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Overview

The purpose of this document is to outline the key planning considerations for welcoming audiences into the Lester Centre of the Arts (LCA) in the context of the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, when it is legal and reasonably safe.

In accordance with guiding documents from Work Safe BC and ActSafe BC, this document outlines additional protocols, policies and procedures that will be followed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Orders from the Office of the Provincial Health Officer

1. Mass Gatherings, August 23, 2020

No events will be held indoor or outdoor with more than 50 patrons

2. Workplace Safety Plans, September 23, 2020

COVID-19 Workplace Safety Plans have been completed and are posted on the website readily available at workplace for review by staff, outside personnel onsite for work purposes, and members of the public.

Strategic Objectives

The plan supports strategic objectives guiding the collective efforts to respond to and overcome the COVID-19 pandemic.

- Protect the health and safety of both employees and the public
- Protect LCA assets while also continuing to the full extent possible to deliver services needed by the community, while adhering to restrictions and limits prescribed by the Provincial Health Officer (PHO)
- Do the necessary planning and complete all work needed to ensure that the LCA programs, services and equipment will be in optimum condition and at operational status when re-opened for community use
- Ensure that the appropriate staff resources and remote work policies and procedures and appropriate technology are in place to provide the services that will be needed over the full duration of the crisis to support all staff who are continuing to work on sustaining services as described above and on the recovery.

Staged Approach to Service Restoration

LCA is taking a staged approach to restoring services. The timing of each stage, and the restoration of programs and services within each stage, is subject to change as the COVID-19 pandemic and Provincial direction evolves. This plan assumes that there is no setback in the collective societal progress to flatten the curve in infections within the province.

The restoration of programs and services will necessitate changes in the way these services are delivered. A number of health and safety measures will be put in place across the facility to ensure that safety of both staff and public while utilizing the facility, keeping it is the responsibility of the public to follow the established guideline:

Stage 1 – No Audiences

Stage 2 – Audiences less than 50

Stage 3 – Audiences of 50-250

Stage 4 – Audiences above 250

Reopening Goals

- Take a risk managed approach to reopening
- Eliminate touch points
- Break the chains of transmission
- Ability to trace any infections – All tickets/entries must be traceable

Minimizing Risk in the Theatre

LCA recognizes the importance of WorkSafeBC and its safety protocols put in place to protect workers, and all resources and guidelines have been considered when developing this plan.

All Workers and Performers must complete a Daily Health Declaration form upon entry. Instructional signage will be posted at all entry points.

It is important to incorporate strategies for reducing transmission risks of COVID-19 to safeguard workers. The following controls will be in effect:

- Workplace setup – Where possible schedules will be modified to minimize the number of workers in one space and those workers on-site will be assigned areas that are at least 2m (6ft) apart for coworkers, patrons and others.
- Strict Illness policy – increased measures will be put in place to ensure staff conduct self-screening prior to entering the workplace as outlined in the plan.
- Physical distancing controls – this is the most fundamental health measure in decreasing the transmission of COVID-19. This measure is to provide at least 2m of space between people where possible.

- Plexiglass shields will be in place where staff provide sales and the 2m apart isn't always possible.
- Administrative controls – good communication through signage, directional arrows/line up dots to assist with physical distancing, encourage payments by POS and reminders not to linger.
- Personal protective equipment (PPE) - this will be utilized as a last resort, only to be implemented if no other options are available. The use of gloves and face masks may be considered where one of the above controls are not possible or effective. Workers must follow the usage guidelines included in staff training.

Screening of Illness

Before entry

Staff will be expected to screen themselves for flu-like symptoms prior to daily entry of the facility. Please make use of the COVID-19 assessment tool. This tool helps determine if you need to call 811 to see a medical professional or need to self-isolate and monitor.

Please pay particular attention to the tool stating the following:

- If you have a fever, sore throat, cough, difficulty breathing, or are sneezing you must stay home from work/school for 10 days and avoid going out in public as much as possible
- If you have travelled outside of Canada in the last 14 days you are to stay home and self-quarantine.
- If you feel you are suffering from any other symptoms such as flu-like symptoms including diarrhea in the last 24 hours you are expected to stay home

If you answered yes to any of the above, STAY HOME

While at the LCA:

If patrons/staff members become ill while attending the theatre we ask that you remove yourself from the facility immediately and contact our office to notify staff. This will allow us to take the following measures:

- Staff to conduct a thorough cleaning of the spaces until cleaning has been completed.
- If a patron tests positive for COVID-19, staff will immediately follow directions provided by Northern Health.

If a staff member feels a patron/staff member displays symptoms while at the facility, they will be asked to leave. The following measures will take place:

- Staff member who requested the patron/staff member to leave will contact their supervisor to inform and document
- Patron/staff member must exit the facility as quickly as possible. If immediate departure is not possible, then they will be asked to self-isolate in an appropriate area, distancing themselves from other staff and patrons
- Staff to conduct a thorough cleaning of the spaces where the symptomatic person was and none is to enter these spaces until cleaning has been completed
- Patron/staff member who falls ill will be given the Illness Policy Handout and will be required to follow the Illness Policy guidelines prior to returning to the facility
- If the patron/staff member tests positive for COVID-19, follow directions provided by Northern Health

Proper Hygiene

To reduce the spread of COVID-19, handwashing has been identified as the most effective method. Staff will be required, and patrons strongly recommended, to increase handwashing for all utilizing the facility. Proper handwashing procedures have been posted throughout the facility and handwashing is recommended:

- Upon arrival and before departure of the facility
- Before and after any transitions
- Before and after eating and drinking
- After using the toilet
- Before and after playing on any play structure or use of equipment
- After sneezing or coughing
- Whenever their hands are visibly dirty

Coughing and Sneezing

It is expected that coughing and sneezing that is unrelated to illness may occur. Staff, instructors, and participants are expected to use good hygiene and protocol when this occurs

- Coughing and sneezing into elbow
- Nose blowing – use enough layers of tissue paper so that the fingers do not touch the secretions
- Immediately dispose of tissue paper in a garbage can with a bag and lid, if possible
- Wash the hands with soap and water
- Tissues will be made readily available throughout the facility

COVID-19 Safety Plan Posting

The COVID-19 safety plan must be posted and provided to renters and performers

Worker Health and Safety Representative

A staff member with risk management knowledge will be designated the “Health and Safety Representative” for the venue. This role is essential during this pandemic, and will be incorporated into health and safety plans.

The Health and Safety Rep will have the following duties:

- Coordinate with, communicate, and help implement public health guidelines
- Work closely with the event producers and performers to develop and implement event health plans
- Ensure existing safety plans are modified for compatibility with new health plans
- Help create worker training that applies current information about hazards and infection disinfecting high-touch surfaces.
- Determine, in conjunction with the venue or event organizer, if a worker or patron may safely enter the event space when there is a health concern

Practices for Sick Workers and Volunteers

Workers must notify their supervisor and stay home from work if they have symptoms of acute respiratory illness consistent with COVID-19 – such as fever, cough, chills, muscle pain, headache, sore throat or shortness of breath – that is not explained by another medical or allergic condition. Workers with symptoms of acute respiratory illness associated with COVID-19 may return to work after (a) home isolation for 14 days since their first symptoms or positive test, (b) medical authorization.

Sanitizing the Venue

Prior to load-in for any performance or event, arrangements with the Operations Department will be made for a thorough sanitizing of the work area, lobby, access points, and communal spaces. Surfaces and objects that are touched frequently must be regularly disinfected using products approved by the BC health authority. Arrangements will be made with Operations to determine the sharing of tasks.

Public Areas – lobby, hallways concession, service areas

- Door handles, handrails, concession counter
- Point of sales terminals, and other keypads
- Tables and chairs, trash receptacle touch points

Restrooms – front and back of house

- Door handles and push areas
- Sink faucets and counters, toilet handles
- Soap dispensers, towel dispenser handles
- Trash receptacle touch points

Back of House- dressing rooms, green room, rehearsal room and production area

- Door handles, push areas and light switches
- Microphones – dedicate one per performer, no sharing
- Backstage and technical equipment
- Trash receptacle touch points
- Cables – clean on rollup

Control Booth

- Limit access – closed during performances
- Increase ventilation

Handwashing Stations

Stations with sanitizer must be provided at all points of ingress and other well-marked locations throughout the venue. Sanitizer stations containing at least 70% isopropanol to be available in the lobby area, near concession, and outside the washrooms. Once a patron has presented their ticket and entered the venue, there will be additional sanitizers inside the theatre entrances. Volunteers to monitor at points of ingress to ensure that all patrons enter with clean hands.

Ingress/Egress Queues

One-way directional flow will be enforced. Patrons enter through the lobby and exit out the egress doors.

- Patrons will queue in the main lobby
- Waiting lines will be managed with ground markers or stanchions, and volunteers
- Signage will be displayed throughout the lobby area describing health rules, including social distancing guidelines
- Egress from back to front starting with row A and working backwards, much like how you deplane an aircraft. After events ends patrons nearest the exits will leave first. Volunteers will ensure that patrons understand the procedure and comply with social distancing. An announcement explaining the egress procedure will be played at the beginning of all events

Ticket takers and Security

- All events will be ticketed with assigned seating. Tickets will be available in advance at all box office locations or over the phone
- Tickets will be scanned by assigned ticket takers wearing face coverings
- Tickets takers will be located outside of the front of house entry doors to avoid congestion of traffic flow
- Ushers will also wear face coverings and avoid touching tickets – if touching does become necessary, the worker must immediately wash their hands before resuming work

Restrooms

Theatre lobby restrooms will be limited to 3 patrons to ensure social distancing. This will result in patrons waiting outside the restroom doors. The waiting area will require monitoring by a Volunteer to insure appropriate space between patrons is maintained.

Intermission

Events will be under 90 minutes long and will not include an intermission

Concession – Beverage Services (when appropriate)

Counter service – The number of counter staff will be limited consistent with social distancing. Workers will be required to wear face masks and gloves. Beverages will be placed on the counter and not handed directly to patrons. One worker will be designated as the cashier only and will handle all cash. All beverages will be served in disposable containers with disposable single use packages used for coffee/tea.

Separate entry and exit points – patrons will entry and exit in one direction flow, floor markers will be used to guide patrons through.

Merchandise Sales

Posting signage with Merchant website sales links is recommended instead of live sales.

Booking of Spaces

Site visits and venue tours for booking will be restricted to 5 persons, unless it is a school tour, then a school cohort of no more than 25 will be allowed while following all COVID – 19 protocols and must wear masks. Companies seeking to book a space/facility must submit a health and safety plan consistent with these guidelines regarding the risks particular to their event.

Parton Education

Widespread messaging that is positive, practical, and proportionate will be provided to patrons through physical signage. Messaging will accomplish 2 essential goals: (1) patrons will learn that the new rules are for their protection, which will eventually lead to greater compliance; (2) transparently showing new sanitary practices will help ease patrons back into the venue.

Advance Information for Clients, Producers and Rental Personnel

1.2 This section covers protocols for venue rentals

1.3 Theatre Health & Safety Representatives will be present will meet the client at the agreed arrival time and will give a health and safety orientation to the incoming group prior to load-in

1.4 The Theatre Health & Safety representative will be present for the first hour to help ensure safety protocols are met and to answer any questions.

1.5 Each rental client must submit a written safety plan to the Technical Director for approval no less than 2 weeks prior to the rental date.

1.6 Travelling groups who identify as a Pod may work or perform to their own comfort level within the building but must respect social distancing with others at all times.

1.7 Individuals are encouraged to regularly wash hands with soap and use the sanitizer sprays that are provided in each space.

1.8 the auditorium eating may not be used by anyone except by special request from production personnel only.

1.9 Sanitizers and cleaning supplies will be made available in each of the washrooms, dressing rooms, Greenroom and stage areas.

1.10 Clients are expected to use sanitizing wipes to wipe down surfaces and common touch points such as light switches each time they exit a space.

Arrival/load-in

2.1 The Client crew and performers to enter and exit the building at the loading door only.

2.2 All production crew and performers will sign in and out at the loading door

2.3 Any group who will work or perform as a Pod must sign-in as such

2.4 House technicians will not handle external musical equipment

Dressing rooms & Greenrooms

3.1 Social distancing regulations call for 5m per person in any room. However, the available floor space is mitigated by number and size of furnishings such as couches and chairs. Therefore, the following room capacities must be observed:

3.2 Dressing rooms: (2 small) two person maximum (2 large) 10 person maximum

3.3 Rehearsal room: 20 person maximum

3.4 Greenroom: 12 person maximum

3.5 Lobby: 50 person maximum

Stage

4.1 The stage is limited to 50 persons

4.2 Access to the stage from the first level will be from stage right

4.3 The tunnel cross-over can be used to avoid crossing the stage

4.4 Risers, piano, marley dance floor etc. Will be pre-set by the house technicians

4.5 Musicians shall place and set-up their own equipment on stage

4.8 When equipment is in place musicians will be asked to leave the area to allow the House technicians to set up microphones and monitors

4.9 Vocalists are being asked to bring and use their own microphones

4.10 If house vocal mics must be used, they will require special handling & cleaning protocols

4.11 If staging requires flown flats, large sets or set pieces it must be discussed with the Technical Director in advance

Live-streaming, video recordings or band rehearsals

5.1 Audio will be mixed at front of house, video mixing and lighting control (if required) will be done from the control booth

5.2 If there are multiple groups of performing artists the vocal mics for each group will be pre-set on separate mic stands by the technicians

5.3 At the end of each group's set the vocal mics shall be removed to backstage by house crew and wiped down with a sanitary cleansing wipe before it is used again

Musical Theatre rehearsals & streaming

6.1 musical theatre will need special considerations because they typically use 6-20 lavalier mics, and may have sets and flown elements in the show

6.2 The use of their own mics is recommended wherever possible

6.3 If lavalier mics must be used each will be assigned to one individual for the run of the show

6.4 Battery replacement will be done by the user

6.5 each mic and belt-pack will be assigned a location for when not in use

6.6 each will be returned to theatre staff at the end of the run for cleaning

6.7 microphones must not be shared

6.8 Lighting directors operate from their own space in the control booth but social distancing must be considered at all times when using the control room

6.9 stage managers are encouraged to call the show from the stage

Dance Rehearsals

7.1 Dance rehearsals are encouraged to operate their music playback from their own laptop or other source. The house crew will provide a stage sound system if required

7.2 Client personnel must be stationed at the back entrance door to regulate performers in and out of the building

7.3 Other personnel may be required to direct dancers to and from the stage

Dance Competitions

8.1 Client personnel must be stationed at the back entrance doors to regulate competitors in and out of the building

8.2 Other personnel may be required to direct dancers to and from the stage

8.3 Costuming and makeup must be done off-site

8.4 Dressing rooms are for washroom –use only

8.5 Dance competitions are advised to organize their musical entries in advance and provide their own operator to play the music tracks. The theatre will provide a work table near the stage and a mixer or playback equipment if required

Protocols for House Technicians

1.1 This Section covers protocols for crew and stage workers

1.2 Theatre Health & Safety representative to meet incoming clients prior to each event

1.3 All crew and client personnel will sign in and out at the stage managers station located stage right

1.4 Any group who will work or perform as a Pod must sign-in as such. (A sign-in sheet will be developed to meet this criteria)

Control Room

2.1 Technical staff only – client SM or LD may be permitted

2.2 Observe at all times 2m social distancing

2.3 Enter and exit from door closest to your work station

2.4 Wash hands with soap and water regularly in the course of your shift in staff designated areas

2.5 Crew to use the designated washroom backstage as the lobby washrooms are closed for now

2.6 Use hand sanitizer supplied in the control booth and backstage often in between hand-washings

2.7 Guest technician to use pre –set table

2.8 At the end of the shift wipe down all tools, light surfaces, switches and doorknobs

2.9 Use house right stairwell to go between control room and stage

Stage

- 4.1 stage entry from lower level is via stage right first door
- 4.2 Exit from stage right second door
- 4.3 Be prepared to give guidance to performers entering and exiting the stage. The doors will be clearing marked
- 4.4 tape off worker- only areas stage right manager station and stage left headset area, also fly tower access on stage left
- 4.5 respect 2m distancing form each other and performers at all times
- 4.6 Wear a face mask as PPE for procedures that involve working closely with others such as setting up risers, moving the piano and laying marley flooring etc
- 4.7 Technicians must insist on protecting their own personal space
- 4.8 Sanitizer and cleansing wipes will be available on both sides of the stage
- 4.9 Washroom will be designated clearly marked for performers

Load-in

- 5.1 The client crew to enter and exit through the loading bay door
- 5.2 The client performers to enter and exit through the backstage entrance
- 5.3 Any group who will work or perform as a Pod must sign-in as such
- 5.4 House technicians will not handle external musical equipment

Showtime

Close control room doors and remain at workstations.

Strike

- 7.1 Performers may have been sweating. Increase your precautions during strike including physical distancing, and more frequent hand washing and sanitizing.
- 7.2 Performers to remove discarded clothing/personal belongings from the stage area
- 7.3 Use gloves to remove microphones and wipe the exterior surfaces. If house mics were used by vocalists use special cleanser on the mouthpieces.
- 7.4 Use cleanser to wipe down all mic stands and put away immediately
- 7.5 Sanitizer wipe monitor handles before picking them up
- 7.6 Sanitizer wipe cables as you roll them up
- 7.7 Damp wash risers before putting them away
- 7.8 Wash Marley before removal from stage

Outbreak/Case Reported

In the event of suspected case or outbreak, immediately report and discuss with the Environmental Officer (or delegate) at Northern Health and follow their direction in regards to next steps and contact tracing

References:

ActSafe BC- Health and safety guide for live performance theatre

ActSafe BC – Performing Arts Industry Relaunch Framework

BC go forward strategy checklist

Canadian Federation of Musicians – Safety Guidelines

WORKSAFE BC protocols for arts and culture facilities