

Nashville Musicians Association, AFM Local 257 Suggested Musician Guidelines for a Safe Return to Work

Updated May 25, 2020: As musicians venture back into live venues and recording studios to return to work, there are many variables in play. We recognize that musicians are more than anxious to return to work as soon as possible. However, unless steps are taken to ensure that potential exposure to Covid-19 is limited, risk factors can increase exponentially. How effectively we protect ourselves, and each other, will make a positive difference in how things unfold and how long it will take.

We can only offer guidelines, not impose rules, but we urge everyone to take them seriously and respect the rights of others. There is no need to turn health and safety concerns into a political debate. If you do not agree with someone else's viewpoint, please respect their right to their opinion, and act accordingly. As all of us work together to bring back the music industry, we need to treat each other in a responsible and cooperative fashion in the work environment, live and in the studio.

At this critical juncture, we believe it is far better to be careful than not, and we encourage everyone to take this threat seriously until it is under control. There are many different opinions about how quickly to ramp things up, but for the greater good of everyone, we need to continue to be careful at each step along the way. The reality is that no one knows who may be infected or carrying the virus at any given time and location, and no one knows exactly what the future holds. What we do collectively to minimize risk will make a difference, and I urge you not to risk your life or the lives of others by taking unnecessary risks that can be easily avoided.

In addition to health issues, legal liability — real or imagined — is also a factor in this equation. The employer and/or producer has a responsibility to create and maintain a safe work environment, as do studio and club owners. SAG/AFTRA has instructed their members that **“the employers and producers remain solely responsible for ensuring the health and safety of all members they employ and no member shall sign any document releasing the employer from such responsibility.”** We already advise our members not to sign waivers of any kind, but are not dictating any further instructions in this area at this time. Sadly, if people get sick there will be those looking for financial gain from such a tragedy. The best thing you can do for yourself and the musician community is to take care of yourself and those around you. Thanks in advance for your cooperation in this unprecedented path we are all on together, whether we like it or not. These guidelines will continue to evolve as we progress.

Here are some established common sense safety practices as a starting point:

Don't touch your face! Wash your hands regularly.

Wear gloves when needed.

Disinfect surfaces that have been touched at regular intervals.

Take your temperature regularly and get tested periodically if you are at risk.

Wear a mask when around others in close proximity.

Observe the six feet social distancing rule whenever possible.

Suggested Recording Studio Guidelines:

Everyone in the studio and control room should wear a mask, not just the musicians.

Vocalists, brass, and wind players should wear masks except when playing.

Everyone brings their own headphones

Optional: bring your own microphone/mic cover - if needed.

No congregating in control room – (it helps to have speakers in the main room)

6 feet between players in a room – limit number of musicians accordingly.

Only individuals in isolation booths

Observe social distancing whenever possible.

Wind and brass sections recorded separately

All studio house gear (piano, B-3, mics, headphone boxes, etc.) disinfected regularly

No congregating in close groups

No group photos

Time cards/paperwork to be filled out by leader or contractor and not passed around

Suggested Small and Medium Live Venue Guidelines:

Do not share equipment with other musicians unless necessary, i.e drum sets.

Sanitize any shared equipment

Musicians should wear masks - except singers, wind and brass players.

Bring your own microphone - and cable.

Limit guest musicians/sit ins unless absolutely necessary.

Keep social distance onstage and in the audience.

No close seating throughout the venue and at the bar.

Use dance floor to keep a safe distance from stage to audience – no dancing.

One act must leave stage before the next comes on.

Stage, mics and cables must be sanitized between acts.

No sharing of stage during changeover between acts.

Wear a mask while passing the tip jar.

Use Virtual Tip Jar or a similar app in addition to or instead of cash tips.

When counting money, wear gloves.

Consider using drum shield-style Plexiglas in front of stage.

Require non-contact thermometer readings for customers, staff and band members before entering the venue.

Despite the challenges we are experiencing, Nashville once again has a unique opportunity to show the world how people with different viewpoints can find ways to work together for the good of everyone. These workplace guidelines are offered with a hope that mutual respect will rule the day and we can all safely get back to work as quickly as possible. We all can agree that we want to see Nashville musicians do what they do best, and be able to do so in a cooperative, responsible, and healthy way.

In Harmony,

Dave Pomeroy

President, Nashville Musicians Association, AFM Local 257

615-579-5227

www.nashvillemusicians.org