



COVID-19 Transition Guidelines for Theatre Productions

Now that the COVID-19 emergency measures have been lifted, the Ministry for the National Heritage, the Arts and Local Government in full collaboration with the Malta Arts Council, is publishing the COVID-19 Transition Guidelines for artistic productions held in established indoor and outdoor theatres.

The objectives of these guidelines are intended to promote safe working practices for producers, crew and artists and also the wellbeing of patrons. These guidelines shall ensure that our theatres adopt the adequate mechanisms to control the risks of exposure to COVID-19.

Producers are expected to take care of the health, safety and welfare of performers and crew, including themselves, and all other staff, including contractors and delivery persons, as well as their audiences. These guidelines are meant to provide generic considerations that theatre producers must take into account when deciding on the control measures being implemented through social distancing, the adequacy of facilities for proper personal and public hygiene, cleaning arrangements, and other changes that may affect the health and safety of the audiences and performers.

For your Audience

A. *BEFORE THE PERFORMANCE*

1. Online and/or cashless pre-payments should be encouraged, without disadvantaging patrons who may not have access to such means of payment. When contactless payment is not possible, payment portals should be disinfected after each use. Self-scanning structures for tickets are encouraged in order to minimise contact between ushers and patrons.
2. Procedures to be followed should be made visible at the entrance of the premises.
3. Visible markings indicating two (2) metre distances between audience members in queues, both outside and inside the premises, should be respected. These markings include queuing for rest rooms.
4. Management should ensure that adequate measures are taken for proper ventilation in the rest rooms. Hand dryers should not be used as these can potentially disperse viral particles into the air
5. Air conditioning units shall be adjusted for more ventilation and recirculated air-conditioning shall be avoided. Airconditioning flaps should be directed towards the ceiling. Filters should be cleaned well and maintained often and properly. Doors and windows must be kept open for at least one hour before the show starts and one hour after the show ends.
6. Audiences should be encouraged to wear masks OR visors at all times inside indoor theatres and whilst queuing at outdoor theatres.
7. The right of refusal of entry onto the premises of patrons if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms should be exercised by the trained staff.
8. Patrons are to be subjected to temperature checks at the entrance for the presence of fever. Persons with a temperature of 37.2° Celsius or higher shall be denied entrance.

9. Adequate and easily accessible hand sanitisers with an appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub should be provided at the entrance of the premises and ensure that all persons sanitise their hands prior to entrance. These should be guided by an usher.
10. The regulation of entrances into the premises should adopt crowd management techniques as necessary. These should now include opening the doors before the previous usual opening hours and managing the audience's entry per row, tier or specific seating area so as to avoid long queuing. Ideally the audience is provided with their ideal entry time the moment they buy or book a ticket.
11. Records of the contact information (name and a phone number) of at least one person per group need to be noted, ideally this is done directly through ticketing system email or message.
12. Producers are required to collect these contact details explaining that these will only be divulged to an authorised officer in case contact tracing is required. This will enable contact tracing to be carried out should a positive case result among patrons or staff.
13. No printed programmes should be distributed to the audience. Producers are encouraged to provide online versions of the programme.
14. Should a bar, restaurant or café facilities operate on the premises, these should work within the respective applicable guidelines for catering establishments.

B. DURING THE SHOW

1. Each seating group should not be made up of more than 6 persons. Two seats on the sides must be kept free between each group. This can be done a priori via a ticketing system, or there and then with proper management by the ushers in the case of free seating.
2. There is no limit on the number of people attending in a particular space as long as these conditions are respected.

C. AFTER THE SHOW

1. Records of the contact information (name and a phone number) of at least one person per party need to be kept for up to 28 days after the show/performance.

2. Cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common and seating areas inside the premises is to be performed after each show.

For Performers & Crew

1. Inform performers and crew utilising theatre and rehearsal facilities that they are required to follow the following obligations detailed in these guidelines even if they are not employed by the theatre operator, and ensure that they fulfill said obligations.
2. Records of performers and crew present at each performance and rehearsal should be kept in order to facilitate contact tracing in case of possible positive cases of COVID-19.
3. The rehearsal space and the performance space should be cleaned and disinfected regularly and thoroughly, before and after use, without affecting the show. Producers must ensure there are adequate and accessible facilities to achieve good hygiene and that facilities are adequate, accessible, equipped with disposable hand wipes, soap and sanitizers, in good working order, clean and safe.
4. Props, costumes and any equipment which are handled during the show should be cleaned and disinfected safely before and after use, without affecting the course of the show or rehearsal.
5. Digital copies of scripts and other documents should be used whenever possible. If physical copies must be used, actors and crew should have their own copy of the script and copies should not be shared between users.
6. Make-up equipment should not be shared between cast members.
7. Any worker should stay home when sick, and perform a swab test before returning to work. The worker can only return once the symptoms have subsided and a swab test is negative.
8. Close contact is permissible on stage if necessary to the artistic rendering of the show and if these guidelines are respected. Social distancing on stage should only be applied if and when it is deemed possible by the director or producer. For example, a quintet on a large stage can apply social distancing, however this is not always the case with a dance performance or a theatrical performance.

9. There is no limit on the number of crew and artists that can participate in a show if these guidelines are respected.
10. In the case of any instrument, performers need to be responsible for their own instruments. Instruments should not be shared.
11. Performers should wear masks or visors when not in rehearsal or in performance. Performers do not need to wear masks during rehearsal or performance.
12. Performers should sanitise their hands with sanitiser before and after rehearsal or performance. Producers need to provide adequate and easily accessible hand sanitisers with an appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub.
13. Ensure that crew and ushers wear masks or visors while on the premises for production meetings, rehearsals and performances. Crew and ushers need to sanitise their hands before and after a rehearsal or performance or any meeting.
14. Restructure the layout of production meetings to allow for 2m social distancing between attendees.
15. Additional persons beyond necessary staff, performers and crew should not be allowed on the premises during rehearsals or shows. Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible and make sure they follow the same guidelines listed for crew members.

Latest information will be available on: www.artscouncilmalta.org