COVID-19: Guidance for Film & Television Productions
October 15, 2020

PLEASE NOTE: Effective October 10, 2020 the Province of Ontario has placed further restrictions on social gatherings, events and other establishments.

- Outdoor gatherings are now restricted to a maximum of 25 people and indoor gatherings are now restricted to maximum of 10 people (where physical distancing can be maintained).
- Capacity limits also reduced to 10 people indoors and 25 people outdoors for tour guide services, real estate open houses, meeting and event spaces, in-person teaching and instruction where physical distancing can be maintained (with exemptions for schools, childcare centres, colleges, etc.).
- Indoor and outdoor events or gatherings cannot be merged together (ex. gathering of 35 people, with 25 people outdoors and 10 people indoors is not permissible).
- Indoor food and drink service in restaurants, bar and other food and drink establishments is now prohibited.
- The following indoor sites are now closed: gyms and fitness centres (i.e. exercise classes and weight and exercise rooms), casino’s, indoor cinemas, performing arts centres and venues, spectator areas in racing venues, interactive exhibits in museums, galleries, zoos, mall food courts etc.
- Indoor fitness, exercise or dance classes cannot be provided.
- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in a class, organized program or organized activity at any facility (including arenas and multi-purpose facilities) cannot exceed 10 people and each class, organized program or organized activity must take place in a separate room.
- Personal care services, where face coverings must be removed (like makeup application, beard trimming), are now prohibited.
- Team sports now limited to training sessions only (no games or scrimmages) and no spectators are permitted.

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:

- The total number of members of the public permitted to be in all of the space in the business or place at any one time is limited to the number that can maintain a physical distance of at least two meters from every other person in the business or place, and in any event is not permitted to exceed 50 persons indoors or 100 persons outdoors for the event.
- Performers and staff are not included in the gathering limits.
- Masks must be worn in all public indoor settings, including workplaces.
- When an indoor space is inaccessible to the public, masks are required when occupants cannot always maintain a two-metre distance.
- Masks are recommended outdoors when physical distancing cannot always be maintained.
- Everyone who enters or remains on the set must wears 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 wears 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 for a staffed space. 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.

Visit OPH’s website for COVID-19 testing information

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

Effective October 3, 2020, the Province updated the Ontario Regulation 364/20 that mandates the use of masks in all public indoor settings across Ontario which includes workplaces.

Staff/performers must use a mask/facemask covering at all times when in publicly accessible areas within the premise, and when in any private indoor areas, where a two meter distance from others cannot be maintained at all times. 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.

Ensure personal protective equipment such as gloves, masks, and eye protection (face shield/goggles) are always available on-site for staff 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 always wear a mask or face covering, 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 eye protection (face shield/googles) for the duration of the service, in addition to their mask.
• 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/

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