

COVID-19 Guidance for Musicians (Vocalists and Instrumentalists)

July 14th, 2020

COVID-19 is most commonly spread from an infected person through respiratory droplets generated through coughing, sneezing, laughing, singing, and talking. Singing, use of wind instruments, speaking loudly and cheering may pose a higher risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19. It spreads more easily when contact is close (within 2 metres/6 feet) and prolonged (more than 15 minutes). This an area of active research and guidance will be amended as evidence evolves.

This document provides additional guidance for vocalists and instrumentalists. This guidance must be used in conjunction with the [COVID-19 Prevention Guide for event organizers, theatres and performance venues](#) and all individuals must adhere to the public health measures outlined in the *Health Protection Act Order*.

If there is COVID-19 activity in the community, the likelihood of it being introduced during an event or at a theatre/venue is higher. Gatherings/events may pose a greater risk of COVID-19 spread if there is a large number of attendees over an extended period of time.

Additional Guidance for Musicians

The most effective measures to reduce the spread of COVID-19 includes separating people by maintaining physical distance (2 metres/6 feet) or the use of physical barriers where physical distance is difficult to maintain. Using a layered approach with multiple measures including environmental cleaning, conducting frequent hand hygiene and maintaining respiratory etiquette decreases the number of interactions and increases the safety of interactions that occur.

- Consider alternate options for an in-person gathering such as a virtual event.
- Performers and participants should not attend events while ill, even if symptoms are mild Visit the [811 website](#) for an up to date list of signs/symptoms.
- Use outdoor sites where possible to further minimize risks.
- At present, limit the number of vocalists and instrumentalists to soloists or small groups
- Post signage to inform participants of signs/symptoms and reminders about physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.
- Maintain physical distancing between performers, event staff and participants at all times. Length of instruments should be accounted for when determining physical distancing between individuals:
 - There is limited evidence to determine exactly what a safe distance would be between singers and others, but greater distances can reduce the risk. Therefore, singers/vocalists should maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres/6 feet and consider an even greater distance from all others (e.g. other vocalists, spectators, etc.) while performing.
 - Consider the use of physical barriers between performers and others (conductor/spectators). Barriers need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

novascotia.ca/coronavirus



- Have vocalists/musicians face away from others while singing or playing wind instruments.
- Performers should wear non-medical masks if physical distancing cannot be maintained between performers and/or the audience.
- If live music is being used for ambiance, lower volume of the music is important. Lower music volume allows the other individuals present to more consistently practice physical distancing (reduces need for close or loud talking).
- Adherence to maximum gathering limits must be maintained.
- Ensure access to hand hygiene stations are readily available.
- If possible, keep a list of performers present and contact information to assist Public Health with contact tracing, if needed.

Group Singing (Choirs, Ensembles, Musical Theatre)

- Group singing is considered higher risk at this time and is not recommended.
- If singing groups choose to practice they should consider virtual or small group practice; any time spent in group singing should be kept to a minimum.

Teaching

- Vocal teaching should involve solo or duet classes and must allow necessary physical distance.
- For indoor studios there should be a 30-minute time followed by cleaning of common surfaces between classes.

Karaoke

- Karaoke is considered high risk due to the potential for a significant number of singers and therefore should not take place at this time.

Cleaning & Disinfection

Particular attention to cleaning and disinfection of high touch surfaces must occur. Health Canada has a list of approved disinfectants that are suitable for use.

- Equipment [e.g. music stands, microphones, water bottles] and sheet music or devices with electronic sheet music should not be shared. If items must be shared, they must be disinfected after each use and between users.
- Instruments, including accessories (e.g. drumsticks, mallets, and guitar picks) should not be shared. Thoroughly clean and disinfect after each use and between users if sharing must occur.
- Instruments, mouthpieces and accessories should be cleaned and disinfected as per standard protocol. Do not share cleaning equipment.
- To reduce the risk of exposure, cleaning of instruments with saliva build-up should be done outside of the group setting (maintaining physical distancing or use of a barrier) directing the saliva into a disposable container/trashcan. Perform hand hygiene after cleaning instruments.
- Uniforms or gowns should not be shared and should be laundered after each use.