

## WANMA RE-OPENING RECOMMENDATIONS

*[This document was created by WANMA's Reopening Committee, with substantive additional input from the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) Reopening Document]*

The notes below represent recommendations from WANMA to create a safer environment in venues for patrons, artists and employees. These recommendations are meant to be concise and, at times, promote questions that each business owner will need to ask themselves in their reopening planning. Venue policies should not be fixed and will need to change with more detailed guidelines from the local and county public health administration. Additionally, many of these tasks will require public support, information and investment to be effective or sustainable for our businesses.

As venue operators in Washington, we want to be able to open responsibly and recognize providing entertainment to groups of people in an epidemic will be complicated, ever-changing, and come at an increased expense. Each venue will have to make important decisions about how and if it's possible to operate their business. The below listed “**minimum recommendations**” will be the most impactful, risk-reducing actions venues can take and each business may also consider the “**additional recommendations**”. It is critical that we create an environment that increases customer confidence and keeps patron processes simple, so that individuals feel cared for, safe, and clearly communicated to. Reopening is a moment to examine all venue safety plans and waste reduction methods (your business's new operating decisions can create mountains of trash!).

For those less familiar with the interoperations of music venues, dancehalls, comedy clubs, nightclubs and non-profit arts organizations here's what we do:

- Offer gathering places for our communities to socialize, dance and engage in the arts and, more subtly, provide a forum for ideas, experiential diversity, and a momentary exit from the regular. These critical spaces host events during the day and night and allow our community to develop a sense of cohesion, newness, and identity.
- Provide direct expressive platforms and financial support to local, national, and international talent (artists, musicians, comedians, youth programs, speakers, etc.) through performer wages and merchandise sales.
- Employ many thousands of people throughout the state, recycle most of gross revenues back into local financial ecosystems, and generate significant economic impact through sales, purchases, leasings, etc.

### VENUE REQUESTS FROM PUBLIC HEALTH

1. **Clear and consistent county or state branded signage for venues and businesses describing protocols and policies (instead of WANMA or individual cities or neighborhoods producing their own). Ideally, as simple as city food safety ratings.**
2. **Quick communication of updates or new protocols and guidelines.**
3. **Where possible, advanced notice of upcoming phase changes to allow businesses time to order stock, alert employees and purchase PPE.**

# -RECOMMENDATIONS-

## VENUE MODIFICATIONS

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Function at 50% capacity with physical distancing measures until Phase 4 or other State/County ruling allows more. Below 50% and it is incredibly difficult to not lose money on operation.
- BIG, CLEAR, STANDARDIZED signage posted with public health guidelines and venue instructions (e.g. bar, bathroom, ticket scanning, queuing, distancing, will call, box office). Images will be more effective than words! Ensure these are multilingual as applicable.
- Sanitation stations throughout the venues including entry/exit points, backstage, and in restroom areas--prioritizing refillable liquid sanitizer.
- Posting signs in restrooms about hand washing (for 20 seconds or more).
- Separation of entrances and exits when possible.
- Remove handheld menus, add chalkboards (or similar) with simple, numbered order items to reduce strained verbal communication in loud spaces.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Venues may wish to further limit their venue capacity.
- Decide how spacing for standing events is conveyed and managed (by security, by sound engineer, etc.). Some ideas: glow-in-the-dark paint, decals, taped grids on the floor, stanchions (as allowable for fire code), or wall signage.
- Remove ATMs (or schedule for more regular cleaning of this high contact area).
- Consider seated events, as physical distancing measures will be easier to achieve.
- Plexiglass around FOH sound, monitors, and/or lighting positions.
- Install foot pulls and touchless dispensers in bathrooms. COVID-19 is not transferable by water, but disable water fountains to reduce shared high contact surfaces.
- Increase trash receptacles so patrons don't have to search to find.
- Sanitizing hand wipes stations or other disposable sanitation methods (please consider less wasteful alternatives).
- If available and affordable, install anti-viral, UV, or HEPA filters in your HVAC unit.
- Where possible, utilize alternative entry points (possibly upselling VIP entry).
- Plexiglass dividers between patrons and box office and food/beverage staff.
- Reduce volumes for music played before/between/after performances or more generally to lower shouting between patrons and/or employees. Enforce db limits as necessary.

## PRE-EVENT COMMUNICATION

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Standard imaging and strong, on-brand messaging with preparedness, efforts, and protocols for venues/bars/restaurants. Ideally this is executed state or city-wide as a certification notice (like the food safety certification or rating), but may instead need to be implemented individually by WANMA or neighborhoods.
- Describe the actions you're taking to make the venue safe, list on the venue's website, post to social media with photos (of remodel or cleaning!) and post around the venue.

- Send an email to ticket purchasers detailing the process to enter, what to do/not do to enjoy the event, not to wear or bring anything they do not need (extra bags, coats, personal items), and the steps the venue is taking.
- Include protocols for the venue and artists in your offers, contracts, and pre-show artist advance emails. Be forward early on about new costs if applicable to artist deals.

#### *Additional Recommendations*

- Create your plan assuming that any patron, employee or performer could be sick.
- Create guidelines for new refund policies, dancing during shows, expected backstage/sidestage/on-stage artist behavior on stage.
- Create a virtual tour or instructional video of how to enter and enjoy the concert.

## **VENUE STAFF/SECURITY**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- All artists, servers, bartenders, stagehands, security, box office, contractors and venue employees must wear masks at all possible times.
- Additional training on sanitization, event flow, and security for all employees and access to updated safety handbooks at all times (ideally via their phones).
- Staff cleaner(s) to sanitize venue high contact surfaces throughout the event. Make them visible to the public.
- Staff cleaner(s) to also wipe down restroom surfaces (including door handles, push plates, sinks, faucets, counters, toilet seats and handles) and manage lines if needed.
- Staff will need to check sanitizer stations, greenroom, and restroom soap more often.
- Reason through how employee personal items are stored. Where possible, use lockers and ask staff to keep items at work and not to bring nonessential personal effects.
- Remind staff not to store items for friends or other non-employees.
- Discourage pat downs. Magnetometers or handheld wand detectors are best.
- Promote a culture of awareness and communication about comfort and sickness.
- Plan more frequent breaks for staff and discuss where staff should break.
- Pre-event cleaning/safety meeting before each event to reinforce protocol and basics.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Look into staff testing for COVID-19 and how often testing would need to occur. Beware test supplies are still limited in Washington as of this writing.
- Assign a health and safety coordinator to your team (may be an existing employee) who knows the venue's protocols, can field questions at any time, oversees cleaning implementation and documentation, stays updated, and handles training.
- Touchless clock-in/clock-out options either app-based or using ID cards.
- Ideally, security wear face shields and N95 masks (other venue staff as reasonable).
- Overstaff cleaning and security staff to cover last minute shift cancellations/added need.
- UV sanitizers for small items to reduce waste, increase speed of cleaning.
- Hand washing with soap may be more effective and less wasteful than continued use of gloves. Washable padded work gloves may work for some venue positions.
- You may decide on a no bag or clear tote bag policy for entry.
- Contactless billing/invoicing from vendors.

## **EVENT LENGTH**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- When possible, reduce event length and the number of artists or bands performing to decrease exposure or multiple events with fewer attendees.

#### *Additional Recommendations*

- Be aware of timelines and staff needed to clean the venue between multiple performances.

## **PROCESSING PATRONS/TICKETS/COATCHECK**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Ticketed entry, even for free events, so that greater patron communication is possible. Use download, digital and/or print-at-home ticketing only.
- Examine group ticketing options (quarantine groups together). Update ticketing terms and conditions with your COVID-19 guidelines and rules.
- Physical distancing for event lines that form outside the venue, noted with stanchions, street markings, decals (with venue facts or branding), or staff/security helping patrons outside. Patrons can line up together by quarantine groups to reduce line length.
- No stamps or wristbands. Separate 21+ and all-ages entrance if possible.
- ID checks will be tricky, but try plexiglass dividers for ID checker or ID scanners. Always air on the side of caution for bar service.
- With physical distancing, security describes the process of entering/exiting the venue, how to purchase drinks, and how to occupy the space to patrons and where sanitation stations are inside. Pointing to image-based signage will also help.
- Enact clear, health and safety-based protocol for denying entry to patrons showing signs of fever or not complying with posted entry rules and how these refunds are issued (which staff member(s) decides, confirms and how is that communicated to the patrons).
- Create a plan in the event a patron or artist exhibits COVID-like symptoms or needs treatment. Decide where they will be moved to (best access to emergency services), what staff will manage the space, and how that space will be sanitized afterwards.
- Prioritize the use of digital promotional material or information. Eliminate or reduce the volume of printed materials being physically exchanged.
- We recommend no reentry and no coat check as operating events will be challenging enough. Advance communication is key!

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Consider taking temperatures or oxygen levels of patrons. Be aware temperature is a less effective tool for assessing illness (100.4 degrees or higher should be turned away, but other factors such as exercise or eating/drinking can impact readings).
- Implement staggered patron event entry through a check-in registration system or your current ticketing platforms. NIVA recommends: Queue (offers ability to process bar orders, though can be costly), QueQ, NextME, QLess. Venues in Washington using the same app is recommended for patron ease.
- Self-serve scanning terminals are ideal or a security person handling entry and another scanning only.
- Security may want to explain processes while monitoring patrons in line outside of the venue in order to prepare them for more seamless entry.
- For patrons purchasing tickets in-person or at doors before the venue opens, require this to be done on personal online devices or venue-provided touchscreen before entering.

- If you think you can safely operate a coat check here are some suggestions: plexiglass dividers cleaned nightly, festival storage lockers that are either one use per night or sanitized between uses, patrons hanging their own items in disposable plastic bags with staff sanitizing hands between transactions (consider the landfill!).
- Plan for patron entry, queuing, and exit in inclement weather.
- Create a dedicated place for media/photographers with a clear view of the stage. Communicate this in advance.

## **PATRON REQUIREMENTS**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Patrons are required to wear masks or face covers at all possible times (besides eating and drinking).

### *Additional Recommendations*

- The venue should offer masks for sale (think branded masks as merchandise!) or for free to patrons who want or need them.
- Patrons should leave nonessential items at home or in their cars.

## **FOOD/BAR SERVICE**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Implement the existing county guidelines for food/drink service.
- Use standard glassware procedures and check dishwasher chemicals frequently.
- Mark physical distancing at bars or in restaurant seating.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Consider cashless operation through your current POS or a new system: tap to pay, pay via mobile device, app payment, or chip reader. Be sure to keep things simple and communicate this in advance to patrons (particularly if they need to download an app).
- Limited menu of premixed drinks for faster, contained drinks or an easy numbered menu.
- Muse on servers running orders to customers to reduce patron movement in the venue.
- Keep all tableware and glassware behind a shield or cover to avoid contamination.
- Provide compostable straws (use compostable disposable items only as necessary).
- Install plexiglass barriers on bar tops to separate employees and patrons, if possible.
- Overservice is an increased concern during COVID-19 times.

## **ARTIST/BACKSTAGE/ONSTAGE**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Advance communication to artists/performers about the venue's safety measures and expected stage protocol ("please help venues manage the audience and refrain from stage diving, entering the crowd, or throwing any merch items, water or similar to fans").
- Backstage is for essential personnel only. Provide hand sanitizer backstage and implement a recurrent cleaning regiment (as in public areas).
- Pre-settle events by wire or check to reduce contact. If signatures are required, each uses their own pens. If cash is required, it should be ordered, counted and sorted at least 24 hours prior to the show to decrease contact.
- In person meet and greets should not be allowed. Suggest streaming, if possible.

- Promote hospitality buyouts over catering. Green room items: either none or single serve portions unwrapped by artists themselves (open food or drink items should be covered).

#### *Additional Recommendations*

- 10' physical separation between the performers and audience. Add a fire-code safe barricade, floor demarcation, or plexiglass barrier (that may also allow closer distancing).
- Additional spacing for wind instruments and horn sections.
- When possible, require artists to hire their transportation and handle all of their gear and possessions (avoiding added staff, loaders and runners needed in extended exposure).
- Consider taking temperatures or oxygen levels of performers at backstage entry points.
- Make an announcement from FOH before each performance thanking patrons for their support and reminding customers of our shared responsibility to each other, to maintain physical distances, the location of sanitation stations, and other critical venue protocols.
- Use microphone windscreens, popmic filters, and change microphones between performers. Performers can be issued individualized windscreens or filters at soundcheck, keep them through the performance (color coded or labeled items may help), and return them to the venue in sealed plastic bags. Sanitize nightly after use.
- Sanitize turntables (electronic safe options only) between DJ sets.
- Any outside caterers should be made aware of venue policies.

## **EXITING/MERCH**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Patrons will not be able to touch merchandise or try on sizes. Merch sellers should try to hang different sizes up so they can be viewed by purchasers.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Add a plexiglass divider at the merch booth.
- Online pre-sales and cashless transactions for merch to be picked up at the venue. Also, position merch table(s) away from exits or lines to avoid crowding.
- Patron dismissal by quarantine group or by room sections.
- Security or venue sound engineers may dismiss groups through the PA system.

## **POST EVENT CLEANING/TURNOVER**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Nightly cleaning by staff or outside vendor with physical distancing. Wipe down/sanitize every surface, particularly those that come most in contact with patrons, staff, or artists.
- Create a cleaning log and document cleaning measures nightly.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Avoid vacuuming and if possible, remove surfaces or material that requires vacuuming.
- Artist team is fully packed up and out before cleaning begins, do not allow them reentry.

## **POST EVENT COMMUNICATION**

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Message from venue, thanking patrons and citing success/upcoming events.

### *Additional Recommendations*

- Provide a survey (Survey Monkey or others) to patrons for feedback. NIVA has great pre and post show survey recommendations.
- Monitor social media to gauge audience reaction/satisfaction with experience.

## SUPPLIES

### *Minimum Recommendations*

- Supplies stocked as best as possible: gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, soap, paper towels, surface sanitizer, etc.
- [Seattle Protects](#) one-stop shop to find bulk mask sales by vetted and contracted manufacturers

### *Additional Recommendations*

Here is the list of supplies to stock from NIVA's extensive reopening guidelines, some are optional to your business and many of these items are currently in short supply, so make sure to try to procure them well in advance of your first show date.

- *Masks (lots of them!), you will need to provide for your staff as well as for patrons that forget or damage their masks.*
- *Gloves, stock both latex and a latex-free alternative.*
- *Hand sanitizer (with at least 60% ethanol or 70% isopropanol).*
- *Sanitizing wipes for quick cleaning of high touch areas during the show or backstage.*
- *Cleaning products and disinfectants.*
- *Face Shields, at a minimum for security staff, though you may extend their usage to the staff in high contact areas (\$5 - \$25).*
- *Hand sanitizing stations for the lobby and entrances (\$100 - \$200).*
- *Hand washing stations for the outside of your venue (\$100 - \$1000).*
- *Plexiglass barriers for stationary staff (\$100).*
- *Bloodborne Pathogen Clean-up Kits. (\$10 - \$40 each).*
- *No Contact Thermometers (\$50++).*
- *ID Scanner(s) (\$1000).*
- *Wands (\$150) or Magnetometer (\$1500 - \$8000).*
- *UV Sanitizers. (\$50 - \$100).*
- *Stanchions (\$40 - \$200 per piece).*
- *Pop Filters or windscreens for Microphones (\$12 - \$80)*
- *Electrostatic Sprayer (\$750-\$2500)*

*A rough estimate of costs will be \$300-\$500 per show for PPE and additional cleaning supplies.*

*Start-up costs are estimated to be ~\$7000 (assuming wands purchased not magnetometer).*

**\*\*These recommendations are for informational purposes only and not legal advice. Contact your attorney to obtain advice with respect to any particular issue or challenge.**