

**GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING  
ONTARIO LIVE MUSIC VENUES:  
PHASE 3**

**July 15, 2020**



**The voice of live  
music in Canada**  
La voix du spectacle  
musical au Canada

# GUIDELINES FOR REOPENING ONTARIO LIVE MUSIC VENUES: PHASE 3

## OVERVIEW

The purpose of this document is to provide guidelines for the safe reopening of live music venues within the Province of Ontario. While these guidelines represent best practices, each venue is unique with varying physical layouts and operational models. Therefore, organizations contemplating reopening should create their own specific COVID-19 Phase 3 reopening procedures based on these guidelines in consultation with local Public Health authorities.

COVID-19 will require many changes to existing practices and procedures for live music venues. These changes are of paramount importance to ensure that members of the public, staff, and artists are clear that their health is the top priority and most importantly to prevent any further outbreaks of COVID-19. The guidelines that follow will touch on every aspect of a live music venues business. All measures outlined within this document are an incremental addition to existing practices and procedures already in place in live music venues.

## COVID 19

COVID-19 is a flu like respiratory illness that spreads much in the same way as Influenza or other Corona Viruses, through person-to-person contact. The primary known form of spread is through respiratory droplets generated by infected individuals coughing, sneezing or speaking. Infection can occur through the inhalation of respiratory droplets from an infected individual or from touching objects or surfaces with COVID-19 on them and then touching of the mouth, nose or eyes.

The Symptoms of COVID-19 have reportedly varied from extreme and potentially fatal to mild or non-existent. For up to date symptoms and self-assessment please visit <https://covid-19.ontario.ca/self-assessment/>  
Common symptoms of COVID-19 include the following:

- Fever
- Head Ache
- Sore Throat
- Dry Cough
- Anosmia (Loss of sense of smell)
- Difficulty Breathing (in some cases very severe)

It is essential that anyone experiencing any of these symptoms self isolate immediately and seek medical advice.

## GENERAL GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR PREVENTION

The following precautions are the best practices currently available for stopping the spread of COVID-19.

- Stay at home when you are sick, except to receive medical care
- Cover a cough or sneeze with a tissue and safely discard the tissue, if no tissue is available cough or sneeze into your sleeve. Always wash your hands immediately following a cough or sneeze
- Wash your hands regularly using soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water is not available use Hand Sanitizer containing at minimum 60% ethanol or 70% isopropyl alcohol. Hand washing must occur following the use of the restroom and prior to eating or touching of the face
- Maintain at least 2 meters of distance between the nearest person
- If it is not possible to maintain 2 meters of distance between people then a mask or face covering should be donned
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth especially with unwashed hands
- Clean frequently touched surfaces and objects daily or after use by others
- Avoid handshakes, high fives and other physical forms of greeting

## COVID-19 RISK ASSESSMENT

Prior to the booking of an event, a COVID-19 specific Risk Assessment should be completed. All relevant internal departments in consultation with artist representatives should complete this risk assessment. Each Event Risk Assessment should be unique to the specific event and address any specific risk and mitigation that is required. If high risks become apparent, which cannot be mitigated these risks should be escalated immediately, which may necessitate significant changes or outright cancellation.

### **OPERATIONAL SAFETY OFFICER**

Each venue should consider designating one suitably trained individual, as the “Operational Safety Officer” to oversee each event. The Operational Safety Officer will ensure compliance with the venues policy as it pertains to hygiene, onsite working conditions and conformity with the venues COVID-19 reopening plan. The Operational Safety Officer should have a full comprehension of the venues COVID-19 reopening plan and relevant policy and have the final authority whether to allow a worker, artist or member of the public to enter the venue if there is a health concern. The Operational Safety Officer should be responsible for implementing the COVID-19 confirmed case response.

### **COVID-19 SITUATION MONITORING**

Each venue should appoint representatives who will monitor specifically the Public Health Agency of Canada, the Ontario Ministry of Health, local Public Health and the World Health Organization. These representatives should have a comprehensive knowledge of the venues COVID-19 reopening plan and monitor these agencies daily as well as announcements from the Federal, Provincial and Municipal Governments. As new information becomes available, adjustments to a venues reopening plan may be required.

### **COVID-19 STAFF TRAINING**

Communication is essential in order for the safe and effective implementation of each venues reopening plan. Training is encouraged for all new measures implemented in each employee’s area of specialization. Training and orientation sessions would be required well in advance of reopening. While training may vary, it should include the following at minimum:

- Presentation of all new measures and policy as it pertains to the COVID-19 Reopening plan and site orientation
- COVID-19 awareness training, symptoms, transmission, best defences
- Effective personal hygiene information and effective hand washing training
- Relevant PPE training, Masks, Face Shields, Gloves. Proper use, fitting and disposal
- Enhanced cleaning and sterilization methods and new guidelines
- WHIMS orientation for new chemicals in use
- Protocols for confirmed COVID-19 infection for artists, staff, and the public
- Procedures to escalate COVID-19 health and safety concerns

### **CONFIRMED COVID-19 RESPONSE**

Any venue reopening should have in a place a specific written plan to immediately respond to a confirmed case of COVID-19. Each venues plan should include the following at minimum:

- Procedures to screen all users for COVID-19 at all entry points
- Procedures to remove and immediately isolate anyone with suspected or sudden onset of COVID-19 symptoms
- Procedures to promptly inform of possible COVID-19 exposure in cooperation with Public Health
- Procedures to quickly cease operations if required in the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19
- Procedures to effectively deep clean and disinfect the entire venue

### **CONTACT TRACING**

In order to assist Public Health Authorities in the situation of a confirmed case of COVID-19 it is recommended that the following measures be in place in advance to assist with contact tracing:

- The contact information for any staff member, worker, artist or visitor must be recorded daily including name, telephone number, date and time of entry/exit
- Contact information for members of the public who attend events. This information can be gathered and made available through advance ticketing platforms, through on site point of sale or through entry screening

### **VENUE ENTRY**

Controlled entry for staff, artists, and the public should be in place to ensure compliance with COVID-19 requirements and to assist with contact tracing if necessary. Venue complexity varies; consider implementing the following measures at minimum:

- Hands should be washed or sanitized immediately upon entry to each venue
- A non medical mask should be worn to gain entry and at all times while onsite when physical distancing is not possible
- A COVID-19 symptom and risk health screening should be completed and passed to gain entry
- Procedures should be in place to refuse entry to anyone who does not meet entry requirements

## ENHANCED CLEANING AND HIGH TOUCH POINTS

Live music venues should be highly vigilant when it comes to frequent cleaning and disinfecting, with particular attention paid to high touch surfaces. Controls should be in place in all cases to eliminate commonly touched surfaces when possible without compromising operational safety or accessibility. The following are recommendations to consider prior to reopening:

- When feasible and safe to do so, common touch points should be removed or modified to reduce the need to touch, In particular doors, light switches, faucets, soap dispensers, manual flush toilets and paper towel dispensers
- Consider a dedicated high touch point cleaning staff
- Consider dedicated cleaning staff to each restroom
- Alcohol based hand sanitizer for all areas of venue placed nearby high touch points, entrances and restrooms
- Consider expanded hours of operation for cleaning staff when required
- Increased availability of waste receptacles near door touch points
- Ensuring all surfaces are cleaned and disinfected by allowing chemicals to penetrate and contact surface area according to manufactures recommendations using products effective against COVID-19
- Full deep clean of all areas following each event, including seating, lobby and back of house areas

## PHYSICAL DISTANCING

Physical distancing is one of the most effective ways to prevent COVID-19 infection; as such, all users should maintain a physical distance of 2 meters. The following are recommendations to ensure physical distancing inside a live music venue:

### FRONT OF HOUSE

- Communicate to all users in advance of each event the measures and restrictions that will be in place at the venue
- Consider staggered or booked entry times for all users and earlier door times to limit queuing
- Consider reducing the length of events and eliminating intermissions to limit washroom use and public circulation
- When possible establish additional alternate routes for entry and exit to reduce queuing
- Use floor markings to delineate appropriate physical distance
- When possible consider providing for one way traffic flow through venue to limit crossover
- Predetermine seating layout for each event to allow for physical distancing
- Identify areas where bottlenecks could occur and devise controls to reduce or eliminate congestion
- Limit capacities and monitor restrooms, install physical barriers where required to ensure physical distancing
- Provide physical or digital signs throughout venue encouraging physical distancing and responsible behaviour
- Limit cash transactions and encourage the use of touchless technology for point of sale and ticket taking
- Consider changing policies around what can be brought to the venue from outside to reduce security interaction
- Install physical barriers such as Plexiglas shields at service locations such as concessions and box offices
- Consider utilizing pre packaged food and beverage items at concessions
- Provide for separation between workers that handle transactions and those that handle food and beverage items
- Provide front line staff with appropriate PPE for their role, such as disposable gloves, non medical masks and face shields
- Consider a coordinated exit by area following each event, this will require direction from venue staff using a dedicated microphone

### BACK OF HOUSE

- Limit staff to only those that are essential for each event
- Reduce artist personnel and crew to only those essential for setup and performance
- Establish safe dressing room capacities and when possible provide additional space for artist and artist personnel
- Limit direct interaction between artist and crew as much as possible
- Ensure that stage setups adhere to physical distancing
- Consider staggering setup and tear down of equipment to reduce personnel onsite
- Ensure equipment such as microphones, instruments are properly sanitized prior to use by an artist
- Eliminate the need to share items on stage such as microphones and musical instruments
- Provide physical barriers such as plexiglass shields to separate anyone such as a singers, brass or woodwind player's from each other and spectators when adequate physical space is not available for appropriate distancing measures
- Catering in the form of buffet should not be allowed, "riders" should be reduced to prepackaged items

## RESOURCES

Ontario Ministry of Health COVID-19 Resources

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/how-ontario-is-responding-covid-19>

Public Health Ontario

<https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/novel-coronavirus>

Public Agency of Health Canada / COVID-19

<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

World Health Organization / COVID-19

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019>

Workplace Safety and Prevention Service / COVID-19

<https://www.wsps.ca/Information-Resources/Topics/COVID-19-Keeping-safe-during-the-pandemic.aspx>

Center for Disease Control (US) COVID-19

[https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC\\_AA\\_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Fnovel-coronavirus-2019.html](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2Fnovel-coronavirus-2019.html)

Ontario Ministry of Labour COVID-19

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/>

Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide

<https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>