



Music Activities and Performances During COVID-19

5/6/2021

This guidance applies to all business and places of public accommodation (“businesses”)—as defined by Executive Order 21-11, as amended by Executive Order 21-21 (“EO”)—engaged in or providing musical activities or performances, including but not limited to commercial businesses, youth symphonies, orchestras, colleges, schools, and places of worship. This guidance applies from Friday, May 7, 2021 at 12 p.m. (noon) through May 27, 2021. Businesses must continue to follow all other applicable [Stay Safe Industry Guidance \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp). The EO requires all businesses to have and implement a written COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that addresses EO requirements and applicable Stay Safe Industry Guidance. For more information about plan requirements, refer to applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities webpage \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp).

School-based K-12 music programs should follow this guidance and should also consult the 2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools found on [Stay Safe Guidance for Schools, Colleges, and Universities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/schools.jsp) and [CDC: Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-staff.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-staff.html).

Recommendations to prevent the spread of COVID-19

COVID-19 is primarily spread through respiratory droplets, so the risk of COVID-19 transmission increases when people gather with other households. Several key strategies can reduce the risk of getting sick or transmitting COVID-19:

- Wear a well-fitting face covering. Visit [Frequently Asked Questions About the Requirement to Wear Face Coverings \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecoverfaq.html).
- Keep at least 6 feet of physical distance from other households and wash hands often.
- Get tested. Visit [COVID-19 Testing \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/testsites/index.html) for information about who should get tested and how to get a test.

- Stay home if you are sick or were exposed to COVID-19. Visit [If You Are Sick: COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/sick.html) and [Quarantine Guidance for COVID-19 \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/quarguide.pdf).
- Get vaccinated. Visit [COVID-19 Vaccine \(www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/vaccine/index.html).
- Work from home. Working from home is strongly recommended and businesses are strongly encouraged to allow employees to work from home when possible. Employers must provide reasonable accommodations as required under existing federal and state law. Employers are strongly encouraged to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with one or more members of their household who have underlying medical conditions and who are unable to be vaccinated.

Understanding risks: singing and playing brass and woodwind instruments

Singing and instrumental music produced by woodwind or brass instruments are thought to be higher-risk activities for COVID-19 spread due to the aggressive expelling of respiratory droplets. This can result in aerosols that can hang in the air for hours. Much attention has been given to the risks of singing because of “super-spreading” events documented during this pandemic. It is important to take extra precautions when participating in musical activities, especially if they involve vocalists and wind instrument musicians.

This document was created based on a review of the literature and recommendations developed by key partners in the music sector, especially these subject matter experts in K-12 and higher education. This guidance was also based on [CDC: Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19 \(www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-staff.html\)](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/k-12-staff.html).

Each section below outlines the steps that businesses or organizations are required to take (“Requirements”) and those that are strongly recommended but not required (“Recommendations”).

General requirements for COVID-19 preparedness plans

- All businesses and organizations must have a COVID-19 Preparedness Plan that explains how the business or organization will keep workers, patrons, performers, students, and/or visitors safe. Refer to the guidance that applies to your industry for more information about Plan requirements: [Stay Safe Industry Guidance \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp).
- The business or organization must assign a designated plan administrator to ensure their COVID-19 Preparedness Plan addresses all requirements, is put into practice, and is updated as necessary.

- The business or organization must ensure that staff, contracted or volunteer performers, audience members, and students can access the plan by posting the plan on their websites or in readily accessible physical locations.
- Employers, administrators, or facility managers are responsible for ensuring that staff, contracted or volunteer performers, audience members, and students comply with the plan requirements.
- The plan must address requirements in this document in addition to the applicable [Stay Safe Guidance for All Business Entities \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/all-businesses.jsp) and [Stay Safe Industry Guidance \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp) that applies to the performance or activity setting (e.g., guidance for entertainment venues).
- Under [Executive Order 20-81 \(www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf\)](https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf), people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all indoor businesses and public indoor spaces, beginning July 25, 2020.
 - Vocal performers may temporarily remove face coverings during indoor musical **performances** in businesses and public spaces when a face covering cannot be worn due to the nature of the performance, as long as social distancing is always maintained. Face shields should be considered as an alternative in these situations. Vocal performers must wear face coverings during indoor **practices**.
 - Musicians playing a musical instrument, such as a woodwind or brass instrument, may remove their face covering during an indoor **practice or performance** if the face covering cannot be used while playing the musical instrument, provided that social distancing is always maintained.
 - Consider using face coverings designed for singers and musicians who play brass or woodwind instruments, whenever possible.

Reducing the risk of COVID-19 among staff, performers, audiences, and students

Requirements for indoor venues

- Spectators must be separated at all times from performers by at least 12 feet. All venue-specific guidance relating to spectators or audience members must be followed, including applicable indoor capacity limits. Venue-specific guidance can be found at [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp).
- Require all people present—including performers, workers, and spectators or audience members—to wear face coverings when required by Executive Order 20-81, as detailed above.
- Maintain social distance of at least 6 feet between performers (singers and musicians) and encourage more distance if possible.
- Performers must have a dedicated space within a venue while performing, and it must be separated from the patrons or audience by a distance of at least 12 feet. Review ventilation quality when determining location of practices and performances.

Recommendations for indoor and outdoor venues

- Use pre-recorded or streamed music as an alternative to live performances or activities whenever possible.
- Reduce the number of singers and performers in ensembles whenever possible.
- Give preference to outdoor rehearsals and performances.
- Avoid shared equipment where the mouth may come into contact with equipment (such as mouthpieces, microphones, etc.) and follow manufacturer's instructions to clean thoroughly between uses. Disposable microphone covers are also an option.
- Consider plexiglass barriers between performers, and between performers and an audience where appropriate.
- Reduce rehearsal and performance times.

Additional requirements and recommendations for specific settings and activities

Instrumental ensembles: orchestras and concert bands

Requirements

- Follow the "general requirements" listed above.
- When performing indoors, conductors and musicians who are able to wear a face covering when playing their instrument are required to wear a face covering at all times.
- When performing indoors, social distancing of 6 feet between musicians must be maintained at all times, as stated above.

Recommendations

- Follow the "general requirements" listed above.
- Increase physical distance between players to more than 6 feet. An additional 3 feet (i.e., 9-foot spacing) is strongly recommended for trombone players due to the length of the instrument.
- Reduce rehearsal and performance times.
- Reduce the total number of performers in an ensemble.
- Increase ventilation and air exchange rates when performing indoors.
- Have brass and woodwind musicians wear face coverings designed to be worn while playing. This measure is strongly recommended to reduce droplet spread.
- Have brass and woodwind players use coverings for their instruments to reduce droplet spread while playing. This measure is strongly recommended.

Vocal ensembles and choirs

Requirements

- Follow the “general requirements” listed above.
- For indoor activities:
 - During rehearsals, vocal performers and conductors must wear a face covering at all times. During rehearsal and performances, vocal performers must be separated a minimum of 6 feet from each other; encourage more distance if possible.

Recommendations

- Have vocal performers wear face coverings during performances.
- Hold vocal rehearsals and performances outside whenever possible.
- Reduce rehearsal and performance times.
- Keep groups as small as possible; have people practice with the same group at each practice and avoid intermixing.
- Separate vocal performers by a distance of more than 6 feet during rehearsals and performances. A distance of 12 feet between performers is recommended when performances are indoors, and performers are not wearing face coverings.

Individual music lessons – instrumental and vocal

Requirements

- Follow the “general requirements” listed above.
- For indoor activities:
 - Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between the student and teacher and encourage more distance when possible.
 - Both instructor and student(s) must wear face coverings at all times, except while playing an instrument that cannot be played with a face covering.

Recommendations

- Follow recommendations from the “General requirements” listed above.
- Consider remote instruction.
- It is strongly recommended that both student and teacher wear face coverings that can be worn while playing brass or woodwind instruments to avoid having to remove the face covering during the lesson.
- It is strongly recommended that both students and teachers use instrument coverings designed to reduce droplet spread while brass or woodwind instruments are played.

- Studios should be assessed for size and ventilation of space. Increase ventilation where possible, including opening windows whenever possible. If ventilation is a concern, consider teaching lessons remotely.
- Consider relocating lessons to larger spaces if available.
- Limit in-person lessons to 30 minutes or less.

Music in faith-based organizations

Requirements

- Follow requirements from the sections above as they apply.
- Indoor congregational singing may occur if all participants wear face coverings.

Recommendations

- Follow recommendations from the sections as they apply.
- Use pre-recorded or streamed music as an alternative to live music, congregational singing, or chanting whenever possible.

References

Related guidance from the State of Minnesota

- [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/restaurants-bars.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/restaurants-bars.jsp)
- [Stay Safe Guidance for Places of Worship \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/places-of-worship.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/places-of-worship.jsp)
- [Stay Safe Guidance for Entertainment and Meeting Venues \(staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp\)](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/entertainment.jsp)
- [Environmental Protection Agency's Indoor Air and Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) \(www.epa.gov/coronavirus/indoor-air-and-coronavirus-covid-19\)](https://www.epa.gov/coronavirus/indoor-air-and-coronavirus-covid-19)

Studies, webinars, and publications on music instruction during the pandemic

- [Resources for Choral Professionals During the Pandemic \(acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/\)](https://acda.org/resources-for-choral-professionals-during-a-pandemic/)
Industry guidance from the American Choral Directors Association COVID-19 Response Committee.
- [Resuming Instruction During COVID-19 \(www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning_to_School_During_COVID-19.aspx\)](https://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Returning_to_School_During_COVID-19.aspx)
American String Teachers Association (ASTA) guidance.
- [High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice — Skagit County, Washington, March 2020 \(www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm\)](https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm)
Article from the CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.

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- [Unprecedented International Coalition led by Performing Arts Organizations to Commission COVID-19 Study \(www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/\)](http://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/)
An aerosol study commissioned by the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), the College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA), and a coalition of more than 125 performing arts organizations. Conducted by researchers at the University of Colorado and University of Maryland.
- [COVID-19 Response Committee Report \(www.cbdna.org/covid19/\)](http://www.cbdna.org/covid19/)
College Band Directors National Association (CBDNA).
- [The UK's professional body for musicians and subject association for music: The ISM publishes global review of research on COVID-19 transmission within performance and music education \(www.ism.org/news/ism-publishes-global-literature-review\)](http://www.ism.org/news/ism-publishes-global-literature-review)
Incorporated Society of Musicians in the United Kingdom. ISM Global Literature Review: Music Performance, Education, and COVID-19.
- [Fall 2020 Guidance for Music Education from NFHS and NAFME \(nafme.org/my-classroom/fall-2020-guidance-music-education-from-nfhs-nafme/\)](http://nafme.org/my-classroom/fall-2020-guidance-music-education-from-nfhs-nafme/)
National Association for Music Education (NAfME) and National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS).
- [Get Your Marching Orders: Boot Camp for Fall \(youtu.be/31dmasbRP8o\)](https://youtu.be/31dmasbRP8o)
Webinar from the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).
- [Peabody Institute Lunch and Learn \(peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/student-services-resources/information-technology-services/remote-teaching-and-learning-at-peabody/summer-lunch-and-learn-series/\)](http://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/student-services-resources/information-technology-services/remote-teaching-and-learning-at-peabody/summer-lunch-and-learn-series/)
Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University upcoming and past performing arts webinars.
- [Leading with Science: Returning to Music Instruction and Performance \(www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3wOXc_MrWo\)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3wOXc_MrWo)
July 8, 2020, webinar from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.
- [Managing COVID-19 Protocols in Administering Percussion Performance Curriculum \(www.pas.org/\)](http://www.pas.org/)
Percussive Arts Society COVID-19 Task Force.
- [Masks Do More Than Protect Others During COVID-19: Reducing the Inoculum of SARS-CoV-2 to Protect the Wearer \(doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-06067-8\)](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11606-020-06067-8)
Journal of General Internal Medicine, July 31, 2020.
- [Reducing transmission of SARS-CoV-2 \(science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6498/1422\)](https://science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6498/1422)
Science, published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, June 26, 2020.

Face coverings for singing

NOTE: We are not promoting or approving any specific product listed below. We are only providing examples of different products available.

- [Broadway Relief Project: The Singer's Mask \(www.broadwayreliefproject.com/singersmask\)](http://www.broadwayreliefproject.com/singersmask)
- [My Music Folders: Resonance Singer's Mask with disposable biofilters \(www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/\)](http://www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/)
- [Clear Mask \(www.theclearmask.com/product\)](http://www.theclearmask.com/product)

Face coverings for wind instrument musicians

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DIY playable masks: a number of homemade mask designs for woodwind and brass players are available on Facebook, YouTube, and other websites. Consider carefully whether they effectively capture droplets and aerosols from the mouth and nose while still allowing woodwind and brass players to successfully play their instruments. [United Sound \(www.unitedsound.org/mask\)](http://www.unitedsound.org/mask) offers a type of overlapping mask that has a patent pending.

Standard masks: standard fabric masks may be sufficient for woodwind and brass playing if they are folded toward the nose or moved to the chin while playing and returned to the regular position for resting or talking. Caution should be used, as aerosols may also emerge from the nose while playing.

Bell covers

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DIY bell covers: use 80 denier nylon hose or stockings and cut an appropriate length to enclose the bell. Bell covers may also be created using cotton knit fabric (high quality T-shirt) or 100% tightly woven cotton (quilting fabric). Use a circle of fabric larger than the bell to allow for sewing a casing for the elastic; dinner plates of various sizes work well as a pattern. Example: for a trumpet bell cover, use a 9 to 10-inch circle; trombone, a 15-inch circle, remembering that some fabric will be used to create the elastic casing. It is important to test bell covers to make sure players can produce normal sound with covers in place. Commercial bell covers have started to become available.

- [Stanbury Uniforms Bell Covers \(stanbury.com/collections/bell-covers\)](http://stanbury.com/collections/bell-covers)
- [Don't Cancel Band - Stretchable Bell Covers by SAS \(www.stretchablecovers.com/covid19bellcovers.html\)](http://www.stretchablecovers.com/covid19bellcovers.html)

Instrument disinfecting guidelines

- [American String Teachers Association Instrument Cleaning Tips \(www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument_Cleaning_Tips.aspx\)](http://www.astastrings.org/Web/Resources/Instrument_Cleaning_Tips.aspx)
- [National Association for Music Education COVID-19 Instrument Cleaning Guidelines \(nafme.org/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/\)](http://nafme.org/covid-19-instrument-cleaning-guidelines/)
- [National Association of Music Merchants COVID-19 and Instrument Cleaning \(www.namm.org/covid-19/articles/covid-19-and-instrument-cleaning\)](http://www.namm.org/covid-19/articles/covid-19-and-instrument-cleaning)
- [Steinway & Sons How to Clean Your Piano \(www.steinway.com/news/features/utility/cleaning-your-piano\)](http://www.steinway.com/news/features/utility/cleaning-your-piano)
- [National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine: Does ultraviolet \(UV\) light kill the coronavirus? \(sites.nationalacademies.org/BasedOnScience/covid-19-does-ultraviolet-light-kill-the-coronavirus/index.htm\)](https://sites.nationalacademies.org/BasedOnScience/covid-19-does-ultraviolet-light-kill-the-coronavirus/index.htm)
- [Yamaha Disinfection Safety Information \(usa.yamaha.com/support/safety/index.html\)](http://usa.yamaha.com/support/safety/index.html)

Software for teaching lessons remotely

- [Cleanfeed \(cleanfeed.net\)](http://cleanfeed.net)
- [Soundjack \(soundjack.eu\)](http://soundjack.eu)
- [JamKazam \(www.jamkazam.com\)](http://www.jamkazam.com)
- [LoLa \(lola.conts.it\)](http://lola.conts.it)
- [Appcompanionist \(www.appcompanionist.com\)](http://www.appcompanionist.com)
- [SmartMusic \(www.smartmusic.com\)](http://www.smartmusic.com)



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