

# Music Activities and Performances During COVID-19

Businesses or organizations providing musical activities or performances—including but not limited to commercial businesses, youth symphonies, orchestras, colleges, schools, and places of worship—must take steps to lower the spread of COVID-19. This document identifies the required and recommended precautions that such businesses and organizations are to take. The items identified as requirements in this document must be incorporated into the business' or organization's COVID-19 Preparedness Plan.

School-based K-12 music programs should follow this guidance and should also consult the [2020-2021 Planning Guide for Schools: Health Considerations for Navigating COVID-19 \(PDF\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/schools/k12planguide.pdf>) and the [CDC Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19](https://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>).

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## 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 the [CDC Strategies for Protecting K-12 School Staff from COVID-19](https://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”).

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# General requirements

## 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: [For Businesses and Organizations Stay Safe Guidance \(https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/index.jsp\)](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 and/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 should address face coverings and when wearing them is required. Under Executive Order 20-81, people in Minnesota are required to wear a face covering in all indoor businesses and public indoor spaces, beginning July 25, 2020. Additionally, workers are required to wear a face covering when working outdoors in situations where social distancing (i.e., physical distance of at least 6 feet from persons not in the same household) cannot be maintained.  
See [Face Covering Requirements and Recommendations under Executive Order 20-81 \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/facecover.html).
  - Under [Executive Order 20-81 \(https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf\)](https://www.leg.state.mn.us/archive/execorders/20-81.pdf), vocal performers may temporarily remove face coverings during indoor musical **performances** in businesses, public spaces, and theaters 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**.
  - Under Executive Order 20-81, 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

- Require audience members, staff, students, and performers to wear face coverings when required by Executive Order 20-81 (see summary of face coverings requirements above, under the **General requirements, COVID-19 Preparedness Plan** section).
- Maintain physical distance of at least 6 feet between performers (singers and musicians) and encourage more distance if possible.
- Live music events are permitted only by performers who are contracted or hired by the business. Singing or performances by patrons, including open mic events and karaoke, is not permitted.
- 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

- 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.
- Use plexiglass barriers between performers, and between performers and an audience whenever possible.
- Reduce rehearsal and performance times.

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## Additional requirements and recommendations for specific settings and activities

### Instrumental ensembles: orchestras and concert bands

Requirements:

- Follow requirements from the **General requirements** listed above.
- Conductors and musicians that are not playing woodwind or brass instruments are required to wear a face covering at all times.
- Social distancing of 6 feet between musicians must be maintained at all times, as stated above.

Recommendations:

- Follow recommendations from 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.
- Consider keeping ensembles to 25 individuals or less.
- Increase ventilation and air exchange rates.
- 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.

## Marching bands

Requirements:

- Follow requirements from the **General requirements** and **Instrumental ensembles** sections listed above.
- During practices, marching bands must limit practice groups to 25 or players less. This means keeping the same individuals in a group throughout all practices and not intermixing groups, as much as possible.
- Marching bands are limited to defined venues for recreational or event purposes and may not perform on a public street or other public right of way.

Recommendations:

- Follow requirements from the **General requirements** and **Instrumental ensembles** sections listed above.

## Vocal ensembles and choirs

Requirements:

- Follow requirements from the **General requirements** listed above.
- 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:

- Follow recommendations from the **General requirements** listed above.
- Have vocal performers wear face coverings during performances.
- Hold vocal rehearsals and performances outside whenever possible.
- Reduce rehearsal and performance times.
- Maintain groups of 25 individuals or less; have individuals practice with the same group at each practice and avoid intermixing. Groups of 10 people or less should also be considered, if possible.
- 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 requirements from the **General requirements** listed above.
- Maintain at least 6 feet of physical distance between the student and teacher, and more whenever possible.
- Both instructor and student(s) must wear face coverings at all times, except while playing a woodwind or brass instrument.

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 student and teacher 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.
  - Consider relocating lessons to larger spaces if available.
  - Increase ventilation where possible, including opening windows whenever possible.
  - If ventilation is a concern, consider teaching lessons remotely.
- Limit in-person lessons to 30 minutes or less.

## Music in faith-based organizations

### Requirements

- Follow requirements from the **sections** above about **General requirements, Instrumental ensembles** and/or **Vocal ensembles**, as they apply.
- Congregational singing, group singing, or chanting by attendees is not recommended in indoor ceremonies or services. However, if congregational singing is allowed, both of the following requirements must be met:
  1. Individuals who are not part of a household group must be separated by a physical distance of at least 6 feet, and household groups must be separated from other household groups by more than 6 feet, whenever possible.
  2. Attendees or members of the congregation must wear face coverings during the entire service or ceremony, even when singing or chanting.

### Recommendations

- Follow requirements from the **sections** above about **General requirements, Instrumental ensembles** and/or **Vocal ensembles**, as they apply.
- Use pre-recorded or streamed music as an alternative to live music or chanting whenever possible.

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## About this guidance

COVID-19 is an emerging disease. We expect to learn more over time and will update this guidance with new information as it is available. The recommendations are based on current public health data and may be revised in the future based on new information.

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## References

### Related guidance from the State of Minnesota

- [Stay Safe Guidance for Restaurants and Bars](https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/restaurants-bars.jsp)  
(<https://staysafe.mn.gov/industry-guidance/restaurants-bars.jsp>)
- [Stay Safe Industry Guidance for Safely Reopening Faith Based Communities](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safefaitth.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safefaitth.pdf>)
- [Safe Celebrations and Events](https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safeevents.pdf)  
(<https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/safeevents.pdf>)
- [Environmental Protection Agency's New Indoor Air and COVID webpages](https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEPAIAQ/bulletins/296e73d)  
(<https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/USEPAIAQ/bulletins/296e73d>)

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

- [Resources for Choral Professionals During the Pandemic](https://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](https://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](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](https://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.
- [Unprecedented International Coalition led by Performing Arts Organizations to Commission COVID-19 Study](https://www.nfhs.org/articles/unprecedented-international-coalition-led-by-performing-arts-organizations-to-commission-covid-19-study/) (<https://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](https://www.cbdna.org/covid19/) (<https://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](https://www.ism.org/news/ism-publishes-global-literature-review)  
(<https://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](https://nafme.org/my-classroom/fall-2020-guidance-music-education-from-nfhs-nafme/)  
(<https://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](https://youtu.be/31dmasbRP8o) (<https://youtu.be/31dmasbRP8o>)  
Webinar from the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS).
- [Peabody Institute Lunch and Learn](https://peabody.jhu.edu/life-at-peabody/student-services-resources/information-technology-services/remote-teaching-and-learning-at-peabody/summer-lunch-and-learn-series/) (<https://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](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3w0Xc_MrWo)  
([https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3w0Xc\\_MrWo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W3w0Xc_MrWo))  
July 8, 2020, webinar from the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.
- [Managing COVID-19 Protocols in Administering Percussion Performance Curriculum](https://www.pas.org/)  
(<https://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](https://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 \(https://science.sciencemag.org/content/368/6498/1422\)](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 \(https://www.broadwayreliefproject.com/singersmask\)](https://www.broadwayreliefproject.com/singersmask)
- [My Music Folders: Resonance Singer's Mask with disposable biofilters \(https://www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/\)](https://www.mymusicfolders.com/product/resonance-singers-mask-with-disposable-biofilters/)
- [Ellebabe Breathable Face Mask With Clear Window Visible Expression for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing \(https://ellebabe.com/products/dh142-elbb1\)](https://ellebabe.com/products/dh142-elbb1)
- [Clear Mask \(https://www.theclearmask.com/product\)](https://www.theclearmask.com/product)

## Face coverings for wind instrument musicians

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

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 \(http://www.unitedsound.org/mask\)](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

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

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

## Instrument disinfecting guidelines

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

## Software for teaching lessons remotely

- [Cleanfeed](https://cleanfeed.net) (<https://cleanfeed.net>)
- [Soundjack](https://dev.soundjack.eu) (<https://dev.soundjack.eu>)  
Replaces [Soundjack Current](https://www.soundjack.eu/index.php) (<https://www.soundjack.eu/index.php>) on Sept. 2.
- [JamKazam](https://www.jamkazam.com) (<https://www.jamkazam.com>)
- [LoLa](https://lola.conts.it) (<https://lola.conts.it>)
- [Appcompanionist](https://www.appcompanionist.com) (<https://www.appcompanionist.com>)
- [SmartMusic](https://www.smartmusic.com) (<https://www.smartmusic.com>)



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