



Updated Guidance on Masking/Testing for Dancers

November 4, 2021

This Updated Guidance is directed to AGMA dancers, dance companies, and opera company dancers when they are rehearsing separately. The purpose of this Guidance is to allow vaccinated dancers, in some circumstances, to remove masks during rehearsals *if* the company implements a robust COVID-19 testing program. As always, any proposed changes to existing safety protocols at AGMA signatory companies must be bargained with your AGMA staff representative prior to implementation. AGMA will continue to address opera and choral company requests for limited unmasking of singers on a case-by-case basis.

On August 3, 2021, the American Guild of Musical Artists (AGMA) and its Expert Medical Advisory Board issued [Guidance on the COVID Delta Variant](#) to address the surge in COVID-19 infections and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) recommendations on mask wearing even for fully vaccinated individuals based on the rate of community transmission of the virus (High, Substantial, Moderate, Low). Since that time, the rate of community transmission for almost the entire United States has been Substantial or High. Consistent with the **Vaccination and Testing Scenarios** provided in the August *Guidance*, dancers have been required to wear masks *except* for performances.

Since August, most AGMA signatory dance companies have returned to the stage or are well into rehearsals for upcoming live performances. Wearing a mask during long periods of intense physical exertion has become increasingly difficult for many dancers. The AGMA Medical Advisory Board reviewed these concerns along with the assurances provided by many companies that they were willing to incur the costs of comprehensive testing programs. Based on this information, the Medical Advisory Board concluded that as outlined in the **Vaccination and Testing Scenarios for Dancers** below, dancers who are tested at least 2 times per week may remove their masks when rehearsing. Note that this change only applies to companies with 100% vaccination rates (in green, below).

For more detailed information about vaccinations and the types of rapid tests available, please see our earlier [Special Guidance on Vaccinations and Testing](#). In this *Special Guidance*, we focus on alternatives to mask wearing during dance rehearsals. All scenarios assume the fundamental safety protocols of the [AGMA/SDC Return to Stage and Performing Arts Playbook](#)

remain in place, including, but not limited to sufficient ventilation, cleaning/disinfecting protocols, hand hygiene practices, and daily health screenings.

VACCINATION AND TESTING SCENARIOS FOR DANCERS

Percentage Vaccinated ¹	Testing	Risk Reduction
100%	No testing required unless removing masks during rehearsal in areas of Substantial or High COVID transmission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If everyone in the organization (performers, directors, choreographers, stage managers, instrumentalists, backstage, front of house staff, etc.) is fully vaccinated, artists can work without masks and social distancing (including partnering for dancers). However, if community transmission rates are Substantial or High on the CDC tracker, https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view.ask, masks must be worn <i>except</i> for performances unless the dancers are tested at least 2 times per week (PCR or rapid antigen), then masks can be removed during rehearsals as well as performances.
More than 90%	Unvaccinated individuals must be tested using a PCR, rapid molecular or rapid antigen test 2-3 days per week, whether they come into work or not.	<p>Vaccinated Individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccinated individuals can rehearse and perform without masks and physical distancing. However, if community transmission rates are “Substantial” or “High” on the CDC tracker, https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#county-view, masks must be worn <i>except</i> for performances. <p>Unvaccinated Individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Unvaccinated individuals must be part of a testing program. Unvaccinated individuals with ongoing negative COVID-19 tests can <i>perform</i> without masks and physical distancing but must remain masked during rehearsals and when off-stage.
70 - 90%	All individuals (vaccinated and unvaccinated) must be tested using a PCR, rapid molecular or rapid antigen test 2-3 days per week, whether they come into work or not.	<p>All Individuals:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> All individuals on site must be part of a testing program. Individuals with ongoing negative COVID-19 tests can <i>perform</i> without masks and physical distancing but must remain masked during rehearsals and when off-stage.
Less than 70%	IN-PERSON WORK NOT RECOMMENDED. PLEASE CONTACT YOUR UNION REPRESENTATIVE.	

¹ Percentage of the whole organization – performers and all other employees working on site.