

Safe Creation and Staging of Work during COVID-19

**Theatre
Forum**

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Safe Creation and Staging of Work during COVID-19

This document is a companion to and should be read along with:

Arts Centres – Working during COVID-19

This document is in accordance to the guidance set out within:

The Government's COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead
The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's Work Safely Protocol
The Department of Health's COVID-19 (Coronavirus): Stay Safe Guidelines
All relevant and recent COVID-19 advice from the HSE, HSA, HIQA and HPSC

It is important to remember that all workers must take responsibility for reducing the risk of COVID-19 while in work, at home and in other settings as all are interlinked and equally dependent. This document is a continuation of Arts Centres – Working during COVID-19 and is focused on the creation of performing arts work within Arts Centres. This includes development, rehearsals, residencies, and performance work.

As per the [Work Safely Protocol](#), the best way to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in a workplace or any setting is to practice physical distancing, adopt proper hand hygiene and follow respiratory etiquette. The following Infection Prevention Control (IPC) measures underpin best practice outlined within this document.

1. Hand hygiene
2. Respiratory hygiene
3. Physical distancing of 2 metres
4. Pre-return to work measures
5. Dealing with a suspect case of COVID-19 within the workplace
6. At-risk workers
7. Working from home
8. Business travel
9. Contractors and visitors
10. Cleaning
11. Use of PPE
12. Customer facing roles

Work Safely Protocol / COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead and Stay Safe Checklist	Tick
A COVID-19 response plan has been developed and communicated to staff.	
A Lead Worker Representative(s) is appointed.	
A COVID-19 Specific Risk Assessment has been undertaken.	
Update existing occupational health and safety risk assessments and safety statement.	
Relevant HR policies and procedures are updated.	
Revise emergency procedures considering: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed internal layouts • Staff training requirements • Emergency and medical procedures. 	
Create and maintain a communication plan for all relevant stakeholders including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff • Visiting workers • Contractors • Funders. 	
All staff to complete 'Pre-return to Work Form' before re-commencing work	
Provide appropriate training and induction for workers.	
Implement your COVID-19 safe operating Infection Prevention Control (IPC's) as identified in your risk assessment and check lists including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleaning regime • COVID-19 capacity calculated to consider activity type, ventilation, available space and physical distancing requirements • Respiratory hygiene to include safe use, storage and disposal of face masks • Hand Hygiene through information on hand washing procedures and facilities • Signage, physical distancing floor markers • Identifying and planning for areas where physical distancing cannot be maintained – physical barriers, screens, PPE • Risk assessment as regard the staging of performance and close contact activity • First aid and provision of isolation area • Entry conditions and access control • Continuous review of physical layout of working/public areas to ensure physical distancing is maintained. 	
Develop plan for responding to suspected case(s) or outbreak of COVID-19.	
System in place for recording contact details to assist HSE with contact tracing if requested.	
Consider needs of specific groups that visit/work in the Arts Centre including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children • People with disabilities • Vulnerable/high risk groups. 	

Organised Indoor Event COVID-19 checklist	
Nominated event organiser.	
Capacity Control that allows for 2m physical distancing for the duration of the event including entry, circulation and exit.	
PD procedures to support Group bookings (max number people from different households) as per COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead guidelines on the date of the event.	
A health screening policy for audience to be communicated in advance where they must not attend if they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • displaying signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or feeling unwell • required to self-isolate or restrict their movements • identified as a close contact of a confirmed or suspected case of COVID-19 • not in compliance with the COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead travel restrictions at the time of the event. 	
Contact logging system in line with Work Safety Protocol and GDPR.	
An event ticket resale policy and procedure to ensure contact tracing is maintained.	
COVID-19 protocol communication plan to attendees and visitors.	
Sufficient staffing with appropriate briefing and training to implement event specific safety plans.	
Provide space for circulation areas to prevent intermingling between queues for concessions, toilets and other areas where queueing may occur.	
Signage: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PD floor markings or similar for areas of queueing internal and external • Use of vertical signage to direct customers to facilitate movement • Use of clear directional signage indicating locations and routes to toilets and other facilities • Face coverings • If you feel sick please do not attend. 	
Provision of hand hygiene stations and environmental waste.	
Cleaning schedule in place with ongoing and frequent cleaning of high touch points including toilets.	
Visitors to remain seated or in designated viewing area unless when using facilities.	
Fáilte Ireland guidelines for food and beverage consumption are being followed.	
Face masks to be worn at all times, except when eating or drinking.	

Fixed Teams

Restricting **contacts** to a limited number of persons and in so doing creating a Fixed Team (Cohort/Bubble) is key infection control within the working environment. This approach ensures infection control by containing possible infection to a group and allowing for quicker contact tracing and testing. **Workers can only belong to one Team at a time with Teams** that are as small as is reasonably practicable. Most companies will operate in one or more Teams which will comprise specific groups who work closely together – there will be interaction between Teams, but this should be more controlled and limited to prevent cross team infection. Assembling and identifying Teams may depend on time, area, activity or contact grouping. Double jobbing or people sharing households may negate the infection control and should be considered within the fixed team arrangements.

- Zone: requires personnel to be divided into dedicated work zones: whether that be costume room, rehearsal rooms, Front of House, on stage etc. so that teams don't mix. Identify any roles that typically operate both front of house and back of house, and minimise these where possible.
- Contact: requires each individual/department to be able to clearly identify their contacts, trace and limit these in advance of commencing work, and remain in contact with only those within their team/contact group.
 - » Show team, cast and onstage crew
 - » Creative team and FOH technical team
 - » Freelance crew and Supervisors.
- Where an individual is operating on a peripatetic (*a person who travels from place to place, especially a teacher who works in more than one school or college*) basis, such as a designer, producer or photographer and operating across multiple groups or individuals, they should be:
 - » Maintaining strict distancing requirement with each group and wear a mask where practicable
 - » Avoiding situations where distancing requirement is broken, for example demonstrating partnering work in dancing
 - » Making efforts to reduce the number of groups interacted with and locations worked in, to reduce the number of contacts made
 - » Restrict visits to under 2 hours to avoid becoming a [close contact](#) within the room – depending on the size of the room.
- In developing pods and fixed team examine how tasks can be grouped or dedicated to one person to reduce touch point issues:
 - » Generally working in smaller groups
 - » Ensuring that members of fixed teams are particularly careful to maintain social distancing when interacting with other fixed teams or individuals to minimise time spent doing so
 - » Partnering –Using a consistent pairing if people have to work in close proximity, for example, during two-person working, scene changes lifting etc.
 - » Ensuring that there is no swapping between designated fixed teams without 48 hour breaks. This is to reduce the risk of whole team impact in the event of somebody contracting COVID-19.
- A venue who routinely programmes shows with, for example, 1-3 nights residency may consider assigning house staff teams to shows specifically for the duration of residency. An example from a venue is a split team on a 3-day rotation basis with no interaction between teams and shifts, including off-work.

Role of Health Screening and Testing

The aim of a health screening protocol is to decrease the likelihood of someone with the virus presenting for work. This may be supplemented with private testing would alongside other daily screening routine checks for symptoms etc. This approach may offer reasonable and sensible level of risk mitigation but it cannot eliminate risk. **The key message is that somebody should not attend the rehearsals or come in for work if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell.**

Where health screening and especially a testing regime is adopted it does not eliminate the risk of contracting COVID-19 and government advice as regards social distancing, face coverings and hand hygiene still needs to be adhered to.

Individual Self-Screening

Before leaving the house for rehearsals or a show, please check you:

- Do not have symptoms of a high temperature (feeling hot, feeling cold, shivers, feeling under the weather).
- Do not have a new persistent cough.
- Have not got a loss of taste or smell.
- Have not been in contact with a person with suspected COVID-19 within the past 14 days.

- Have not been advised to self-isolate due to a third party from another setting that has been infected with COVID-19.
- No-one within your household has COVID-19 symptoms as outlined above, which would require the whole household to go into isolation as guided by HSE advice.

Individuals must **not** attend a work if any of the above are true and:

- There should be no pressure placed upon to attend work if they have symptoms or they think the environment is unsafe for them.
- If during work an individual feels uncomfortable with the management of the rehearsal or work on stage, then there should be no pressure placed on that individual if they decide to opt-out of that.

There is no requirement under Public Health guidance to complete **temperature checks**, however, a decision may be made to check following risk assessment. Temperature checks when somebody arrives for work should be contact free (to avoid disease spread). Where a someone has a temperature (38°C or over), they should contact their GP to establish the best course of action.

Testing

The company must risk assess in advance of rehearsals the likelihood of close contact work. Mitigating risk involved with close contact will require robust Infection Prevention Controls and possibly the use of asymptomatic testing as an administrative control measure. The use of asymptomatic testing needs to be thoroughly understood before undertaking it. Where testing is required, workers must be informed at contract or engagement stage. Asymptomatic testing can create a false sense of security and see a drop off from other more reliable mitigation factors. Companies must follow current public health advice in following protocols and where testing is used must engage the services of an external occupational safety physician with regard to advance risk assessment and developing a compliant testing regime.

Face Coverings

By law it is compulsory to wear a face covering on public transport and in shops and other indoor public settings including theatres, cinemas and museums and crowded work areas. Visitors must wear a face covering at all times other than the limited purpose and limited time period necessary to consume food and beverages.

Individuals do not have to wear a face covering if they have an illness or impairment that would make wearing or removing a face covering upsetting or uncomfortable. Children under 13 are also not required to wear a face covering. There are also some exemptions for workers for example, where there is a screen separating the worker from other persons.

Visors are not the best option for offering protection from COVID-19. Visors may stop some spread of droplets from the nose or mouth. This is better than not wearing any face covering. But visors should only be worn by individuals who have an illness or impairment that makes wearing a face covering difficult. Further advice on face coverings and visors can be found [here](#).

Wearing of masks is not a substitute for the Infection Protection Control (IPC) measures outlined (physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory hygiene, worker teams' arrangements etc.) but they may be used **in addition** to these measures especially where maintaining physical distancing is difficult. If masks are worn, they should be clean and they should not be shared or handled by other colleagues. A full list of places where masks should be worn can be found on the [HSE website](#).

Rehearsal Room and Theatre Preparation

General

- There is a COVID-19 response plan in place for the venue with an identified Isolation area/room, HSA [COVID-19 Response Plan Template](#).
- PPE for medical emergency and staff with knowledge on how to apply first aid.
- A COVID-19 Specific Risk Assessment has been undertaken to include a risk assessment of vulnerable staff, see HSE for [people at higher risk](#).
- Ensure sufficient space for physical distancing. This agreed Physical Distance (PD) of 2m capacity should be displayed on a sign outside the space.
- Consideration should include circulation – entry/exit, one-way systems and the activity type within the space.
- Mark up the rehearsal floor and theatre stage, to help people maintain physical distancing.
- Allocate designated areas to safely store and isolate personal belongings and props.

- Install a Hygiene safety station that contains hand sanitiser, face masks, PPE disposal bins etc. Hand sanitizer available at entrance to the building and principal areas of work.
- COVID-19 Signage to include for example Public Health Information, access routes, hand washing, room capacity, HSA [COVID-19 posters and resources](#).
- Access to the room should only be for essential people who will be in the room at any time.
- Suitability of toilets, are they compliant with physical distancing, cleaning protocols and can they be restricted to fixed teams?
- Separate entrance and exits (if possible) to rehearsal room and main building clearly signed.

Ventilation

Natural (via windows and doors) and mechanical (HVAC) ventilation significantly improves hygiene and better air quality. The ability to adequately ventilate the space, opening windows and doors where possible and the use of Heating, Ventilation and Air Condition systems (HVAC) will significantly inform the assessment for space occupancy. The [HPSC Guidance on Non-Healthcare Building Ventilation during COVID-19](#) and the [Work Safely Protocol](#) will greatly inform a working capacity for a performance or rehearsal space.

Cleaning

Rehearsal and performance venues must ensure that there are adequate cleaning protocols in place for controlling the risk of infection within each room/area. Appropriate cleaning and disinfection products should be used as required. The Production Manager and Stage Managers should plan rehearsal room and theatre setup for safe usage. Cleaning protocols should include:

- Somebody should have the job of making sure that cleaning happens and keep records are kept.
- Regular cleaning and sanitization, twice a day – before and after working days – and regularly throughout especially toilets and welfare areas.
- Extremely regular sanitization of high-touch points and common use equipment between activities. Dance floors should be treated as high-touch points and should be cleaned and disinfected at a minimum twice daily or between dance groups/fixed teams. Areas of the floor that are used more regularly should be more frequently cleaned throughout the day and the mop pad should be washed with bleach in the washing machine between uses.
- Increased waste disposal bins and dedicated COVID-19 disposal signage.
- Where shared amenities are used for multiple groups, the rehearsal venue must confirm adequate measures are in place to clean and disinfect the areas between use. This may require consultation with the venue manager/premises owner.
- Agreement in advance with regard to who cleans and disinfects rehearsal and performance area and that workload on departments is reasonable given the onerous requirements of COVID-19 protocol. It should not be a presumption that cleaning and room sanitising is done by the stage management team.
- Where showers, lockers and changing facilities are required, setting clear use and cleaning guidance is essential to ensure they are kept clean and clear of personal items, and that physical distancing can be achieved as much as possible.

Rehearsal and Performance Venue Agreements

Venue Assessments for show or rehearsals	
Up to date venue-specific COVID-19 guidelines including venue capacities for stage and Back of House (BOH) including dressing rooms and welfare facilities to include production recovery procedures.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front of House (FOH) Foyer and Auditorium announcements and information to incorporate Current COVID-19 response plan including instructions on the reporting system for raising concerns, and who to alert if an individual or individuals (outbreak) presents with symptoms of COVID-19. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPE for Arts Centre staff. The centre should carry contingency for visiting staff (on a charge-back arrangement) or advise visitor/contractors/shows of the house policy in advance. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of clean dressing room spaces in include COVID-19 physical distancing capacity. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hygiene stations to include hand sanitiser, soaps and washing facilities, waste bins, signage. 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the venue is shared, who is it shared with and are there shared facilities to consider. Can a dedicated toilet, entry and exit be facilitated? 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ventilation and space assessment to consider <ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Ventilation type » Room activity type and duration » Breaks arrangement » Available space to consider area and height » The need to open windows and doors will affect the ability to heat a space so all workers should be informed in advance » External noise disrupting within and internal room noise being heard outside the room should be considered. 	

- For International workers it is important to check the relevant government travel restrictions when arriving from overseas countries [governments protocols for international travel](#) .
- By using virtual collaboration tools, off site systems of work can reduce time required in the venue and avoid unnecessary contact. These include:
 - » Offline sound/lighting/video plotting.
 - » Online video calls for auditions, fittings, creative meetings and production meetings.
 - » Show broadcast systems that can enable the creative interface to take place off-site. It can also assist Stage Managers to forward notes for swing company members or standby positions.
 - » To facilitate the above, and further future working conditions, venues should ensure stable wireless broadband access throughout the venue.
- If the shows are to be streamed, it is advised to bring in a streaming technical director at the start of the project to determine the most suitable technical approach in delivering the production. This will determine the tools and technology required to deliver your stream and the correct online platform used to view the stream.
- Where a production or project or archival work is put online this may change their presenters role to broadcaster/publisher and may require Publishers Liability Insurance to cover both print and online. This should be considered where there are concerns around defamation, libel, etc and should be noted and consideration given to.
- Venues may consider adopting a generic/festival/summer rig to reduce the workload on stage. The design should factor in a variety of incoming lighting designs.
- Performance venue pre-rigs should be discussed at an earlier stage to spread the fit-up time. Impact on touring production as regards LX and SND.
- Backstage work will be shaped by compliance with physical distancing and sanitising regulations. As this has a knock-on effect on the available playing space, Set Designers will need an idea of how much space they will have to work with at conceptual stage, taking into consideration the offstage footprint of the show as regards props tables, access points, face mask set down areas for cast.
- Chaperoning requirements for children in the cast to be considered.

Considerations regarding programming include	
Is an interval possible? If so, what is proposed to mitigate against the associated risks with audience movement and intermingling?	
Is a post-show discussion possible?	
COVID-19 capacity should calculate for each area within the venue to consider activity type, ventilation, available space with circulation (one-way systems, entry/exit points) and physical distancing requirements. What is operating capacity for the venue for <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dressing rooms Toilets Stage Auditorium – Front line of Audience needs to be 2m from the stage edge – Is there show staging that affects the setting line? Other areas for consideration 	
Have the requirements for ventilation in line with government guidance affected heating, use of Haze and smoke? Give consideration to the time needed post show before a load out can commence. Can load in doors be opened to increase ventilation for load outs and air breaks on stage?	
What is the Venue turnaround time for both stage and front of house as regards cleaning and disinfecting for Tech week and Matinee days? Are Matinees possible? What is the house policy as regard production desks (LX, SND, SM) and turnaround time for evening shows?	
Any house specific COVID-19 policies for example face masks for BOH, use of fixed teams or changes to working at height protocol etc.	
If the venue is shared with another group (i.e., hired rehearsal rooms), what is the cleaning schedule between each group.	

Performance Company

- Employees' contracts should state the implementation of COVID-19 protocols (including if testing or health screening is a requirement – in line with GDPR) and personal responsibilities expected of them.
- Consideration should be given to the audition process and the use of self-tapes and only hold live auditions when required. Attendance at an audition should be only as required basis.
- Encourage company members to walk or cycle to work and avoid public transport wherever possible and consider working off peak hours.
- Where achievable, allow people to work from home, HSA [Working from Home](#). Consider how the creative process can be facilitated online and only hold meetings in person where necessary. This should include model box presentations and avoiding traditional large group sessions.
- Consider the effect on high levels of absenteeism and what contingencies can be put in place to mitigate against.
- All workers must complete pre-return to work forms and complete return to work induction training, [HSA Return to Work Form](#).
- Where there are children in the company, chaperoning procedures (preferable within the child's household bubble) need to be a consideration with IPC's
- Consider the effects which this new way of working will have on company members with who declare with disabilities or sensory disabilities and those who may not declare. Not every disability is visible.
- Company members who are considered to be high or very high risk or who are living with higher risk family members should be given extra care, and should be individually risk assessed as to how they will be best able to work. Be conscious of decision bias and any discriminatory practices.
- All workers should feel able to draw attention to non-compliance with protocols and should not feel at risk of discipline or dismissal if they report such things. There should be a clear reporting procedure set up and known to all. Members of the Company, Stage and Production Management traditionally monitor their safety in the workplace, these roles and that of the Lead Worker Representative should receive the appropriate safety training to carry out these roles.

What are the plans in place for a health and safety induction – including COVID-19 – on the first day to company members in the venues?

- If there is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 within the company what is the pre-agreed arrangement of disinfecting the venue? Who pays for it? Is there an external contractor agreement?
- Depending on the size of the company, and where the venue is situated, can a scheduled entrance and exit take

- place across various times and doors to avoid congestion?
- Can markings be implemented on the walls or floor to indicate safe distances for cast staging and blocking?
- Designate specific areas for lunch and dinner breaks that facilitate physical distancing?
- Designate specific areas to store and isolate personal belongings safely?

Rehearsal Schedule

Company Checklist	
Depending on the scale of production, the first day of rehearsals which includes meet and greet, read-through, and design presentation should be online where possible. Initial design and model box presentations should include how the cast and crew will navigate the design regarding new COVID-19 protocols.	
Company induction must be in a form that is easily understood and is specific to the show and venue, HSA Return to Work Safety Induction . It is a collective responsibility for all company members to follow the agreed Health and Safety guidelines outlined in this training. Topics to be covered within a rehearsal briefing include:	Tick
<p>The key message is that somebody should not attend the rehearsals if they are displaying any signs or symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell.</p> <p>A notice should be included so that visitors are informed that they must not attend if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are experiencing any symptoms of COVID-19 or are feeling unwell • are not awaiting the results of a COVID-19 test • are not self-isolating or restricting their movements • have been diagnosed with confirmed COVID-19 infection in the last 10 days • are a close contact of a person who is a confirmed case COVID-19 in the past 14 days (i.e., less than 2m for more than 15 minutes) • have been advised by a doctor to isolate or cocoon • have returned from international travel and are not in compliance with government guidance. 	
Has a lead Worker Representative role been assigned, and who this person is.	
Workers owe each other a duty of care, clean as you go, clean cups and workspaces.	
The arrangements for staggering access to avoid busy times on public transport.	
Company members should attend rehearsals only when required and avoid congregating before and after rehearsal or a show.	
What is the venue sign-in and out system? QR registration that brings to a form for contact tracing purposes and allows organiser view who have an have not signed in.	
What are the welfare services (toilets, teas/coffees, smoking).	
<p>The hand and respiratory hygiene requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • hand sanitizer should be used when entering building, the rehearsal room or stage area, after using the toilets and as necessary. • face masks policy • proper respiratory etiquette (wear a mask, cough into your elbow, bin your mask) • There will be regular ventilation and air breaks. 	
The make-up of fixed team and pod groupings are.	
Describe how physical distancing protocols will be implemented as regards venue signage, one-way systems, use of green rooms (if allowable), toilets (are these dedicated for pods) and other communal areas.	
Detailed rehearsal schedule – storyboard to include physical distance and close contact rehearsal.	
Bringing only what is needed as regards bags, personnel belongings and to have their own scripts, stationery, certain tools etc.	
Bringing their own food and water.	
Personal belongings should be left in the dressing room and bring as few personal items to work as possible.	
Remain BOH or in the area/zone identified by stage management to assist in the fixed team arrangements. Do not visit other dressing areas.	

- At an early stage, it is advised that a risk assessment and determines PPE requirements for the production. The supply of PPE must be Public Health compliant and consistent across the company.
- Initial design and model box presentations to include safety information on how the Cast will navigate the design regarding new COVID-19 protocols. E.g., where they can and can't move.

- Induction training should be scheduled at the very start of rehearsals, as part of the familiarisation and traditional meet and greet.
- Depending on the scale of production, the first day of rehearsals which includes meet and greet, read-through, and design presentation could possibly be streamed online.
- Production meetings, where possible, should be held online. Face to face, and other in-person group meetings should only happen if absolutely required.
- The rehearsal schedule should consider avoiding peak public transport. E.g., in Dublin a consider a schedule from 10:30am to 6:30pm. Allowances should be made for company members with evening family commitments.
- When creating the schedule, factor in staggered ventilation breaks to prevent gatherings of people.
- Individuals attending rehearsals should be limited, it is recommended there is a specific workspace/chair allocated in spaces to accommodate visitors on an individual basis, to be reserved in advance with the Stage Manager. The workspace will need to be sanitised before and after each use it.
- Have systems in place to move rehearsals online where possible.

Production Schedule

- With requirement to separate and create breaks between Fixed Teams on stage, this will likely require more time for rig and sound checks and other normal activities.
- The scale and complexity of a production is to be considered to allow for the slower pace of working while physical distancing. It is recommended that production schedules work as per normal while facilitating cleaning within work schedules.
- There should be two cleans a day which to include cleaning work areas, consoles, headsets and any equipment that is touched. It is important to remember there needs to be constant clean as you go policy throughout the day of work.
- In advance of the health and safety induction on the first day, a reminder message will be communicated to all Production departments to reinforce pre-existing venue protocol including working at height, manual handling PPE equipment such as boots and hardhat, in addition to anything COVID-19 related.
- The build process should allow for fixed pods/teams/partnering where possible, staggered start times and access for each department. E.g. use a dinner break to ventilate and separate a call between lighting crew and stage management
- The Get In/Load Out process, which traditionally happens immediately after the show, may now, depending on scale need to accommodate cleaning and ventilation of the stage area.
- Cleaning staff may need access to the auditorium earlier on show days. This may limit technical times on stage, and includes making sure production desks are clear. After the auditorium is cleaned, the area should not be re-entered. Where necessary, space should be identified, and procedures in place to facilitate physical and vocal warm ups elsewhere.

Production Recovery

- These steps are recommended to be followed if someone is a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19, they are informed by government and health authorities' regulations and **DO change! Companies must have a COVID-19 response plan in place which follows the [Work Safely protocol](#), as per [HSA COVID-19 Response Plan](#).**
- The performance venue will lead on primary COVID-19 compliance protocols and the company will follow their direction of a pre-agreed response procedure as part of the presenting contract.
- As most companies do not have the resources to put a full understudy structure in place, it is recommended that companies establish a pool of talent across acting, directing, design, stage management and tech who have agreed in advance to being approached to step into a role if a position becomes available at short notice.
- If there is a confirmed case of COVID-19 in the company, work is paused, a deep clean of the working area is enacted, and then the company will follow HSE guidance on continuing with the production as regards determining [close contacts](#) etc.
- It is advised that a second Stage Manager (either from within or outside of the company) is familiar with the prompt book and show call. The show should be filmed during previews or opening night so that a recording of the cues being called for backup.
- If it is determined that the individual is not well enough to continue with work, a decision will be taken to either replace the individual from the talent pool indicated above or continue in their absence and reintroduce them to the process when HSE guidelines allow.
- An additional number of days should be considered as a contingency before the tech starts to allow for the possibility of work pausing due to a COVID-19 case.
- If an individual or department needs to [self-isolate](#) so late in the production process (tech and dress rehearsals or

after the first performance) that it is not possible to replace individuals, from the talent pool or elsewhere, a decision will be taken at that stage whether or not to proceed with the production.

- If it is recommended that an employee self-isolates working from home may be possible and considered.
- Agreement to be made in advance with the venue about covering costs for venue deep clean.
- Symptomatic and close contact testing provided by the HSE is free, private testing will be at the cost of the company.
- Contract implications will need to be considered for affected company members regarding loss of income.

Touring

Company show riders should include:	
Load in and out Risk Assessment and Method Statements (RAMS) to include COVID-19	
A show specific COVID-19 safety plan that considers venue staff as well as touring staff. This will range from scene changes to show blocking, PPE usage to access protocols, and so on. Specific risk assessment for vulnerable members of crew or cast	
Clean up procedures – Pre and Post show.	
Dressing room requirements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the company require the use of showers post show? • Are there fixed team arrangements that affect dressing room allocation? 	
Production schedule to include venue induction/toolbox talk, venue cleaning, air breaks. An agreed time in the schedule to look at and discuss COVID-19 arrangements at the venue, and a dedicated time for a walk through, with a suitable member of staff to establish adherence to the protocols and how best to arrange space and PD.	
Lighting, sound and video desk production layouts and plans.	
Staging, blocking and props management procedures. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onstage • Offstage 	
Onstage activity type including singing/spoken word/dance.	
If there are children in the show what are the chaperoning arrangements?	
Up to date information for stage door re names and contacts.	
The Venue should provide:	
Up to date venue-specific COVID-19 guidelines.	
A venue specific COVID-19 induction within the standard start of work briefing.	
Instructions on the reporting system for raising concerns, and who to alert if an individual presents with symptoms of COVID-19.	
PPE for Arts Centre staff. The centre should also carry contingency for touring staff (on a charge-back arrangement).	
Clear directions, instruction and signage regarding the venue COVID-19 working arrangements.	
Suitable clean dressing room space(s).	
A clean and safe as possible environment.	
Sanitiser, soaps and washing facilities.	
A flexible and helpful attitude to resolving issues and concerns.	
Practical measures to mitigate any risk possible.	
A robust venue Risk Assessment.	
Up to date venue-specific COVID-19 guidelines.	

- The incoming company and Arts Centre should mutually agree working procedures and protocols from build, tech, run to load out.
- Consider transport arrangements as regards not sharing houses between teams.
- Arts Centres should ensure that touring companies have accurate, up to date and readily accessible venue tech specs and information in line with evolving health and safety updates.

Show or event specific Risk Assessments will be required for the loading and unloading of trailers. Mitigation measures may include:

- Limit the unload to a specific fixed team and partnering arrangements.
- Limit pack size and avoid overpacking.
- Avoid loose pack, such as small furniture in hampers, larger furniture wrapped in tarp / with bungies etc.
- Requiring that the truck driver stays outside of the trailer, entering only to check the pack and for tying off.
- Risk Assessment may require that PPE to be worn, consider duration and the conditions when unloading a truck as regards heat, sweat and environmental conditions.
- Instigating a policy on allowing drivers use rest facilities, showers, toilets etc. when taking statutory breaks.

Production Departments

General Notes

- Wearing of PPE should be risk assessed by the Production Manager and the department heads when required to come in close contact with cast for mic dressing/prop/Wigs Hair Make Up/costume/scenery related duties.
- Consider what props, costumes, fabrics and other materials can be purchased online where possible.
- Avoid using cash to purchase costumes. e.g., is it feasible to use card tap or a Revolut type card?
- Avoid sharing phones or taking/receiving calls on other people's phones.
- Shared equipment should be cleaned and sanitised after use and before handing it over to other people, this includes FOH and office computer stations, sewing machines, lighting or sound control desks, tools used on stage or in the gallery etc. Musicians shall clean their own instruments as needed. Suitable cleaning agents and wipes shall be supplied if requested.
- Personal tools and equipment should be labelled with the name of the user. Toolboxes brought into the venue should be cleaned/sanitised and should have a marked tool set down area for the duration of the work.
- Company members should have their own, mugs, water bottles (disposable ones are preferred).
- If lighting and sound operators sitting close together in control booths, protective screens need to be installed to separate them.
- Workstations in the auditorium should be minimised, socially distanced and accessible via different seating rows.
- Communications equipment should receive careful sanitising attention. Headsets, belt packs, walkie talkies should never be shared. Nor should radio mic packs and heads, handheld mics, trailing cables. All such items should be marked with users' names.
- Consideration should be given as to how directors notes are given post show (access to dressing rooms or auditorium likely not to be possible).
- Create and maintain a cleaning checklist for the show or rehearsals.
- Protocols for filming and Production Guidelines for the Creative Screen Industry available [here](#) UK DCMS Guidelines [here](#).

Props

- Props within the show should be limited to single cast use where possible. If props are shared, the Cast sanitize their hands (at the end of a scene) after passing objects to each other.
- When a prop enters the building, it should be cleaned and disinfected or quarantined for 72 hours when props cannot be cleaned sanitised without incurring damage.
- Performers should be encouraged to look after their own props and sanitise them before and after each use cycle.

Wardrobe

- Quick costume changes will be reduced to a minimum, ideally eliminated. Use of hand sanitiser before and after each change and PPE assessment to include appropriate mask and visors for technicians.
- In rehearsals and in performances, costume changes to be set by the Costume department, change is completed by the Cast and then tidied by the Costume department.
- Costumes used during fitting will be laundered or quarantined before being used on someone else.
- Cast will be responsible for storing shoes and costumes that they use during rehearsals in an allocated sealed plastic container.
- Protocols should be established to clean other costume objects such as hats and wigs.
- Steaming to be used to disinfect costumes effectively where machine washing is not possible.

Wigs, Hair and Make-up

Where Cast have been asked to do their own hair and make-up as much as possible. Where that is not possible, the following hair and make-up protocols will be implemented:

- Frequent hand washing will be implemented to reduce the risk of transmission through handling equipment. Use of hand sanitiser or disposable gloves before and after each cast member.
- Wash costumes as per manufacturers instructions and at the warmest water setting possible and dry items completely.
- Physical distancing will be implemented between make-up stations. The stations will be thoroughly disinfected between each use.
- Ways of increasing equipment hygiene will be reviewed (e.g., using air borne sanitising sprays, keeping make-up in sealable containers, keeping equipment to a minimum per workstation).
- Equipment will be sterilised and disinfected between each appointment.
- Should the company require that the Cast provide their own make-up, there will need to be provision for this within the production budget.
- PPE assessment to include appropriate mask and visors for technicians.

Stage Management

- Rehearsal, tech and show reports should include specific relevant COVID-19 considerations.
- Stage Management to develop and communicate to all show cast and crew a clear protocol as to working procedures during tech, dress rehearsals and shows.
- Both on-stage and backstage access to be restricted to workers only.
- The use of backstage wings to be assessed to enable minimal interruption e.g. a one-way system and dedicated wings for various departments.
- Assess the use of green rooms and crew rooms by fixed pods and teams or restrict and stagger access.
- Limit handling of key props on-set to a dedicated crew member and relevant cast.
- Consider cover responsibilities, such as Assistant Stage Manager, to covering the book and maintain, where possible, a separation between those who operate front of house and those who operate back of house.

Technical

- Team lifting should be avoided where possible, prioritising mechanical solutions. For example, using a line or hoist, and the use of trolleys and motors.
- Agree designated partnering teams within fixed teams.
- Limit the number of people on stage as much as possible, and restrict tight corridors like upstage crossovers at one person at a time.
- Equipment out on loan or incoming hire should be cleaned/sanitised.
- Microphones, radio equipment, especially earpieces, headsets and fist mics should be personalized and only used by that specific individual, preference would be for companies to tour their own microphone package, and for any staff to have their own headsets.
- Production desk consoles should have networking capability and secure remote access capacity.
- Agreeing a fixed position for the sound desk to minimise movement of desks.
- If a Production Company is working in the venue it will be responsible for providing its own staff (crew, performers, creatives etc.) with PPE. PPE requirements should be HSA compliant and consistent across the venues.
- Radios may reduce the requirement for face to face contact and shouting in the space. Units will need to be appropriately cleaned if not single use. Where users are wearing masks, this should be a consideration with regard to headset mics.
- Contractors who supply hire items should be required to sanitise them before loading out of their premises and again once installed. Examples include sound effect systems, pianos, practice microphones, music stands, floor vinyl, stand-in rehearsal scenery.

Singing and Wind/Brass Instruments

Singing and playing wind and brass instruments, especially in groups, are considered higher risk activities because of the potential for aerosol production. Recommendations on singing and wind/brass instruments are taken from the UK Department of Digital, Culture Media and Sport (DCMS) guidance on [Working Safely during Coronavirus for Performing Arts](#) Current Irish Government Public Health Measures for the cultural sector including music can be found [here](#).

Orchestra pits and band areas are often small and tight spaces where social distancing may be difficult. Particular attention needs to be paid to the following:

- Marking up the orchestra pit or band area so that all musicians are clear about their spacing and social distancing. Use of other areas within the performance space (e.g. side-stage or on-stage) may need to be considered to provide adequate space for the musicians required.
- Positioning musicians side-by-side or back-to-back where feasible and avoiding face-to-face, with particular regard to be given to the position of instruments with lateral transmission such as piccolos and flutes.
- Consider using screens or barriers, especially where musicians are facing each other, whilst taking account of health and safety requirements regarding noise exposure and general airflow.
- Booths, barriers or screens can be used between individual singers/wind and brass players who are not part of a fixed pod, between fixed pods of singers and others, and between cast and any audience.
- Suitable face masks should be worn at all times. Singers and wind/brass players should only remove their mask when necessary to perform or play.
- Hand sanitizer should be used when entering building, the rehearsal room or stage area, after using the toilets and as necessary.
- Bring as few personal items to work as possible.
- Music stands and chairs should be cleaned before the first session and then assigned to each musician for the day.
- There must be no shared supplies, including use of phones. Everyone shall have their own designated music stand, instrument stand, pencils, erasers and sheet music.
- Musicians shall be seated observing the safe distance of 2m and the conductor shall be placed at least 3m from the musicians. If a singer is facing anybody else when singing without a mask during rehearsals or performances they should increase the usual safe distance of 2m as much as possible (>5m) to reduce the risk of direct transmission of the virus by droplet.
- Wind instrument players shall do their embouchure warmups so that no droplets escape, i.e. with a cloth or their hand in front of their face. Do not blow through a mouthpiece (without the instrument attached) due to the high air velocities produced.
- Condensate from wind instruments should be collected in disposable cloths and disposed of by the player at the end of each session.
- Orient speaking so that you are not speaking directly at another person's face when taking notes or discussing things during rehearsals.
- Arrive to rehearsals/performances already changed to avoid use of communal dressing rooms.
- When waiting for rehearsals to begin you should wait outside the premises until the start time to avoid congregation of groups in reception/entrance/backstage areas.
- Do not warm up or practice in other rooms in the building.

References

Government of Ireland

[COVID-19 Resilience & Recovery 2021 The Path Ahead](#)

[Work Safely Protocol](#)

[Covid-19: Stay Safe Guidelines](#)

Health Service Executive

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) Resources](#)

Health and Safety Authority

- <https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/COVID-19/>

- https://www.hsa.ie/eng/topics/COVID-19/return_to_work_safely_templates_checklists_and_posters

Health Protection Surveillance Centre

[COVID-19 Resources](#)

National Standards Authority of Ireland (NSAI) – COVID-19 Resources

- <https://www.nsai.ie/COVID-19/>

- <https://www.nsai.ie/COVID-19workplaceprotection/>

[Fáilte Ireland – Business Supports Hub](#)

[European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control \(ECDC\) – Disinfection of environments in healthcare and non-healthcare settings potentially contaminated with SARS-CoV-2](#)

Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council (PHECC) – COVID-19 Update

- https://www.phecc.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

- https://www.phecc.ie/PHECC/Publications_and_Resources/Newsletters/Newsletter_Items/2020/PHECC_COVID_19_Advisory_v1.aspx

[World Health Organisation](#)

https://www.ictu.ie/download/pdf/ictu_national_return_to_work_safely_protocol_may_2020.pdf

https://www.citizensinformation.ie/en/employment/employment_rights_during_Covid19_restrictions.html

<https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-tourism-culture-arts-gaeltacht-sport-and-media/>

[Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth](#)

[IOSH COVID-19 risk assessment guidance](#)

[Event Safety Alliance](#)

[UK Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport \(DCMS\)](#)