



COVID-19: Guidance for Film & Television Productions

August 1, 2020

The following recommendations aim to support production companies and organizations in their planning efforts and provide guidance to reduce the risks associated with the transmission of COVID-19 while conducting filming events of all sizes. The reopening framework and operational requirements for film events are contingent on the Province of Ontario's [Emergency Orders](#).

Ottawa Public Health (OPH) continues to follow the lead of provincial authorities, who set the guidance and protocols with respect to emergency closure orders and any relaxation of these rules. The Government of Ontario released A Framework for Reopening our Province, which signals a careful stage-by-stage approach to reopening Ontario.

Film and television activities were permitted to resume during Stage 2 reopening, as long as they met the conditions under the Province's Guidance on Health and Safety for Television, Film and Live Performance Sector and the conditions outlined in the Emergency Orders. Additional restrictions were lifted in the [Province of Ontario Framework for Reopening Stage 3](#) related to audiences:

Studio audiences may resume on film and television sets, provided that:

- Outdoor capacity does not exceed 100 people. Performers and staff are not included in the gathering limits.
- Indoor capacity does not exceed 50 people. Performers and staff are not included in the gathering limits.
- Masks are recommended at all times, both indoors and outdoors, when physical distancing cannot be maintained at all times.
- If in an enclosed public space, every person who enters or remains on the set must wear a mask that covers their mouth, nose, and chin (unless exempted) as per the [City of Ottawa's Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law](#).
- Plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier is installed between the audience and singers as well as players of brass or wind instruments
- Use floor markings to indicate safe distances for line-ups.

In addition, all film and television productions should follow the specific public health guidance below and to keep everyone, especially the most vulnerable, as safe as possible. **OPH's guidance is subject to change as new information is received.**

General Safety

- If in an enclosed public space, every person who enters or remains on the set must wear a mask that covers their mouth, nose, and chin (unless exempted) as per the *City of Ottawa's Temporary Mandatory Mask By-law*. Wearing a mask does not replace other protective measures including physical distancing, hand washing, not touching your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands and self-monitoring for COVID-19 symptoms and staying home if you are sick. Mask use should be combined with these other protective measures.
- Representatives of the production company or responsible organization must ensure that every person who is not wearing a mask while in the premises is provided with a verbal reminder to do so as soon as practicable following entry, and if applicable.

- Consider requiring all studio audience members to reserve their space in advance.
- If people will be projecting their voices (speeches, shouting, singing), then greater distancing is prudent.
- Maintain on site daily records of production staff, performers and studio audience contact information (e.g. full name, telephone/email), including date and time at premises, for contact tracing purposes, should the need arise.
- Ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at all public entrances and exits of the premises.
- Ensure the set and premises are configured and operated in such a way as to enable persons to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres (6 feet) from other persons, except where necessary for the filming of the movie or television production.

Number of People in the Premises

- Restrict the number of production staff and studio audience members to ensure ease of movement and to maintain two metres/six feet between people.
- Establish flexible work schedules and stagger lunch and break times when possible to limit the number of people in the premises at one time
- Restrict the studio audience to the number of people that can maintain physical distancing of at least two metres and cannot exceed gathering limits of 50 indoors and 100 outdoors. This applies to the entire facility, regardless of the number of production areas/stages within the facility.
- Performers and staff are not included in the gathering limits.
- Physical distancing includes all cast, visitors, volunteers, vendors and crew.
- Physical distancing requirements apply to all components of the set, whether indoor or outdoor: approaches, entrances, exits, parking and transportation etc.
- If all staff, performers and studio audience members will have access to washrooms while on site, develop a plan to ensure physical distancing, cleaning and disinfection.

Employee Health and Safety

- Ensure production staff/performers are trained on proper [hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette](#)
- Staff/performers are advised to report illness to their supervisor/manager and to stay home if sick. Staff are [screened](#) for COVID-19 symptoms daily before starting each shift. See OPH's [Employee Self-Screening Questionnaire](#).
- Staff/performers are advised to put on a mask, go home right away and [self-isolate](#) if they become ill during a shift, and immediately notify their employer. Staff/performers are advised to call their Health Care Provider or visit our main [Novel Coronavirus COVID-19 webpage](#) for the latest guidance on next steps.
- Testing is available for all Ottawa residents that suspect they have Covid-19, visit a [Covid-19 Assessment Centre or Care Clinic](#) for testing
- Performers must maintain physical distancing of two metres from every other person, except from other performers where necessary for purposes of the performance.
- Consider assigning the same staff to work with the same actors to limit the overall number of contacts.
- Remind everyone to be practicing physical distancing, wearing cloth masks while out in community and engaging in frequent hand washing to decrease likelihood of being infected.
- If possible, travel to the set alone or only with members of your household. If using ride share, wear a cloth mask and keep windows open.

- Provide access to hand hygiene stations and supplies on set. Ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at each work area, and staff/performers are encouraged to use it frequently.
- Encourage frequent and proper handwashing
 - Signage: [How to Handwash](#)
 - Signage: [How to Use Alcohol-based Hand Rub](#)
- Staff/performers must use a mask/face covering at all times while providing services and when in publicly accessible areas within the premise as per the [Temporary Mandatory Mask By-Law no. 2020-186](#). [Learn more on masks and face coverings](#).
- [Masks should be used properly](#) and cleaned or discarded appropriately. Masks should be changed when they become damp or soiled. (Link to <https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/en/public-health-topics/masks.aspx>)
- Personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and eye protection (face shield/goggles) are available on-site for staff at all times, to use as needed.
- Persons who provide hair or makeup services must wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Persons who receive hair or makeup services must wear a mask or face covering at all times, except while receiving services that tend to an area of their face that would be covered by a mask or face covering.
- In the event that a person receiving hair or makeup services is unable to tolerate or is otherwise exempt from wearing a mask/face covering, or its removal is necessary to receive service, the service provider should wear a surgical/procedural mask and eye protection (face shield/goggles) for the duration of the service.
- Develop a contingency plan for absenteeism.

Signage at the Premises

- Signage for [COVID-19 Health Assessment](#) is posted at the entrance of the premises.
- Individuals with [COVID-19 Symptoms](#) and/or who have been in contact with someone with COVID- 19 are not permitted to enter the premises.
- Signage for [hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette](#) is posted at the entrance and throughout the premises.
- Floor stickers and [physical distancing signage](#) are available in high visibility areas to remind production staff and studio audience members to keep two metres/six feet apart from others at all times.
- [Mask required poster](#) is posted at all public entrances.

Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection

Follow [Public Health Ontario guidance](#) to keep workplaces clean and hygienic – increase frequency of cleaning high-touch surfaces such as elevator buttons, key boards, mouse, phones, desks, computers, seating areas, lunch tables, kitchens, washrooms, etc.

- Develop a thorough cleaning and disinfection plan for commonly touched surfaces
- Consider assigning gear to each individual operator so that equipment does not have to change hands during a shoot.
- Tool: [OPH cleaning and disinfection checklist](#)
- Factsheet: [Public Health Ontario Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](#)
- Develop a plan for reducing the number of touch points that occur. Consider the

types of interactions during the film event and where transactions occur

- Hair and makeup, grip and electrical gear, transportation etc.
- Ensure there is enough time between studio audience groups, to ensure thorough cleaning and disinfection of the spaces and equipment.
- Barriers and dividers must be protective and stable enough to be easily cleaned and disinfected.
- Washroom surfaces are cleaned and disinfected at least twice a day or as often as necessary.

Additional resources

Below are some resources that may be useful:

- [Ontario's emergency orders](#)
- [Resources to prevent COVID-19 in the workplace | Ontario.ca](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [City of Ottawa's Business Toolkit](#)
- [OPH's workplace website for the latest guidance](#)

Industry-specific resources

- <https://cmpa.ca/covid-19/>
- <http://www.wvandco.com/filmontario/>
- <https://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/pubs/filmguide/>
- <https://www.creativebc.com/about-us/news/covid-19/motion-picture>
- <https://www.creativebc.com/about-us/news/covid-19/#new-covid-19-resource-index>
- <https://cmpa.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/06/Section-21-Film-Television-COVID19-Guidance-June.25.20.pdf>
- <https://digitallibrary.ontariocreates.ca/DigitalLibrary/CovidUpdate.aspx>

For the most recent information, please visit www.OttawaPublicHealth.ca/Coronavirus .