



Returning to Work Safely Guidelines for Small Venues, Studios & Rehearsal Spaces

For More Information, Please Visit: www.afm.org/returning-to-work-safely

Musicians will soon venture back into live venues, recording studios and rehearsal spaces, if they have not already done so. During this period, it is critical that we take the proper steps to ensure that we do so in a way that protects ourselves and the people we work with. How effectively we can safely reengage in the workplace by focusing on following best practices will determine whether we are able to continue on this road back to our “new normal.”

The following are guidelines pulled from a wide range of experts, and we urge everyone to take them seriously and respect the rights of others. As we learn more, the guidelines will continue to evolve, and we will have to continue to adjust our behavior. As all of us work together to bring back the music industry, it is essential that we treat each other in a responsible and cooperative fashion in our work environments, both live and in the studio.

At this critical juncture, we believe it is important to be cautious and we encourage everyone to take this threat seriously until it is completely under control. There are many different opinions about how quickly to ramp things up, but for the greater good of everyone, we need to stay focused on everyone’s safety. The reality is that no one knows who may be infected or carrying the virus at any given time and location. What we do collectively to minimize risk will make a difference, and we 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 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. We are advising you to not sign any document that would release the employer of any liabilities. We have not included the long list of protocols that employers need to put in place, but if you walk into a space that has not implemented a reopening strategy/written safety plan consistent with state law and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) protocols, which should include an infection mitigation coordinator, you should consider whether the workplace has been properly prepared for your safe return to work. You should also inquire about whether the HVAC system has been inspected and meets the required standards for filtering and turning over the air in each facility.

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

- Practice physical distancing. Keep six feet/two meters away from people to the extent possible.
- Wear a mask when around others in close proximity.
- Don't touch your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Wash your hands regularly.
- Wear gloves when needed and throw them away after use and hand sanitize.
- Respectfully refrain from shaking hands or hugging anyone.
- Cover your nose and mouth with the elbow or a tissue when coughing or sneezing.
- Throw the tissue away after using.
- Use an alcohol based sanitizer (60% alcohol or higher) if you are not able to access a sink for hand washing.
- Keep rubber gloves, disinfectant wipes, spray, and hand sanitizer in your car or bag.
- Bring wipes for your workplace and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at regular intervals.
- Take your temperature regularly and get tested periodically if you are at risk.
- Carry your own pen or pencil
- Regularly wipe down cell phones, tablets, and computers.
- Do your best to refrain from touching anything without hand sanitizing before and after. This includes mics, instruments, lounge tables, refrigerator handles, door handles, headphones, amps, cables, cases, gear bags, pedals, pens (bring your own), paperwork, paper clips, etc. in the recording studio, on stage, or in vehicles to and from the job.
- Communicate honestly with your co-workers, employer or contractor if you are uncomfortable going to work.

Suggested Small and Medium Live Venue Guidelines:

- If you are sick, do not go into work and follow the CDC guidelines to self-quarantine and seek appropriate medical attention.
- Do not share equipment with other musicians.
- Musicians should wear masks—except singers, wind and brass players.
- Bring your own microphone and cable.
- Keep social distance onstage and in the audience.
- No close seating throughout the venue and at the bar.
- No dancing. Use dance floor to keep a safe distance from stage to the audience.
- One act must leave stage before the next comes on.
- Stage, mics and cables must be sanitized 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.
- Consider using drum shield-style plexiglas in front of stage (singers) and between and/or in front of winds and brass.

- Before and after shows, if you normally interface with fans, refrain from touching them (handshakes, hugs, etc.). Explain it from the stage if you feel it is necessary.
- Do not allow fans to touch merchandise, if possible. Designate a single CD, book, t-shirt, etc. as a “store sample” and clean/disinfect before and after each show.
- Wear gloves when handling cash and credit cards. Use contactless payment methods whenever possible.
- Do not wear stage clothing from night to night without first washing them, preferably in hot water. If they cannot be washed, spray the clothing with a disinfectant spray.

Suggested Recording Studio/Rehearsal Space Guidelines:

- Everyone in the studio and control room should wear a mask, not just the musicians.
- Use disinfecting towelettes to wipe down studio equipment before and after use.
- Common areas in facilities should be cleaned/sanitized regularly (e.g., light switches, surfaces, doorknobs, phones, water dispensers, coffee machines, cabinet and refrigerator handles, microwave buttons, ventilation grills, chairs and arm/back rests, etc.).
- Studios should be cleaned/sanitized before and after each session, including the microphone, POP filters, music stands, and any other equipment the performer will come in contact with.
- Vocalists, brass, and wind players should wear masks except when playing.
- Everyone brings their own headphones.
- Bring your own microphone/mic cover—if needed.
- No congregating in control room (it helps to have speakers in the main room).
- Six feet/two meters between players in a room—limit number of musicians accordingly.
- Twelve feet/3.6 meters between winds/brass, singers and other musicians if in the same room.
- Only individuals in isolation booths.
- Winds and brass sections recorded separately, when possible (otherwise distanced as stated above).
- 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 the leader or contractor and not passed around.