

AGMA Updated Guidance and New CDC COVID Framework

March 9, 2022

This *Updated Guidance* is based on our Expert Medical Advisory Panel’s assessment of the new CDC Community Risk Level Framework tool and the continuing distinctive risks that COVID-19 poses for our members.

The CDC’s Community Risk Level Framework is a new tool to help communities decide what prevention steps to take based on the latest data. Levels can be Low, Medium, or High based on hospital admissions, the total number of beds being used, and the total number of new COVID-19 cases in the area.

Whether they are making magic happen from backstage or performing *on* the stage, our members face unique challenges in their workplaces. Dropping mask requirements will likely increase the risk to artists from unmasked audiences. By now, we also know that the SARS-CoV-2 virus will continue to mutate. The severity of disease, transmissibility, and immune avoidance associated with any future variants cannot be predicted.

Based on these realities, our Expert Medical Advisory panel recommends a cautious and incremental approach to lifting proven safeguards. Leveraging the new CDC Community Risk Level Framework while maintaining some layers of additional control (vaccines, testing, ventilation, mask use, and physical distancing) will help keep our members rehearsing and performing safely.

The CDC’s new metrics for assessing community risk uses three indicators: new cases, new COVID-19 hospital admissions, and the number of hospital beds filled by COVID-19 patients. The CDC will be updating data for every county in the US and making available the risk level for each county [on this site](#). *The metrics that justify the CDC’s reductions in community controls, therefore, must be monitored continually and may warrant reinstating controls if or when the risk to our members increases again.*

New Cases (per 100,000 population in the last 7 days)	Indicators	Low	Medium	High
Fewer than 200	New COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	<10.0	10.0-19.9	≥20.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	<10.0%	10.0-14.9%	≥15.0%
200 or more	New COVID-19 hospital admissions per 100,000 population (7-day total)	NA	<10.0	≥10.0
	Percent of staffed inpatient hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients (7-day average)	NA	<10.0%	≥10.0%

Additional Controls for Performing Artists

When the community risk is decreasing from High to Medium or Medium to Low, the higher-level controls, as shown in the chart below, should be maintained for a minimum of 2 weeks before changing to a lower level. When there are any signs of worsening of community risk (the area moves from Low to Medium or Medium to High), the higher level controls must be reinstated immediately. In addition, please follow the guidelines below. *Contact your [AGMA Staff representative](#) with questions specific to your company.*

Mitigation Controls	Low	Medium	High
Vaccines	Require COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.	Require COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.	Require COVID-19 vaccines and boosters.
Ventilation	Maintain improved ventilation.	Maintain improved ventilation.	Maintain improved ventilation.
Masks	Masks optional after at least 2 consecutive weeks at Green/Low.	Masks required for rehearsals and at all times when not performing. Use higher-grade masks (KN95, N95, KF94).	Masks required for rehearsals and at all times when not performing. Masks required for performing unless testing increased. Use higher-grade masks (KN95, N95, KF94).
Physical Distancing	Not required	Optional/where feasible	As per <i>AGMA/SDC Playbook</i>
Return to Work Testing	Optional	Recommended PCR (72 hours) or RA testing (4 hours) prior to work.	Recommended PCR (72 hours) or RA testing (4 hours) prior to work.
Surveillance Testing	Testing is recommended after relaxation in masking requirements. Companies that opt for an optional masking policy after 2 consecutive weeks at Green/Low are advised to engage in surveillance testing 1-2 x per week for all, until 2 additional weeks have passed following implementation. Testing may then be suspended.	Surveillance testing at least 2x per week for all.	Surveillance testing at least 3x per week for all.
Contact Tracing	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain
Symptom Checking	Maintain	Maintain	Maintain

Task/Situation Guidance			
	Low	Medium	High
Auditions	No restrictions.	In-person auditions allowed with everyone masked except individual auditioning. Testing within 48 hours PCR or withing 4 hours rapid antigen testing.	As per AGMA/SDC Playbook Remote auditions where possible. Testing within 48 hours PCR or withing 4 hours rapid antigen testing.
Make Up and Costume	Masks not required if performer and makeup and hair stylists are fully vaccinated and boosted.	Everyone wears a mask except the performer when face makeup is being applied or hair being styled.	Everyone wears a mask except the performer when face makeup is being applied or hair being styled.
Intimate Scenes	Rapid antigen testing of those involved 2-4 hours prior to the performance.		Minimize or perform in a non-touch manner. Testing as per Low and Medium.
Children	Fully vaccinated follow rules for adults Un/partially vaccinated maintain mask wearing except for performances.		Only engage fully vaccinated children – follow adult requirements.
Touring Companies	Working from multiple locations brings with it uncertainties (venue ventilation capabilities, venue staff vaccination status and other controls. Hotel living and use of public transportation may also increase risk. It is therefore recommended that a more cautious approach be adopted. Operate either at one level higher than the venue (Medium if venue is at Low) or require location to be at a certain risk level or lower for 4 weeks before adopting that level of control.		

Additional Recommendations for Vulnerable Artists

For Artists who are immunocompromised or at high risk for severe disease:

- Consider more flexible work options if feasible
- Provide access to rapid testing if needed either via home tests or other easy access
- Make sure vulnerable Artists know they should talk with their healthcare providers about oral antivirals, monoclonal antibodies, and PrEP (preventative treatment e.g., with Evusheld)

As always, the goal of AGMA is the safety, health, and success of our artists and companies. Any proposed changes to existing safety protocols by AGMA Signatory Companies must be reviewed and discussed with your AGMA representative prior to implementation. We thank our members and companies for their patience and collaboration as we continue to maintain health and safety in our workplaces.