

Media Production

The “Tennessee Pledge” is a plan to help Tennesseans get back to work in a safe environment, restore their livelihoods and reboot our state’s economy.



Media Production

Safeguarding Guidance

These guidelines and protocols were designed to address a broad spectrum of media-based production (e.g., Film, Television, Commercials, Recording Studios, etc. (collectively referred to as “Productions”). It is recommended that all Productions consult applicable state and local public health orders as well as applicable [CDC](#) and [OSHA](#) guidelines.

The State recognizes that many of the recommendations outlined in this document represent evolving workflows and processes of production. The recommendations should be adapted to specific circumstances as necessary. As circumstances change, and public health officials issue new guidance, the protocols under which production occurs may be adjusted accordingly.

These guidelines were developed in partnership by the Tennessee Entertainment Commission and the Tennessee Economic Recovery Group, with reference to recommendations from the Motion Picture Association and The Recording Academy.

These guidelines do not replace or supersede any requirements applicable to your business or licensed employees pursuant to law or regulation. Rather, these guidelines are intended as a supplement to assist with safely reopening and providing services due to COVID-19. These guidelines are subject to change.

This document addresses the following areas of concern:

- 1. Infection control*
- 2. Protecting and supporting cast and crew health and safety*
- 3. Physical distancing*
- 4. Unique production-specific concerns*
- 5. Consideration for reopening recording studios*

Note: various job roles are involved in the industry, including pre- and post-production staff, cast, craftspersons, laborers, and many others. To avoid confusion, the term “cast and crew” is used throughout to refer to any/all individuals who are involved in the production process.

Note on nomenclature: to maintain consistency with public health and medical guidelines, COVID-19 refers to the name of the clinical syndrome caused by the virus referred to as

SARS-CoV-2.

Additionally, the State recommends Productions put into place an assortment of measures to protect cast and crew, including:

Infection Control & Diagnostic Testing

- **Regular, periodic testing of the cast and crew is encouraged** to mitigate the risk of the spread of COVID-19. Diagnostic testing is widely available in Tennessee. [Find locations and contact information](#). Serologic or antibody tests are not currently recommended as a strategy to control infection in the workplace at this time

Personal Protective Equipment

- **It is always recommended that face covering be worn** when on set or at production/studio facilities workspaces, except when not feasible as noted below. Medical masks, cloth masks and face shields reduce the transfer of saliva and respiratory droplets to people close to the wearer. It is recommended that all cast and crew have personal face coverings that are assigned to the individual and are not shared with others; there should not be a common central pool of shared face shields or face coverings, unless the items are new or unused
- **Avoid universal glove use by all cast and crew.** Gloves may lead to a false sense of security and may increase risk, particularly due to self-contamination while donning and doffing. Instead, effective and frequent hand hygiene with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub is imperative, along with avoidance of touching the eyes, nose or mouth. However, gloves may be worn as infection prevention PPE when touching potentially contaminated commonly shared equipment is unavoidable and equipment cannot feasibly be disinfected (e.g., lighting/electrical cables, worn costumes, etc.) Adequate training in glove use, including safe doffing, should be implemented. Non-medical (work) gloves should be worn as usual when appropriate
- **PPE may be disposed of** as regular (non-biohazard) waste. Ample trash receptacles should be available, and these shall be emptied regularly

Hand Hygiene

Hand hygiene is a cornerstone of infection prevention and will need to be practiced widely in entertainment industry work environments. Given the potential concern about transmission of COVID-19 via contact, enhanced hand hygiene measures are critical.



Recommendation to follow regarding hand hygiene:

- **Cast and crew should avoid touching** their eyes, nose and mouth
- **Handwashing facilities with running water, soap and paper towels** (dispensed using a non-touch system, if possible), adequate for the number of cast and crew, should be available and accessible from the first day of work
- **Handwashing facilities** should be kept clean and well-stocked
- **When production is taking place where handwashing facilities are not readily available**, mobile handwashing stations should be provided
- **Stations with alcohol-based hand sanitizer** with at least 60% alcohol should be strategically placed around work areas and readily accessible
- **Sufficient supplies of hand sanitizer** should be stocked and maintained
- **Cast and crew should be provided with pocket-sized hand sanitizer** that can be used if hand washing or sanitizing stations are not available, such as in vehicles or remote locations
- **Cast and crew should be made aware of proper hygiene practices** (washing for a minimum of 20 seconds of duration, scrubbing all surfaces)
- **Production should encourage and promote opportunities** for cast and crew to practice hand hygiene and perform disinfectant wipe downs of high-touch areas
- **Hands should be washed** or sanitized:
 - Upon arriving at the job site
 - After blowing one's nose, coughing, or sneezing
 - After using the restroom
 - Before and after eating or drinking
 - After contact with animals or pets
 - After handling shared equipment or objects
 - After cleaning or disinfecting equipment, tools or workspaces
 - At other appropriate times throughout the workday
- **Signage should be posted** prominently with instructions on how to stop the spread of COVID-19, including hand hygiene and PPE instructions
 - [CDC guidance to stop the spread of germs](#)
 - [CDC guidance on COVID-19 symptoms](#)

Disinfection & Maintenance

- **Heightened cleaning and disinfection should be practiced.** EPA-registered disinfecting methods and supplies with a claim against SARS-CoV-2 should be used and made available. Those responsible for performing cleaning should adhere to the following recommendations and any other guidance issued by public health authorities with respect to cleaning practices
- **High-touch surfaces should be wiped down** periodically, following the disinfectant



manufacturer's instructions (e.g., safety requirements, protective equipment, concentration, contact time). Examples of high-touch surfaces are tables, doorknobs, countertops, phones, faucets, etc.

- **Productions should work with all departments to review and implement specific plans** for disinfection of department-specific equipment. Departments should review specific workflows and identify ways to ensure disinfection of equipment and physical distancing (e.g., cleaning of camera dollies, use of remote focus devices, lights)
- **All workspaces should be cleaned with increased frequency**, with an emphasis on high-touch surfaces
- **Whenever possible, minimize use of shared office equipment** such as copiers and fax machines. When use of such equipment is unavoidable, hand hygiene should be performed after use
- **Manufacturer's cleaning instructions** should be followed for cleaning of sensitive equipment such as electronics
- **Production on set and work off set should designate specific individuals to perform high touch wipe down**, with an emphasis on shared spaces and equipment
- **Shared workspaces should be cleaned daily** with an emphasis on high-touch surfaces, including but not limited to production sets, studios, dressing rooms, hair and make-up stations, trailers, on- and off-production offices, break areas, shops and eating/meal areas
- **Dedicated cleaning crews should clean common spaces** at appropriate daily intervals
- **Due to inability to clean** many of these objects, special care should be taken
- **As many of these items have unique cleaning requirements**, those responsible for cleaning such items will do so in the customary manner
- **Hand props** (other than those with unique cleaning requirements) should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use by different persons
- **Hands should be cleaned before and after** handling props, accessories and other items
- **Personal equipment (such as tools, headsets, microphones and radios)** should be cleaned and disinfected before being issued and then at least once per day. Manufacturer's suggested cleaning instructions should be followed for electronics and other sensitive items
- **Equipment such as radios/walkie-talkies** should be issued to a single cast or crew member and used exclusively by that cast or crew member for the duration of production
- **Personal items or equipment that must be shared between members of the cast and/or crew** should be wiped down with disinfectant between use and hand hygiene should be performed after handling



- **High-touch surfaces in vehicles (e.g., steering wheels, controls, seatbelts, door handles, arm rests)** should be cleaned at least once per day and prior to a change in operator or passenger
- **Whenever possible, use of paper that may be transferred or shared between persons** should be minimized. Alternatives such as electronic scripts and electronic sign-in/out should be explored
- **Consider alternatives to cash** to minimize the need to handle paper money, such as purchase cards
- **When paper scripts are unavoidable**, they should be assigned to a specific individual, clearly labeled with their name, and not shared between others
- **Crew lists, call sheets, production reports** and other similar documents should be electronic whenever possible
- **When use of shared paperwork is required**, such as blueprints or editing binders, hand hygiene before and after handling is recommended

Food & Beverages

COVID-19 is less likely to be spread through food or beverages; however, catering, crafts service and eating within workspaces present several unique challenges.

- **Those responsible for preparing and distributing food** must clean their hands with soap and water or hand sanitizer prior to beginning food preparation and/or distribution and regularly thereafter and should wear masks
- **All local public health regulations regarding preparing and distributing food must be followed**, including regulations regarding the use of appropriate food service PPE (hair nets, gloves, and face coverings), safe food temperatures, etc., and all personnel responsible for the preparing and/or distribution of food must be properly certified to do so
- **As face coverings cannot be worn while eating, adequate eating space must be provided** to ensure physical distancing can be maintained during meal periods
- **Handwashing facilities and/or hand sanitizer must be readily accessible** at the entrance of any designated eating area and should be used when entering and leaving the area
- **Mealtimes should be staggered** in a manner designed to avoid the gathering of large groups in the same location at the same time
- **All eating surfaces must be cleaned** and disinfected before and after use
- **Eliminate communal “buffet style” or self-service food service**, including salad bars, trays of food, or any food service that requires sharing of utensils such as serving spoons or tongs
- **Meals and snacks should be served** in individually packaged or wrapped portions. Avoid shared communal trays or bowls



- **Eating utensils should be disposable** and individually wrapped
- **Off-production offices, meeting rooms and other workspaces** should have infection control protocols for use, especially when used for providing impromptu meals, snacks and coffee. Likewise, break rooms, microwaves, dishes and food deliveries will require regular cleaning and physical distancing
- **If food is to be delivered to the job site**, one or more individual(s) should be designated to receive the delivery. A face covering should be worn when interacting with the delivery person and hand hygiene should be performed after handling the delivery
- **Consider options for cast and crew to place orders ahead of time** to minimize the amount of time they must wait in line. Consider addition of plexiglass (or similar) barriers between servers and cast and crew
- **Avoid using or sharing items** such as menus or condiments such as salt and pepper shakers. These items should be disposable and single serve
- **Drinks should be individually packaged.** If drinks are to be dispensed from a water station, soda fountain, coffee machine or similar equipment, set up should minimize contact between individuals and touching of common items

General Infection Prevention Issues

- **Limit the duration of workdays** and excessive consecutive workdays whenever possible
- **Post signage in all production workspaces** where production activities occur, reinforcing health & safety principles
- **Physical contact should be avoided**, including shaking hands, “high fives,” fist or elbow bumps, or hugging. Physical contact related to performers is discussed below
- **Visitors to set should be limited unless necessary.** If visitors are provided access, they will be subject to the same guidance as cast and crew, including the need for symptom screening and PPE requirements
- **In indoor spaces, ventilation systems and other measures should be used to increase circulation** of outdoor air as much as possible (e.g., by opening windows and doors when possible, using fans and other methods)
- **Stagger cast and crew call** and wrap times to limit the number of individuals arriving to and departing from work simultaneously

Protecting and Supporting Cast & Crew Health and Safety

- **All cast and crew should participate in daily symptom monitoring** prior to arriving on set or at their workspace. Recommended options include electronic



survey, manual screening and/or temperature spot-checks. Productions should emphasize and reinforce to all cast and crew that working while sick with symptoms of COVID-19 is not permitted. This should be part of training, set orientation and reinforced with posted signage and frequent reminders

- **Upon arrival each day, screen all cast and crew for COVID-19 symptoms with the following questions:**
 - Have you been in contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19 or anyone experiencing symptoms in the last 14 days?
 - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath or sore throat?
 - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
 - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
 - Temperature screen cast and crew upon arrival each day. Normal temperature should not exceed 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit
- **Cast and crew are expected to immediately notify** a designated person or persons if they are experiencing, or a member of their household is experiencing, symptoms of COVID-19. If a cast or crew member is experiencing symptoms or has come into close contact with someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 either on or off site, they must leave work and notify their employer
- **If a cast or crew member develops symptoms of COVID-19** when off site, they must not go to work, should seek testing, and should immediately contact their healthcare provider. Anyone who reports to work with symptoms of COVID-19 will be instructed to return home and contact their healthcare provider
- **Cast and crew must be notified if they have been exposed** to an individual who has exhibited symptoms of COVID-19 or who has tested positive for COVID-19, as they will be quarantined and monitored by public health
- **Management should develop contingency plans** in the case of cast or crew members testing positive for COVID-19 or having to enter quarantine if they are exposed to a case of COVID-19

Physical Distancing

- **Limiting face-to-face contact with others** is the best way to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Cast and crew should practice physical distancing whenever possible. Physical distancing involves maintaining a distance of at least 6 feet from any other person at all times, except when doing so is incompatible with one's job duties (see below). Cast and crew should avoid congregating in groups. When practical, separate work locations into zones to facilitate physical distancing. When groups of people must be in the same room, keep groups as small and consistent as possible
- **Visible physical indicators (e.g., cones, duct tape or signage)** marking 6 feet of distance should be placed in areas where people must congregate, such as crafts



- service, eating/meal areas, make-up and costume trailers
- **Use phones, videoconferencing or similar technologies** for meetings whenever possible. Avoid people gathering around a computer to watch together. Consider virtual production meetings whenever feasible
 - **Whenever possible, move to virtual** writers' rooms
 - **When virtual writers' rooms are not possible**, maintain 6 feet of distance, use face coverings, and perform hand hygiene before and after the meeting. Minimize use of paper
 - **Use technology options such as additional monitors and remote viewing** with the prior approval of or consultation with the Director, when required and as applicable, to allow the viewing of video from a separate location to facilitate physical distancing
 - **At this time, the use of live audiences is discouraged.** On a case-by-case basis, live audiences may be used as long as audience members:
 - Wear face coverings at all times
 - Maintain 6 feet of physical distance between small groups or families attending together, including while waiting in line and sitting in a studio
 - Undergo COVID-19 symptom screening on entry
 - **COVID-19 transmission is more likely when there is singing, loud speaking, and yelling as in live performances.** Maintain at least 15 feet of separation if possible between performers and crew. Where necessary, install barriers to minimize travel of aerosolized particles from performers, or implement alternative placement of performers. In addition, maximize physical spacing between performers on-stage. When possible, utilize outdoor areas for performances to increase ventilation
 - **Consider remote work/telecommuting opportunities** for cast and crew. This should only apply to those who can perform their job duties effectively while working remotely/telecommuting
 - **To the extent possible, reduce crowding** of all shared workspaces (e.g., production offices and shops) with a goal of keeping people 6 feet apart
 - **In control rooms, editing rooms and other small spaces**, if physical distancing cannot be maintained, all individuals must wear face coverings and should practice hand hygiene

Special Considerations for Cast & Crew Working in Close Proximity to Performers

The work of some cast and crew members (e.g., hair stylists, make-up artists, costume designers, costumers, wardrobe department personnel, sound technicians, property persons, studio teachers and special effects technicians, etc.) may not be possible while maintaining physical distancing from others. The following shall be in place:



- **Alter workspaces** to permit physical distancing between work stations
- **Control the entrants** to trailers and other workspaces
- **Allow sufficient work time** to follow safety protocols
- **Cast and crew in close proximity** must wear a face mask and/or face shield at all times and perform hand hygiene before and after the encounter. If the performer cannot wear a mask (e.g., during make-up), limit duration of contact and the crew member may wear a face shield in addition to a face covering or mask
- **See [Close Contact Business Guidelines](#)**

Special Considerations for Performers

The work of performers will frequently put them in close (less than 6 feet) contact with other performers or cast and crew including, for example, hair stylists, make-up artists, stunt coordinators, costumers and wardrobe personnel. Face coverings/masks may not be practical during many of these activities. Additionally, certain activities such as fight scenes or intimate scenes increase the risk of transmission.

- **Whenever possible, performers shall practice** physical distancing
- **When maintaining physical distancing is not possible** (e.g., between a performer and make-up artist) and the performer cannot wear appropriate PPE, contact must be kept to the shortest amount of time possible, and the other cast or crew member must wear appropriate PPE and observe hand hygiene practices
- **The number of people involved in close proximity with a performer** should be kept to a minimum whenever possible. If a performer requires work by more than one make-up artist/hairstylist, make-up artists/hairstylists should observe appropriate PPE requirements, and both performer and make-up artist/hairstylist should observe hand hygiene practices immediately after completing the task
- **Consider measures to minimize scenes** with close contact between performers, such as amending scripts or use of digital effects
- **Stand-ins should wear face coverings** even if the performer they are standing in for may not
- **When possible, adjust shooting schedules** to minimize the amount of back-and-forth travel needed by performers and to keep groups of performers as small and consistent as possible
- **Visitors should be limited unless their presence is necessary.** If visitors must come, they will be subject to the same guidance as cast and crew, including, but not limited to, symptom screening and/or temperature screening, and PPE requirements
- **When performers are in a holding area**, waiting to be used in a production, employers and performers should adhere to the recommendations outlined herein, including recommendations regarding physical distancing and the use of PPE



- **Using a projected voice may project respiratory droplets in greater quantity and over greater distance**, increasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission, particularly with prolonged exposure. Maintain at least 15 feet of separation if possible between performers and crew. Where necessary, install barriers to minimize travel of aerosolized particles from performers, or implement alternative placement of performers. In addition, maximize physical spacing between performers on-stage. When possible, utilize outdoor areas for performances to increase ventilation
- **When it is possible to do so consistent with their job duties**, performers shall wear appropriate PPE
- **When wearing PPE is not possible**, such as when a scene is being filmed or after make-up has been applied, the number of people with whom the performer is in close contact shall be minimized
- **As soon as possible after filming a scene**, the performers shall put on their PPE and/or physically distance themselves
- **Casting should be conducted virtually** via self-tape, online video conference, or other applicable technology whenever possible
- **If that is not feasible, or for any additional calls or live sessions necessary**, there should be a sufficient space large enough to accommodate 6 feet physical distancing in all directions
- **If performers will not be wearing PPE during an audition**, a plexiglass partition or similar barrier between the performers and those observing the audition should be provided by the employer and used and cleaned between performances along with any furniture, props etc.
- **If no barrier is present, increase the physical space** between those observing to those auditioning beyond the 6 feet physical distancing standard.
- **As minors may have difficulty adhering to physical distancing**, wearing PPE, and practicing hand hygiene, when not working, they should be relocated to a secure off-set location to the extent possible
- **As studio teachers will need to interact with minors** within 6 feet of distance, teachers should wear face coverings, practice frequent hand hygiene, and receive training on COVID-19 prevention. Whenever possible, remote schooling should be made available
- **PPE requirements and options may be modified for minors**. Do not place face coverings on children under 2 years of age or on children who cannot place and remove their face covering without assistance. Do not place cloth face coverings on children who are sleeping
- **At this time, there is no evidence that animals play a significant role in spreading the virus that causes COVID-19**. Based on the limited information available to date, the risk of animals spreading COVID-19 to people is considered to be low



- **Animal handlers/trainers should receive training on COVID-19 prevention** and should follow all rules regarding physical distancing and PPE
- **Animals should not be handled by others** except those necessary for shooting a scene (i.e., avoid petting, feeding). All those involved in touching animals should perform hand hygiene before and after
- **Other animals not involved in production** such as personal pets should be kept off sets

Special Consideration for Transportation

- **Use self- or production-provided transportation** when possible. With shared transportation options, drivers and passengers should wear face coverings and maintain social distancing to the extent possible. High-touch surfaces in vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected frequently throughout the day
- **If public transportation is used**, travel should be arranged to avoid peak travel times, if practical

Special Consideration for Filming on Location

- **Filming on location can pose certain risks** compared with shooting on a studio/ stage set. Those responsible for selecting a location should take the following considerations into account
- **Provide adequate space**, such as additional trailers, tents and eating space, during location filming to allow for physical distancing
- **Perform wipe down of high-touch areas** at least daily
- **Minimize use of crowd scenes or street scenes** when a controlled flow of people is not possible
- **Prioritize locations where access can be secured**, and members of the production can be kept away from the general public when possible. Outdoor ventilation may reduce risk of COVID-19 transmission
- **The location shall provide sufficient space for performing** planned production activities while adhering to physical distancing recommendations
- **Traditional, in-person location scouting is considered essential** to the success of a production. However, given the need for physical distancing and minimizing entry into private spaces, consider alternative options for the time being
- **To the extent possible, location teams should pursue alternatives** to traditional, in-person location scouting, such as creating virtual options including the use of photographs and digital scouting
- **Tech and director scouting should occur in small groups** to the extent possible
- **All departments that provide assessments of scouting locations** as well as the

location teams should have appropriate PPE available

- **Locations shall be prioritized during scouting that allow complete control of the site**, including controlling access, ability to shut down the site for cleaning and high standards of hygiene

Special Consideration for Recording Studios

- **Evaluate rooms in the studio facility and make necessary adjustments to ensure social distancing** (a minimum of six feet). In areas such as hallways where six feet of distance is not possible, stagger the use of the spaces to maintain distance
- **Until further notice, consider requiring individuals to wear cloth face coverings** while inside the facility
- **Have vocals or any instruments that cannot be performed with face coverings take place in an isolation room** or an otherwise empty studio. Avoid vocals in the control room if there are other people, including engineers and producers, in the control room
- **Consider limiting studio access** to essential personnel. Limit the number of people allowed in the control room and/or performance spaces so that people can be at least six feet apart
- **Consider having clients and engineers sign in electronically upon arrival** each day. You may choose to require clients, engineers and others to have their temperature taken upon entry to the facility. Consider whether to require a simple questionnaire with date working at studio, information on any recent travel, contacts and symptoms
- **Send a copy of your COVID-19 related protocols to clients in advance** of their session and post in various areas around the studio as reminders
- **Encourage regular hand hygiene practices.** Post proper handwashing reminders in bathrooms and other areas
- **The facility's engineers should wear facial coverings** at all times and gloves whenever they need to enter a performance space
- **Routinely clean and disinfect** all frequently touched surfaces, such as workstations, countertops, handrails, and doorknobs. Designate a staff person to be in charge of this and consider posting the schedule of cleanings so all are aware. When cleaning/disinfecting, use appropriate products based on guidelines by the CDC and Environmental Protection Agency
- **Microphones should be monitored and cleaned before and after** all sessions. Consider requesting that musicians and vocalists bring their own personal pop filters and sanitize them themselves. Isopropyl alcohol is recommended for cleaning.



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- **Provide hand sanitizer** in various other parts of the facility, including control rooms, studios, bathrooms, kitchen, etc.
- **If possible, request that musicians and vocalists bring their own personal headphones** with ¼-inch jacks and sanitize them themselves. Musicians should handle own equipment
- **If possible, if there will be more than one session happening at a time**, consider separate entrances and bathrooms for each session
- **Consider HVAC filter cleaning** and replacement
- **Consider remote workstations** with staff at “safer at home” locations where practical to facilitate some services: editing, cleaning, mixing, bouncing stems, etc.
- **Shift staff and/or session schedules** where possible to maximize social distancing