

A photograph of a jazz club performance. The scene is dimly lit with blue and purple stage lights. In the foreground, a pianist is seated at a grand piano. In the background, a band is performing on a stage. A large text overlay is centered in the upper half of the image.

REVS

REOPEN EVERY VENUE SAFELY

CLEVELAND / AKRON

2020



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Smashing Pumpkins at Goodyear Theater. Photo by Janet Macoska.

INTRODUCTION

With COVID-19 came the shutdown of many businesses. While most places reopened late spring/early summer, live music venues remained closed. In the midst of COVID-19, live music venues have often been called the first to close and last to open due to the many concerns around the safety of live music. To work towards reopening local live music venues safely, in May, Cleveland/Akron got involved in the Reopen Every Venue Safely (REVS) initiative launched by Music Cities Together. This initiative is focused on helping venues open as safely and as soon as possible by providing best practices and guidelines. The best practices and guidelines you will read below were built from meetings and discussions between Arts Cleveland and local music venue owners and directors, musicians, and public health professionals.



Welshly Arms in tavern filming a scene for Destination Cleveland, 2013. Photo courtesy of Beachland Ballroom.

CLEANING PROCEDURES

Initial steps and precautions:

-  • Make cleaning a priority before, during and after events.
-  • Place hand sanitizing stations throughout the venue.
-  • Staff members should wear gloves when cleaning and disinfecting.
-  • Remove rugs and carpets to make cleaning easier and more effective.
-  • Document all cleaning processes.
-  • Keep logs of every time a room is cleaned.
-  • Protect the cleaning crew and purchase a body fluid clean-up kit with disposable tools (i.e. emulsifier, scraper, gloves, gown, face shield, etc.)

Cleaning Communications

Share cleaning plans and routines on your website, via signage and/or social media for industry representatives and patrons to see. Post clear, easy-to-read procedural information at all workstations to help staff remember cleaning and sanitation protocols. This will help everyone feel more comfortable and safe.

Microphones

To disinfect microphones, take the microphone screen off and wipe everything down with a mixture of isopropyl alcohol and 20% water. To clean microphones, remove the grid and wash it with soap and water and then allow it to dry. Clean the remainder of the microphone by wiping it down with a cloth moistened with soap and water.



Photo courtesy of Happy Dog.

Between Acts

Sound equipment and anything on stage should be sanitized between bands during a multi-band show. All equipment brought on stage should be sanitized prior to entry.

Green Rooms and Dressing Rooms

Green rooms and dressing rooms should be deep-cleaned and sanitized before the venue reopens using EPA-recommended products. On show days/nights, rooms should be cleaned and sanitized before acts arrive as well as between dress rehearsals and performances regardless of whether the artists using the room changes.

Disinfecting Soft Surfaces

If soft surfaces are used (seat cushions, fabric chairs or benches, etc.) your disinfectant should be approved for use on soft surfaces as well. For example, a chlorine-based disinfectant will not work as it “bleaches out” the fabrics. Depending on the surfaces to be disinfected, the dwell time required for an effective germ kill, and the PPE required for use during application, the local board of health may require you to designate which disinfectant you will be using.

MUSICIAN SAFETY & MANAGEMENT

Discussion with Agents/Managers

Communicate all venue COVID-19 safety plans for live shows with the performer’s agent and/or manager well in advance. This includes the venue’s cleaning protocols, plans for physical distancing in the venue, temperature screening, mask requirements, and what is expected of the musicians. Inform agents and managers about what gear and equipment musicians should bring with them to the venue. Encourage bands to provide as much of their own gear as possible including cables, pedals, picks, and above all - mics. Share information on how load-in and load-out will be handled and where this will take place. In the commencement phase of reopening venues, we encourage all artists to bring their own vocal mics.

Set clear expectations of what behavior will be expected of the musicians and their crews when they are on stage. Do not allow artists to stage dive or walk into the crowd while singing. Avoid in-person meet-and-greets. Suggest the band schedule a virtual meet-and-greet if they would like to meet with local fans.

Include information in the contract about any restrictions on who and how many people can enter the venue with the band members. Limiting the number of people in the venue with the musicians will help enable physical distancing and reduce venue liability. Consider restricting entry to anyone who is not a band member, required stage crew, or manager.

Venue Arrival and Load-In

Require masks and check temperature of the musicians, their crews, local production crews and anyone who will be interacting with them when they arrive. Musicians should wear masks at all times in the venue when not performing.



Trombone Shorty and Orleans Avenue at Goodyear Theater. Photo by Jeff Klum.

Stage Set-Up

Allow the maximum amount of physical distancing for musicians on stage. Consider using plexiglass shields between the stage and floor as another level of protection for both bands and audiences (see Resources, page 11). Singers should bring their own microphones whenever possible to avoid contact and cross contamination. If musicians are to use the venue's microphone, the venue will be responsible for cleaning and disinfecting before and after each use (see Cleaning Procedures, page 4). Venues should also consider purchasing disposable microphone covers for use when multiple people will be using the same microphone.



The HiFi's (shown: plexi social-distancing panels from ClearSonic, Inc) at Jilly's Music Room.

Green Room Policies

In the commencement phase of reopening, venues should restrict the backstage area, green rooms/dressing rooms to essential personnel only. There should be limits on the capacity for these spaces to allow for physical distancing. Masks should be worn in these areas. Venues need to implement the placement of hand sanitizer stations close to the door and opposite the door wherever possible. Those visiting these areas should physical distance as much as possible. We recommend venues post their guidelines for these spaces in obvious places in and outside these green room/dressing room areas. Provide cleansing cloths for bands to wipe down equipment.

Green Room / Hospitality Riders

Buyouts or stipends are recommended when hospitality is included in the artist's contract. If the venue is providing hospitality, food and drink items should be covered and/or packaged. Make any outside caterers aware of these policies if they do not have their own safety precautions in place. Further direction should come from the artists and their reps. Dine Safe Ohio orders must be followed and persons must be seated while eating.

Merchandise

If the venue chooses to allow in-person sales, products should be packaged in plastic. Recommend bands use touchless point-of-sale machines for payments (see Resources, page 11). Consider the following options to support physical distancing while encouraging sales:

- Ask bands to consider selling merch before, during and after the show to avoid a long line at the merch table at the end of the night.
- Consider apps or websites (see Resources, page 11) that allow patrons to order items on their phone and designate a time to pick them up at the table.
- Take orders and use push notifications or text the buyers when orders are ready for pick up at the merch table.
- Offer venue staff to help with merch sales and deliveries.
- Offer table signage with the band's chosen apps or links directing fans to order merch on their phones.
- Provide signage, tape on the floor or some other method to designate 6 ft social distancing for customers in line to purchase merchandise.

Sound Production/Technical Staff

Develop a site-specific plan that will allow bands and sound production/technical staff to remain physically distant from each other while working together. Crew should wear masks and gloves when working with band members and equipment. Remind musicians to step away from the crew if and when they have to come on stage to manage equipment.

Stage Entry and Exit

Set up a plan or route for band members to get on and off stage and maintain physical distance from audience members.

- If the stage has multiple access points, designate each as enter/exit only.
- When musicians must walk through a crowd to return to their dressing room, section off a path that restricts audience members as band members make their way to the destination.

EMPLOYEE SAFETY

Training

Train venue staff on all the new rules and procedures that will be in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. Include details of new cleaning procedures, front-of-house safety precautions, how to wear a mask correctly, how to wash hands correctly, and physical distancing in the venue. Provide additional training for any staff interacting with customers on communicating with customers who are not following the safety precautions or who fail the COVID-19 screening tests. Provide them with a prepared response and/or procedure for multiple scenarios including accepting people who cannot wear a mask due to health issues. ServSafe (<https://www.servsafe.com/Landing-Pages/Free-Courses>) is a recommended resource for training.

Clocking In

Check the temperature of all staff members every time they arrive to work. Require all staff to wear a mask while inside the venue. Consider asking staff members to quarantine after they have traveled to a COVID-19 hot spot or were in contact with someone who contracted the virus regardless of the presence or absence of symptoms.

Kitchen Staff

Designate a food runner to limit the kitchen staff's interaction with patrons. Follow current [FDA food handling recommendations](#).

Front of House

Consider pairing up staff members or grouping them into teams, limiting interaction between them. For example two staff members always work on Thursday and Saturday shifts together while two other staff members always work Wednesday and Friday shifts together or some variation. This may require new policies around swapping shifts to avoid complications if contact tracing becomes necessary.

Ticket Takers & Ushers

Moving forward, patrons should be asked to have their tickets on their phones. Using electronic tickets instead of paper tickets will limit physical contact between employees and customers. If applicable, consider having just one ticket window open for walk-up attendees, so fewer staff members interact with customers. We need to remember to protect these venue staff members at all times with proper and efficient PPE as they will be interacting with patrons directly. During advance sales, parking emails and show information emails, venues should take full advantage to inform patrons to allow more timing for onsite audience processing.

Bar Staff & Procedures

Consider installing sliding screens or plexiglass shields at the bar. Consider using a number system—similar to how numbers are taken at a deli. Customers approach the bar when their number is called. (See Resources, page 11 for recommended apps).

New Roles

- An HVAC professional should be employed to ensure efficiency and proper maintenance to increase air flow safely in the venue.
- Consider hiring a **Health and Safety Coordinator**. This person should help design all site-specific procedures, would be up-to-date on local laws and in regular contact with the local public health department. This position may also help train front-of-house staff in answering patron questions and assist in communications. (During the pandemic, special events must be submitted for approval to the local health department as mass gatherings of more than 10 people are prohibited in Ohio).
- Depending on the size of your venue, at least one staff person should be designated to clean all surfaces while customers are in the venue. This person would be responsible for maintaining consistent cleaning procedures and regularly sanitizing high-touch areas such as entrances, doorknobs, railings, counters, tables, chairs and phones. Consider designating one female and one male for cleaning so that high touch surfaces in restrooms can also be cleaned every 1-2 hours.
- Consider designating one or more staff members who will enforce physical distancing rules. This would typically be staff who are consistently interacting and developing rapport with patrons throughout the day/night.



Maddie Finn performing behind the bar on B Side patio.

Sound Production/Technical Staff

As mentioned previously, establish site-specific plans for bands and sound production/technical staff to remain physically distant from each other while working together. This is to protect both band members and the production/technical staff.

Band's Role:

Ask the band members to serve as message bearers who encourage audience members to wear their masks and social distance. They should also thank audience members for their cooperation. Band members should also wear masks and social distance from the staff as much as possible.



Treemore at Jilly's Music Room.

AUDIENCE SAFETY

Opening The Doors

Use floor stickers and signage to indicate 6-foot markers where patrons should stand to remain physically distant while waiting in line. Include signage and ask customers in advance to have tickets ready and pulled up on their phone when they arrive to avoid slowing down the line. Timed entry is recommended for welcoming patrons into the venue and avoiding long lines at the door and inside the venue. Multiple ticketing services now offer a timed entry feature and vary in price. The venue may designate different arrival times for patrons attending a show. Patrons attending are divided into a few different groups. Set arrival times 10-15-minutes apart. The patrons will be informed of their arrival time when they order their ticket online (see Ticketing, page 11).

Venues may alternately use a queue app—similar to restaurant table apps (see Resources page 11)—allowing people to log in, add their name to a list, and see how long a virtual line is. When patrons check-in to enter the virtual line they receive an automated estimate time to arrive at the venue.

Capacity

Establish a maximum capacity and regulate.

When the Show Ends

Audience members should exit the venue at different times and through different doors in the venue, if possible. Consider releasing the audience in sections, starting with those closest to the door(s). Announce sections from the stage at the end of the show instructing patrons when to depart. Designate staff to help manage the flow and communicate with people on the floor. Use floor marques or tape arrows to the floor and walls to indicate new directional flows.



Have a plan to make sure people with mobility and/or communication issues are cared for during the timed exit.

Food

Follow current [FDA food safety recommendations](#).

Ticketing

Work with your ticketing company to establish the best set-up for your venue using the physical distancing guidelines. Clearly state your physical distancing guidelines on your ticketing site. Include any new requirements (mask wearing, temperature screening, etc.) so patrons know these before they purchase their ticket(s).

Reassess and include the venue's refund policy on the ticketing site. In particular, consider refund policies for patrons who are not able to enter the venue due to a high temperature screening at the door or other new safety measures. Ask patrons to avoid paper tickets unless absolutely necessary, requesting that they send electronic tickets to their phone or email. Ask to have their ticket pulled up on their phone, ready to be scanned when they arrive at the venue.

For walk-up purchases, consider having just one ticket window open for walk-up attendees so as few staff members as possible are in contact with customers. This process should involve the least amount of physical interaction possible. Notify all walk-up patrons of the new venue requirements and guidelines, indicating where they can find signage if they have questions.



David and Jessica Lea Mayfield, brother and sister, performing in ballroom, 2013. Photo courtesy of Beachland Ballroom.

RESOURCES

Recommended Cleaning Supplies and PPE

- Electrostatic sprayer – a very effective, efficient deep cleaning method. This sprayer effectively cleans surfaces and hard-to-reach areas while saving time and labor.
- List of [EPA recommended cleaning products](#) for use against COVID-19
- [Clear Sonic](#), Akron-based manufacturer. Purchase online: panels, baffles, booths, etc.
- [UH Healthy Restart Playbook](#)
- [Clean Committed](#): a program of Destination Cleveland
- [SupplySide Group](#), a company in Beachwood that sells PPE.

Recommended Ticketing Resources

- [Eventbrite](#) - an event management and ticketing website. Eventbrite has capabilities that help with social distancing.
- [Arts People](#) - a web-based software for arts organizations. This software is recommended for venues with fixed seating. Arts People has social distancing as part of their ticketing services.
- Point of Sale (POS) machine - this is helpful for cashless, in-person purchases. The Square is a popular POS machine, but there are other options as well.

Queue Apps for Scheduling Arrival Times

- [Queue - Nightlife Done Right](#)
- [NextME - Virtual Waitlist App](#)
- [QueQ - No more Queue line](#)
- [LRS](#)
- [SimpleTix](#)

Additional Resources

- [Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide](#)
- [Event Safety Alliance Event Safety Guide](#)
- [NIVA Reopening Resource Guide](#)

CLEANING LOG

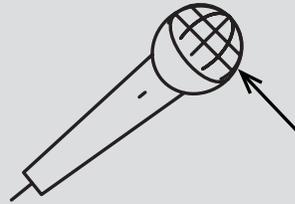
Room: _____

Date: _____

Time	Initial	Time	Initial
6:00 a.m.	_____	10:00 p.m.	_____
7:00 a.m.	_____	11:00 p.m.	_____
8:00 a.m.	_____	MIDNIGHT	_____
9:00 a.m.	_____	1:00 a.m.	_____
10:00 a.m.	_____	2:00 a.m.	_____
11:00 a.m.	_____	3:00 a.m.	_____
NOON	_____	4:00 a.m.	_____
1:00 p.m.	_____	5:00 a.m.	_____
2:00 p.m.	_____		
3:00 p.m.	_____		
4:00 p.m.	_____		
5:00 p.m.	_____		
6:00 p.m.	_____		
7:00 p.m.	_____		
8:00 p.m.	_____		
9:00 p.m.	_____		



STEP 1



remove the grid

STEP 2



wash it with soap and water and dry

STEP 3



wipe equipment with soap and water or alcohol swabs avoiding internal wires and electrical

always check with manufacturer for specific cleaning instructions

Many thanks to the venues, artists and health professionals who contributed to this effort:

B-Side

Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music

Beachland Ballroom

BOP STOP At The Music Settlement

Cuyahoga County Board of Health

Goodyear Theater

Grog Shop

Happy Dog

Jilly's Music Room

Kiah Rogers



REVS is a national campaign of Music Cities Together that seeks to support the live music industry by developing work plans, protocols and communications strategies that will help communities reopen live music as quickly and safely as possible while effectively engaging with key stakeholders including musicians, venue employees and audiences.