



THEATERS AND PERFORMANCE VENUES OVERVIEW

The framework below represents the City of Boston’s operational recommendations for **Theaters and Performance Venues**. These operational recommendations incorporate the Commonwealth’s Sector-specific Workplace Safety Standards and supplements them with recommendations based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and industry associations to offer best practices for ensuring social distancing and reducing risk at events as well as preparing and returning to the physical workplace, preparing the workforce, and ensuring continuity of operations.

These operational recommendations apply to operations during Step 1 of Phase 3 of the Commonwealth’s phased reopening plan and are subject to change by the City of Boston at any time based upon changes to the Commonwealth’s Workplace Safety Standards, CDC guidance, or other public health information or analysis. For the City of Boston, Step 1 of Phase 3 of the Reopening Plan will commence on July 13, 2020.

These operational recommendations provide Boston businesses with clarity about how to operate in Boston given its unique diversity, density, population, and built environment. Businesses, however, must comply with all current state standards at all times.

No activity at any theater or performance venue shall occur without meeting these COVID-19 workplace safety standards. These standards apply to all enterprises permitted to operate until rescinded or amended by the state, unless where sector-specific standards are applicable to part or all of the enterprise’s activities, in which case enterprises must follow those sector-specific standards. The owner of the enterprise shall be responsible for meeting these standards.

All actions undertaken to comply with Commonwealth standards and City of Boston recommendations must also comply with regulations of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Massachusetts Architectural Access Board. In addition to these standards, theaters and performance spaces should continue to abide by any and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations, policies, certifications, and licensure requirements for their facility.

Large capacity event venues must continue to remain closed until Phase IV. This includes venues used for group or spectator sports, entertainment, business, and cultural events including:

- Stadiums, arenas, and ballparks



- Exhibition and convention hall

Following these recommendations will ensure greater public health and safety. The City of Boston strongly encourages people in vulnerable populations, especially the elderly and those with underlying medical conditions, to continue to avoid unnecessary public outings and inessential services. Staff health is also a critical factor in whether retail can safely open and serve attendees.

Key Considerations

- Reopening services will increase the risk of COVID-19 spread; thus, the goal is to know, communicate, and manage transmission risk.
- Programs, services, and industries must be altered, some significantly, for several months or longer until a vaccine or effective treatment is developed.
- All plans must include mechanisms for how programs and services can be quickly scaled back if COVID-19 cases and deaths begin to spike.
- Linguistically and culturally appropriate public messaging and communications are critical.
- The experiences and needs of those disproportionately impacted will be overlooked if not explicitly considered in all plans.

CITY OF BOSTON THEATER AND PERFORMANCE VENUE UPDATES EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 5, 2020

Indoor performance venues can only be used for activities without a live audience, including, but not limited to, the following: film and television production; rehearsals; arts education; and live-streaming of performances without an audience.

Singing indoors is prohibited, and the playing of brass and woodwind instruments is discouraged but permitted as long as performers maintain a distance of 10 feet apart.

All non-audience uses of indoor performance venues will follow the City of Boston’s capacity limit for indoor gatherings, which is a maximum of 25 persons.

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS MANDATORY STANDARDS

No activity at any theater or performance venue shall occur without meeting these COVID-19 safety standards. These standards apply to all enterprises permitted to operate until rescinded or amended by the state, unless where sector-specific standards are applicable to part or all of the enterprise’s

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activities, in which case enterprises must follow those sector-specific standards. The owner of the enterprise shall be responsible for meeting these standards

- [Safety Standards and Checklists: Theaters and Performance Venues](#)

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

These additional safety guidelines and resources are available to support indoor and outdoor events, theaters, and performance venues.

U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)

- [OSHA – COVID-19 Webpage](#)
- [OSHA – Enforcement Guidelines Webpage](#)
- [OSHA Fact Sheet – Protecting Workers During a Pandemic](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

- [CDC – Environmental Cleaning and Disinfection Recommendations](#)
- [CDC – Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers to Plan and Respond to Coronavirus Disease \(updated 3/21/20\)](#)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

List of EPA-approved disinfectants:

- <https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-n-disinfectants-use-against-sars-cov-2>

U.S. Department of Labor

Information on employee leave rights:

- [Department of Labor Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#)



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In Step 1 of Phase 3, only outdoor theater and performance venues and indoor movie theaters may reopen. Additionally, indoor theaters and performance venues within the City of Boston may open for activities **without** a live audience. Drive-in movie theaters may continue to operate under guidance issued for these businesses.

Theater and performance venues’ management and employee personnel must ensure these mandated requirements are implemented and followed at all times. These requirements are in addition to general requirements identified above for physical space and social distancing; management; cleaning, disinfecting, and hygiene; and confirmed cases.

It is important to consider for these checklists the best practices identified previously in this document.

The following workplace specific safety standards are organized around four distinct categories covering Physical Space and Social Distancing; Management and Employees; Cleaning, Disinfecting, and Hygiene Protocols; and Confirmed Cases and specific guidance for theaters and performances authorized under Phase 3, Step 1. *Please Note: For all the following checklists, items listed in bold are standards that have been issued by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Items listed not in bold are additional standards required or recommended by the City of Boston.*

THEATERS AND PERFORMANCE SOCIAL DISTANCING CHECKLIST

Theater and performance venue management and employee personnel must implement physical amendments and procedures to ensure social distancing is available and followed for all workers and attendees. Theater and performance venue operators should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>Indoor movie theaters must monitor attendee entries and exits and limit occupancy at all times to the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fifty percent of each individual theater or screening room’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record 	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing</p>

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<p>holder, and never more than 250 persons in a single enclosed, indoor space</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indoor movie theaters for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow ten persons per 1,000 square feet of accessible space, and never more than 250 persons in a single enclosed, indoor space.• All occupant counts and calculations for indoor movie theaters must include all customers, patrons and attendees but may exclude workers/staff and performers.	
<p>Each outdoor venue must monitor customer entries and exits and limit occupancy at all times to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 25% of the venue’s maximum permitted occupancy as documented in its occupancy permit on record with the municipal building department or other municipal record holder, but in no event shall the venue admit or host more than 50 persons.• Venues for which no permitted occupancy limitation is on record may allow up to 8 persons per 1,000 square feet of accessible space, and never more than 50 persons.• All occupant counts and calculations for outdoor venues must include all customers, patrons and attendees but may exclude workers/staff and performers.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>For rehearsals, virtual performances, and other events without an audience, indoor venues must limit occupancy at all times to 25 persons.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Post clearly visible signage regarding the need to maintain 6 feet of social distancing and not to enter a room until that distancing can be maintained.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Venues must put markers outside of the building to ensure 6 feet of distance for attendees who are waiting outside to enter.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Ensure separation of 6 feet or more between individuals where possible.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Close or reconfigure worker common spaces and high-density areas where workers are likely to congregate (e.g., break rooms, eating areas, backstage areas) to allow social distancing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Separate workstations that cannot be separated by 6 feet or more with physical partitions extending to at least 6 feet in height.• Install physical barriers for ticket stations where possible; otherwise, maintain 6 feet distance where not possible	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For attendee-facing enterprises (e.g., lines to make payments, lines to use restrooms), install visual social-distancing markers to encourage attendees to remain 6 feet apart. <p>Establish directional pathways (e.g., one-way entrance and exit to rooms, one-way pathways) to manage visitor flow for foot traffic and minimize contact. Post clearly visible signage regarding these policies.</p> <p>Reconfigure seating areas to ensure 6 feet between attendees not in the same group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Distance shall be measured from the closest boundary of one attendee recreation or seating area to the closest boundary of another attendee recreation or seating area.• This may require blocking every other row of seats and/or staggered seating within rows.	
Limit group sizes to no more than 10 people for groups attending together.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Stagger lunch and break times for workers, regulating the maximum number of people in one place and ensuring at least 6 feet of physical distancing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Require face coverings for all workers and attendees, except where unsafe due to medical condition or disability.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Special protocols should be followed for close contact between live performers during outdoor performances:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Performers are to wear face coverings during performances whenever feasible• Performers should remain at least 6 feet apart even if wearing masks. Any activity requiring performers to be closer than 6 feet must be as brief as possible• Activities that require prolonged direct contact (e.g. intimate scenes, fight scenes) are discouraged.• Prohibit direct interaction between performers and audience before, during, or after performances (including backstage and post-performance meet-and-greets).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Special protocols should be followed for close contact between live performers during indoor activities without an audience:	



<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performers are to wear face coverings during performances whenever feasible • Performers should remain at least 6 feet apart even if wearing masks. Any activity requiring performers to be closer than 6 feet must be as brief as possible • Activities that require prolonged direct contact (e.g. intimate scenes, fight scenes) are discouraged. 	
<p>For outdoor live performances, singing and playing of brass and wind instruments are discouraged. For performances involving singing or brass or wind instruments, special distancing should be followed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 10 feet between performers. • At least 25 feet between performers and the first row of the audience 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>For indoor activities without an audience, singing is prohibited, and the playing of brass and wind instruments is discouraged. For indoor activities involving brass or wind instruments, performers must maintain a distance of at least 10 feet apart.</p>	
<p>All commonly touched physical materials must be discarded or sanitized between use.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Any self-serve racks or containers for these materials should be removed, and instead, all materials must be handed out individually by workers.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
Venues are encouraged to offer exclusive hours or other accommodations for those in high-risk populations as defined by the CDC	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Contactless payment methods and/or digital ticketing are encouraged.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage use of electronic versions or no-touch displays in place of commonly touched physical materials (such as menus and playbills) where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

THEATER AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND EMPLOYEE CHECKLIST

Theater and performance venue management and employee personnel must ensure these mandated staffing and operations requirements are implemented and followed at all times. Theater and

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performance venue management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>Provide training to workers on up-to-date safety information and precautions including hygiene and other measures aimed at reducing disease transmission, including the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social distancing, handwashing, and proper use of face coverings ● Self-screening at home, including temperature and symptom checks ● Importance of not coming to work if ill ● When to seek medical attention if symptoms become severe ● Which underlying health conditions may make individuals more susceptible to contracting and suffering from a severe case of the virus 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Venues must screen workers at each shift by ensuring the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Worker is not experiencing any symptoms such as fever (100°F and above) or chills, cough, shortness of breath, sore throat, fatigue, headache, muscle and/or body aches, runny nose and/or congestion, new loss of taste or smell, or nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea. ● Worker has not had “close contact” with an individual diagnosed with COVID-19. “Close contact” means living in the same household as a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, caring for a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, being within 6 feet of a person who has tested positive for COVID-19 for 15 minutes or more, or coming in direct contact with secretions (e.g., sharing utensils, being coughed on) from a person who has tested positive for COVID-19, while that person was symptomatic. ● Worker has not been asked to self-isolate or quarantine by his or her doctor or a local public health official. ● Workers who fail to meet the above criteria must be sent home. 	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Adjust workplace hours and shifts (leverage working teams with different schedules or staggered arrival and/or departure) to minimize contact across workers and reduce congestion at entry point.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Venues should maintain operating hours that allow for ongoing off-hour sanitation and cleaning.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>Limit visitors and service providers on-site; shipping and deliveries should be completed in designated areas.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

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Maintain a log of workers and visitors to support potential contact tracing (name, date, time, contact information).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers may not appear for work if they are feeling ill.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace, the employer shall notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) in the city or town where the workplace is located and assist the LBOH as reasonably requested to advise likely contacts to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of other workers may be recommended consistent with guidance and/or at the request of the LBOH.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Post notice to workers and attendees of important health information and relevant safety measures as outlined in the Commonwealth’s Mandatory Safety Standards for Workplace.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Stagger event times (such as theater showings) to avoid congregation of attendees in different groups and to allow for thorough cleaning of the activity space (e.g., seating areas or tables) before new attendees arrive.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers should facilitate organized entrance and exit between events where audiences are arranged in rows or other large groups to prevent unnecessary congregation of attendees.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Facilities should develop a seating plan for which attendees can reserve spots ahead of time and which is adjustable to the size of the booking party, allowing couples and small groups to sit together while maintaining at least 6 feet of distance from other individuals and/or groups.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Instruct attendees to limit seating groups only to related or associated members of the same party.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Additional on-site amenities and services may only open and operate when those amenities or services would otherwise be authorized to operate under the Commonwealth’s Phased Reopening Plan and then must adhere to all sector-specific safety protocols, available on the Reopening Plan website, applicable to the amenity or service. Examples include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Restaurants and food service: Must follow the latest restaurant guidelines• Gift shops: Must follow the latest retail guidelines• Performer hair and makeup: Must follow the latest close contact business guidance	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Reconfigure lobbies to discourage congregation of attendees before, during, or after shows.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

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Best Practices/Recommendations	Status
Limit worker movement to discrete work zones to minimize overlap where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers who are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 according to the CDC (e.g., due to age or underlying conditions) are encouraged to stay home.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Workers are strongly encouraged to self-identify symptoms or any close contact to a known or suspected COVID-19 case to the employer.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage workers who test positive for COVID-19 to disclose to the employer of the office for purposes of cleaning and/or disinfecting and contact tracing.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Encourage advanced reservations and digital ticketing where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Intermissions should be avoided to limit time of performance and to prevent congregating and close contact with others.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing

CLEANING, DISINFECTING, AND HYGIENE CHECKLIST

Theater and performance venue management and employees must ensure these mandated cleaning and hygiene requirements are implemented and being followed at all times. Theater and performance venue management should also consider implementing items listed as “Best Practices/Recommendations” when appropriate and feasible.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
Conduct frequent cleaning and disinfection of the site (at least daily and more frequently if feasible).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Keep cleaning logs that include date, time, and scope of cleaning.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Conduct frequent disinfecting of heavy transit areas and high-touch surfaces (e.g., doorknobs, bathrooms, seats, ticket counters, staff break rooms).	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
In the event of a positive case, shut down the site for a deep cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Disinfect seating areas and any other mutually touched objects immediately after each use. At no point should attendees come in contact with objects that others have touched without first being disinfected according to CDC guidelines.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status

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Open windows and doors to increase air flow where possible.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
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CONFIRMED CASES CHECKLIST

Confirmed COVID cases for theaters and performance venues will require review and adherence to this checklist.

Mandatory Requirements	Status
<p>If the employer is notified of a positive case at the workplace (including from other employees, attendees, vendors, delivery personnel, or anyone accessing the facility), the employer should notify the local Board of Health (LBOH) where the workplace is located and work with them to trace likely contacts in the workplace and advise workers and others who may have accessed the space to isolate and self-quarantine. Testing of others who accessed the same space may be recommended consistent with guidance and/or at the request of the LBOH.</p> <p>In the event of an employee notifying an employer of a positive COVID case, the employer should obtain consent from the employee to share his or her personal information with the Boston Public Health Commission (BPHC). If the employer does not have consent to share the employee’s information, the employer can still call BPHC for general guidance on closures and identifying close contacts. The employer cannot reveal information about the confirmed case to close contacts due to privacy concerns. This function may be supported by public health agencies other than BPHC depending on the location of the confirmed case.</p> <p>When calling BPHC, employers should be able to identify whether the employee worked 48 hours prior to onset of symptoms or was asymptomatic 48 hours prior to the test. The employer should also be able to identify if the employee was wearing a face covering at work, details of work conditions, locations of work (i.e., inside, outside), proximity to other employees or attendees, level of interaction with the public, and barriers or face coverings that were in place.</p> <p>The employer will help the LBOH to identify employee(s) who may have had contact with the confirmed case. The employer will notify these employees of the need to quarantine. The employer and LBOH will reach out to affected healthcare providers. Contacts to a confirmed case should be encouraged to have a COVID-19 test. Any employee who is identified as a close contact should not return to work for at least for 14 days.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
<p>In the event of a positive case, shut down the site for deep cleaning and disinfecting of the workplace in accordance with current CDC guidance.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Best Practices/Recommendations	Status

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Workers who test positive for COVID-19 should not be allowed to return to work until cleared by a medical professional as being symptom-free for at least 3 days and having been at least 10 days since symptoms first appeared.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Any previous attendee who has notified the indoor or outdoor event operator of a positive case should be encouraged to contact LBOH. The indoor or outdoor event operator should also contact any employee and known attendees who may have come into contact with that attendee.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing
Maintain and review attendee and employee records as necessary for information to support contact-tracing efforts.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ongoing