

This Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document addresses questions following directives from the Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail (CNESST) and the Direction générale de la santé publique on health and safety measures for protection against COVID-19.

Instructions from the Direction générale de la santé publique may be subject to change as the pandemic progresses. Responses provided in this FAQ apply to professional activities and are effective as of November 3, 2020. Directives associated with each of the alert levels of the four-tiered progressive regional alert and intervention system (COVID-19) must prevail.

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1. THE SMALL, STABLE TEAM

1.1 What is a small, stable team (SST)?

A team of no more than nine people, working exclusively together.

1.2 What is the maximum number of people in an SST?

Nine people.

1.3 What is the basis for determining the duration of an SST?

There is no maximum or minimum duration.

1.4 May an artist be part of two SSTs in two different productions concurrently?

No. Since the risk of virus transmission is slightly increased in one SST, we do not want to raise it even more by combining the risks of two SSTs.

1.5 What is a controlled area?

An area where SST members are away from other people.

1.6 What are the distancing rules in the SST?

According to CNESST's workplace sanitary standards guide for the Performing Arts Sector, Performance Halls and Movie Theatres – COVID-19:

- *Artists may be at least one metre away from other people, without procedural masks or eye protection, if they are working on a single act or show and form a stable team of less than 10 people*
- *For a period not exceeding 15 minutes per day, cumulatively, these artists may be less than one metre away, without procedural masks or eye protection. Physical contact between two artists involving touching parts of the face is not permitted*
- *Individuals at risk of serious complications as well as workers on unstable teams or working on more than one act or show must stand at least 2 metres apart if they are not separated by a physical barrier, or if they are not wearing a procedural mask or protective eyewear [...]*

1.7 Can SST members be added or removed during rehearsals or performances?

Members may be removed at any time. Adding members to an SST is not recommended. One member may be added per week (7 days), provided they have not been part of another SST in the last 7-10 days and do not present any COVID-19 symptoms.

1.8 Are there any special health guidelines for SST members beyond rehearsals or performances?

Like all workers in cultural occupations, during a pandemic, SST members must follow general public health guidelines, which include: maintaining a two-metre distance from people outside their household or SST, washing their hands frequently, avoiding indoor gatherings as per the rules for their alert level, and wearing a surgical mask ("procedure mask"), or face shield as per the guidelines, or in situations where the two-metre distance cannot be maintained.

1.9 Is isolation recommended for performers and crew during the performance/rehearsal period?

No, there is a residual risk of transmission of COVID-19 after isolation.

1.10 How long is the precautionary period between rehearsals or performances for SST members?

The minimum duration is seven days.

1.11 Can the precautionary period between rehearsals or performances for SST members be shortened by diagnostic tests?

No.

1.12 Can directors, choreographers and designers be part of the SST?

No, they cannot be part of the SST. They must remain two metres away from the members of the SST at all times.

1.13 How to apply SST rules when shows go on tour?

Refer to CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the Public Transportation Sector – COVID-19 and encourage individual transportation. In addition, refer to the specific measures for transporting people during a tour in the CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the Performing Arts Sector, Performance Halls and Movie Theatres – COVID-19

1.14 Can there be two or three 9-person SSTs in the same show?

The idea behind SSTs is to isolate the people who are in them. Since SSTs cannot interact with each other, the layout of the premises must enable them to work at a distance from each other.

2. PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

2.1 Are technical team members required to wear personal protective equipment at all times?

Yes, with the exception of those who work two metres away from other people, or who are separated by a physical barrier.

2.2 Can a good quality face covering replace the surgical mask (“procedure mask”)?

No, because there is currently no standard in Quebec for face coverings. The surgical mask is recommended by the CNESST and the Direction générale de la santé publique in work settings.

2.3 Can the visor be worn without other protection?

No, the visor must be worn with a surgical mask when the two-metre distance cannot be respected.

2.4 How do I decide when to change my surgical mask?

The surgical mask should be changed as soon as it is soiled or wet, or after four hours of continuous use. Two to four masks are required per eight-hour shift, depending on the individual or type of activity.

2.5 Do the rules also apply when a production is rehearsed or performed in a public place?

Yes.

2.6 Is it mandatory to wear face coverings in enclosed public places at all times, even if you are more than two metres away?

Yes, the face covering is mandatory in a public place, according to the rules in force, and distancing measures continue to apply.

2.7 Does the requirement to wear a face covering also apply to office workers? In other words, will workers in the same office be required to wear a face covering all day long?

Employees working in an office must wear a face cover or surgical mask when in common areas, but are not required to wear it at their workstation if:

- A two-metre distance is maintained from any other person
or
- they are separated from others by a physical barrier.

2.8 Is an organization renting out space required to provide surgical masks to tenants?

The organization must encourage visitors or employees who already have one to wear it and must be able to provide one to those who do not.

2.9 Can circus performers wear only a surgical mask, without eye protection, while performing their art?

For the circus arts, if the risk of injury associated with wearing protective eyewear is deemed significant, artists working together could wear only the surgical mask for the duration of a rehearsal.

For performances, SST artists working on a single show or act may be at :

- at least 1 metre from other people, without surgical mask or eye protection
- less than 1 metre away from other people, without a surgical mask or eye protection, for a period not exceeding 15 minutes per day, cumulatively.

2.10 When sharing equipment or objects (e.g. juggling props, theatre accessories, etc.), is it recommended to wear gloves?

No. Hand washing before and after is recommended.

3. PHYSICAL CONTACT AND PROXIMITY BETWEEN ARTISTS

3.1 What type of close physical proximity is allowed and why?

With the exception of artists who have lived at the same address for a period prior to the artistic project, scenes involving physical contact between two people (bed scenes, contact between face parts) are not permitted because they are at high risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Furthermore, very brief friendly gestures, such as handshakes, or a comforting gesture such as a hand on the shoulder, are permitted. An aggressive gesture from the back, or an impulsive gesture such as a slap or a punch are permitted.

3.2 Can only artists who are in real life relationships have intimate contacts (bed, fights, etc.) in the context of the art project?

Only artists who have been living at the same address for a period prior to the art project may perform these scenes. This applies not only to couples, but also to roommates.

3.3 Can two artists dance together? Alternatively, is this possible if one of the artists is wearing personal protective equipment (PPE)?

Yes, artists who have been living at the same address for a period prior to the art project can dance or perform together.

This is also possible if 2 artists are at a 1-metre distance from each other and are members of the same small stable team (SST), but the duration of the scene must be counted within the 15 cumulative minutes per day.

Two artists are also allowed to dance together less than 1 metre apart when one of them is wearing PPE.

3.4 Can an intimate scene between two artists be made if one of them is wearing PPE rendered invisible through staging effects?

A scene can be performed at a less than one-metre distance, without intimate contact, when one of the performers is wearing PPE. However, scenes involving intimate physical contact between two artists (fights, bed scenes, contact between faces) are not permitted, except for artists who have lived at the same address for a period prior to the project.

3.5 Can scenes with babies and children be performed? What are the rules for adults and children performing in the scene?

Yes, they can be performed under the same rules set out for adults.

3.6 What about the elderly or people with comorbidities?

They may participate in rehearsals and performances, but it is in their best interest to stay within 2 metres of other people.

3.7 Under what conditions is close physical proximity of less than one metre permitted?

With PPE, performers can be at less than 1 metre with no time limit, but without contact between faces.

Artists in an SST may interact at less than 1 metre, without PPE, for a period not exceeding 15 minutes per day, cumulatively. However, with the exception of artists who have lived at the same address for a period prior to the artistic project, scenes involving physical contact between two people (bed scenes, contact between face parts) are not permitted.

Furthermore, very brief friendly gestures, such as handshakes or a comforting gesture such as a hand on the shoulder, are permitted.

3.8 Does the cumulative 15 minutes per day apply to non-artists?

This measure applies to SST members to enable closer physical proximity of less than 1 metre without PPE.

Furthermore, non-SST workers are not obliged to wear PPE if they perform all of their tasks at a 2-metre distance, even if, for brief, unforeseen moments in their day, and not exceeding 15 minutes in total, they are at a less than 2-metre distance from another person.

3.9 In the circus, is contact between two artists possible when wearing PPE?

When performers wear PPE, contact is possible (with the exception of faces touching). However, sanitary instructions must be respected (hand washing, etc.).

3.10 How is the two-metre distance between people measured?

It is measured from head to head.

3.11 What is the appropriate distance for performers without PPE who are exerting themselves and who may project droplets during their performance?

The minimum distance is at least two metres between these performers unless they are separated by solid partitions.

3.12 What is the distance allowed between the artists and the audience?

At least two metres, and more if possible.

3.13 What is the distance allowed between artists who project their breath (e.g. singers, wind instrumentalists, etc.)?

Each singer and wind musician must keep a minimum two-metre distance from other people or be separated by a solid partition. The other musicians may be seated one and a half metres apart, while remaining two metres from the conductor.

3.14 Can puppeteers go without protective equipment based on the 15-minute rule?

If they constitute an SST, puppeteers may work within 1 metre of each other, without PPE, for a period not exceeding 15 minutes per day, cumulatively.

4. CONTROL MEASURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 Is the presence of a person responsible for the application of sanitary measures mandatory in a rehearsal or performance space?

No, but it is highly recommended to prevent outbreaks.

For acts and shows where performers are less than 1 metre away, less than 15 minutes without protection, the employer must keep a record of the following information: dates and locations of the acts or shows, and names of the workers involved.

4.2 If a presenter or company does not comply with health standards, who is accountable and how can the situation be resolved?

Both parties have shared responsibilities. The presenter must notify the company of the measures they are implementing. The company's workers are also responsible for complying with the rules.

Whenever a situation is considered dangerous for workers, the CNESST can be notified: 1 844 838-0808, option 1 (you can report anonymously).

4.3 In the context of on-site dance presentations, who is responsible for keeping the public at least two metres away from the artists?

CNESST's Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the Performing Arts Sector, Performance Halls and Movie Theatres – COVID-19 outlines employer responsibilities on pages 1 and 9: "The suppliers, subcontractors, partners and customers have been informed of the measures implemented in the business in compliance with the guidelines issued by Santé publique (the public health authorities) to make them aware of the importance of complying with these measures."

4.4 Is the maintenance of a record and the submission of a signed consent and commitment statement by the parties constituting an SST sufficient to authorize their free studio practice?

No. Written commitments are not part of the accepted procedures.

4.5 Should venue staff intervene when members of the public are unwilling to comply with distancing measures?

Venue managers must ensure that the capacity of the venue allows for a two-metre distance between individuals or households circulating in common areas and one and a half metres between spectators seated in the room who are not from the same household.

They must take the appropriate steps to inform their customers of the instructions to be followed. They must also manage entrances and exits as well as service areas (restaurants, washrooms, etc.) to ensure that measures are followed, particularly in congested areas.

They are also responsible for terminating the activity when compliance becomes impossible.

5. SAFE MANAGEMENT AND CLEANING OF THE PREMISES

5.1 What measures should be followed when hosting both professional and non-professional artists in a venue?

One must comply with the rules set out in the CNESST guides for professional workers and follow the government rules for non-professional artists.

5.2 Is there a risk of contamination from sweating or the projection of droplets, and are there any special measures to be implemented?

Sweating is not an additional concern. Rather, the risk of contamination is associated with the projection of droplets from the mouth and nose. As yet, there is no evidence of transmission by other bodily fluids.

Personal hygiene, frequent hand washing, and frequent washing of surfaces and objects used, remain the key rules to follow.

With regard to the measures to be applied, cleaning and disinfection of the floor must be done before and after each use by different groups.

More specifically, regarding the cleaning of surfaces, including carpets, see the Workplace Sanitary Standards Guide for the Indoor and Outdoor Sports, Recreation and Open-Air Activities Sector – COVID-19 This guide can also be consulted for professional dance.

5.3 Should barefoot work be avoided? Is floor work to be avoided?

No.

5.4 What should be done in studios that are not equipped with an air ventilation system?

Ventilation must be adequate and comply with the regulations of the Régie du bâtiment and CNESST. However, it is possible to open one or more windows to allow regular air exchange.

5.5 Do establishments with code-based entrance systems need to have staff available to greet artists using the facility?

It's not necessary. However, it is recommended that hands be washed after contact with frequently touched objects.

5.6 Under what sanitary conditions can dance take place outdoors?

The rules are the same as on stage. In situ, dancers are allowed to touch the ground. The outside ground does not have to be disinfected. Hands must be washed before and after the performance. It is also necessary to maintain a two-metre distance from the audience.

5.7 If the shift is longer than eight hours, but the crew remains the same, does the disinfection scenario change?

If the team remains the same and the work continues, cleaning can be done after the shift, regardless of the length of the shift, to avoid contaminating the workers on the next shift.

5.8 How often should a presentation hall be disinfected?

After each shift or after each performance.

5.9 How is the 1.5 metre distance between seated spectators measured?

It is measured from head to head.

5.10 With the 25% on-site staff requirement, how do we determine the number of people allowed on-site to greet the public?

In order to welcome the public, the presenter has the right to have more than 25% of their staff working. The 25% regulation applies only to office work.

5.11 Do the rules regarding the number of people allowed in a cultural venue include artists and staff?

No. The rules only apply to the number of spectators or visitors, excluding artists and staff.

5.12 Do performance venues have to keep a record of the number of people who have visited the venue as they do in bars and restaurants?

No, unless their Direction régionale de santé publique advises otherwise.

5.13 How often should a workplace or venue be fully ventilated or disinfected and how long between performances?

After each shift or after each performance. There is no set time limit between performances.

5.14 How should we manage the cloakroom service?

It is better not to offer this service. The space made available in the rooms may allow for coats to be placed on free seats. Otherwise, workers in the coatroom, who handle clothing, must wash their hands regularly.

5.15 Are there any special measures required for presentation halls located in the same building as an educational institution?

The specific rules established by the educational institution must be respected.

5.16 What are the rules on the consumption of food and beverages on stage?

Whenever possible, limit the consumption of food and drink on stage. A minimum two-metre distance between people must be kept at all times, except for members of a small, stable team. Sharing cutlery and servings should be avoided.

6 RULES ACCORDING TO ALERT LEVELS

6.1 What impact will a region's classification (from green to red) have on the resumption of rehearsals and performances?

Alert levels introduce additional measures by targeting certain sectors of activity. These sectors are selectively restricted, banned or closed. Alert levels are established based on the recommendations of public health authorities who regularly analyze the situation taking into account the epidemiological context, transmission control and the health care system's capacity.

6.2 Does the transition of regions from one level to another result in changes to the various CNESST health guides?

No.

6.3 In the red zone, is it permitted to organize pop-up shows in situ in an outdoor public space, without announcing the date?

In the red zone, even without a specific schedule, organizing a gathering in an outdoor public space is prohibited.

6.4 Is it possible to hold an outdoor performance with a dancer and a spectator (or a family unit) in a red zone?

In the red zone, activities cannot be held in a public place.

6.4 Is it possible to hold an outdoor show in front of red zone balconies?

In the red zone, it is not possible to organize this type of performance outdoors.

6.6 Are rehearsals with more than one person in home workspaces permitted in all zones?

In the red zone, work activities are possible in a private residence rented for this purpose, to operate a business.

Visits for professional purposes (e.g. home recording studio) are therefore permitted, in compliance with health standards (compliance with the two-metre limit, wearing face covering, etc.). However, supervised leisure activities (e.g. a private lesson given by a teacher to a student) remain suspended.

6.7 Are artists allowed to circulate between zones and what are the regulations?

Circulation is possible for cultural workers and artists. For these people specifically, all prohibitions in their zone of origin continue to apply in the other zones, with the exception of the possibility of practicing their art or work in places welcoming the public, according to the rules in effect.

6.8 For venues in the green, yellow or orange zone, can a presenter ask an artist to take a screening test before agreeing to allow them to perform in their venue?

The presenter may request it and the artist may refuse it. This issue lies within the contractual relationship between the two parties.

It is best to follow measures regarding distancing, personal protection, hygiene and cleaning of premises and surfaces to avoid transmission of the virus and to ensure the safety of workers and the public.

6.7 What should a presenter in a green, yellow, or orange zone do if they notice that there are spectators from a red zone in their venue?

Venue managers must take the necessary steps to inform spectators coming from red zones in advance of their obligation to respect the directives of their zone of origin and to not show up.

7. INTERNATIONAL WORK

7.1 Is it possible to reduce the quarantine period?

No. Quarantine is under federal jurisdiction under the Quarantine Act (S.C. 2005, c. 20).

Travellers entering Canada must follow the rules set out in the Government of Canada's Emergency Orders under this Act: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection/latest-travel-health-advice.html>.

8. MANAGEMENT OF SYMPTOMATIC PEOPLE

8.1 What should be done if an artist or technical staff member shows symptoms? What measures should be taken for other production team members?

The case must be reported immediately to the Direction régionale de santé publique, which will take charge of all follow-ups:

Determine the level of risk of contagion, quarantine, or isolation, etc.

Outbreaks have been prevented by following the guidelines presented in the CNESST guide. If the infected person and their coworkers have followed the guidelines, the number of cases may be very limited.

8.2 If a member of a small stable team (SST) is diagnosed positive, should other SST members go for testing, wait for the results, and stop work until their test results are received?

The Direction régionale de santé publique will determine the appropriate follow-up.

8.3 Does anyone who tests positive immediately go into quarantine?

Yes.

8.4 How long is the quarantine?

The Direction régionale de santé publique will provide guidance on this.

9. THE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

9.1 What rules must an artist working in a school follow?

Artists must follow the same rules as teachers. These rules are in place in every school. When giving a lecture or workshop, the artist must wear personal protective equipment when they are less than two metres away from other people. If they are more than two metres away, they may remove their protective equipment during the performance or workshop.

The artist is allowed to move from one school to another. However, they must comply with the protocols of each school. A school has the right to have a stricter protocol and to ask that there be no movement between schools.

9.2 Does the duration of a children's performance influence the risk of contamination?

No, if all sanitary measures are respected.

9.3 What procedures should be followed when a theatre hosts a school group?

First of all, make sure that school outings are allowed in the alert zone concerned.

In the hall and common areas of the auditorium, the rules of the classroom bubble apply, just as they do at school.

If you have additional questions regarding health measures for the performing arts, you can contact the monitoring team at comitescovid19@mcc.gouv.qc.ca.