

COVID-19 Transitioning – Obligatory Conditions and Guidelines for Drive-in cinemas, Outdoor Cinemas, Outdoor Theatres

These following obligatory conditions are issued under the Public Health Act Chapter 465 of the Laws of Malta and require strict adherence. Failure to adhere to these conditions will result in enforcement procedures as provided by the Act.

‘Outdoor’ places in the context of this document refer to venues where the seating area of the audience as well as any other areas utilised by patrons (apart from washroom facilities) must be in the open (outside any building).

Obligatory conditions to be observed in drive-in cinemas, outdoor cinemas and outdoor theatres

The Superintendent of Public Health hereby orders that all drive-in cinemas, outdoor cinemas and theatres or any outdoor premises being used for the screening or staging of entertainment (hereafter referred to as the premises) shall implement the following measures:

- a) exercise the right of refusal of entry onto the premises of patrons if they are visibly unwell or have respiratory symptoms
- b) subject patrons to temperature checks at the entrance for the presence of fever (persons with a temperature of 37.2° Celsius or higher will be denied entrance)
- c) provide adequate and easily accessible containers with an appropriate 70% alcohol hand-rub at the entrance of the premises and ensure that all persons sanitise their hands prior to entrance
- d) regulate entrance into and exit from the premises adopting crowd management techniques as necessary
- e) FOR OUTDOOR CINEMAS AND OUTDOOR THEATRES - ensure that the maximum number of patrons that the premises can hold at any one time is one person per 4 square metres of the seating area, excluding staff
- f) FOR DRIVE-IN CINEMAS – ensure that all vehicles are correctly parked within sector markings and that the 7-metre-wide emergency corridors are free of vehicles at all times
- g) indicate with visible markings outside and inside the premises two (2) metre distances that patrons shall respect whilst queuing, including queuing for rest rooms and vending machines
- h) affix visible signage at the entrance of the premises indicating the maximum capacity that the premises can hold at any one time
- i) except in the case of families with children and people from the same household, no more than 6 persons should be allowed to sit together in a group
- j) ensure that audiences are seated in such a way that they maintain social distancing of at least 2m from each other or from each allowed group and that the seating area is never greater than 25% of its potential capacity, or in the case of drive-in cinemas, that vehicles are parked a minimum of 2m apart
- k) the distribution of 3-D glasses that are reused by multiple patrons is not allowed
- l) implement measures to decrease points of contact between staff and patrons and between members of staff
- m) ensure that staff wear masks and/or visors
- n) inform performers and crew utilising theatre facilities that they are required to follow the obligations detailed in this guidance even if they are not employed by the theatre operator, and ensure that they fulfil said obligations
- o) provide ongoing cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common areas inside the premises
- p) ensure that no bar, restaurant or café facilities operate on the premises, allowing sale of refreshment only by ambulatory vendors (members of staff who

- q) walk through the seating/common areas, or parking area in the case of drive-ins, offering food and beverages for sale) taking the necessary precautions, including wearing masks and/or visors
- r) make available open receptacles for disposal of waste
- s) FOR DRIVE-IN CINEMAS ONLY - vehicles to be kept switched off at all times when parked, vehicle windows to be kept open and clients are to remain in their vehicles except to visit the restrooms or the vending machines, in which case clients are to wear masks or visors.
- t) Smoking will be prohibited on the premises

Guidelines for the application of COVID-19 conditions and mitigation measures in drive-in cinemas, outdoor cinemas and outdoor theatres

Theatres and cinemas involve the provision of a service to the public but may also involve the sale and distribution of goods such as refreshments and programmes. Premises include both areas where workers interact with patrons and closed areas such as the 'back of house', backstage and/or projection room that may involve only minimal face-to-face contact with patrons.

Adapting cinemas, theatres or other outdoor premises used for the screening/staging of entertainment to manage and mitigate the risk of exposure to COVID-19 requires a thorough risk assessment. These guidelines provide considerations that cinema and theatre organisers must take into account when deciding on control measures such as restrictions within their premises to allow for social distancing, the adequacy of facilities for proper personal and public hygiene, cleaning arrangements, and other changes that may affect the health and safety of workers and performers.

Determining the premises capacity for outdoor cinemas and theatres

Operators shall ensure that on the premises there are 4 square metres of space per person, excluding staff.

To achieve this 4 square metre 'rule':

- i. calculate the area of the premises (e.g. length of premises in metres x width of premises in metres = area of premises in square metres)
- ii. divide the area of the premises by 4
- iii. the answer of that division (ignoring any remainder) is the maximum capacity that the premises can hold at any one time.

By way of example, if the premises are 205 square metres in size, $205 \div 4 = 51.25$, ignoring the remainder of 0.25, the operator should allow only 51 patrons at any time on the premises, excluding staff.

Visible signage shall be affixed at the entrance of the premises indicating the maximum number of patrons that the premises can hold at any one time.

Determining the premises capacity for drive-in cinemas

Operators shall ensure that on the premises there are sectors of 28 square metres of space (7metres length by 4 metres width) per vehicle thus ensuring 2 metres between each vehicle.

There shall be a 7-metre-wide emergency corridor around the entire perimeter of the premises and 7-metre-wide emergency corridor in the middle of the premises. These emergency corridors shall be free of vehicles at all times.

Visible signage shall be affixed at the entrance of the premises indicating the maximum number of vehicles that the premises can hold at any one time.

Social/physical distancing for audiences

Social distancing refers to the requirement that people physically distance themselves from others. Public Health Authorities have determined that everyone must keep at least 2 metres from others and that the seating area

should be at no more than 25% its maximum potential capacity. Visible signs and/or markings outside and inside the premises shall indicate 2 metre distances that customers shall respect whilst queueing, e.g. to enter the premises or use restroom facilities. The collaboration of Local Councils shall be sought, where applicable.

Organisers should also review tasks and processes that usually require close interaction and identify ways to modify these to increase social distancing between workers themselves and between workers and patrons (e.g. payment counters) as well as decrease the need for queuing. Measures that decrease points of contact between staff and patrons include digital tickets and online booking and purchase of tickets, which should be encouraged as much as possible. Online and/or cashless payments should also be encouraged, without disadvantaging patrons who may not have access to such means of payment. Self-scanning of tickets by customers can eliminate another point of contact between patrons and staff. In the case of drive-in cinemas, patrons should be discouraged from getting out of their vehicles unless absolutely necessary.

Crowd management techniques should also be used to ensure audiences maintain social distancing while taking and leaving their seats and to avoid groups gathering in common areas, for example before or after the performance. Show times should be staggered as necessary to allow time for adequate disinfection between screenings/performances and ensure that large numbers of people do not occupy and congregate in the common areas at the same time.

With respect to the seating areas, for seating that is not socially distanced (e.g. seating fixed in place or fixed to adjoining seats) operators should ensure that seating is occupied at no more than 25% capacity and that seating patterns allow 2m between groups of patrons who have attended the cinema/theatre together. Except in the case of families with children and people from the same household, no more than 6 persons should be allowed to sit together in a group. In the case of movable seating that can be spaced out as necessary, this should be laid out in such a way as to respect the 2m distancing requirement. These restrictions should be kept in mind when theatre/cinema seats are being booked. Operators may wish to employ techniques such as use of a checkerboard pattern or blocking off of certain rows to help achieve the required distancing or employ software solutions that allow dynamic seat selection that respects distancing requirements at the booking stage. In the case of drive-in cinemas, vehicle parking spots should be indicated using bays or other markers in such a way that a 2m distance is maintained between parked vehicles.

When changing the social layout of the premises, the layout must allow for workers, performers and crew to enter, exit and move about the both under normal working conditions and in an emergency without risks to their health and safety.

Social/physical distancing for staff

Working in close contact increases the risk of workers being exposed to COVID-19. If the task must be completed and workers will be in close contact, undertake a risk assessment to determine what control measures are reasonably practicable in the circumstances to eliminate or minimise health and safety risks from COVID-19. For example, if close contact with others is unavoidable, implement other control measures that can apply such as:

- minimising the number of people within an area at any time
- staggering start, finish and break times where appropriate
- moving work tasks to different areas of the premises or off-site if possible

- if necessary, separating workers into dedicated teams and have them work in shifts, with teams avoiding interacting with each other. Split or stagger shifts to reduce the number of workers on the premises at any given time
- if adopting a shift system, do not rotate workers between teams. Keep team members fixed so that if a team member develops COVID-19, the number of exposed workers is minimised.
- schedule time between shifts so that there is no overlap of staff arriving at and leaving the workplace to avoid / reduce interaction. If handover is required, consider using digital means for this so that staff do not need to physically congregate in the same place.
- requiring staff to wear a badge as a visual reminder to themselves and customers of social

distancing requirements

- using social barriers, such as clear acrylic screens (e.g. Perspex), at ticket booths and ticket scanning areas wherever possible
- requiring workers to use methods such as mobile phone to communicate rather than face to face interaction
- ensuring each worker has their own equipment or tools

Hygiene facilities

Organisers must ensure there are adequate and accessible facilities to achieve good hygiene and that facilities are adequate, accessible, equipped with disposable hand wipes, soap and sanitizers, in good working order, clean and safe.

They should be thoroughly cleaned several times each day (see further details in section on 'Cleaning and Disinfection' below). Bathroom doors and windows should be kept open to allow for better ventilation. Hand dryers should not be used as these can potentially disperse viral particles into the air.

Sale of refreshments

Operators are not allowed to have bar, restaurant or café facilities on the premises. Refreshments may be sold by ambulatory vendors (members of staff who walk through the seating/common areas, or parking area in the case of drive-ins, offering food and beverages for sale) or drive through take away as long as the same member of staff who handles food and beverage items is not responsible for handling cash from customers. Contactless payment or, if not possible, exact payment is preferable. Only packaged items should be sold and any staff members handling food/beverage items should adhere to strict hygiene principles. These include frequent hand washing and use of gloves when handling such items, or, where possible, use of an implement (such as tongs) to eliminate direct contact with the items being sold to patrons. Bins should be available for patrons to be able to safely dispose of any packaging waste.

Considerations for performers and crew

Actors and crew are also required to practice social distancing and should avoid physical contact as much as possible. Minimum possible numbers of cast and crew should be allowed (no extras or chorus). Actors and crew are subject to the same requirements regarding hygiene and other COVID-19 related precautions as other staff, excepting that actors are not required to wear masks/visors during a performance. Should physical contact be required by a scene, actors should sanitise their hands before and after. Individuals who qualify as vulnerable persons as defined by the Protection of Vulnerable Persons Order, 2020 should not be cast in performances.

Cast members should apply their own make-up, wardrobe and hair styling (under direction of a stylist if necessary). Make-up equipment should not be shared between cast members. Each performer should have a dedicated space for their personal belongings (pens, glasses, clothing etc), which should not be kept 'floating around' the backstage area. Digital copies of scripts and other documents should be used whenever possible. If physical copies must be used, actors and crew should have their own copy of the script and copies should not be shared between users.

Workstations and equipment used by more than one person need to be cleaned between users. Hand props should be disinfected between each user or handled by one actor only. Backstage and 'back of house' areas should be kept well-ventilated.

Staff and crew meetings, training and rehearsals

Postpone or cancel non-essential meetings or training. If meetings or training are essential, use non face-to-face options such as tele and video conferencing. If this is not possible, ensure face-to-face time is limited, make sure

the gathering, meeting or training goes on for no longer than it needs to, and hold the gathering, meeting or training in spaces that enable workers to keep at least 2 metres apart – e.g. in the outdoor part of the premises or in a large conference room. Limit the number of attendees in a gathering, meeting or training by holding multiple training sessions. Ensure adequate ventilation if gathering, meeting or training is held indoors.

Deliveries, contractors and visitors attending the premises

Additional persons beyond necessary staff, performers, crew and maximum allowed capacity of patrons should not be allowed on the premises. Minimise the number of workers attending to deliveries and contractors as much as possible. Delivery drivers and other contractors who need to provide maintenance or repair services or perform other essential activities, should be given clear instructions of requirements while they are on site. Ensure hand washing facilities, or if not possible, alcohol-based hand sanitizer, is readily available for workers after handling deliveries.

Personal protective equipment for staff

If employers have a situation where, despite other control measures, workers will be in close contact with each other or with other people for longer than the recommended time (i.e. more than 15 minutes face to face cumulative over one day or more than 2 hours in a shared closed space), consider the use of personal protective equipment (PPE). Workers must be trained in the proper use of PPE. Be aware of risks that may arise as a result of workers using and wearing PPE inappropriately.

The type of PPE to be provided will depend on the type of premises and the outcomes of risk assessment. Common PPE that can be used to protect against COVID-19 include masks, gloves, eye protection, and screens. The use of certain types of masks, gowns and disposable suits is restricted to healthcare settings. It is not recommended that these types of PPE are used outside of healthcare to protect against COVID-19. Eye protection, in the form of safety glasses, goggles or a face shield, can be used as PPE for protecting against the risks of COVID-19. Eye protection can assist to act as a physical barrier from droplet spray and prevent unintentional rubbing of eyes between hand washing. Eye protection may be necessary for workers who are in close proximity to droplet spray. For many outdoor theatres and cinemas, eye protection will not be a required control measure. Good hygiene practices should be followed if eye protection is used.

In view of the fact that staff generally spend time in both the outdoor as well as the indoor areas of the premises, where maintaining social distancing is more difficult (e.g. the projection room, backstage or 'back of house' areas), and that staff may need to have close contact with each other to perform certain tasks, the advice of the Public Health Authorities is staff members should wear a mask or visor while at work.

It is the responsibility of the organisers to provide appropriate masks or visors to their workers. Organisers must also provide appropriate training and instruction on how to put on and fit, wear, remove and dispose of masks and on how to put on, remove and sanitise visors. They must also provide suitable facilities to dispose of masks appropriately. Information about using masks or visors is provided by the manufacturer. If a worker has been provided training and instruction about using a mask or visor, they must comply with that training and those instructions.

In view of the fact that patrons will be restricted to outdoor areas of the premises and will be required to maintain social distancing at all times, they will not be obliged to wear masks or visors, though they may choose to if they wish.

Gloves will not normally be necessary for most tasks in many theatre and cinema premises, apart from staff members selling food/beverages to patrons (see section on 'Sale of Refreshments' above) and for cleaning (see below). A risk assessment must be conducted to help inform what gloves, if any, are appropriate for the

premises. If employers choose to supply or use gloves, they should make sure the gloves are suitable for the work; not all gloves are appropriate for all work or workplaces. Be aware that wearing gloves may result in new risks. For example, wearing disposable gloves could cause skin irritation, contact dermatitis or other sensitivities in some workers.

Cleaning and disinfecting measures

A combination of cleaning and disinfection will be most effective in removing the COVID19 virus. There shall be ongoing cleaning and disinfection operations of all the common areas. Premises must be cleaned at least daily. Cleaning with detergent and water is sufficient. Once clean, surfaces can be disinfected. When and how often the premises should be disinfected will depend on the likelihood of contamination. Alternatively, cleaners may be able to do a 2-in-1 clean and disinfection by using a combined detergent and disinfectant.

How to clean and disinfect

Cleaning means to physically remove germs (bacteria and viruses), dirt and grime from surfaces using a detergent and water solution. A detergent is designed to break up oil and grease with the use of water. Anything labelled as a detergent will work. Cleaning should start with the dirtiest surface first, progressively moving towards the cleanest surface. When surfaces are cleaned, they should be left as dry as possible to reduce the risk of slips and falls, as well as spreading of viruses and bacteria through droplets.

Disinfecting means using chemicals to kill germs on surfaces. It is important to clean before disinfecting because dirt and grime can reduce the ability of disinfectants to kill germs. Disinfectants containing $\geq 70\%$ alcohol, ammonium compounds, chlorine bleach or oxygen bleach are suitable for use on hard surfaces (surfaces where liquids pool, and do not soak in). The packaging or manufacturer's instructions will outline the correct way to use disinfectant. Disinfectants require time to be effective at killing viruses. If no time is specified, the disinfectant should be left for ten minutes before removing.

Areas to be cleaned and disinfected

Any surfaces that are frequently touched should be prioritised for cleaning, e.g. door handles, seating, counters, phones, POS machines, acrylic screens (if installed) and bathroom and other sanitary facilities, including bathroom fixtures like taps and flushing handles. Any surfaces that are visibly dirty, or have a spill, should be cleaned as soon as they are identified, regardless of when they were last cleaned. The premises should be cleaned and disinfected at least every day. If the premises have many patrons entering each day, more frequent disinfection of areas used by patrons is recommended.

Seating and other surfaces frequently touched by patrons during a performance/screening (such as railings in the seating area, doors leading to the seating area, if applicable) should be disinfected after each performance. Seating surfaces should be wipeable and easy to clean, if seats have cloth coverings application of wipeable covers is required. If certain areas of the premises e.g. 'back of house', backstage, projection and storage areas are only attended by the same small work crew each day having little interaction with other people, routine disinfection in addition to daily cleaning may not be needed in these areas.

What should cleaners wear?

In most circumstances, it will not be necessary for cleaners to wear protective clothing to clean the premises. However, workers should use personal protective equipment (PPE) that is necessary for the products they are using. Gloves and a disposable apron are the minimum requirements. Medical masks should be used if cleaning an area impacted by a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 case. Clothes that can be washed afterwards are suitable.

How to stay informed: www.covid19health.gov.mt