

# **Health and Safety Protocols in response to the 2019 Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic**

*Revised: September 22, 2022*

*These procedures are for internal use will be revised as new information becomes available. They have been developed with input from medical professionals reviewed and approved by the Florida Department of Health in Sarasota County.*

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## I. Executive Summary

These guidelines were developed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic in an attempt to minimize the risk of transmission of the virus and to allow Sarasota Opera and our company members to be safe in the work environment. For the purposes of this document, a company member is defined as anyone employed by Sarasota Opera either as an employee, independent contractor, or volunteer, in all departments.

The risk of contracting COVID-19 can be mitigated by implementing protective measures. We have compiled these guidelines to detail these measures and to ensure best practices are in place so that the work environment is as safe as possible.

Information and guidance about COVID-19 are evolving and change based on new evidence. We expect that these health and safety protocols will change based on changes to the progression of the virus, changing conditions, and new guidance from applicable health authorities. Any changes will be communicated as soon as they are known and disseminated by Sarasota Opera's COVID Compliance Officer.

## II. Novel Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19)

Coronaviruses are a type of virus. There are many different kinds, and some cause disease. A newly identified coronavirus, SARS-CoV-2, has caused a worldwide pandemic of respiratory illness, called COVID-19.

### *COVID-19*

- COVID-19 is the disease caused by the new coronavirus that emerged in China in December 2019.
- COVID-19 symptoms include cough, fever or chills, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, muscle or body aches, sore throat, new loss of taste or smell, diarrhea, headache, new fatigue, nausea or vomiting and congestion or runny nose. COVID-19 can be severe, and some cases have caused death.
- The new coronavirus can be spread from person to person. It is diagnosed with a viral test.
- Prevention involves frequent hand-washing, coughing into the bend of your elbow, staying home when you are sick and wearing a cloth face covering if you can't practice physical distancing.

### *COVID Vaccines*

We strongly encourage being vaccinated against COVID-19 and being up to date with your booster shots. COVID-19 vaccines available in the United States are effective at protecting people from getting seriously ill, being hospitalized, and dying. As with other diseases, you are protected best from COVID-19 when you stay up to date with the recommended vaccines, including recommended boosters.

Four COVID-19 vaccines are approved or authorized in the United States to prevent COVID-19: Pfizer-BioNTech, Moderna, Novavax, and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen (J&J/Janssen). It's recommended that the J&J/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine only be [considered in some situations](#).

Updated COVID-19 boosters can both help restore protection that has decreased since previous vaccination, and provide broader protection against newer variants. The updated, or bivalent boosters, target the most recent Omicron subvariants, BA.4 and BA.5, that are more contagious and more resistant than earlier strains of Omicron.

- CDC recommends everyone stay up to date with COVID-19 vaccination, including all primary series doses and boosters for their age group:
  - People ages **6 months through 4 years** should get all COVID-19 primary series doses.

- People ages **5 years and older** should get all primary series doses, and the booster dose recommended for them by CDC, if eligible.
  - People ages **5 years to 11 years** are currently recommended to get the **original (monovalent) booster**.
  - People ages **12 years and older** are recommended to receive one **updated Pfizer or Moderna (bivalent) booster**.
    - This includes people who have received all primary series doses and people who have previously received one or more original (monovalent) boosters.
    - At this time, people aged **12 years to 17 years** can only receive the **updated Pfizer bivalent booster**.
- Getting a COVID-19 vaccine after you recover from COVID-19 infection provides added protection against COVID-19.

*What is the incubation period for COVID-19?*

Symptoms may appear 2-14 days after exposure to the virus. Most persons will develop symptoms 5-7 days after their exposure.

*What are signs or symptoms of COVID-19?*

COVID-19 symptoms include:

- Cough
- Fever or chills
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Diarrhea
- Headache
- New fatigue
- Nausea or vomiting
- Congestion or runny nose

In rare cases, COVID-19 can lead to severe respiratory problems, kidney failure or death.

*How is COVID-19 diagnosed?*

Diagnosis may be difficult with only a physical exam because mild cases of COVID-19 may appear similar to the flu or a bad cold. A laboratory test can confirm the diagnosis.

*Does COVID-19 cause death?*

In some cases, persons have died due to their COVID infection. While this outcome is not common, it is important for ill persons to seek medical care if there are any changes in the severity of their symptoms. Additionally, persons with underlying medical conditions (diabetes, COPD, asthma, other respiratory illness, etc.) are at increased risk for a severe outcome or death.

### III. Understanding Exposure Risks

*Factors that lower or increase risk of transmission*

**Length of time:** How long were you with the infected person?

Longer exposure time **increases** the risk of transmission (for example, contact longer than 15 minutes is more likely to result in transmission than two minutes of contact).

**Cough or heavy breathing:** Was the infected person coughing, singing, shouting, or breathing heavily?

Activities like coughing, singing, shouting, or breathing heavily due to exertion increase the risk of transmission.

**Symptoms:** Did the infected person have symptoms at the time?<sup>i</sup>

Being around people who are symptomatic increases the risk of transmission.

**Masks:** Were you or the infected person or both wearing a respirator (for example, N95) or high-quality mask?

If one person was wearing a mask, the risk of transmission is decreased, and if both people were wearing masks, the risk is substantially decreased. Risk is also lower if the mask or respirator is a type that offers greater protection.

**Ventilation and filtration:** How well-ventilated was the space?

More outdoor air can decrease the risk of transmission. Being outside would be lower exposure risk than being indoors, even with good ventilation and filtration; both of those options would be lower risk than being indoors with poor ventilation or filtration.

**Distance:** How close was the infected person to you?

Being closer to someone who is infected with COVID-19 increases the risk of transmission. Crowded settings can raise your likelihood of being close to someone with COVID-19.

## IV. Steps that Mitigate Risk

Sarasota Opera is committed to take steps that mitigate the ongoing risk of exposure. The specific steps and procedures will vary dependent on the company member's job requirements and will be covered below. However, all contractors and staff must follow the basic guidelines of personal hygiene, social distancing, and utilizing PPE (Personal Protective Equipment).

### *Vaccination*

- Testing has shown that fully vaccinated people are protected from serious illness and hospitalization from COVID. An individual is considered fully-vaccinated two weeks following the second dose of a two-dose vaccine (Pfizer/BioNTech or Moderna) or two weeks following a single dose vaccine (Johnson and Johnson/Janssen).
- Viruses are constantly changing, including the virus that causes COVID-19. These changes occur over time and can lead to the emergence of variants that may have new characteristics. Vaccines continue to reduce a person's risk of contracting the virus that cause COVID-19. Vaccines are highly effective against severe illness.
- Booster shots are now readily available for all vaccines and are strongly encouraged. Vaccine protection has been shown to wane over time and will be strengthened by a booster shot received beginning 6 months from the receipt of the last dose of the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine or 2 months after the Johnson and Johnson vaccine.
- Bivalent boosters are now available that are effective against the most recent variants. Everyone who is eligible is strongly encouraged to receive this booster. You are eligible if it has been 2 months or more since your last booster shot.

### *Hygiene*

- Wash hands frequently throughout the day.
- Utilize sanitizing stations in the Steinwachs Artists Residence and in the Opera House complex.
- Avoid touching your face with your hands.

- Company members are asked to wipe down high touch areas in common areas and rehearsal spaces. Clean with sanitation wipes before and after use.

#### *Social Distancing*

- Maintain social distance from others at 6 feet apart as much as possible.
- Personal materials are not to be shared, when possible.
- Limit any travel to essential purposes only.

#### *Personal Protective Equipment/ PPE*

- It is advisable to wear a high quality mask when you are with large groups of people or if you are not aware of the vaccination/infection status of those you are with. Appropriate places to wear a mask are stores, theaters, and other venues where you might be at risk of exposure.
- N95, KF95, or KN95 are the most effective masks in preventing exposure. If these are not available a multi-ply surgical mask is another option. Some mask is better than no mask.

## V. Sarasota Opera Cleaning and Sanitation

Although the possibility of transmission via surfaces is low, enhanced cleaning and sanitation measures have been taken. In addition, modifications have been and will continue to be made to the HVAC systems to increase air flow and enhance air filtration.

- All hard touch surfaces, furniture, music stands, piano, tables, and chairs will be cleaned and sanitized daily.
- Rehearsal rooms will be aired out as much as possible between rehearsals by opening windows and doors and/or using a commercial air scrubber / negative air machine.
- The air conditioning system has been reinforced with a Bi-Polar Ionization system for elimination of virus. They have also been optimized for increased air flow.
- Hand sanitizers have been installed throughout the building. Sanitizing wipes are generally available throughout the complex.

## VI. Guidelines for Arrival to Sarasota

- When you arrive in Sarasota, you will be supplied with rapid tests for your own use. In the beginning of the season, we will be testing seasonal staff twice a week (this may be altered to once a week later in the season). Please inform the Company Manager only if you test positive.
- The morning of your first rehearsal or first day of work, please take a COVID test. You may report to rehearsal/work if you test negative, but you must remain masked.
- You will be advised to take another test on the fourth day after your first test.
- If you are sharing living space with someone who is not a family member, it is advisable to wear a mask in the living areas of your unit except your bedroom or bathroom, until two successive tests have been taken.
- To minimize risk, you might want to utilize curbside or delivery services for your shopping needs:
  - Publix curbside contactless pick-up
  - Whole Foods contactless pickup through Amazon Prime
  - Target Drive Up
  - Trader's Joes drive-up
  - Walgreens delivery or curbside pick-up

We will continue to test company members twice a week to start. Depending on the level of local transmission, we may change our testing protocol to less frequently and possibly to include only those whose job function requires the removal of a mask. This would include singers, conductors, and orchestral members playing wind or brass instruments.

All company members, staff, and volunteers who are working within the rehearsal spaces or backstage, will be required to wear a mask while indoors.

## VII. General Protocols

All members of the company must observe the following basic protocols.

### *Health Checks*

- Company members **must** stay home if they have any of the following symptoms:
  - Any fever (100.4°F or higher) or a sense of having a fever
  - A new cough that cannot be attributed to another health condition
  - New shortness of breath that cannot be attributed to another health condition
  - New chills that cannot be attributed to another health condition
  - A new sore throat that cannot be attributed to another health condition
- Notify the Company Manager if you detect any symptoms. All medical information will be kept confidential.

### *Policies within the Sarasota Opera House complex and Steinwachs Artists Residences*

- Beginning one hour and fifteen minutes prior to a performance, please do not use the stage door or enter the courtyard. You may use the Pavilion entrance at that time. This is designed to minimize contact with the general public.
- Always wear a high quality mask in public areas in Steinwachs and the Opera House complex.
- Company members may go to restaurants. Please avoid going to spaces that host large groups who will not be masked. Wear a mask in any place where large groups are congregating or engaging in behavior that increases the risk of transmission (e.g., working out, singing).
- Visitors are not allowed in Steinwachs Artist Residences or in the Sarasota Opera House unless approved by the Artistic Administrator or Director of Production.
- Water coolers are installed with disposable cups. Do not share water containers.
- Company members must continue to observe all Sarasota Opera health and safety guidelines including social distancing, while visiting non-company members (family or friends).

## VIII. Rehearsal Protocols for Staging and Singing Rehearsals

- Masks will be worn by singers during initial staging rehearsals. Stage management will let you know when masks can be taken off in rehearsals.
- Pianists and other music staff must always wear masks.
- Stage management and directors will wear masks in rehearsals.
- Access to room rehearsals by those who are not in the production will be limited. Any visitors must be masked. Some guests may be allowed in the theater for onstage rehearsals.

## IX. Protocols for Wig, Makeup, and Costume Staff

### *Wig and Makeup*

- All staff must wear a mask. Staff who require close contact with an artist (when applying makeup or wig), should wear a mask and consider wearing a face shield.
- Artists will be taught to apply their own makeup as much as possible. They will wear a mask as long as feasible, while being made up.
- Each artist will be provided with their own makeup. Makeup must not be shared.
- The hard surfaces in the wig and makeup room must be cleaned and disinfected between artists. Ample time must be left in the schedule to accomplish this.
- Staff must wash hands immediately before and immediately after any direct contact with others during application or fittings in addition to washing hands before entering workspaces.

### *Costume Shop*

- Costume Shop work, including costume fabrication and craftwork should happen with enough workers to safely complete work while remaining at least 6 feet apart, using proper PPE for tasks normally requiring additional protection.
- Only costume personnel or artists at their designated fitting time may be in the costume shop.
- Implement modified traffic flow through shop workspaces where appropriate to reduce employees passing in tight areas.
- Except for small loads capable of being loaded and unloaded by a single person, loading, and unloading tasks are to be performed by a designated crew.
- Materials and completed work will be handled in ways to help reduce the possible transmission of the virus when moving between workers.
- When possible, based on material type and/or the particular step in costume production, launder materials per CDC disinfecting guidelines, “Laundry – For clothing, towels, linens and other items.”
  - Launder items according to the manufacturer’s instructions. Use the warmest appropriate water setting and dry items completely.
  - Wear disposable gloves when handling dirty laundry from a person who is infected.
  - Dirty laundry from a person who is infected can be washed with items from other individuals.
  - Do not shake dirty laundry.
  - Clean and disinfect clothes hampers according to guidance above for surfaces.
  - Discard gloves and wash hands immediately.

### *Fitting Rooms*

- Artists are not to enter the shop until the designated fitting time. Artists will entry through the south-east (main entrance) and leave through the northwest exit (near the entrance to the theater balcony). These will be plainly marked.
- One artist per hour will be scheduled for a fitting, with 15 minutes in between each fitting.
- No other costume shop personnel except those required for the fitting will be in the costume shop during the fitting.
- Fitting room surfaces will be disinfected before and after every fitting.
- Attendance in fitting rooms will be limited in order to keep adequate distances.
- No guests permitted in fitting area unless the guardian of a minor.

- Employees, which could include designers who cannot keep 6 feet of distance, will wear appropriate protection including gloves and/or face shields.
- Artists and staff will be required to wear face coverings during fittings.
- Artists will be asked to dress and undress themselves as much as possible.

#### *Rehearsal Items*

- Artists will be asked to supply their own basic rehearsal items.
- Rehearsal shoes can be supplied if necessary. They are to be placed in sealed boxes on a rack when not being used. Only the artist should handle the shoes.
- Rehearsal requests should come via email only. Staff should refrain from coming into the costume shop to make requests.

#### *Dressing Rooms*

- Artists are asked to dress themselves as much as possible. PPE will be used by both the artist and Dresser when help is required.
- Prepped costumes will be pre-set in dressing rooms prior to the performer's arrival with detailed dressing lists for the performer to review.

### **X. Protocols for Backstage Crew**

- Face masks that cover both mouth and nose are required to be worn when unmasked performers are on stage.
- PPE should not be shared.
- Social distancing guidelines should be maintained whenever possible.
- Tools should not be shared, if possible. If it is necessary to share a tool, it should be cleaned and sanitized using sanitizing wipes between uses and users.
- The refrigerator and microwaves in the crew lounge may be used but social distancing should be maintained.
- Meals and breaks should be staggered to facilitate social distancing and should be taken outside if possible.
- Unauthorized visitors or family members will not be allowed in the facility at any time.

### **XI. Guidance for Staff Reporting Illness**

- Company member must report to Company Manager, or Artistic Administrator if they feel sick or have been in contact with someone who is sick. When a company members suspects they might be sick:
  - Keep in contact with the Company Manger.
  - Return to your housing immediately and isolate.
  - Receive a COVID Test. SOA has at-home COVID tests available for this purpose.
  - Decide on next steps: Speak to your doctor, receive COVID test.
- If only one symptom of COVID-19 occurs, company member can return to work the following day if there are no new/worsening symptoms and they receive a negative COVID test.
- If more than one symptom occurs, and one of the symptoms is a fever, company member must isolate and receive a COVID test. If symptoms improve and the company member tests negative for COVID after 3 days, they may return to work.

## XII. Guidelines for Positive COVID Cases

If a positive COVID case is identified, immediate steps will be taken to isolate the affected company member and quarantine close contacts.

Upon receiving a positive diagnosis, the company member must immediately inform the Company Manager, Artistic Administrator, or Director of Production. A second COVID-19 test will be arranged to confirm the diagnosis.

- The company member must immediately isolate.
  - If they are on the Opera House premises and cannot return to their home immediately, they will isolate in a location in the Opera House complex or in the courtyard.
  - If the company member is in single housing provided by Sarasota Opera (no roommate) they must isolate in their housing.
  - If the company member is in shared housing provided by Sarasota Opera, if advisable they will be immediately moved to a single unit either in company housing or other location. At a minimum they should isolate in their bedroom until other arrangements are made.
  - If the company member lives locally, they should isolate in their home, informing any family members of their condition.
- If the positive diagnosis has been confirmed, the company member must isolate for 5 days from the onset of symptoms or a positive diagnosis, whichever comes first. At the end of 5 days, if the company member does not have a fever for at least 24 hours without medication, and other symptoms are improving, they may return to work. They should wear a mask until receiving a negative COVID diagnosis.

If symptoms develop during the isolation period (see section II.), the COVID Compliance Officer should be contacted. If any of the following serious symptoms develop, the company member should seek medical help immediately (call 911):

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

## XIII. Guidelines for Contact with a Positive Case

Any person who has been identified as having contact with someone who has COVID-19 should monitor their symptoms. If they are asymptomatic, they should wear a mask AT ALL TIMES around company members and receive a COVID test within 3-5 days of exposure. Unless they develop symptoms, they do not need to quarantine.

If the company member tests negative after 5 days, they can return to normal behavior.

If the Company is in performance, anyone who has been in contact with someone who has COVID-19 within 5 days, will be tested within 12 hours of the next performance. If they test negative and are not exhibiting any symptoms, they can perform unmasked, but should wear a mask offstage and around others.

If symptoms (see section II.) develop, the Company Manager should be contacted. If any of the following serious symptoms develop, the company member should seek medical help immediately (call 911):

- Trouble breathing
- Persistent pain or pressure in the chest
- New confusion
- Inability to wake or stay awake
- Bluish lips or face

#### XIV. General Human Resources Guidelines

- Company members who violate any COVID protocol are subject to immediate dismissal.
- Company members who must isolate or quarantine will continue to be paid as if they were working.
- All medical information will be kept confidential except to medical authorities as required by law.