

Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for  
Audiovisual Production – COVID-19

## OHS is everyone's business!



The purpose of this guide is to support the audiovisual production sector for management of occupational health and safety (OHS) in their work environment. It seeks to guarantee that operations can resume or continue under the safest and healthiest possible conditions in the context of COVID-19.

In a crisis period, it is important that workers, employers, and other players in the workplace collaborate to have healthy and safe work environments for all! Dialogue and cooperation are essential to achieve this.



### Management of occupational health and safety

Management means implementing the necessary measures to honour the employer's legal obligations, namely identify, correct and control the risks and encourage the workers' participation in this preventive approach.

Good cooperation between the employer and the staff is essential to encourage management of OHS.



The employer must **proceed with identification of the risks of transmission of COVID-19 in the work environment**. If the risks of contamination cannot be eliminated, the employer must seek to reduce and control them. The employer must identify the tasks during which workers may be exposed to the virus. The suppliers, subcontractors and partners have been informed of the preventive measures implemented in the company in compliance with the guidelines issued by the public health authorities to control the risks associated with COVID-19 and make them aware of the importance of complying with these measures.

The preventive measures that may be applied are based on the principles of exclusion of symptomatic persons from the workplace, physical distancing, hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and maintenance of hygiene measures for the tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces.

The COVID-19 context can be a major stress factor, whether for the employer or for the workers, suppliers, subcontractors and partners, due to the upheaval it causes in the different spheres of society. Special attention must therefore be paid to the psychosocial health of the staff.



### **Exclusion of symptomatic workers from the workplace**

Persons exhibiting symptoms are part of the COVID-19 transmission chain in the workplace. Procedures accounting for the following factors can avoid transmission of the disease:

- Identification of workers and artists with COVID-19 symptoms before they enter the workplace, by means such as:
  - a questionnaire,
  - a self-evaluation by the workers and artists;
- Answers to these questions are confidential and employers must take the necessary steps to ensure protection of their confidentiality.
- Posters are installed as reminders of the importance of hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and physical distancing at key locations and locations conducive to contamination (entrance, rooms, filming locations, washrooms, locker rooms, exterior doors, etc.);
- The suppliers, subcontractors, partners, workers and artists have been informed of the preventive measures implemented in the business to reduce and control the risks associated with COVID-19 and make them aware of the importance of complying with these measures;
- Every person exhibiting COVID-19 symptoms is informed of their obligation to stop participating in audiovisual production activities until they are able to resume them in compliance with the established sanitary standards;
- The producers, workers and artists who test positive for COVID-19 after visiting one or more audiovisual production locations must notify the people in charge according to the instructions received from the Direction générale de la santé publique;
- Every person who starts to feel symptoms in the workplace must be isolated in a room or other place away from other people and wear a procedure mask. The symptomatic person and all the people who have been in contact with this person must call 1-877-644-4545 to obtain instructions from the Direction générale de la santé publique;
- The results of the public health investigation make it possible to determine if the people who have been in contact with the symptomatic person may return to work or must self-isolate;
- Once the person exhibiting symptoms has left, prohibit access to these locations by waiting to disinfect the room, the surfaces and the objects touched by the person, if applicable.



## Physical distancing

- Whenever possible, a minimum of 2 metres of distancing between people must be maintained at work, from arrival to departure;
- This distance must also be maintained during breaks and lunch hour;
- The organization of work and activities has been reviewed to respect at least 2 metres of physical distancing between producers, workers and artists, whenever possible.
- Proximity traffic and interactions between producers, workers and artists are limited;
- Sharing objects is to be avoided. If this is impossible, implement strict hygiene measures;
- If possible, the smallest and most stable possible teams are preferred at each filming location to encourage physical distancing and reduction of contacts, particularly in the different closed locations with restricted space where several people may be grouped;
- Avoid holding meetings that require a physical gathering;
- Handshakes and hugs must be avoided;
- For the meal areas, avoid buffet tables or party platters. When the producer must provide the meal, ensure that individual service (individual serving provided on an individual dish) is offered (including for beverages) and, whenever possible, encourage “lunch box” service.

**Adjustments must be made to limit the risk of transmission** when the principles of physical distancing cannot be respected. For example:

- Use of technological means (telework, videoconference, etc.) is preferred (e.g. audition, approval of proofs, etc.);
- Physical barriers (full partitions) have been installed between the different workstations that are too close to each other or that cannot be spaced (e.g. control room or audio recording room);
- The organization of work has been reviewed. For example:
  - reduce the number of workers present at the same time and job rotations at the filming or audio recording location,
  - limit movements from place to place on the same day to the strict minimum necessary (e.g. from one room to another in the same building or from a film set to the control room),
  - areas of activity are specifically reserved for producers and the different groups of workers and artists, so as to limit contacts between these groups,
  - changes to the schedules of activities that can minimize contacts between artists have been planned,
  - efforts have been made to spread out the arrival and departure time of the different departments so as to avoid gatherings at the entrances;

- A procedure mask and protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin) are supplied to producers, workers and artists who perform a task requiring them to be within 2 metres of another person and in the absence of physical barriers;
- The audience is limited according to the Santé publique directives for gatherings. At all times, a minimum distance of 2 metres must be respected between workers and the audience.

### **Special measures for audiovisual productions**

- The crews of lighting technicians, stagehands and set decorators are reduced, whenever possible, and the work schedule is adapted to allow the fewest possible personnel on the film set at the same time;
- Whenever possible, limit the number of equipment units, scenery items or props;
- The microphones are disinfected after each use;
- It is recommended to obtain information from the lessor of the shooting location if applicable, of the date of the last leasing, because a good practice is to allow 24 hours between film crews. If this is impossible, the surfaces likely to be touched by different people on the film set must be cleaned and disinfected before using the film set;
- The sets, equipment units, objects or props that will be used during a shoot shall be cleaned and disinfected before and after their use;
- The workers and artists who must handle sets, equipment objects or props during a shoot must wash their hands frequently;
- If the same dressing room is used by more than one artist, one after another, it must be cleaned and disinfected between uses for each artist;
- On the film sets, limit circulations of cash (petty cash). Reimbursement of bills by bank transfers is to be encouraged. If cash is used, the people who have exchanged cash must wash their hands immediately after, or disinfect them with a no-rinse cleanser (hydroalcoholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60%).

### **Special measures for audiovisual productions authorized on and after June 7, 2021**

- The artists<sup>1</sup> may be at least one metre from other persons, without a procedure mask or protective eyewear, if they are working on a single set specifically dedicated to them and form a stable crew of fewer than 10 people. If all the artists in a stable crew have been vaccinated (one week after their second dose), the limit of fewer than 10 people is lifted;
- For a cumulative period not exceeding 15 minutes per day, these artists may shoot scenes within one metre, without a procedure mask or protective eyewear;

1. For artists who have been vaccinated (2 weeks after receiving the first dose of vaccine), the 7-day period to be part of a stable crew is lifted.  
For artists over 70 years of age who have been vaccinated (3 weeks after receiving the first dose of vaccine), the restriction is lifted.

- For stable crews where all the artists have been vaccinated (one week after receiving their 2 doses), physical contact (bedroom scenes, contact with parts of the face) and kissing during a scene are allowed, without the one-metre distance restriction and the 15-minute restriction;
- Persons at risk of [serious complications](#) and workers on unstable crews or working on more than one set must stay at least 2 metres away from each other if they are not separated by a physical barrier or they are not wearing a procedure mask or protective glasses;
- Regarding scenes shot less than one metre away, the employer must send the CNESST a register containing the following information:
  - shooting dates and locations,
  - names of the workers concerned.

#### **Special measures for personnel assigned to hairdressing and makeup**

- Refer to the CNESST Guide for the Personal Care and Esthetic Services Sector;
- The makeup artist uses an individual makeup kit for each person (artist, extra or guest).

#### **Special measures for personnel assigned to sewing or costumes**

- New clothes must be washed or set aside for 3 hours before a fitting;
- Fittings are done in isolated areas with the fewest number of people at a time;
- Clothes and costumes that have been fitted are washed or set aside for at least 3 hours before being fitted for another artist or made available again to production;
- Couturiers or costume designers and artists who must handle clothes or costumes must wash their hands frequently;
- Physical contacts must be reduced to the minimum;
- A procedure mask and protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin) are supplied to personnel assigned to sewing or costumes and artists who perform a task requiring them to be within 2 metres of another person;
- Clothes or costumes must be kept in individual plastic covers;
- The clothes or costumes worn are washed with the usual laundry soap or dry-cleaned.

#### **Measures for film crew transportation vehicles**

- Physical barriers (transparent full partitions in compliance with the standards in force) are installed between the driver and the workers or artists;
- In transport vehicles, when the physical barrier is not installed at the driver's station, prohibit access to the first benches to respect the 2-metre distance from the driver;

- The producers, workers or artists in the vehicle must be separated by a physical barrier or be seated alone on a bench with free benches between them to respect the 2-metre distance between people;
- A procedure mask and protective eyewear (protective glasses or visor covering the face down to the chin) are supplied to the driver, producers, workers and artists when it is impossible to be at least 2 metres from another person, without a physical barrier. In addition, the vehicle is filled to only 50% of its capacity;
- Suitable ventilation in the vehicle is ensured by avoiding air recirculation and encouraging opening of windows whenever possible, for example;
- The driver's station is cleaned and disinfected at least after 8 hours or during a change of driver (e.g. steering wheel, interior and exterior door handles, interior mirror, seat belts, doors, seat);
- The frequently touched surfaces in the vehicles are cleaned and disinfected every day (e.g. seat belts, doors, seats).

### **Special measures for postproduction and sound recording studios**

- Only one artist is present at a time in the audio recording booth for vocal takes, unless the artists are separated by physical barriers (full partitions);
- The microphones are disinfected after each use;
- Only one artist playing a wind instrument is present at a time in the audio recording booth, unless separated by physical barriers (full partitions);
- After an artist has played a wind instrument, the floor of the artist's work area is cleaned.



### **Hand hygiene**

Frequent hand washing with soap and water or with a hydroalcoholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60% for at least 20 seconds limits the risks of transmission in the work environment, particularly:

- before touching the face (eyes, nose, mouth);
- after coughing, sneezing or wiping the nose;
- before and after eating;
- when entering and leaving rooms and, whenever possible, after each use of collective equipment;
- when entering and leaving the job site;
- after handling something that is frequently touched or a package received;
- before putting on and removing protective equipment.

When a hand washing facility is unavailable nearby, provide a non-rinse cleanser (hydroalcoholic solution with an alcohol concentration of at least 60%).



## Respiratory etiquette

Respecting respiratory etiquette consists of:

- covering your mouth and nose when you cough or sneeze, and using tissues or the crook of your elbow;
- using single-use tissues;
- immediately discarding used tissues in the trash can;
- frequent hand washing;
- not touching your mouth or eyes with your gloved or bare hands.



## Maintenance of hygiene measures for tools, equipment and frequently touched surfaces

Given that the virus responsible for COVID-19 can survive on surfaces, application of hygiene measures is essential.

- Ensure efficient operation and maintenance of the ventilation systems, according to the regulatory requirements for the type of facility and the tasks performed;
- Clean the sanitary facilities at least after 8 hours of work and disinfect them daily;
- Clean the meal areas after each utilization and disinfect them daily. For example:
  - refrigerator door handle,
  - chair backs,
  - microwaves;
- Clean and disinfect the frequently touched surfaces after 8 hours of work and when they are visibly soiled. For example:
  - tables,
  - doorknobs,
  - faucets,
  - toilets,
  - telephones,
  - computer accessories;
- Steam clean the couches or frequently touched fabric surfaces;
- Clean and disinfect the tools and equipment used at least after 8 hours of work or when they must be shared;
- Use the appropriate cleaning products or disinfectants (see the manufacturer's recommendations and do not mix cleansers);
- Remove non-essential objects (magazines, newspapers and knickknacks) from the common areas;

Resources are available online for more information concerning [cleaning of surfaces](#) or the [recommended disinfectants](#).



## Legal obligations

Legal obligations with respect to occupational health and safety, for both the employer and for workers, must be applied in the context of COVID-19. They are summarized below.

### Employer

The employer has an obligation to protect the health, safety and physical well-being of their workers. *The Act respecting occupational health and safety* (AOHS) stipulates that the employer must take all the necessary measures to do so ([section 51](#)). This includes using methods to identify, correct and control risks.

In the context of COVID-19, the employer must ensure that the usual preventive measures are still appropriate. If not, they must modify them to protect workers against the risk of contamination.

The employer must also inform them about the risks associated with their work, including those associated with COVID-19. They must also provide workers with appropriate training, assistance and supervision so that everyone has the skill and knowledge required to safely perform the work assigned to them.

### Worker

Every worker has an obligation to take the necessary measures to protect their health, safety or physical well-being and to ensure that they do not endanger the health, safety or physical well-being of other people in the workplace ([section 49](#) of the AOHS). To do this, they must follow the rules and measures put in place in the context of COVID-19, just as they follow the other rules applied in the workplace. Workers must also participate in identifying and eliminating risks. If they see risks or have suggestions in this regard, they must inform the health and safety committee (if there is one), their superior or a representative of the employer.

## **Acknowledgments:**

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- Alliance québécoise des techniciens et techniciennes de l'image et du son
- Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices du Québec
- Bureau du cinéma et de la télévision du Québec / Québec Film and Television Council
- Société des auteurs de radio, télévision et cinéma
- Société de développement des entreprises culturelles
- Union des artistes
- Directors Guild of Canada
- International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees
- Direction de la santé publique
- Institut national de santé publique du Québec
- Ministère de la Culture et des Communications
- Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists Montreal

The guide and the kit result from a reflective process intended to support the work environments in management of occupational health and safety in the context of COVID-19. The project is scalable and will harmonize with the preventive measures ordered by the Direction de la santé publique (public health authorities).

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