Governor Ricketts and Other Nebraska Officials,

Wedding and event professionals are extremely concerned about the future of our industry. We are small to medium size businesses that will be running out of our financial assistance from the SBA in late May and early June.

If we remain under the same gathering limitations for the month of June, even if the gathering limits are increased to 50 people, thousands of businesses in the State of Nebraska could be in jeopardy and tens of thousands of employees will go on unemployment. We are planning on opening June 1, 2020 as long as 2020-DCHC-001 is not extended. We ask that you communicate the directed measures, so we are prepared and can stop weddings and reception cancellations. We know we can operate as safe or better than restaurants and other industries that have been able to operate at a reasonable capacity.

Other states bordering Nebraska are open for events. South Dakota, and Missouri are doing wedding receptions this month. Kansas have a scheduled opening for venues on June 2nd. The state of Texas opened their venues for weddings and receptions with the same capacity as restaurants on May 6th. Many other states have either planned openings in June or are already operating with DHMs.

Please do not overlook our industry. In 2019, there were 11,824* weddings with $265,271,440* in revenue generated right here in Nebraska. We need to get back to work and our clients want to celebrate their events, just as other states have allowed. As mentioned in multiple press conferences, Nebraskans are smart and do the right thing.

Find our solutions below for what we are assuming some of the states concerns for weddings receptions and other events. We have also included a plan put together the event safety alliance on how to open safely during this out-break that many of us have read and will use to implement a safe environment for our customers, and staff. If there are concerns that the State of Nebraska has that have not been included in on the plan, please let us know.

Sincerely,

Nebraska Wedding and Event Professionals

Contact Names:


| | | |
|---|---|---|
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*The Wedding Report https://stats.wedding.report/

Addressing Potential Concerns

1. The relationship between the invitees to the client. Guests in attendance are family and close friends to the venue's client.
    a. We understand the concern of contact amongst guests, but with additional security, and assigned seating we feel we can limit the amount of direct contact with other guests. Guests also have a personal interest in the health and well-being of all attendees.
2. Restaurant can host 50% of the maximum occupancy with no more than six guests per table.
    a. Traditionally clients have a final rsvp list that they share with venues at least 10 days prior to the event allowing venues to create a room layout that would stay within the 50% occupancy regulation and require assigned seating for a maximum of six guests per table.
3. Tables are required to be spaced six feet apart.
    a. The average table in a restaurant is 36-42 inches wide. In most venues, the tables are 60 inches wide which would ensure even more social distance between the guests at each table. With each room being a custom design, venues can ensure a minimum of six feet, if not more, between each table for guests' comfort and safety.
4. Customers may only consume alcohol on the premises if also consuming a meal.
5. No customer self-service will be allowed. This is included but not limited to: self-serve buffets, salad bars and beverages.
    a. Caterers will be required to serve all food directly to guests including but not limited to cake, desserts and appetizers.
    b. Bartenders serve directly to guests in disposable glasses.
6. All staff and vendors must wear cloth masks.
7. Prescreening all staff members health.
    a. Venues and Vendors will communicate to staff to stay home if they have any symptoms or are not feeling well.

# The Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide




## For Event Professionals During the COVID-19 Pandemic

**Edited by Steven A. Adelman**

*Please share this Guide – We all want to reopen safely*

## HOW TO USE THIS REOPENING GUIDE

The *Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide* is a collective work by event industry professionals to help our peers who are planning to reopen during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic. This document contains no "best practices" that apply everywhere – coronavirus creates different challenges depending on countless factors, including the size of the event, its geographic location, the physical space, and the anticipated attendees, to name just a few. Instead, in the order one would plan an event, we have identified reasonably foreseeable health risks and suggested options to mitigate them.

Because this is intended to be used by event professionals, we have tried to strike a balance between a simple checklist and an exhaustive consideration of all options. Our goal is to provide enough information so each user can make reasonable choices under their own circumstances.

Some of this guidance is scalable, meaning it can be applied equally to events of any size. Where we had to choose, we focused on the circumstances of smaller, local events that we anticipate will reopen first. Consequently, this *Reopening Guide* emphasizes things people can do rather than things they can buy, since money is likely to be especially tight for smaller events and venues that have been closed and may only partially reopen. Our intention is to follow this initial release with guidance more applicable to tours and larger events, which face additional challenges that will keep them closed longer.

In the text, people are referred to as either "patrons" or "workers." A patron is anyone who pays or presents a credential to attend an event – they can be required to follow health and safety procedures as a condition of entry and attendance. A worker is a paid professional or volunteer providing services – they can be required by their supervisor to follow health and safety procedures as a condition of work.

There is no guarantee of an illness-free event even if you follow everything in this *Reopening Guide*. It is indisputable, however, that planning, training, and implementing reasonable health and safety measures are the best ways to protect live events and the people who create them, while also inspiring patrons to return to the places where we make magic happen.

Steven A. Adelman
Vice President, Event Safety Alliance
May 11, 2020

## 1. PLANNING WHEN TO REOPEN: WHEN IT'S LEGAL AND REASONABLY SAFE

The lifecycle of any event begins with the decision to do business in the first place. This *Reopening Guide* assumes that we all want to reopen as fully and quickly as possible without unreasonably risking health or safety. A government directive legally allowing you to reopen does not mean you can do so safely.

The law may help you think through that second issue. Everyone has a legal duty to behave as a reasonable person under the same or similar circumstances. Here, the key circumstance is how to reopen (a) during a highly contagious global pandemic in which (b) even asymptomatic people can carry the disease, and (c) most places currently lack widespread testing, contact tracing, or a vaccine.

If small events and venues can reopen without increasing COVID-19 transmission rates, it will open the door for progressively larger spaces to implement similar measures on a larger scale in the future. If, on the other hand, the first attempt at a safe reopening is a failure, that would set back the entire event industry.

Careful decision-making is necessary because even well-intentioned safety measures have potentially significant unintended consequences. Consider, for example, risks as seemingly unrelated as coronavirus and severe weather. If a "take refuge" order is required against a weather hazard such as lightning, social distancing may not be possible in existing areas of refuge. Alternate assembly areas and more egress portals will be needed to mobilize a mass evacuation. If additional shelter areas are not available or egress capacity prevents social distancing during a weather evacuation, then outdoor event organizers and their vendors will have to reevaluate their decision triggers. You may even consider proactively postponing or cancelling where you cannot effectively activate emergency plans without exposing workers and patrons to greater risk of transmission. The new normal gets complicated in a hurry.

As much as we are all eager to get back to work, the decision when and how to reopen must be driven by a realistic assessment of one's ability to resume operations safely.

## 2. PATRON EDUCATION

"We're all in this together" describes the essential role patrons play in allowing live events to reopen safely. Because COVID-19 is highly contagious, everyone – patrons as well as workers – must do their part. This section focuses on ways to educate patrons to maximize health and safety compliance and minimize disruption of the event.

**How to Change Expectations**. At this early moment, there is as much resistance to face coverings and social distancing as there was to bag checks and magnetometers in the United States after 9/11. We got used to them, and most people came to accept that they were for our own safety. A cultural change is necessary again. Widespread messaging by venue and event professionals can accomplish two essential goals: (a) patrons will learn that the new rules are for their protection, which will eventually lead to greater compliance; and (b) transparently showing new sanitary practices will coax nervous people back into public places.

**What to Explain**. The concept of explaining rules to patrons is hardly new. Many events or venues already have codes of conduct with lists of prohibited items and behavior. Before reopening, they must add their new health procedures and expectations, such as social distancing and face covering requirements and longer wait times. There is no specific information that is best. Rather, as with all safety messaging, you want to be positive, practical, and proportionate.

**Where to Message**. In a word, *everywhere*. Here are some ways to reach patrons before they arrive at your point of ingress.

- **Web site** for the venue, event, or artist. The more prominently new rules and expectations are displayed, the more serious businesses appear about enforcing them, which will tend to gain greater compliance.
- **Social media channels** for the venue, event or artist. As with the web site, the more information appears on social media, the greater its impact.
- **Ticket purchasing sites** should link to health and safety rules. Online ticket purchases can require patrons to check a box affirming that they have read and agree to comply with posted rules, the way we affirm that we are not a robot before making an online purchase.
- **Emails and push notifications** reminding patrons of health rules and expectations can be sent at regular intervals from date of purchase through day of show.
- **Mobile apps** are already valuable means of giving patrons directions to the venue, show times, artist bios, and merchandise options. You can add health rules and expectations to the information on every patron's phone.
- **Signage** leading to and at the event site can be effective as a further reminder, especially if it is visually attractive and located where patrons are likely to be

standing still or moving slowly. Physical signs are particularly important for ticketless events or where young participants will be brought by their parents.

- **Event registration and badge check-in** are excellent places to post health rules and model compliance at conferences or other events where patrons check in. Registration materials can be placed by workers or volunteers on a table to be picked up by event attendees, and lines can be marked on the floor or created by rope and stanchions to enforce social distancing.
- **Guest services staff and volunteers** walking along the line at ingress or among patrons waiting for service can put a friendly face on health and safety rules, and they encourage compliance by modeling good behavior.

**How to Message**. With a goal as broad as normalizing and gaining buy-in for new rules, any method that works is good. Here are a few suggestions.

- **Marketing staff** can use their creative talent to promote health guidance without being intimidating.
- **Photos and videos** can show patrons having a good time even while following health rules, such as attractive people wearing stylish face coverings over their nose and mouth.
- **Storyboards** can show how a venue is sanitized so patrons understand the process and personalize the workers keeping them safe.
- **Announcements** should be both audible and visual to accommodate people with sensory challenges and different language skills.
- **Artists and performers** can use their authority with attendees to remind them that only their full compliance allows the show to go on.

**Contact Tracing**. As countries around the world gradually reopen, some are using contact tracing to enable health authorities to track who has been to an event or location if an outbreak flares up. They are then contacted and instructed to seek medical advice. This infection control method becomes more effective when testing is widespread, and some societies are more tolerant of the perceived impact on personal liberty than others, but people who do allow limited access to their whereabouts may enjoy relaxed social distancing requirements. In the United Kingdom, for example, the National Health Service is testing a contact-tracing app to help medics warn people linked to a given outbreak, with the goal of loosening distancing and isolation requirements for society as a whole. Likewise, Australia is ramping up contact tracing using its COVIDsafe app, and South Korea has made track and trace a major part of its pandemic recovery plan.

## 3. WORKER HEALTH AND HYGIENE

Because COVID-19 is a highly contagious virus with insufficient testing and no vaccine, workers and volunteers must diligently address the health risks of working in the close confines of many event spaces.

**Infection Mitigation Coordinator**. This *Reopening Guide* recommends that a worker with appropriate medical and risk management knowledge be designated the "Infection Mitigation Coordinator" for the event, venue, or business. This role is essential during this pandemic, and it should be incorporated into health and safety plans and training. The Infection Mitigation Coordinator should have the following functions.

- Coordinate with, communicate, and help implement public health guidelines.
- Work closely with the event producer or venue operator to develop and implement event health plans.
- Ensure that existing safety plans are modified for compatibility with new health plans.
- Help create worker training that applies current information about hazards and infection control measures, including social distancing, handwashing, temperature checking, and disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
- Determine, in conjunction with the venue or event organizer, if a worker or patron may safely enter the event space when there is a health concern.

**Practices for Healthy Workers and Volunteers**.

- **Social Distancing**. Public health guidance stresses that whenever possible, everyone should leave at least *six feet* (*about two meters*) to the person closest to them. Where a task cannot be accomplished working alone, workers can limit their exposure by forming a "work team" in which people routinely work together, but they keep their distance from everyone else.
- **Hand Washing**. Frequent hand washing with soap is vital to help combat the spread of any virus. When a sink is available, workers should wash their hands for twenty seconds at least every 60 minutes, and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel or dryer. As a backup, workers may use sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when a sink is not available. Workers should also wash their hands at the beginning and end of each shift and break, after using the restroom, sneezing, touching their face, blowing their nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, smoking, eating, or drinking.
- **Gloves**. Gloves are not a substitute for regular hand washing. Gloves made of vinyl or similar non-absorbent material that allows fine motor function without possibility of contaminating the wearer's hands should be worn when conducting health checks on workers or patrons, when handling food, tickets, or any items on which infection can be transmitted, and when using cleaning or disinfecting

products. Workers should be trained on the proper use of gloves, including frequency of disposal and hand-washing based on the worker's specific duties, to avoid spreading the virus in high-touch areas.

- **Face Coverings**. Physical respiratory protection such as a cloth face covering should be worn whenever people are within six feet (two meters) of each other because (a) COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets and (b) a significant number of infected people will show no outward symptoms of illness. Face covering requirements should be task-specific and include instruction on proper use. For example, workers doing temperature screening may need N-95 or equivalent face coverings when dealing with potentially sick workers or patrons. In order to ensure maximum comprehension and compliance, signage posted throughout the venue should show how to wear and use a face covering, including these points.
    - ❖ Wash your hands before putting on a face covering.
    - ❖ Put the same side against your face each time to avoid wearing the "contaminated side" against your nose and mouth.
    - ❖ Remove your face covering using the straps to avoid touching the part that protects your face.
    - ❖ Wash cloth face coverings after each use, and wear other masks only according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- **Personal Protective Equipment ("PPE")**. For workers, PPE to minimize the risk of exposure to coronavirus is as necessary as it is for patrons. Employers should ensure that in addition to face coverings and gloves, workers and volunteers have PPE appropriate for their work, and that vendors and independent contractors provide and use their own.
- **Temperature Screening**. Each point of entry, both front and back of house, should be monitored by workers trained and approved under the Infection Mitigation Coordinator's supervision. These workers will conduct temperature screening using 'no-touch' thermometers approved by the Infection Mitigation Coordinator. Anyone displaying a temperature over 100.4 F (38.0 C) should be taken to a private area for a secondary temperature screening. Workers or patrons confirmed to have a higher temperature should be denied entry and directed to appropriate medical care. Safety plans should include a refund policy and protocols how to handle groups where one member is denied entry.
- **Touching Your Face**. Workers should avoid touching their eyes, nose, and mouth. Microphones, headphones, and other personal equipment should not be shared, and should be sanitized before and after each use.
- **Cough and Sneeze Etiquette**. Workers should cover their cough or sneeze with a tissue, or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available, followed by thorough handwashing.

**Practices for Sick Workers and Volunteers**. The following recommended practices for sick workers presume a degree of supervisor oversight and control over employees that may be difficult with independent contractors. Where possible, companies should consider incorporating health and safety requirements into their independent contractor agreements.

Workers must notify their supervisor and stay home from work if they have symptoms of acute respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19 – such as fever, cough, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat, or shortness of breath – that is not explained by another medical or allergic condition.

- **Symptomatic Workers**. If a worker exhibits symptoms of acute respiratory illness upon arrival to work, or becomes sick during the day, their supervisor must separate them from other workers and patrons and send them home or to a designated isolation area immediately.
- **Documentation**. The supervisor should document the circumstances of the worker's illness to help with contact tracing, as applicable.
- **Contact with Symptomatic Workers**. Because one can carry COVID-19 with no symptoms at all, anyone who has been in close contact with a person known to have had the virus, or whose family or friends show signs of exposure, should behave as if they are infected, isolate themselves, and contact their physician.
- **Returning to Work**. Workers with symptoms of acute respiratory illness associated with COVID-19 may return to work after (a) home isolation for 14 days since their first symptoms or positive test, and (b) medical authorization.

**Responding to Confirmed Cases Of COVID-19**. If a worker is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19, their supervisor should immediately notify the local public health authority as well as the Infection Mitigation Coordinator, who should do the following.

- Legal Warning. It may be illegal to provide the infected worker's name or other information that could be used to determine their identity. Consult your local health department and human resources policy regarding reporting protocols.
- Determine what areas of the venue were visited, used, or impacted by the infected worker (the "Impacted Areas").
- Assess whether the worker's role put them within six feet (two meters) of other workers or patrons, including whether their duties create specific transmission risks such as food handling, bartending, or ticket checking.
- Work with the local health department to determine which other workers had close contact with the infected worker (the "Impacted Workers").
- Notify the Impacted Workers that they may have had contact with an infected worker and encourage them to monitor their health and report any concerns to their healthcare provider.

- Any worker who tests positive for COVID-19 should remain in home isolation for not less than 14 days after symptoms begin. The worker should follow health authority guidance and their company policy.
- Impacted Workers who have been in close contact with a person who tests positive, but who are not presently symptomatic or suffering a fever greater than 100.4 F/38.0 C, should not come to work for 14 days after their last close contact, and quarantine themselves. During quarantine, they should watch for symptoms of COVID-19.

**Paid Sick Leave.** Employees in the United States with COVID-19 should be paid sick leave by their employers under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. A link to the U.S. Department of Labor's "Employee Rights" poster is in the Resources section at the end of this *Reopening Guide*.

## 4. SANITIZING THE VENUE

**Sanitizing High-Touch Areas.** As soon as vendors begin to load in, surfaces and objects that are touched frequently, such as the ones listed below, should be regularly disinfected using products approved by the applicable health authority.

- **Public Areas** (lobby, hallways, dining and food service areas)
  - ❖ Door handles, handrails, push plates
  - ❖ Bike rack or other barricades the public may touch
  - ❖ Handrails for stairs, ramps, and escalators
  - ❖ Elevator buttons – inside and out
  - ❖ Reception desks and ticket counters
  - ❖ Telephones, Point of Sale terminals, and other keypads
  - ❖ Tables and chairs, including high chairs and booster seats
  - ❖ Beverage stations, water fountains, vending and ice machines
  - ❖ Trash receptacle touch points
- **Restrooms** (front and back of house as well as portable units)
  - ❖ Door handles and push plates
  - ❖ Sink faucets and counters, and toilet handles
  - ❖ Lids of containers for disposal of women's sanitary products
  - ❖ Soap dispensers and towel dispenser handles
  - ❖ Baby changing stations
  - ❖ Trash receptacle touch points
- **Back of House Offices, Dressing Areas, Green Rooms, Production Areas**
  - ❖ Individual office and other room furniture
  - ❖ Door handles, push plates, doorways, railings
  - ❖ Light switches and thermostats
  - ❖ Cabinet handles
  - ❖ Telephones, computers, other keypads, mouse
  - ❖ Microphones
  - ❖ Backstage and technical equipment
  - ❖ Trash receptacle touch points
- **Back of House Kitchen and Food Preparation Areas**
  - ❖ Handles of all kitchen equipment doors, cabinets, push pads
  - ❖ Counter surfaces
  - ❖ Light switches
  - ❖ Handles of beverage and towel dispensers
  - ❖ Handles of sinks, including handwashing sink and mop sink
  - ❖ Cleaning tools and buckets
  - ❖ Trash receptacle touch points

**Cleaning and Disinfecting**.

- **Cleaning** removes dirt and impurities from surfaces and objects and may lower germ counts by removing but not necessarily killing them.
- **Disinfecting** reduces and kills germs on surfaces and objects. Because disinfecting does not necessarily clean the surface, cleaning and disinfecting are both essential.
- **Cleaning Technique**. Clean high-touch areas by using water and soap or cleaning solution to remove dirt and impurities from surfaces and objects and reduce germ counts.
- **Disinfecting Technique**. High-touch areas should be disinfected using materials effective against COVID-19. To quickly disinfect a seating area between events, electrostatic cleaning is a means of spraying a fine mist of positively charged disinfectant particles that adhere to surfaces and objects.
- **Following the Manufacturer's Instructions**. In all instances, including technical and production equipment such as microphones and headphones, it is important that cleaning procedures follow the manufacturer's instructions. This will increase the likelihood of a thorough cleaning while not damaging the equipment or voiding a warranty.
- **Disposal.** Place gloves and other disposable items used for cleaning and disinfecting in a bag that can be tied before disposing of them with other waste.
- **Frequency**. The frequency of cleaning high-touch areas should be determined based on the surface or object and how it is used, applying guidance from local health authorities.
- **Documentation**. Documenting that health and safety practices were followed at the correct intervals can help a business show that it behaved reasonably under its circumstances, which would be a key issue in a lawsuit. A supervisor should ensure that cleaning logs are carefully entered and preserved for reference. Events that contract to use a venue should request a copy of the venue's cleaning and disinfection plan.

## 5. INGRESS AND EGRESS

Patrons' experience at the venue should match the health guidelines they consistently receive beginning with their first ticketing or social media engagement.

**Handwashing Stations.** Stations with either soap and water or sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol must be provided at all points of ingress and other well-marked and illuminated locations throughout the venue. These stations should allow no-touch activation if possible. Supervisors must regularly confirm there are adequate supplies.

**Parking Lots.** To ensure that patrons observe social distancing when leaving or returning to their vehicles, parking lot operators can kill spaces between vehicles. This should be feasible with the relatively smaller crowds foreseeable in the early days after reopening. As patrons return in larger numbers and more spaces are needed, lot operators should emphasize the need for social distancing even in parking lots.

**"Virtual" Queuing for Ingress.** Event organizers should consider ways to schedule staggered ingress in order to minimize lines for wanding, bag check, and ticket scanning. Virtual queuing is a modern version of the familiar concept of metered access to the front of a line. Consider the following to spread arrival time and manage demand at the entrance.

- Events with a specific start time could schedule patron arrival times.
- During the ticketing process, patrons could select their ingress time and location, which can be coordinated with public transportation or rideshare vehicles.
- A limited number of unscheduled entries is recommended to accommodate patrons stuck in traffic or physically unable to sit in a seat for a long time.

**Will Call and Box Office** windows are often protected by glass partitions. Where there are no physical barriers between ticket staff and patrons, a clear protective shield is recommended. Patron distancing can be preserved by opening fewer windows and marking appropriate queuing space, or on-site ticket purchase and pickup can be eliminated for events that accept only electronic tickets by advanced purchase.

**Space Requirements**. Additional space may be required to accommodate longer but less densely packed lines waiting to enter the venue.

- **How Much Space**. In a six foot (two meter) social distancing model, up to 36 square feet (4 square meters) per unrelated group will be necessary.
- **Where to Queue**. It is important to separate pedestrians from vehicle traffic, and to preserve room for other pedestrians to pass. This will present challenges in urban settings or where space outside the venue doors is limited. Venues whose entrance is in a densely settled area may need to arrange with neighboring

properties and public safety authorities to allow early-arriving patrons to wait on adjacent streets. If an ingress queue consistent with social distancing would cause the line to extend into a road or pedestrian walkway, consult with local public safety authorities to determine where to safely queue patrons while preserving emergency access.

- **How to Queue**. The line waiting to enter can be managed using common methods such as lines marked on the ground, rope and stanchions, fencing or bike rack, in combination with workers who provide information about anticipated wait time and ingress procedure and also enforce social distancing. The area where patrons wait should have signage showing the event's health rules, including social distancing guidelines and face covering requirements.

**Screening.** Once patrons reach the front of the line outside the venue, there should be a new screening process.

- **Temperature and Health Screening**. Outside the venue perimeter, a worker wearing a face covering, gloves, and medically-identifiable clothing such as scrubs, who has been approved by the Infection Mitigation Coordinator, should take the temperature of every patron and conduct a brief visual screening for symptoms of fever or infection.
  - **Temperature Screening**. This *Reopening Guide* does not make a recommendation regarding a specific type or style of thermometer, only that it be compliant with your applicable public health authority. Cost and efficiency of devices can vary widely, so each venue or event operator should make a decision that is reasonable under their circumstances.
  - **Health Screening**. The Infection Mitigation Coordinator should develop health screening questions and evaluation criteria in consultation with a qualified medical professional.
- **Bag Check**. Even during a pandemic, it remains important for security reasons to keep prohibited items out of the venue. In order to avoid touching patron personal items, event organizers may wish to enforce a small clear bag policy in which patrons open their own bags for inspection. Alternatively, some event organizers may prohibit bags, although exceptions will likely be necessary for medicine or personal hygiene products. There is some tension between health and security that event organizers will have to address. For example, a no-bag policy will have the effect of driving away families who carry diaper bags for their young children, and a venue that offers coat check will need a sanitary security procedure to accept checked items. A recurring theme is that policies designed to avoid exposing workers or patrons to infection should consider how to avoid increasing their exposure to other risks.

- **Magnetometers and Pat-Downs**. Walk-through magnetometers are effective at detecting metallic objects while allowing security workers to maintain social distance. Hand wands are a less costly alternative which still allow no-contact metal detection, but they require the security worker to be closer than six feet (two meters) from the patron, so they are less optimal from a health perspective. Pat-downs are obviously least sanitary, and venues may deny admission to patrons who repeatedly activate the magnetometer rather than putting hands on patrons. Any worker conducting a pat-down search MUST wear a face covering and gloves and have access to a wash and sanitizing station.
- **Ticket Scanning**. Paper tickets and cash require physical contact between patrons and workers that can be avoided at many events. At ticketed events, tickets can be made available in advance and online only. Electronic tickets can be scanned by ticket-takers wearing face coverings and gloves, or patrons could check themselves in at self-service kiosks outside the health and security screening area.
- **Face Covering and Glove Requirement**. Patrons who are required to wear face coverings and gloves at ingress should put on their own or purchase them from the venue. To speed the line, face covering could be provided in advance with wristbands in a quantity sufficient for the duration of the event (e.g., multiple masks for multi-day events).
- **Security Workers and Ticket Takers**. Security workers and ticket takers should wear face coverings and gloves whenever they are among patrons, both for their own health and to model safe practices. Because contaminated gloves spread coronavirus the same as contaminated hands, workers should avoid touching tickets or patrons unless their task requires it. If touching does become necessary, the worker should immediately discard the gloves, wash their hands, and put on fresh gloves before resuming work.

**Sanitizer Stations.** Once a patron has presented their ticket and entered the venue, there should be hand sanitizer or options for hand washing immediately in front of them. The Infection Mitigation Coordinator should appoint hand sanitizer monitors at points of ingress to ensure that all patrons enter with clean hands.

**Disability Accommodations.** New health screening measures may require new accommodations for persons with disabilities. For example, deaf patrons who read lips may require screening from a worker wearing a clear face covering or one with a see-through window over their mouth. An event space that reduces points of ingress or egress must ensure continued accessibility. Venues that temporarily reduce capacity should confirm that they still offer enough accessible seating, including companion seats, to comply with disability laws. Patrons whose disability makes them unable to wait in a long line may need a more expedited access procedure. In order to remain

compliant with applicable laws and provide reasonably accessible events for all patrons, this *Reopening Guide* recommends consulting with a local advocate for persons with disabilities.

**Scheduled Egress from Back to Front**. Social distancing likely requires that egress be managed the same way passengers exit an airplane at the end of their flight. After events that have a definite end such as concerts or sporting events, patrons nearest the exits should leave first, by row or section, in order to clear space for patrons further inside to follow. This will require workers and volunteers to ensure that patrons understand the procedure and comply with social distancing requirements until they are in their vehicles or otherwise outside the venue doors.

**Emergency Egress**. As referenced on page 2, the need for social distancing creates significant challenges when planning to evacuate a crowd during an emergency. Where patrons might be told to take refuge, such as at an outdoor event due to a forecast of severe storms, the area of refuge must be able to accommodate the crowd while maintaining six feet (two meters) between unrelated groups. Likewise, if patrons will be instructed to return to their vehicles in an emergency, workers will need training to manage the exiting crowd to avoid the risk of contagion while they flee from some other hazard. These may not be significant obstacles for the smaller crowds that will initially return to events, but event organizers will have to coordinate with all stakeholders, including public health and public safety officials, to reevaluate their emergency plans as larger crowds gradually return.

Note: The goal of maintaining six feet (two meters) between people would become a distant secondary consideration if there is a clear and imminent danger requiring an emergency evacuation. Even during this pandemic, emergency egress plans should reflect that moving patrons away from the most urgent hazard is the first order of business.

## 6. FRONT OF HOUSE CIRCULATION, FOOD AND BEVERAGE, AND MERCHANDISE

Front of house operational decisions will require a thoughtful balance of competing interests. On one hand, you want a capacity crowd. On the other, you can invite no more patrons than you can accommodate while maintaining social distancing and healthy conditions in all areas of the venue. The issues discussed throughout this *Reopening Guide* are intended to help organizers strike their own reasonable balance between those interests.

**Restrooms.** Workers should limit occupancy of restrooms to ensure social distancing. Unless portable restroom facilities are added, this will likely result in patrons waiting outside the restroom doors. The area where they are waiting will require monitoring to preserve (a) appropriate space between patrons and (b) an easily discernible line to avoid conflict about where the line begins. Regarding all social distancing measures, particularly restroom access and line control, this *Reopening Guide* recommends posting new policies on all applicable web sites, social media platforms, and physical signage inside the event space to avoid surprised patrons waiting impatiently in long lines.

**Seated Venues.** In venues with reserved seating, there is likely to be some flexibility in the number of seats to remove or kill in order to maintain social distancing between unrelated patrons. Some events foreseeably draw crowds that attend in groups, which suggests that perhaps a venue can safely accommodate more patrons for that event. The recommended spacing of six feet (two meters) does allow room for judgment, but if someone gets sick, that decision will certainly be judged. Remember that even at a seated event, patrons must also navigate choke points such as ingress and egress, hallways, concessions, merchants, and restroom areas. This *Reopening Guide* recommends erring on the side of a conservative maximum capacity figure.

**General Admission Venues**. General admission events present many of the same challenges as seated events, plus additional concerns that may delay the reopening of GA spaces until more patrons voluntarily comply with social distancing and face covering requirements.

A few obvious changes will be necessary whenever GA events do reopen. Patrons cannot all stand at the front of the stage like they are accustomed; moshing and crowd surfing are violations of social distancing per se and must be absolutely prohibited during this pandemic; even hallways and smoking areas where patrons congregate will have to be monitored to enforce health policies. Here are some simple ways to remind GA patrons of the importance of social distancing.

- High conspicuity gaff tape on the floor of an indoor space, or spray chalk, survey flags, and cones for outdoor spaces, to mark six foot (two meter) separation.
- Rope barriers and stanchions or bike rack to physically separate patrons.

- Open areas patrolled by workers performing the guest services functions of providing information, enforcing rules, and modeling healthy behavior.
- Messaging to patrons before and during the event through electronic messaging and physical signage.
- Messaging by the performer during the event.

These measures will succeed only if compliance by all patrons is required for entry and participation. GA events are challenging to supervise as it is – voluntary social distancing and face covering will likely require a level of widespread patron education that, as of this writing, does not exist. Even more than figuring out how to enforce social distancing in undifferentiated spaces, teaching patrons to proactively engage in healthy behavior may be the first hurdle GA event organizers should try to clear.

**Intermission**. Intermission presents the same social distancing challenges as ingress and egress, with the distinction that some patrons will remain seated. For everyone who chooses to get up, they will have to be led out from back to front, and patrons will not be allowed to congregate inside or outside restrooms or near lobby concession stands. Even with fewer people attending events during the early phase of reopening, intermission may have to be longer than before to allow time for socially distanced patron movement. Given these issues, including how to let some people out of a row while others remain seated, the path of least resistance may simply be shorter shows with no intermission.

**Food and Beverage Service.** Safe service of food and beverages presents many operational challenges, but many are likely within the ability of even smaller events and venues.

- **Ordering**. Menus can be posted electronically or printed on single-use paper to avoid transmitting germs on reusable plastic menus. Electronic ordering can be encouraged using QR codes for each menu item. In lieu of being served by waitstaff, patrons can be notified by text when their order is placed at a designated pick-up area, creating a touchless service experience that also avoids crowds of patrons waiting for their food.
- **Counter Service**. At a self-service restaurant or concession stand, the number of counter staff should be limited consistent with social distancing. Workers should place food and beverages on the table, counter, or other surface rather than handing purchases directly to patrons.
- **Partitions**. Where practicable, physical barriers such as clear plastic partitions should be installed at registers.
- **Point of Sale Terminals**. POS terminals should be assigned to one worker where possible, and they should be sanitized between each user and before and after each shift. If multiple servers are assigned to a terminal, then servers should

sanitize their hands after each use. Workers who handle money should wear gloves and should not serve food or beverages. Where a point of sale system requires a signature or entry of a PIN, a disposable wooden stylus may allow a touchless transaction.

- **Grab and Go Prohibited**. Workers should place requested items on the counter for patrons in order to reduce touching of food or packaging. For this reason, self-service buffets, even with clear breath guards, will be difficult.
- **Bar Hygiene**. Bartenders should model safe behavior by wearing a face covering and gloves when they are behind the bar. Garnishes should be prepared in a central location like the kitchen and provided with tongs to bartenders, or they should be eliminated entirely. Patrons should hold their own identification for bartender inspection. If a worker must handle a patron's ID, the worker should then dispose of their gloves and wash their hands before resuming service.
- **Tables and Chairs**. Dining tables, bar tops, stools and chairs should be sanitized after each use. Decoration rental companies may have workers to clean and disinfect furniture before, during, and after events. Once furniture is positioned to allow social distancing, the new location can be marked on the floor.
- **Trays**. Trays and tray stands should be sanitized after each use or eliminated entirely in favor of individually packaged food and beverages placed inside paper bags bearing the patron's name for easy pick-up.
- **Utensils**. To replace individual eating utensils, patrons can be provided pre-wrapped cutlery, straws, and stirrers, or they can take what they need from individual item dispensers such as Smartstock.
- **Beverage Packaging**. Formerly self-service fountain drinks can be replaced with bottled beverages.
- **Condiments**. Condiments should be served with food orders or only at patrons' request, in disposable single-use packages or containers that can be sanitized after each use. Open condiment service buffets should not be used.
- **Note: Additional Waste**. A likely consequence of more sanitary food and beverage practices is additional trash and recyclable material. It will be important to dispose of trash more regularly, and to consult a recycler about sanitary recycling options.
- **Separate Entry and Exit Points**. If possible, send patrons away from the food and beverage area in a different direction than the way they entered.

**Merchants' Infection Control Plans.** Because event retail workers may touch many other workers and patrons and handle materials that people hold, consume, or wear, their attention to infection management is important. Food and beverage vendors and merchandise sellers should know the health risks related to their work, and they should understand cleaning procedures and risk mitigation measures. Workers may have to arrive early for shifts and work with new equipment in new ways. Event organizers

should contractually require that merchants present their own infection mitigation plan as a condition of engagement to work the event, just as they now require stamped construction plans or certificates of insurance.

**High-Touch Items Related to Food and Beverage Service**. Safe service of food and beverages will require frequent sanitization of many small items, such as the following.

- Bottle and can openers
- Cutting boards
- Grill scrapers
- Ice buckets
- Ice scoops
- Knives
- Ladles
- Measuring cups and spoons
- Pots and pans
- Pour spouts
- Serving spoons
- Spatulas
- Squeeze bottles
- Tabletops
- Tongs
- Wine keys

**Socially Distanced Dining**. In order to enforce social distancing where patrons or workers dine, the following practices are recommended, as applicable.

- **Staffing**. The host and manager should enforce distancing at entries, waiting areas, and queues to reinforce signage posted throughout these areas.
- **Reduced Seating**. Tables, bar stools, and booths should be removed or taken out of service to allow six feet (two meters) between each unrelated party, or as the local public health authority requires.
- **Staggered Mealtimes**. For both front of house patrons and back of house workers, mealtimes can be staggered to ensure that queues and dining capacity are kept to safe levels of density.
- **Line Management**. Workers must manage lines at quick service areas, such as coffee and food pick-up, to ensure that patrons remain appropriately distanced. If queues get too long or take up too much space, consider opening additional service or pick-up areas at other parts of the venue.
- **Table Service.** Where guests order from a menu and are served each course, the following practices are recommended to avoid touching patrons' food or drinks.
    - Bread served to each diner individually rather than in a basket.
    - Servers bring appetizers, entrees, and desserts to the table on covered plates that the server uncovers in front of the patron.
    - Less formal settings can substitute upgraded box meals for individually plated dishes.
    - Table settings include hand wipes.
    - Set only as many chairs as are consistent with social distancing.
    - Servers wear face coverings and gloves at all times.

**Merchandise.**

- **Contactless Ordering**. Items for sale can be posted on a web site or event app that allows for mobile ordering and on-site pickup.
- **Queuing**. Mark merchandise sales lines on floor, with barricade, or rope and stanchion, patrolled by guest services workers to provide information and enforce social distancing.
- **Touchless**. No trying on merchandise. Only workers may touch items for sale.
- **Contactless Payment**. Point of sale systems that use Apple Pay or a similar app eliminate the need for workers to touch patron credit cards.
- **Final Sale**. No returns or exchanges. All sales are final.
- **Spacing**. Merchandise sellers must be spaced far enough from each other so patrons can wait in line while maintaining social distance and not block access for pedestrians passing by.

## 7. PRODUCTION ISSUES

Most of the front of house health guidance in the preceding sections applies equally to back of house operations, including touring and production workers. Here are some further issues specific to event production.

**Division of Authority and Responsibility**. Touring productions and venue operators will have to decide which party is responsible for various tasks and behaviors related to health and safety. Because these will be new agreements, this *Reopening Guide* recommends that new responsibilities, and the authority to carry out and enforce them, be memorialized in detail. Any such agreement should be mutually supportive rather than imposing a disproportionate burden on one side or the other – the tour wants to know the venue is clean and the venue want to know the tour will not bring unreasonable risk into their premises. Both parties have a vested and mutual interest in agreeing to the kinds of measures discussed here.

**Booking an Event Space.** Site visits and venue tours for marketing and booking should be replaced by virtual tours to the extent feasible. Companies seeking to book a space should prepare to submit a health and safety plan consistent with these guidelines regarding the risks particular to their event.

**Social Distancing Musicians.** The authoritative guidance requiring not less than six feet (two meters) of social distance may have to be expanded for singers and musical instrument players. Musicians often breathe deeply and expel aerosols further than people engaged in non-physical activities. Their performance space, including on stage and in orchestra pits, should be arranged to maximize social distancing while allowing at least some of them to perform together.

**Materials Handling.**

- **Production equipment and cargo** should be sanitized when loaded at the warehouse and unloaded at the venue. In addition to face coverings, workers should wear gloves when handling equipment and cargo to prevent surface contamination.
- **Social distancing** applies to production crew working in confined spaces, such as inside trailers. Workers should always wear face coverings and gloves when those do not interfere with essential work functions, particularly when they cannot maintain social distance. The general need for distancing should not cause other unsafe working conditions for technical and construction crew. For example, if a piece of equipment takes four people to lift, then each worker should protect themselves from infection to the best of their ability while lifting the load together.

- **High-touch equipment** such as motor controllers, microphones, mic stands, presentation remotes, and audio/video cable should be sanitized frequently, and equipment should be dedicated to individual users where possible.
- **Heavy equipment** such as forklifts, boom lifts, and scissor lifts should minimize the number of operators of each piece of equipment where feasible.

**Equipment Deliveries**. In addition to adhering to the Materials Handling guidance above, delivery truck drivers should not leave their cab during offloading unless they receive the same screening and follow the same health procedures as other workers. To the extent possible, deliveries should be scheduled in shifts to minimize the time workers load or unload close together. Workers unloading deliveries should change their gloves and wash their hands between each delivery.

**Ground Transportation.**

- **Driver Health.** When drivers report for duty, they should undergo the same screening for temperature or infection symptoms as other workers.
- **Vehicle Capacity**. As in all other public areas, social distancing should be enforced in buses, vans, and other ground transportation to the extent possible. For example, nine passengers plus a driver could fill a fifteen-passenger van in order to allow more space between riders. This may require adjustment of existing plans to provide additional vehicles or multiple trips.
- **Passenger Hygiene**. Passengers should wear face coverings and gloves while riding, and wash hands or use hand sanitizer after leaving the vehicle.
- **Vehicle Cleaning.** Transportation providers should disinfect the passenger compartment after every trip, including all hard surfaces, seats, headrests, seatbelts, seatbelt buckles, and armrests. Nothing should be left in the rear of the vehicle that could be touched by more than one person, such as papers, water bottles, or coffee cups. All vehicle operators should be trained regarding the surfaces passengers are likely to touch and the cleaners, disinfectants, and PPE needed to clean and disinfect them. Additional time between trips must be reserved for this process.

## 8. LEGAL ISSUES

Myriad legal issues may arise as events and venues reopen during a pandemic. Most cannot be meaningfully addressed in a general way, so you should consult your attorney about your own situation. One issue that can be addressed here is your legal exposure if someone claims they got sick attending or working at your venue or event. To begin, here is some basic law.

The legal name for a claim of personal injury or wrongful death is a "tort." In a tort case, the injured party has the burden to prove four elements: (1) they were owed a duty of care by defendants; (2) there was a breach of that duty; (3) that breach was the cause of (4) plaintiff's damages.

- **Duty of Care**. Taking steps discussed in this *Reopening Guide* to mitigate the risk of illness, and documenting how you arrived at your conclusions and enforced your new health policies, will be compelling evidence that you did not breach your duty to provide reasonably healthy and safe premises under these challenging circumstances.
- **Proximate Cause**. Any claim that someone got sick at a particular venue or event will face a significant causation problem. Given all the people with whom we have contact when we leave our homes, all the surfaces we touch, all the aerosols from other people that we unknowingly breathe in, as well as the incubation period for COVID-19, it will be difficult for most victims to isolate one contact as the source of illness while excluding all others as possibilities.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 should create a new social contract between event and venue operators and the people who work at and attend them. Because event workers and patrons all have a duty to behave reasonably under their circumstances, everyone should promise to maintain social distancing and engage in sanitary practices suitable for a pandemic, rather than doing only enough to keep their job or avoid getting ejected. Likewise, even if there is relatively little risk of losing a lawsuit based on negligent sanitary practices, event and venue operators should implement robust health and safety measures because they will save lives and help reopen more events.

As noted above, we are all in this together.

## WHO WE ARE

The Event Safety Alliance® (ESA) is a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting "life safety first" in all phases of event production and activation. ESA includes professionals in event planning, promotion, production, and performance, in music, sports, and corporate events, as well as our allies in security, law, insurance, meteorology, and health care.

This *Reopening Guide* reflects the breadth and diversity of the Event Safety Alliance and its many friends. Here is a list of contributors.

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## RESOURCES FOR FURTHER READING

This *Reopening Guide* does not presume to offer medical guidance or opinions. Rather, we have based our operational suggestions on public health material produced by reputable authorities, and we have considered guidance written by our peers in related fields or businesses. Most of the material listed below is from the United States, but we are aware that similar guidance is being written every day in other parts of the world. Here are some of the publicly available materials we have found valuable, hyperlinked to the source documents.

### Health Information

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services ("DHHS"). This web site contains many useful subpages that discuss the epidemiology of COVID-19 and means of mitigating its risks, as well as an extensive glossary of terms related to infection control.
- World Health Organization ("WHO"), like the CDC web site, provides a great deal of information about the science of COVID-19, its global impact, the effects of containment programs, and strategies and plans one might adopt to curtail its spread.
- Coronavirus Resource Center, Johns Hopkins University & Medicine, features a COVID-19 global case tracker which is updated daily, news and information from experts, and many other infection control resources.

### Guidance for Workplaces

- The United States Department of Labor ("DOL"), Occupational Safety and Health Administration, has extensive resources on its COVID-19 web page, including "Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19," OSHA 3990-03 2020.
- "Operational Toolkit for Businesses Considering Reopening or Expanding Operations in COVID-19," Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, May 6, 2020.
- "Pandemic Preparedness in the Workplace and the Americans with Disabilities Act," U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, issued October 9, 2009, updated March 19, 2020.
- "HIPAA Privacy and Novel Coronavirus," DHHS, Office for Civil Rights, February 2020.

### Guidance for Mass Gatherings

- "Considerations for sports federations/sports event organizers when planning mass gatherings in the context of COVID-19," WHO, Interim guidance, April 14, 2020, and "Guidance for the use of the WHO Mass Gatherings Sports: addendum risk assessment tools sin the context of COVID-19," April 30, 2020.

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- "NABTU and CPWR COVID-19 Standards for U.S. Construction Sites," North America's Building Trades Unions and The Center for Construction Research and Training, April 27, 2020.
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