COVID-19 Guidance for Film and Television

RESTRICT LEVEL

This document provides public health information, guidance and recommendation on prevention of COVID-19 as issued by Ottawa Public Health and should not be considered a regulatory document. The information included here is intended for readers in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada. For information on regulatory restrictions in place for the regions of Ontario and the City of Ottawa, please see the Government of Ontario response framework and the City of Ottawa Provincial and City Rules.

The province’s COVID-19 Response Framework has five levels of public health measures Prevent, Protect, Restrict, Control and Lockdown. This guidance document describes the public health measures for the Film and Television sector aligned with the Reopening Ontario Act and City of Ottawa specific enhanced measures at a Restrict Level.

Closures (S. 22 under the Health Protection and Promotion Act; Reopening Ontario Act)

Capacity limits
Capacity and gathering limits are impacted by the level, and regulations may change, refer to the Provincial framework for keeping Ontario safe and open for the most current information to ensure you are compliant.

Gathering Limits

- 50 people indoors/100 people outdoors
- There are different limits that apply to events or gatherings held in staffed businesses and facilities such as performing arts venues, restaurants, cinemas, banquet halls, gyms and places of worship.

Modify

- Increase physical distance between people if they will be projecting their voices, such as by speechmaking, shouting or singing.
- Maintain daily records of contact information for all production staff, performers and studio audience members, including date and time at premises. This information may be used for contact tracing by Ottawa Public Health in the event that someone who was present later tests positive for COVID-19.
Review the Guidance for Employers on Preventing COVID-19 in the Workplace to plan and implement COVID Wise protocols to keep staff and customers safer.

Safety plan (New as of November 21, 2020!)

Workplaces must also prepare and make available a safety plan. This safety plan must:

- Describe measures/procedures that have been or will be implemented in the business, place, facility or establishment to reduce spread of COVID-19.
- Include measures for screening, physical distancing, masks, cleaning, disinfecting and personal protective equipment (PPE).
- Be in writing and made available to any person for review on request.
- Be posted in a visible place to come to the attention of those working or attending the location.

Practice Physical Distancing

- Physical distancing. The set must be configured and operated in such a way as to enable persons on the set to maintain a physical distance of at least two metres from other persons, except where necessary for the filming of the film or television production.
- Plan and modify the layout of your facility to ensure enough space is provided for staff and customers to maintain physical distancing.

Calculate capacity

Calculate the maximum number of people permitted in the facility that allows for physical distancing as noted above, or complies with provincial gathering limits, whichever is less.

- It is the responsibility of the owners and operators to determine the capacity specific to the space or venue based on the layout of the venue, equipment or structural obstacles, flow of traffic, activity requirements and achieving the required physical distancing
- Post occupancy limits within each space, including washrooms, locker rooms, and fitness rooms.
- No studio audience is permitted on set.
**Limit capacity**

- Limit the number of people based on calculations above.
- Designate and manage entry and exit points to control the number of people entering the facility and each space within. If the maximum number of people is reached, allow one person in for every person that leaves.
- Stagger arrivals and departures, where possible, to reduce congestion at points of entrance and exit and in common areas.
- Review and coordinate the use of all amenities to ensure physical distancing can be maintained in common areas if the facility is a community centre, multi-purpose facility, or other complex with multiple uses.
- Restrict the number of production staff to ensure that ease of movement and a two-metre physical distance between people can be maintained.
- Use flexible work schedules and stagger break times when possible to limit the number of people on the premises at any one time.
- Count all cast, visitors, volunteers, vendors and crew when planning measures to maintain physical distancing.
- Include all aspects of the set, facility and environment when planning access to, egress from and traffic through the site so that physical distancing is maintained.
- Develop a plan to ensure physical distancing, cleaning and disinfection for all washrooms on site, if they will be in use.

**Modify the space**

Modify and arrange site/floor plan to maintain physical distancing and reduce contact.
- Design traffic flow that encourages one-way movement with prominent signage and/or floor markings.
- Ensure alcohol-based hand rub is available at all entrances and exits of the premises that are in use.
- Increase floor marking and signage to allow people to find rooms and amenities more easily.
- Ensure enough space for people in high traffic areas and places where people may gather.
- Identify areas where crowding and bottlenecks are common, such as lobbies, washrooms, and use staff or barriers to redirect people who may gather in these areas.
Manage lines & Avoid Congregation
Monitor and manage lines within and outside the facility.
- Post physical distancing signs at all entrances, service desks or otherwise.
- Place visual markers spaced two metres/six feet apart (e.g. tape on the floor, pylons, signs) to encourage physical distancing and guide customers.
- Encourage the use of masks/face coverings for guests waiting/lining-up outside.
- Assign staff to monitor lines and to make public announcements reminding customers to keep two metres/six feet apart.

Use of masks
- All staff and artists must wear a mask or face covering indoors, as per City of Ottawa bylaw and O. Reg. 364/20, except when necessary for the purposes of rehearsing or performing.
- Owners and operators must develop a policy and protocols on the wearing of masks, as per City of Ottawa bylaw, and train staff on the policy and protocols. More information is available on Ottawa Public Health’s COVID masks webpage.

Use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)
- Persons who provide hair or makeup services must wear appropriate personal protective equipment.
- Singers and players of brass or wind instruments must be separated from any other performers by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- The employer must determine what PPE is required and ensure that it is worn by workers.
- Educate staff on the proper use and disposal of masks and PPE.

Heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) systems
- Ensure the HVAC system(s) are properly maintained.
- Increase outdoor air-exchange by:
  - maximizing the outdoor air ratio of the HVAC system settings, or
  - open windows and doors, if it is safe to do so.
- Use the highest efficiency filters that are compatible with the HVAC system.
- Keep seating and activities away from air vents and areas with high airflow.
- Do not obstruct HVAC inlets and outlets.
- When using ceiling fans, use an upward airflow rotation.
- If portable fans are used, position fan with an upward movement to avoid blowing of air across people and surfaces.
- There is no evidence the use of portable air purifiers will prevent the spread of COVID-19. If used, follow the manufacturer’s directions to decide where best to place the device. Follow the manufacturer’s instructions on maintenance.
- For more information, review the COVID-19: Transmission, Aerosols and Ventilation fact sheet.
**Enhance cleaning and disinfection**

- Review Public Health Ontario’s [Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings](https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/professionals/hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette)

**Employee Health and Safety**

- Ensure production staff and performers are trained on proper [hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette](https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/diseases-conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/share-bacterial-coverings.html).
- Advise all staff and performers to report illness to their supervisor/manager and to stay home if sick.
- Screen all staff and performers for COVID-19 symptoms daily before starting each shift using a screening tools such as the Ottawa Public Health [Employee Self-Screening Questionnaire](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19).
- Consider grouping the same staff and artists together in cohorts to limit the overall number of contacts.
- Remind everyone to practice physical distancing, wear cloth masks while in the community and engage in frequent hand washing to decrease risk of contracting COVID-19.
- If possible, everyone should travel to the set alone or only with members of their household. Those using a ride sharing service should wear a cloth mask and keep windows open while in the vehicle.
- Staff/performers must use a mask at all times when in the premises.
- In the event that a person receiving hair or makeup services is medically exempt from wearing a mask, the service provider should wear eye protection (face shield/goggles) for the duration of the service, in addition to a medical mask.
- Develop a contingency plan for absenteeism.

**Other resources**

- See recommendations from the province here: [Guidance on Health and Safety for Television Film and Live Performance Sector](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19).
- [Canadian Media Producers Association: COVID-19](https://www.cmpra.ca/coronavirus/covid-19)
- [Creative BC: Motion Picture - Resources for COVID-19 Updates](https://www.creativebc.ca/coronavirus)
- [Creative BC: Information + Resources](https://www.creativebc.ca/coronavirus)
- [FilmOntario: COVID-19 Update and Resources](https://www.filmontario.ca/covid-19)
- [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development Safety Guidelines for the Film and Television Industry in Ontario](https://www.labyrinth.ca/coronavirus)
- [Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development: Film and television industry health and safety during COVID-19](https://www.labyrinth.ca/coronavirus)

**More information**

For more information, visit our website at [ottawapublichealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19](https://www.ottawapublichealth.ca/WorkplaceCOVID19).