

AGMA's COVID-19 Update Following the CDC's New Respiratory Virus Guidance

April 8, 2024

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have updated and simplified their [COVID-19 recommendations](#), now treating COVID-19 like other respiratory viruses such as the flu and RSV. COVID-19 remains an important public health threat, however, and the change in the CDC's guidance does not mean that COVID-19 is eradicated or that it no longer poses risks to certain populations and those working in certain industries.

The CDC continues to recommend that all individuals stay up to date with their COVID vaccinations, including an annual bivalent booster for most people and a second dose for the elderly or immune compromised. The CDC's COVID-19 New Hospital Admissions Rate Tracker is the metric recommended by the AGMA Expert Medical Advisory Panel to help AGMA signatory companies decide what steps to take based on changes in COVID-19 hospitalization rates. [Low equals less than 10.0 per 100,000 population, Medium is 10.0 to 19.9 per 100,000 population, and High is over 20.0 per 100,000 population.](#)

The virus responsible for COVID-19 continues to mutate, which has resulted in less severe symptoms but also in making COVID-19 more infectious. That means that COVID-19 remains a threat to our industries — a threat that, if not mitigated or controlled, could cause the possible cancellation of performances. **As a result, AGMA's Expert Medical Advisory Panel continues to recommend that AGMA signatory companies follow the guidance shown below to keep theaters open and AGMA members rehearsing and performing safely.**

Mitigation Controls	Low (Less than 10.0 per 100,000)	Medium (Between 10.0 & 19.9 per 100,000)	High (More than 20.0 per 100,000)
Vaccination	Up to date per CDC	Up to date per CDC	Up to date per CDC
Masks	Optional	Masks recommended for rehearsals.	Masks <i>required</i> for rehearsals
Surveillance Testing	Optional	Test 2x per week	Test 2x per week when masked and 3x when unmasked (performing)
Ventilation	Maintain improved ventilation per the AGMA Return to Stage and Performing Arts Playbook.		
Return to Work (RTW) Post-COVID-19 Infection	Isolate for a minimum of 5 days or until fever <i>and</i> symptom free for 24-hours. Take additional preventive steps recommended by CDC: wear a mask (KN95/N95) for at least 10 days; physically distance from others; and take a COVID-19 test to determine if you are still at risk of spreading infection. Do not RTW until COVID-19 test is negative.		

Return to Work (RTW) Post-COVID Exposure	Test each day before reporting to work or wear a mask during rehearsals and symptom check for 10 days. If you test positive, follow the steps outlined above for RTW Post-COVID-19 Infection.
---	---

The CDC and the Panel further recommends that:

- Practice good hygiene by covering coughs and sneezes, washing, or sanitizing your hands often, and cleaning frequently touched surfaces.
- Artists should symptom check each day before rehearsals or performances. If you are sick, stay home.
- If masks are optional, their use should be permitted and *encouraged* for anyone wishing to wear one during rehearsals.
- If surveillance testing is optional, sufficient tests should be made available for anyone experiencing symptoms or for those participating in intimate or other scenes involving increased exposure.
- If masking and testing are not required, paid leave should be provided for COVID-19 absences to encourage symptomatic or sick artists to remain at home.

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.