Department of Theatre and Dance COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Guidelines for Rehearsal and Production in Tucker Theatre, Murphy Center Studios and Anderson Studio Theatre.
(rev. Sept. 13th, 2021)

The following is a synthesis and adaptation of multiple guidelines from the following:
- USITT-TPR Covid-19 Safe Reopening Resources
- Event Safety Alliance (ESA)
- Actors Equity Association (AEA)
- Illinois State University – School Of Theatre and Dance
- Minneapolis Opera
- Utah State University Eastern
- Research Institute for Exhibition and Live Communication (R.I.F.E.L.)
- Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA)
- Center for Disease Control (CDC)
- TN Department of Health
- Dance USA

The purpose of this document is to create guidelines that should be considered to mitigate risk during Theatre and Dance facility use for rehearsals, production, performance and special events. These regulations and mitigation plans may be fluid and fluctuate with better understanding of the risks associated with COVID-19 and the overarching mitigation plans of the University and Department. The Theatre and Dance Department is committed to working with each director, cast, and crew to ensure needs for each individual production are met and that safety is the number one priority.

GENERAL MITIGATION GUIDELINES

- All processes have been created to adhere where applicable to University guidelines. University Covid Mitigation updates and information is available at Campus Updates on Coronavirus Precautions | Middle Tennessee State University (mtsu.edu) Please refer to their FAQ section for more detailed information.
- All Faculty, administrative staff and students are required to report the following:
  - If they test positive for Covid-19 OR
  - Have symptoms consistent with Covid-19 OR
  - Are close contacts of positive Covid-19 persons
- Masks are required for all faculty, administrative staff and students when in the facility.
- If the University policies change regarding masking, distancing, testing, or quarantining; additional mitigation measures may be implemented. Any changes to the mitigation plan will be made in consultation with University personnel and adapt to suit the safety and needs of each individual rehearsal and production process and participants.
- Best practices regarding social distancing, hand washing, face coverings, PPE, temperature screenings, self-health checks and general healthy etiquette should always be observed.
- Vaccination appointments are available on campus by going to www.mtsu.edu/healthservices/covid-vaccine.php
- Regular testing is strongly recommended for all faculty, administrative staff and students participating in the rehearsal and production process.
  - The Department will be providing free preemptive weekly testing available to all production cast and crew.
  - Participation is not required but strongly encouraged. More information on testing procedures is available through the Department Production Manager.
Testing is available for all students at Student Health Services. If symptomatic, a free in-house Covid antigen and in-house PCR test appointment can be made by going to www.mtsu.edu/healthservices/covid-testing.php Results are available same day.

A take home Everlywell test kit is available for all faculty, staff and students and can be picked up at Student Health Services front desk with no appointment necessary during regular operating hours.

- Students, faculty, and staff must NOT come to campus if they are experiencing COVID-19 symptoms, have reason to believe they have come in contact with the virus, or are in isolation or in quarantine due to pending test results or after exposure if unvaccinated.
- In the case of a confirmed exposure to Covid-19, all faculty, administrative staff, and students should adhere to most up to date University recommendations regarding quarantine.
  - Quarantine for unvaccinated persons who have been determined to have had a close contact with someone with COVID-19 requires separation from the person who is ill (e.g., household contact) and quarantine from all other persons for 10 days. The quarantine period may be shortened to seven days if there is a negative COVID test on day 8. Self-monitoring for symptoms and wearing of a face mask should continue through Day 14. Mask-wearing is especially important through day 14 and should continue as noted beyond the quarantine period.
  - Quarantine for unvaccinated persons who have been determined to have had a close contact with someone with COVID-19 but who cannot separate from the person who is ill must continue for a total of 20 days, with release from quarantine on day 21.
  - Vaccinated individuals who have been exposed to COVID-19 but are not symptomatic are NOT required to quarantine. Please upload proof of vaccination with the MTSU Student Health portal to help expedite this determination.
- Social distancing is encouraged for all faculty, administrative staff and students during the rehearsal process and production process, especially when off stage.
- Regular breaks should be considered for cast and crew in line with AEA and ESA recommendations.
- Production team may elect to designate an existing cast / crew member(s) or assign a new member(s) responsible for the following:
  - Covid–19 Safety Manager
    - This person assists in establishing, communicating, and ensuring compliance with all Covid-19 safety protocols set out by the University, Department, and Production team. This position may be responsible for symptom screening, monitoring implementation of policy for social distancing, masks, and PPE, food, beverage and communal objects, cleaning and sanitization of any high-touch surfaces, props, and equipment used during that production.
- More than one person can be responsible for responsibilities. A secondary person could be designated in case primary person(s) is not capable of completing their duties. Additional Theatre and Dance program faculty and staff members may be designated to assist with these duties. These members should work in conjunction with the person designated for each production to ensure guidelines are met safely. Resources and training may be available for anyone interested in Covid-19 Safety Manager position.
- Scripts, pencils, water bottles and other personal items should not be shared.
- PPE and sanitation supplies for rehearsal and production processes should be requested and procured through the production manager.

**REHEARSAL**

- All production processes should adhere where applicable to University and venue guidelines.
- Any rehearsals and meetings that can be conducted remotely are encouraged to do so.
• All rehearsal processes should adhere to general mitigation guidelines where applicable.
• All rehearsal and production spaces must be scheduled with request and approval through the production manager.
• Access to the rehearsal space will be managed by the stage manager, director and/or the event manager on duty.
• Prior to beginning rehearsal activities all individuals should conduct a self-health check. Individuals should do the following for their self-health check:
  o Consider if they have been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19?
  o Consider if they have been experiencing any symptoms related to Covid-19 (listed below) that are unrelated to other conditions (such as allergies)
    ▪ Fever over 100.4 degrees F
    ▪ Chills
    ▪ Cough
    ▪ Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    ▪ Fatigue Muscle or body aches
    ▪ Headache
    ▪ Sore throat
    ▪ New loss of taste or smell
    ▪ Congestion or runny nose
    ▪ Nausea or vomiting
    ▪ Diarrhea
• It is recommended that prior to interacting with other members of the production, all participants should have their temperature screened by a laser thermometer.
  o If the person registers a temperature over 100.4 degrees F. or has answered YES to the questions above, they should be sent home, limit contact with others, and contact their healthcare provider or seek health services through avenues available on campus.
• All participants should sanitize their hands before beginning any rehearsal activities. Sanitizing bottles and stations will be located throughout the building.
• A registration/roll should be taken prior to every rehearsal for potential contact tracing in response to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
• Any choices that involve physical touch should be discussed with the actors involved and approached like we would staging any moment of intimacy. Consent is required and if at any time performers communicate to their stage manager or deputy that they no longer feel safe, a change should be implemented.
• The following mitigation measures are pulled from Dance USA’s Return to Dancing and Training Considerations Due to Covid-19. These Mitigations should be taken into consideration for all Dance rehearsals and productions and may be applied to other Theatre and Dance activities.
  o Basic Concepts:
    ▪ Dancers and staff with medical conditions that place them at higher risk should not participate during this transition period. If you need special accommodation, please contact Lance Alexis, Director of ADA Compliance.
    ▪ Be aware of COVID-19 symptoms (Appendix A) and check the CDC website for updates https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html
    ▪ Dancers and staff should continue to limit exposure outside of the home to essential needs such as grocery shopping, healthcare, and dance
    ▪ Dancers and staff should only be at the studios if feeling completely well with no symptoms of illness.
    ▪ Social distancing recommendations in general become significantly greater when dancers and athletes are exercising indoors. Being in an enclosed, indoor space, sharing the same air for a prolonged period of time (> than 10 minutes) increases the chances of
exposure and infection. Standard social distancing guidelines of 6 feet are not as effective as the time of exposure is increased and even a low dose of virus is within the air.

- All dancers and staff need to behave as if they are an asymptomatic carrier of COVID-19 to help reduce risk that asymptomatic individuals are infecting an enclosed environment.
- Daily cleaning procedures should be implemented and address high touch areas such as elevator buttons, door handles, ballet barres, copy and fax machines, stair railings, and bathrooms/dressing room areas. Cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer must be sufficient to maintain a safe working environment with cleanings multiple times/day. Bleach solutions or alcohol solutions with at least 70% isopropyl alcohol or 60% ethanol can be used.
  
  o Criteria for participation in group training sessions
- No signs or symptoms of COVID-19 in the past 14 days
- If a dancer or staff member has had COVID-19, a clearance note from their doctor is recommended to return to the studios
- Standard infection prevention measures continue such as frequent and effective hand washing, avoiding touching of the face
- Activities with direct and indirect contact are permitted including partnering but extended moments of intimacy should be avoided.

**PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE**

- All production processes should adhere where applicable to University and venue guidelines.
- Any production related meetings are encouraged to occur remotely when applicable.
- All production and performance processes should adhere to general and rehearsal mitigation guidelines where applicable.
- **Masks are required for all faculty, administrative staff and students when in the facility. Masks may only be removed on stage during a performance. Distancing is encouraged for the duration of all productions and events when possible.**
- Dressing rooms will be accessible, but capacity may be limited to maintain distancing when possible. Staggered call times will be encouraged.
- Additional mobile makeup stations will be available for performers outside of the dressing rooms. Performers are required to sanitize these stations before and after each use.
- Access to the performance venue, shops, dressing rooms, booth and box office may be limited outside of designated call times for that production.
- PPE and sanitation supplies for rehearsal and production processes should be requested and procured through the production manager.

**Additional Mitigation Guidelines should be considered for the following locations and equipment:**

**Box Office/Lobby**

- **Masks are required for all faculty, staff, students and patrons when in the facility.**
- Signage and stanchions should be used for masking protocols and encourage safe distancing for those entering / exiting.
- Access to Tucker Lobby and DKA Anderson Studio Theatre Lobby prior to the production may be limited.
- Doors to the lobby will remain locked until the lobby and theatre are accessible. The lobby doors may only be unlocked and propped open by the event manager on duty.
- Prior to the start of the production, doors are to be propped open to limit high-touch situations and improve air flow and quality. Doors may only be propped opened and closed by the designated responsible person or event manager on duty.
• Access to restrooms may be limited at the discretion of the event manager on duty.
• Egress from Tucker will be permitted through all marked exits. Door alarms will be disabled and at the conclusion of any production, all exits doors may be propped open to help mitigate safe egress.
• All staff will be required to sign in in order to track potential contact tracing in response to a confirmed case of COVID-19.
• Daily cleaning / disinfecting plans should be followed to ensure continued safe operations.
  o Cleaning procedures should include but are not limited to the following:
    ▪ Disinfecting of all high touch surfaces – Door handles, light switches, countertops, stanchions, signage, scanners, computers, keyboards, mice and other lobby equipment used during productions or events with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol.
    ▪ Sweep of lobby and restroom floors.
    ▪ Check and refill all sanitizing stations, wipes, masks and other PPE as needed.

Production Booth
• Access may be limited only to designated personnel.
• **Masks are required by all faculty, staff and students when in the production booth.**
• Each control station may be limited to one production staff at any one time, University Faculty and staff may enter the space when absolutely necessary during a production or rehearsal.
• Food and drinks are not permitted in the booth.
• Scripts, pencils, water bottles and other personal items should not be shared.
• Production equipment may be designated and assigned to crew to limit cross handling. Communication headsets, packs and “God” microphone must be checked out from Production Manager or Event Manager on duty. These items must be sanitized prior to and after each use and returned at the conclusion of the production.
• Daily cleaning / disinfecting plans should be followed to ensure continued safe operations.
  o Cleaning procedures should include but are not limited to the following:
    ▪ Disinfecting of all high tough surfaces – Door handles, light switches, countertops, consoles, boards, racks buttons, computers, keyboards and mice used during productions or events with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol.
    ▪ Check and refill of all sanitizing stations, wipes, masks and other PPE as needed.
    ▪ Cleaning protocol for communication headsets, packs and batteries should include wiping down with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol.
    ▪ Cleaning protocol for “God” microphone should include wiping down housing with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol. At the conclusion of the production, microphone wind screen should be removed, washed in warm soap and water and air dried before being put back into storage.

Production Equipment and Properties
• Access may be limited to designated personnel.
• **Masks are required for all faculty, staff and students when in the facility.**
• Personal items as well as any food or drinks are not permitted in these spaces.
• Gloves are recommended to be worn by all crew when handling any production equipment during rehearsal, load-in, run and strike.
• Area supervisors may designate a specific person(s) permitted to handle specific equipment / do specific production related tasks. During rehearsal, load-in, run, and strike, this person(s) is responsible for handling the equipment for their area.
• At the end of each work session, control boards should be sanitized.
• Additional mitigation steps should be taken when applicable to ensure items are being sanitized properly before use or storing. A cleaning station may be set up outside of the storage room / shops to
ensure all items are being sanitized before returning to storage. Shop managers / technicians can set up multiple tables that designate un-sanitized equipment ready for cleaning and sanitized equipment ready for use or storage.

- Daily cleaning / disinfecting plans should be followed to ensure continued safe operations.
  - Cleaning procedures should include but are not limited to the following:
    - Disinfecting of all high tough surfaces – Door handles, light switches, countertops, consoles, boards, racks buttons, computers, keyboards and mice used during production or events with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol.
    - Check and refill of all sanitizing stations, wipes, masks and other PPE as needed.
    - All fixtures, instruments, mic stands, I/O boxes, comm and mic packs, handheld microphones, projectors, equipment bags, cases and other lighting, sound and video equipment should be wiped down with a cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol prior to use or return storage.
    - Hand held microphone wind screens and lav/wig microphone foam screens should be washed in warm water and soap and left out to air dry before being returned to microphone assembly. Metal/plastic screens should be wiped down with a cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol and left out to air dry before being return to microphone assembly.
    - Cleaning protocol for cables prior to being stored should include wiping down entire length of cable with a cloth soaked in warm water and soap. Wipe and hang to dry.
    - Fly rail breaks handles should be sanitized at the conclusion of each rehearsal, load-in, run, and strike with cloth soaked in 70% isopropyl alcohol.

**General Production Regulations and Mitigation Guidelines for Patrons and Guests.**

- All production processes that will include patrons and invited guests from the public have been created to adhere where applicable to University and venue guidelines
- Capacity for Tucker Theatre auditorium should not exceed 800 patrons and guests. Final capacity for any event will be at the discretion of the Production Manager and Event Manager on duty. Seats may be designated as reserved to ensure social distancing if necessary.
- **Patrons and guests attending any event or production are required to wear a mask.**
- Prior to arriving for a production or event, patrons and invited guests are strongly recommended to conduct a self-health check. Individuals should do the following for their self-health check:
  - Consider if they have been in contact with a confirmed case of Covid-19.
  - Consider if they have been experiencing any symptoms related to Covid-19 (listed below) that are unrelated to other conditions (such as allergies)
    - Fever over 100.4 degrees F
    - Chills
    - Cough
    - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
    - Fatigue Muscle or body aches
    - Headache
    - Sore throat
    - New loss of taste or smell
    - Congestion or runny nose
    - Nausea or vomiting
    - Diarrhea
- Prior to being granted access, all patrons and invited guests may have their temperature screened by a laser thermometer.
If the person registers a temperature over 100.4 degrees F. or has answered YES to the questions above, they will not be permitted entry, and should be encouraged to limit contact with others, and contact their healthcare provider.

- Access to Tucker Lobby and DKA Anderson Studio Theatre Lobby prior to the production will be limited and only by necessity.
- Doors to the lobby will remain locked until the lobby and theatre are accessible. The lobby doors may only be unlocked and propped open by the event manager on duty.
- Prior to the start of the production, doors are to be propped open to limit high-touch situations and improve air flow and quality. Doors may only be propped opened and closed by the designated responsible person or event manager on duty.
- Access to restrooms may be limited at the discretion of the events manager on duty.
- Egress from Tucker will be permitted through all marked exits. Door alarms will be disabled and at the conclusion of any production, all egress doors may be propped open to help mitigate safe egress flow from the building.

Ticketing for Public Events

- All productions and events that will include patrons and invited guests may be ticketed through the online ticketing vendor or tracked using BlueID Scanners.
- All tickets (including free student tickets) must be secured prior to entry to the theatre.
- Events may be designated as assigned seating and internal mitigation measures may be implemented to ensure social distancing is observed with seating assignments. Please check with the Production Manager or Event Manager on duty regarding policy for each event.
- Any patron or guest who attends an event and contracts COVID-19 is encouraged to contact The Department of Theatre and Dance to allow communication and contact tracing to other patrons and invited guests.
- Patrons and invited guests will be informed through internal ticketing messaging system if a case of Covid-19 requires contact tracing.