

COVID-19 Guidance for Musicians (Vocalists and Instrumentalists)

January 26, 2021

This guidance is meant to support individuals, groups, businesses and organizations in planning for musical activities including lessons, practices, performances and musical gatherings.

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](#). Also, be aware of [local restrictions in your community](#).

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 and brass 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 is an area of active research and guidance will be amended as evidence evolves.

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. Individuals should also consider their own personal circumstances when deciding whether or not to partake in activities that may post a higher risk of spreading the virus that causes COVID-19.

Additional Guidance for Musicians (Choirs, Ensembles, Musical Theatre, Wind/brass instruments)

Group singing and playing instruments (wind/brass) remain higher risk activities at this time. Consider:

- Alternate options for an in-person gathering such as a virtual event.
- Limiting the number of vocalists and instrumentalists to soloists or small groups.

If musicians choose to gather in groups, adherence to [gathering limits](#) must be maintained for participants and audience/spectators. The public health measures listed below should be implemented as a layered approach to reduce the risk of transmission of the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Performers and participants should not attend events while ill, even if symptoms are mild. The [COVID-19 Daily Checklist](#) should be completed.
- Keep groups small and consistent over time to reduce the number of overall contacts.
- Maintain physical distance between performers, event staff and participants.
 - There is limited evidence to determine exactly what a safe distance would be between performers and others, but greater distances can reduce the risk. Therefore, performers and participants should maintain a minimum distance of 2 metres/6 feet and consider an even greater distance from all others.
 - Length of instruments should be accounted for when determining physical distancing between individuals.
- Consider how to maintain physical distance when participants and spectators move throughout the venue/event.
- Use physical barriers (e.g. plexiglass) where physical distancing is difficult to maintain. Barriers need to be cleaned and disinfected after each use.

- Have performers and participants face away from others while singing or playing wind or brass instruments.
- Use outdoor sites where possible to further minimize risks. If indoors the site should be well ventilated.
- Post signage to inform participants of signs/symptoms and reminders about physical distancing, hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. Signs can be found at: <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/resources/>
- Participants should conduct frequent hand hygiene and practice respiratory etiquette. Access to hand hygiene (e.g. handwashing or use of alcohol-based hand rub) stations should be available.
- Performers and participants should wear non-medical masks if at all possible during the activity.
- Group singing/wind and or brass sessions should include no longer than 30 minutes of actual singing/playing; if part of a longer session then this 30 minutes should be at the end of the session.
- Follow cleaning and disinfecting procedures outlined below.
- 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).
- Keep a list of performers and participants present and contact information to assist Public Health with contact tracing, if needed.

Karaoke

- Karaoke is considered high risk due to the potential for a significant number of singers and therefore cannot take place at this time, except at [dedicated karaoke bars](#).

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. All products should be used as per the manufacturer's directions.

- 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.