for your security staff. However, you will have to decide how much policing of that distancing is expected of them, and because of noise, they may have to get closer to a patron than is considered safe to discuss any concerns. Consider providing your guards with N95 masks, if available, and face shields as they will be in the closest contact with your patrons, and train your staff on non-verbal communications and de-escalation so that contact is minimized.

These general guidelines should be considered:

- No moshing, stage diving or crowd surfing should be allowed. Performers should be encouraged to remind patrons that only their full compliance allows the show to go on.
- Informational and instructional announcements should be provided via the PA and screens if possible.
- Side stage access should be limited to essential working crew.
- Backstage access should be limited, working in conjunction with the PM and artist.
- If your venue has a barricade, the security staff assigned to that space should also be provided with face shields. The staff should be placed on either side of the barricade rather than centrally. The barricade itself should be extended up to 12' (as space permits) from the stage to allow a safe distance from the performers if a vocalist is part of the group.
- Connect with media on the guest list to ensure they are aware of any updated locations for photos and that that placement is adhered to.
- If there are multiple bands on a bill, attention must be paid to ingress and egress in all spaces. One way markings on the floor will help establish clear pathways that security can refer patrons to.

RESTROOM MANAGEMENT AND CLEANING

Proper restroom cleaning is imperative, and you should refer to your state or county guidelines to see if there are specific rules surrounding cleaning and capacity. Frequent cleaning is almost a given, and documenting this frequency is important for increasing accountability and reducing liability. Because of these requirements, access will be much more limited for patrons than it has been in the past. As such, restroom lines must be managed in an organized manner, much like the line to enter the venue. The majority of venues will not be able to accommodate social distanced lines and time must be provided to maintain disinfection and sanitation plans.

- Use a scheduling app (see [Ingress](#) section) to virtually queue. Patrons will receive a text message when it is their turn to use the facilities.
- An attendant will be necessary to disinfect and sanitize the facilities on a scheduled and regular basis, including door handles, push plates, sinks, faucets, counters and toilet seats and handles. The attendant should have access to appropriate PPE for both cleaning and patron interactions, including a bloodborne pathogen kit. The attendant should be supported by security staff as this is an area that may require logistical support and potential conflict could arise.
- Allowing room for “emergency” walk-ups and supporting patrons with accessibility needs should be built into the restroom plan.

In addition to restrooms, cleaning staff should be visible throughout the venue and continue to circulate cleaning high touch points and bar surfaces throughout the venue from the time doors open to when the last patron leaves. Please note, the barricade is a high touch point, and should be sanitized regularly throughout the evening.

As previously mentioned, adding additional cleaning staff would be helpful, including someone specifically assigned to restrooms as mentioned above. All cleaning staff should be in easy to identify cleaning attire. This is all a form of non-verbal communication, allowing patrons to see the on-going efforts to keep the venue sanitized.

EGRESS

Whether your venue is seated or standing, consider exiting by zones at the end of your show. For calculation purposes, it should be 82 people per 3.28 feet of space per 1 minute on egress, (Note this depends on audience profile, type of event, weather, type of surfaces, how wide the exit is, and if the exit leads to an open space that doesn't restrict crowd flow).

You will need support from security or ushers to help guide this process, but by informing patrons in advance and potentially using the PA and screens, if applicable, to guide the process, you should be able to achieve this safely. The good news is you don't have to feel as bad kicking people out of the room at the end of the night! You may also want to use additional exits if possible. By reviewing your emergency exit plans you may find egress points that you hadn't previously considered for routine operations.

If it applies to your venue, consider reusing the outdoor social distancing markings used for ingress for rideshare queuing post show.

POST-SHOW

SETTLEMENT

Shows should be pre-settled as much as possible to avoid prolonged conversations at the end of the night. When possible, reports should be emailed to the artist representative. To avoid contact, wires would be preferred, followed by check settlements. If signatures are required, each party should provide their own pen. Cash settlements should be avoided as it will extend settlement time, increase contact points and in all likelihood your venue will have less cash in house than previously due to more cashless transactions. If cash is required, it should be ordered, counted and sorted at least 24 hours prior to the show to decrease contact.

LOAD OUT

Any gathering at the backstage entrance should be banned as it poses a risk to fans and the artist. Have a member of the security team dedicated to that area if you do not already have one posted there to deal with any issues that may arise. It should be made clear to the Artist that once the last member of the touring party is out of the venue at the end of the night, there shall be no re-admittance under any circumstance. Full sanitization of production gear is required, please check manufacturer's guidance to protect your gear.

CLEANING

Make sure your cleaning team has thoroughly sanitized the venue post show. Ideally there will be 24 hours between events to allow extra time for the process and for reduction of the virus on any surfaces that may have been missed or are hard to sanitize (e.g. cardboard). Sanitize any radios that are shared by staff members from day to day. A UV Sanitizer could be a good option for your radios, ticket scanners and for certain production gear.

Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty towels and laundry and then discard after each use. If possible, do not shake dirty laundry. This will minimize the possibility of dispersing virus through the air. If you do laundry in-house, wash items at the highest possible temperature. Clean and disinfect clothes hampers or consider using a bag liner that is either disposable (can be thrown away) or can be laundered.

PATRON SURVEYS

For your guest communications, a post-show survey can be sent to gauge patrons' experiences, uncover any concerns or problems the venue may have missed, and the information can also be used to promote patron feedback & experiences on social media, website and to agents & artists. Surveys can easily be created using Google Forms or Survey Monkey.

RESOURCES FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

[WHO Training on PPE, hygiene and sterilization](#)

[Using a Non-Contact Thermometer - FDA Guide](#)

[Sample COVID-19 Symptom Checker](#)

[HVAC Guidance](#)

[CDC One-Sheets for Staff and General Signage](#)

[CDC Considerations for Events and Gatherings](#)

[General and Food Safety Infographics](#)

[CDC Decontamination and Reuse of Filtering Facepiece Respirators](#)

OSHA [No-Cost On-Site Safety and Health Consultation Services for Small Business](#)

[Social Distancing Chart for Row Seating in Churches](#)

[Example of a Socially Distanced Theater Chart](#)

[Cocktail Table Setup ~ Socially Distanced](#)

[Standard Seating example - Socially distanced](#)

[ESA Reopening Guide](#)

[Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers COVID-19 White Paper](#)

[CORE—Restaurants Envisioning Safe Reopening](#) includes table seating diagrams

[FDA Best Practices for Retail Food Stores, Restaurants, and Food Pick-Up/Delivery Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic](#): This guide is also available in [Spanish](#)

[FDA Summary of Best Practices for Restaurants](#)

[National Restaurant Association Reopening Guidance](#)

[Safety First Guide](#): Operating rules for kitchens.

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