

Festivals – Additional Covid 19 Guidance

Please read in
conjunction with
Covid-19 Guidance
for the Arts Sector

Arts Council Festivals - Additional Covid 19 Guidance

REVISIONS:

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1	20/09/2021	Initial publication
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Note

This is a living document, which means that as government restrictions and public-health guidelines evolve, this document will also evolve to reflect new government advice and changes to protocols as they emerge. All sectoral guidelines have been developed in line with the government's [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021: The Path Ahead](#) and the [Work Safely Protocol](#), and on the latest health guidance available from the Government [Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting](#) the Department of Health, WHO, HPSC and the HSE.

Disclaimer

Please note that the disclaimer in the Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector applies equally to this document.

Chapter 1. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The Arts Council and Fáilte Ireland and other stakeholders came together in partnership to develop guidelines in line with the government's [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021-The Path Ahead](#) and [Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting](#) with the primary aim of supporting festival and event organisers in minimising the risk of the transmission of COVID-19 at festivals and individual events; to rebuild confidence and trust among attendees, and to determine the actions to take by carrying out an appropriate COVID-19 risk assessment in addition to standard assessment for other health-and-safety hazards.

Please note that from **20th September 2021** the following is relevant:

Event: organised gatherings or activities of limited duration that bring people together. This includes Indoor Events/Mass Gatherings includes Conferences, Trade Fairs and Exhibitions & large-scale business events involving external audiences. These events also include community, cultural, commemorative, recreational, art or entertainment experiences involving external audiences. This includes festivals.

Note 1: gatherings related to sports/physical activity should refer to the relevant guidelines developed by the relevant statutory bodies.

Note 2: For further information on organised indoor group activities (sports, arts, culture, dance classes) please refer to the *Young People, Children & Education — Additional Covid-19 Guidance* document.

Guidelines were created in line with current government guidance outlined in [Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting](#), underpinned by advice from the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) [Work Safely Protocol](#), Health Service Executive (HSE), World Health Organisation (WHO) and other relevant bodies. The guidelines also draw upon best practice in consultation with the festival and events sector.

The health and safety of employees, participants and spectators is the number one priority for the owners and management of the event/activity. All individuals will need to continue to monitor the ongoing risk from the disease and take personal responsibility as they take steps individually and collectively in their everyday lives to keep this risk under control.

Government has decided to move from a model of regulatory restrictions to a system based on personal responsibility. As such, it is essential that employees, participants, and spectators take every opportunity to adhere to the recommended infection prevention control measures and to minimize the transmission of the virus.

The Arts Council has produced Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector and is the overarching framework applicable to all areas of activity under the umbrella of the Arts Council including Festivals.

The Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector must be read in conjunction with this document and is available at <https://www.artscouncil.ie/covid-19/government-guidelines/>

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Please Note: Information and Guidance in relation to the following is accessible in [Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector](#).

1. INTRODUCTION
2. OVERVIEW OF CURRENT GOVERNMENT GUIDANCE
3. PREPARATION
4. CONSIDERING THE RISKS
5. COMMUNICATIONS
6. WORKERS HEALTH
7. ATTENDEE HEALTH
8. PERSONAL AND RESPIRATORY HYGIENE
9. PHYSICAL DISTANCING
10. HEATING/VENTILATION/AIR-CONDITIONING SYSTEMS
11. CLEANING TO PREVENT CONTAMINATION
12. SUSPECTED CASE AND OUTBREAK RESPONSE PLANNING
13. SUMMARY OF FIRST AID AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE MEASURES

Appendix 1 Risk Assessment Sample-

Appendix 2 Alcohol-based Hand Sanitiser: Advice for safe use.

Appendix 3 Ventilation Protocol – *Work Safely*

Appendix 4. Artist and Performers Risk Assessment and Covid-19 Plans

Event organisers must also follow the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment's [Work Safely Protocol](#). This national protocol is the result of a collaborative effort by the HSA, the HSE and the Department of Health, designed to support employers and workers to put measures in place that will prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace as the economy begins to re-open following closure due to the current pandemic. Event organisers must familiarise themselves with the latest guidelines from the following sources: [Health Service Executive](#) ; [Health and Safety Authority](#); [World Health Organisation](#); [Government of Ireland](#); [HPSC.ie](#).

A COVID-19 Response Plan should be treated as supplementary to existing operational plans of festival and event organisers. It is not intended as a replacement for pre-COVID-19 operational plans, event management and/or festival safety and operational planning. It is recognised that for festival organisations a large number of individual events will be offered to the public, each requiring its own risk assessment and planning in addition to that of the overall festival safety plan. The [Dublin City Council Event Guidance Booklet](#) is a useful resource for event planning.

Risk of Transmission

Planning requirements for all festivals and events must include conducting thorough **Risk Assessments** at the outset. The risk assessments for each festival and event now need to take account the risk of transmission of COVID-19. Event organisers should identify hazards that present a risk of the spread of infection between persons, taking into consideration both workers and attendees. A risk assessment should be undertaken for every separate event if there are a number of

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events within a programme offering e.g. Festival Programmes. See: Arts Council Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#) and [hsa.ie](#); [hpsc.ie](#); [hse.ie](#).

Additional resources for performers

- [Sing Ireland](#) has developed guidance for choirs. Further advice outlined in published Guidelines Reopening Venues and Events <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35bb8-covid-19-sectoral-guidance/>
- Further information on Live Entertainment can be found at [Download \(assets.gov.ie\)](#)
- Theatre Forum has developed guidance for the safe creation and staging of work during COVID-19 for arts and cultural workers. It has also developed a framework for performing-arts venues working during COVID-19, available [HERE](#). This is also available as part of the Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector.
- Guidance on COVID-19 policies and protocols for professional dance workers prepared by Dance Ireland is available [HERE](#).
- Arts Centres - Working with Covid 19 guidelines are here <https://theatreforum.ie/forum-notice/resources-for-reopening/?nowprocket=1>
- Artists and Performers guidance in regard to Risk Assessment and Covid -19 plans is outlined in Appendix 4 ARTIST AND PERFORMERS RISK ASSESSMENT AND COVID-19 PLANS - Guidance for the Arts Sector: https://author.artscouncil.ie/uploadedFiles/wwwartscouncilie/Content/Contact_us/COVID-19/COVID-19_GuidanceForTheArtsSector.pdf

Chapter 2. SHOW SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS

Vocalisation

Vocalisation presents a risk of transmission via the production of respiratory droplets and aerosols during speaking and singing. Loud speech and singing, while less forceful than coughing or sneezing, can result in bursts of air releasing respiratory particles large enough to transport viruses, including some small enough to be transported on air currents and inhaled deep into the respiratory tract. The quantity and size of particles produced during vocalisation enhance the risk of transmission compared to less-intense respiratory activities. See www.hpsc.ie - [Guidance on non-healthcare building ventilation during COVID-19](#); and Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

Instruments

Transmission risks associated with playing musical instruments vary according to the type of instrument. Playing of strings, keys or percussion typically does not present added risks due to respiratory droplets and aerosols but may present risks due to fomite transmission from shared instruments. Instrumentalists who play more energetically could be inhaling and exhaling more forcefully, which may increase the quantity of aerosols exhaled to the surrounding air. Playing of brass and woodwinds may increase the release of respiratory particles by blowing air, sometimes forcefully, through a mouthpiece. Respiratory particles may exit through the instrument bell or keys, or across the surface for instruments such as the flute. See www.hpsc.ie [Guidance on non-healthcare building ventilation during COVID-19](#), and Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

Dance/Performing Arts

Many dance and performing-arts activities involve close physical contact. Physical exertion can also lead to respiratory droplets and aerosols.

Performers also often have prolonged closeness to other people, including hair and make-up personnel, sound engineers, etc. See Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#); www.hsa.ie; www.hpsc.ie; www.hse.ie.

Other Close-contact Activities

As part of live performances, close-contact activities and shared equipment can be unavoidable, such as costume fitting, hair and make-up, working with sound and amplification equipment (such as microphones). Event organisers should ensure that all activities are carried out in line with government guidance and public-health advice. Strict adherence to health-screening measures, physical distancing, use of face coverings and PPE, and enhanced cleaning in such circumstances will be vital in preventing the spread of the virus among performers and other workers. COVID-19 risk assessments should be carried out and response plans should be prepared for activities. Some performers may be operating in a close-contact pod that may permit them to work in close contact

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without face coverings. A testing regime and Response Plan must be implemented in these circumstances.

See Guidance on COVID-19 policies and protocols for professional dance workers prepared by Dance Ireland available [HERE](#).

- Arts Centres – resources for re-opening are here: <https://theatreforum.ie/forum-notice/resources-for-reopening/>
- Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

Performance Locations

The location and orientation of the performance area will determine the appropriate IPCM required to reduce the risk of transmission between performers and attendees.

Performances delivered on the ground (not on a stage) will require appropriate barrier systems and/or management to ensure physical distancing can be maintained between performers and audiences. Compliance with government advice outlined in the [Work Safely Protocol](#) is a requisite for safe and successful event planning.

Control Measures

Develop and implement Infection Prevention and Control Measures (IPCM): based on the risk assessments, control measures can be put in place that are considered reasonably practicable to reduce the risk of transmission completely or to a tolerable or acceptable level. The management and implementation of control measures will determine if the event can be considered a 'controlled environment' as defined in [COVID-19 Resilience and Recovery 2021-The Path Ahead](#) and updated in [Reframing the Challenge, Continuing Our Recovery and Reconnecting](#). IPCMs outlined in the *Work Safely Protocol* include:

1. Ventilation
 2. Hand hygiene
 3. Respiratory hygiene
 4. Physical distancing
 5. Pre-return-to-work measures
 6. Cleaning
 7. Customer-facing roles
- **Develop a response plan for a suspected COVID-19 case:** event organisers must develop a COVID-19 Response Plan detailing their response to a suspected COVID-19 case for workers, participants, performers and attendees.
 - Consideration should be given to physical distancing of performers with additional protection measures where required, such as physical screens and facing brass and

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woodwinds away from crowds and other performers. Further guidance at Arts Council Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

Additional considerations include:

- Distancing for audiences and performers depending on activities.
- Reducing the duration of the shows.
- Reducing the number of performers.
- Face coverings – singers' face shields, etc.
- Increased ventilation in the performance areas.
- Increased cleaning and disinfection to reduce fomite transmission.
- Consideration of performers' effect on the crowd's behaviour.
- Updating 'show stop' procedures for significant crowd non-compliance.

Event organisers should reach agreement with co-producers, artists, performers, workers and venues regarding working procedures, responsibilities, and response protocols throughout rehearsals, build periods, technical installations, event days and take down periods.

Event organisers should ensure that artists, performers, and entertainers are aware of the event's COVID-19 Response Plan and the control measures in place. They must be aware of their role in providing a COVID-19-safe event by complying with physical-distancing and hygiene protocols. Artists and performers must provide the event organisers with their own COVID-19 Response Plan. See: Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#); www.hsa.ie; www.hpsc.ie; www.hse.ie.

Exhibitions and Visual Arts

Where event organisers present exhibitions or utilise gallery spaces for the event, consideration should be given to the following for preparation and execution:

- Layout of the exhibition's area must accommodate physically distanced viewing.
- Floor markings to denote standing spaces.
- Defined capacities for discrete areas and ability to manage capacities.
- Management for the ingress and egress of attendees to and from the space.
- Production of digital exhibition information/catalogues to avoid distribution of physical materials.

Refer to Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

See also Guidelines Reopening Venues and Events accessible at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35bb8-covid-19-sectoral-guidance/> and also additional information at the following :

- www.hsa.ie
- www.hpsc.ie

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- www.hse.ie
- [Guidelines for Re-opening Visitor Attractions](#) and
- Theatre Forum's [Reopening Arts Centres Guidelines](#) for additional information.

Static Installations

Where events present exhibitions or installations in the public realm, event organisers must ensure the following for preparation and execution:

- Layout to accommodate physically distanced viewing.
- Consideration of the use of floor markings to denote standing spaces.
- No opening/closing ceremonies or live activities that could potentially breach government restrictions.

Event organisers may wish to incorporate self-guided tours as part of these installations. A self-guided tour is where attendees navigate a route independently as opposed to an escorted tour, where a tour guide directs the route, times, information and places toured. Information for the tour could be offered via event app.

Performers and Artists Areas

Event organisers shall be responsible for ensuring that event facilities for performers and artists – such as green rooms, dressing rooms and rehearsal spaces – are included in the event's COVID-19 Response Plan and that they are managed and operated in compliance with government guidance and public-health advice.

Where there are multiple performers or artists using the facilities (green rooms, staging, etc.), thorough cleaning and disinfecting should be carried out before and after each use to avoid potential cross-contamination. For outdoor performances, artist areas, dressing rooms, bathroom facilities and warm-up spaces must also be provided. Room capacities should be clearly signposted, and event organisers should consider all visitors to these areas (guests, artist liaisons, stage managers, etc.).

For further information see:

- Arts Centres – Resources for Re-opening: <https://theatreforum.ie/forum-notice/resources-for-reopening/>
- Arts Council's Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector at <https://www.artscouncil.ie/covid-19/government-guidelines/>
- Guidelines Reopening Venues and Events is accessible at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35bb8-covid-19-sectoral-guidance/>

International and National Travel

Workers – including artists, performers and touring workers – must adhere to government restrictions with respect to national and international travel. Information for those travelling (including the details of category-2 locations) and the passenger form can be found [HERE](#) and [HERE](#).

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Information on requirements for people traveling to and from Ireland is accessible at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/77952-government-advice-on-international-travel>

Other Site Activities

There may be other activities and attractions at your event that need to be considered and assessed with respect to the risk of transmission of COVID-19. This may include activities such as:

- Sampling and promotions
- Demonstrations
- One-to-one activities – e.g. traditional-music tutorials, face painting, etc.
- Workshop activities – e.g. art classes, circus-skills workshops, traditional singing or music workshops
- Interactive games – e.g. bouncing castles, climbing walls
- Funfairs and carnival games
- Interactive performances with the public or collaborative art-making with the public
- Walking tours

Event organisers must ensure activities do not cause an increased risk of infection transmission. Risk assessment/compliance considerations should be carried out in advance of booking activities (at programming stage) and checked for compliance as agreed on-site. There may be some activities that may not be suitable. Please check all relevant current advice and guidelines including Arts Council Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#); www.hsa.ie; www.hpsc.ie; www.hse.ie and [Work Safely Protocol](#)

SECTION SUMMARY

- ***Liaise with artists, performers and touring workers***
- ***Live-performers' and artists' response plans provided by performers/artists***
- ***Manage and monitor close-contact work in line with government guidance***
- ***Ensure artist areas and back of house are managed in line with government guidance***
- ***Review guidance on international travel for artists and performers***
- ***Risk-assess other site activities***
- [Work Safely Protocol](#)
- ***Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector at [HERE](#)***
- ***Guidelines Reopening Venues and Events is accessible at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35bb8-covid-19-sectoral-guidance/>***

Chapter 3. CONTRACTORS AND SUPPLIERS

Event Operations

All aspects of the festival and event operations should be planned and managed to ensure compliance with government guidance and public-health advice. This includes:

- Set-up and take-down activities
- Deliveries and collections
- Scheduling of suppliers and contractors
- Arrival of artists and performers

Event organisers will need to consider a slower pace of work to facilitate physical distancing and enhanced cleaning Requirements.

Event organisers should ensure that communications with contractors and suppliers with respect to COVID-19 IPCMs are consistent and in line with measures outlined in Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#).

Documentation

Contractors and suppliers must follow the event's IPCM and take into account current public health advice to prevent the spread of COVID-19. All suppliers and contractors who come on-site and work at the event must sign a health declaration prior to entering, as per all workers. Event-specific COVID-19 induction should be provided detailing event organizer's COVID-19 Response Plan. This will include policies and procedures on:

- Physical distancing
- Hand hygiene and etiquette
- Face-covering policy
- Health screening
- Suspected-case response and isolation areas
- COVID-19 Compliance Officers
- Contact tracing

Standard health and safety management procedures for suppliers and contractors should also be implemented. All supplier and contractor health and safety documents should be updated to include their COVID-19 Response Plan. Event organisers should ensure that contractors and suppliers:

- Have appropriate insurances in place.
- Have reviewed and updated their safety statement and associated risk assessments to take account of COVID-19. See HSA website for resources on [Safety Statements and Risk Assessments](#).

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- Have reviewed and updated risk assessments and method statements for all works on-site to address the risk of COVID-19. Particular emphasis will be required for 'close working' – i.e. where persons cannot maintain physical distance.
- Have reviewed and updated daily briefing documents (safe-system-of-work plans, site induction briefings, etc.) to address COVID-19.

Suppliers and contractors should nominate a LWR and/or COVID-19 Compliance Officer, who will be responsible for ensuring compliance for their own team and who will liaise with event organisers as required. For further guidance please see Arts Council Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector at [HERE](#).

Stage/Set Build

Construction Federation of Ireland C-19 Standard Operating Procedures should be referred to for 'site build' and 'strike/de-rig' elements. The document can be found [HERE](#).

SECTION SUMMARY

- *Return-to-work screening for contractors and suppliers*
- *Training for contractors and suppliers*
- *Response plans provided by contractors and suppliers*
- *Contact-tracing systems for contractors and suppliers*
- *Set-up and take-down considerations*
- *Scheduling and planning considerations*
- *Cleaning and Hygiene considerations*

Chapter 4. ACCESSIBILITY

Event organisers should ensure that COVID-19 IPCM do not compromise the rights or quality of the experience for attendees or workers with disabilities. The COVID-19 Response Plan should have regard to the requirements of disabilities, equality and inclusion legislation.

Factors to be considered include:

- Control measures should not prevent a person with a disability from attending or accessing the event.
- Event organisers cannot restrict people from attending for reasons of disability. It is for the individual to carry out their own personal risk assessment and to determine the appropriateness of their attendance at the event.
- Attendees with disabilities often require attendance with a companion or aid. This will need to be considered when allocating tickets in line with physical distancing.
- Positions of barriers and infrastructure should not impede the access or circulation route for people with disabilities.
- Positions and legibility of signage should have regard for people with disabilities.
- Hand sanitisers should be accessible to people with a range of abilities.
- Hand sanitisers, barriers and other infrastructure should contrast visually with surrounding surfaces so that they are easily identifiable to people with vision impairment.
- Stewards and COVID-19 Compliance Officers should be made aware that some disabled people are unable to wear face coverings.

Chapter 5. ZONE EX MANAGEMENT

Consideration needs to be given to the event venue environs during **entry and egress** at an event. The management of the 'last mile' leading from public car parks, public-transport hubs and local amenities will be essential in reducing the risk of spreading COVID-19.

While management of this zone may be outside the direct control of venue management and event organisers, a holistic view of the attendee journey to and from the event (or from event to event where this takes place in a festival programme on multiple sites) needs to be considered. A consultative-management approach should be applied between the event organisers and statutory agencies. **Size and location of the event will determine the required management.**

This might include:

- Review of public-transport capacity and ability to get people to and from the festival or event safely.
- Review of access and egress to public-transport hubs to allow physical distancing.
- Requirement of additional parking due to increased numbers of attendees driving to the venue to avoid public transport.
- Attendee behaviour outside the venue.
- Impact on local businesses and residents, ensuring they can physically distance from the attendees and implement public-health measures.
- Overcrowding in local amenities pre- and post-event.
- Overcrowding in communal areas and streets.
- Changes to approach routes that may affect traffic management.
- Temporary road closures to accommodate new access and egress routes and to promote physical distancing.
- Staggered entry time and egress times.
- Casual traders.
- Signage to direct audiences or the public to and from the venue.
- For festivals and events hosted in a venue without a defined site boundary, such as in the public realm or greenfield sites, event organisers should ensure they can deliver the event under the conditions of a 'controlled environment'. This requires a secure site boundary with designated entry and exit points.

Event organisers should liaise with, as appropriate: venue management; local authorities; An Garda Síochána; the National Transport Authority and/or local transport providers, and any other stakeholders to coordinate safe access and egress to and from the event.

Ambient crowds should be included in event planning arrangements. Event organisers will need to be aware of and have mechanisms in place for discouraging and dispensing with the congregation of crowds outside the event as a result of event activities.

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Some events will be held in multiple '*controlled environments*' by using multiple venues. Event organisers must be cognisant of crowd movements and management to avoid congestion when planning and programming.

For further guidance please see Covid-19 Guidance for the Arts Sector [HERE](#) and Guidelines Reopening Venues and Events is accessible at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/35bb8-covid-19-sectoral-guidance/>.

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