



# Cultch Safety Guidelines in Response to COVID-19,

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1. [STAFF HEALTH AND HYGIENE](#)
2. [SANITIZING THE VENUE](#)
3. [MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY](#)
4. [INGRESS AND EGRESS](#)
5. [FRONT OF HOUSE CIRCULATION, FOOD AND BEVERAGE AND MERCHANDISE](#)
6. [PRODUCTION](#)

In an effort to protect our staff, patrons and clients from the spread of the COVID-19 virus, The Cultch is continuing to establish new policies and practices to provide a safe working environment for all productions.

Please find our new mandatory guidelines below.

## **BROAD STEPS FOR SUCCESS**

### **Distance**

- Cultch staff are strongly encouraged to work from home and not out of the office whenever possible.
- Maintain at least 6 feet apart unless absolutely necessary.
- Avoid any unnecessary physical contact and touching your face.
- Increase physical space between staff, cast and crew members. Masks mandatory whenever in the building and not at your designated workstation.

### **Sanitation**

- Sanitation Stations: Hand sanitizer should be visible & available at all points of ingress and throughout the venues, and common areas like dressing rooms and staff offices
- High Touch surfaces in areas that are in use are sanitized twice daily and before any use of a space.
- Crew, cast and staff are required to wash their hands with soap and water frequently.
- Disposable, disinfecting wipes are readily available so that commonly used surfaces can be wiped down before each use.
- Disinfect workstations, sets, gear frequently.

### **Enforcement**

- If you're feeling unwell with symptoms outside of your regular health, such as fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, stay home and immediately inform your supervisor.
- No admittance for symptoms of respiratory illness, including fever or cough.



- All groups from outside the organization including renters and artists in residence must submit a Covid Safety plan for all of their staff that meets or exceeds these policies.
- All staff, visitors and artists must sign in upon entering the building to comply with contact tracing measures.

### **Change**

- The Cultch, Artists and Clients need to continue to focus on what is the current necessity for cast/crew/staff & patrons safety and comfort, rather than any former customs/practices.
- We are entering into a new era in Live Theatre production in which flexibility and compassion need to be at the forefront of everything.

## **1. STAFF HEALTH AND HYGIENE**

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

### **The COVID-19 Mitigation Team**

The Cultch will designate members of staff with appropriate medical and risk management knowledge as the “Infection Mitigation Team”. The COVID-19 Mitigation Team will 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 inform staff in the application of current information about hazards and infection control measures, including physical distancing, handwashing, and disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
- Determine, in conjunction with the venue or event organizer, if staff or patrons may safely enter the event space when there is a health concern.

### **Practices for Healthy Staff and Volunteers**

- **Health Declaration:** All staff, volunteers and crew will be required to actively respond to Health Declaration questions when arriving for a shift. Anyone who says yes to any of the four questions, will not be permitted entrance.
  - Symptoms
  - Isolation
  - Contact

- Travel
- **Physical Distancing:** Public health guidance stresses that everyone should leave at least six feet (about two meters) to the person closest to them when working. Where a task cannot be accomplished working alone, staff should limit their exposure and wear a mask.
- **Hand Washing:** Frequent handwashing with soap is vital to help combat the spread of any virus. When a sink is available, staff should wash their hands for at least 20 seconds at least every 60 minutes, and dried thoroughly. As a backup, staff may use sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol when a sink is not available. Staff should also wash their hands at the beginning and end of each shift and break, after using the restroom, sneezing, touching their faces, blowing their nose, cleaning, sweeping, mopping, smoking, eating, or drinking.
- **Face Masks:** Physical respiratory protection such as an N95 mask or cloth face covering should be worn whenever staff are away from their workstation and/or within six feet (two meters) of each other because (a) COVID-19 is spread through respiratory droplets and aerosols and (b) a significant number of infected people will show no outward symptoms of illness. In order to ensure maximum comprehension and compliance, signage posted throughout the venue shows how to wear and use a face covering, including these points.
  - A face shield is not sufficient on its own, a face mask must also be worn.
  - Your face covering should be able to be worn over your ears. Neck gaiters are not sufficient. You may be required to wear a disposable mask provided by the Cultch if your over-the-ear face-covering does not effectively limit the transmission of droplets.
  - 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 face coverings after each use, and wear other masks only according to the manufacturer's specifications.
- **Touching Your Face:** Avoid touching your 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:** Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, or an elbow or shoulder if no tissue is available, followed by thorough handwashing.
- **Sharing of Food:** Under no circumstances should food be shared.

## Practices for Sick Staff

Staff must notify their supervisor/coordinator 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 Staff:** If staff or volunteers exhibit symptoms of acute respiratory illness upon arrival to their shift, or becomes sick during the day, their supervisor must separate them from other staff and patrons and send them home or to a designated isolation area immediately.
- **Documentation:** The supervisor should document the circumstances of the staff's illness to help with contact tracing, as applicable.
- **Contact with Symptomatic Staff:** 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:** Staff 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 you have been in contact with someone with a confirmed case, a member from Public Health will contact you to let you know you may have been exposed and provide directions for the next steps.
- If you have symptoms, you will be sent for testing. If you do not have symptoms, you will be asked to self-isolate so that if you develop COVID-19, you won't spread it to others in the community. Learn about [self-isolation](#).

**Paid Sick Leave.** All staff will be covered for sick leave.

## 2. SANITIZING THE VENUE

### Sanitizing High-Touch Areas

All High-Touch Public Areas of the venue will be sanitized every day.

- **Public Areas** (lobby, hallways, box office, food service areas)
  - Door handles, handrails, push-plates
  - Bike rack or other barricades the public may touch
  - Handrails for stairs
  - Elevator buttons - inside and out.
  - Reception desks and ticket counters
  - Telephones, Point of Sale terminals and keypads
  - Tables and chairs, including booster seats
  - Trash receptacle touchpoints

- **Restrooms** (front and back of house)
  - 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
  - Trash receptacle touchpoints
- **Back of House, Offices, Dressing Rooms, 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
  - Trash receptacle touchpoints

## 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.
- **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. The supervisor should ensure that cleaning logs are carefully entered and preserved for reference.

## 3. MAXIMUM OCCUPANCY

Occupancy limits for each venue and rooms within the facility (including dressing rooms,



green rooms, and washrooms should be established and posted. Performing arts venues are subject to the provincial health officer's orders prohibiting mass gatherings of 50 patrons or more. Ensure that physical distancing can be maintained throughout the facility.

### **The Cultch (1895 Venables Street)**

- **Historic:** 44
- **Culture Lab:** 20
  - 20 without seats or live performers
- **Gallery (Lobby):** 20
- **Box Office:** 1
- **Founders Lounge:** 8 (4 pairs)
- **Public Washrooms:**
  - Larger washroom ("women"): max 3 at a time
  - Smaller washroom ("men"): max 2 at a time
  - Single washroom: 1
- **Historic Greenroom:** 6
- **Historic Dressing Rooms:**
  - A: 3
  - B: 3
  
- **Culture Lab Greenroom:** 1
- **Culture Lab Dressing Rooms:**
  - D: 3
  - E: 3

### **Jim Green Studio (1885 Venables Street)**

- Max 15

### **The York (639 Commercial Drive)**

- **Venue:** 50 (50 audience, not including crew/cast)
- **Box Office:** 1
- **Lobby:** 20
- **Public Washrooms:**
  - Larger washroom ("women"): 3
  - Smaller washroom ("men"): 2
- **York Greenroom:** 2
- **Dressing Rooms:**
  - A: 5
  - B: 6

## 4. INGRESS AND EGRESS

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

- Cultch COVID-19 protocols and expectations will be listed on The Cultch website.
- Patrons will be emailed prior to the event notifying them of, and going through, the Cultch COVID-19 policies and procedures.

### Handwashing Stations

Sanitizer containing at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol will be provided at all points of ingress and other well-marked and illuminated locations throughout the venue. Supervisors must regularly confirm there are adequate supplies.

### Screening

Once patrons reach the front of the line outside the venue.

- **Health Screening.** Patrons will be asked a set of health screening questions by Front of House staff before entering the venue. Patrons are notified beforehand that if they said "yes" to any symptoms, they will not be granted access and will be refunded.
- **Ticket Scanning.** Avoid paper tickets and cash handling as much as possible. Make tickets available in advance and online as much as possible. Electronic tickets should be scanned by volunteers/staff wearing face coverings and gloves. Rentals will be encouraged to use electronic ticketing.
- **Face Covering.** Patrons are required to wear face masks when they enter the building as well as in their seats. To speed the line, face-covering could be provided in advance.

### Sanitizer Stations

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

### Accommodations

New health screening measures may require new accommodations for persons with disabilities. With reduced points of ingress or egress, we must ensure continued accessibility. The Cultch and Rental Clients must 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.

### Scheduled Egress from Back to Front

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 staff and volunteers to ensure that patrons



understand the procedure and comply with physical distancing requirements until they are in their vehicles or otherwise outside the venue doors.

## 5. FRONT OF HOUSE CIRCULATION AND MERCHANDISE

### **Restrooms**

Occupancy will be limited to ensure physical distancing. 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. New policies will be posted on Cultch web sites, physical media platforms, and physical signage inside the event space to avoid surprised patrons waiting impatiently in long lines.

### **Intermission**

Performances will not be permitted to have intermissions at this time.

### **Merchandise**

- Merchandise will not be sold on-site. If a client wishes to sell merchandise, it must be set up through our Box Office department.

## 6. PRODUCTION

- **Physical distancing** applies to production crew working in confined spaces. Staff should always wear face coverings when those do not interfere with essential work functions, particularly when they cannot maintain physical 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 staff member should protect themselves from infection to the best of their ability while lifting the load together.
- **High-touch equipment** such as monitors, microphones, mic stands, remotes, and audio/video cable will be sanitized frequently, and equipment will be dedicated to individual users where possible.