

# COVID - 19 THEATRE PROTOCOL AND GUIDELINES



**THE  
PLAYHOUSE  
THEATRE**

HOTTENTOTS HOLLAND DRAMATIC SOCIETY



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## **COVID-19: SAFETY MEASURES IN THE THEATRE**

### **COVID-19 task team:**

Chairman of Management Committee	Darryl Spijkers
COVID- 19 Compliance officer:	Ann Coetzee
Temperature + mask control:	Noel Pitout and/or Stage Manager/Show Director
Sanitization:	Noel Pitout/Bobby Bennett
Finance:	Tim Beavon

### **Community Guidelines**

Let us consider how we can effectively combat COVID-19 transmission:

- Stay home if you are sick.
- Sneeze and cough in your elbow.
- Wash your hands regularly and thoroughly.
- Clean surfaces regularly.
- Avoid any physical contact with other people.
- Wear a mask. Volunteers and cast will be required to wear specific masks.

### **Theatre Application of Guidelines**

The theatre management team have a statutory obligation to ensure that our theatre is safe and that all procedures are managed thoroughly and responsibly. Wearing masks in public is mandatory from 1 May 2020. The World Health Organization has set a certain standard that a mask must meet in order to be deemed safe and effective.

These are the several ways we will protect patrons, cast and volunteers at the theatre:

- In addition to this protocol and guideline document, for each Alert Level, Theatre Management will develop an operational plan in line with the requirements by the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture under the Disaster Management Act No 57
- Patrons, cast and volunteers who show symptoms of COVID-19 MUST stay home.
- The theatre will require volunteers and cast members to regularly wash hands with soap and water or use hand disinfectant.
- Volunteers and patrons will be required to wear masks.
- Wherever possible, social distance parameters will be established by means of markers.
- No congestion in theatre buildings or on the grounds.
- Social distance will be maintained and physical contact or touch (handshakes or hugs) will not be allowed.
- Posters about COVID-19 and good hygienic practices will be visible everywhere.
- Regular garbage disposal will take place.
- Hand sanitisers will be available at theatre entrances, reception, bathrooms, and back of house.
- The theatre will be disinfected regularly, with emphasis on high-risk surfaces such as handrails, door handles, bathrooms, counters and the auditorium. There will be a daily cleaning programme with specific chemicals and specified processes will be followed:
  - Theatre will be inspected at the end of each day to have it ready for the next day.

- FOH volunteers will disinfect the Green Room after each show/event
- Bathrooms will be disinfected every hour.
- The whole theatre will be cleaned and disinfected on a monthly basis.
- Patrons will be advised to each provide their own bottle with disinfectant for personal hygiene.
- Volunteers and cast are responsible for the regular disinfection of their personal space.

***Face masks:***

- Face masks should be worn by everyone around the theatre complex
- Masks of cloth must be used properly to be effective.
- In addition to wearing a mask, everyone shall follow the other measures to prevent the spread of the virus - keep a distance of 1.5 metres from other people and wash hands regularly.
- Keep the mask on at all times except when eating/drinking
- If a volunteer or cast member needs to remove their mask while at the theatre (e.g. during tea/lunch break) and is then required to put it on again, care must be taken to only handle the mask by the strings of the mask.
- Wash hands thoroughly after removing the mask.
- Volunteers, cast and patrons also need to make sure that masks are put on and removed in the correct way.

**Guidance to volunteers and cast in the use of masks**

Take note of the following advice for wearing cloth face masks:

- Wash your hands before putting on the mask.
- Place the mask with the correct side facing your nose and mouth. Make sure both are covered well.
- Tie the strings behind your head or, if the mask has elastic bands, make sure they are tight.
- Once you have put on the cloth face mask and you are comfortable with the fit of the mask, DO NOT TOUCH YOUR FACE OR THE MASK until you take off the mask.
- Take the mask off by untying the strings or elastic bands and holding it by the strings only. Place it in a container, ready to be washed.
- Do not touch the actual mask itself when you are taking it off. Do not store the mask around your neck when not in use.
- Wash it in warm water and iron your cloth mask every day. The mask must be stored in a clean paper or plastic bag (clearly labelled with the person's name) when not in use.

**Procedures to be followed upon entering the theatre complex**

The following steps will be followed for each rehearsal, hire or performance:

- **SCREEN** - Complete of the "Register on entering the Theatre premises". The form must be completed and signed before entering the theatre complex.
- **SANITISE** - Clean your hands. The hands of patrons, cast and volunteers will be sprayed with an alcohol-based cleaner to disinfect it.
- **SCAN** - Take patrons, cast and volunteers temperature. The temperature of patrons, cast and volunteers will be taken before they may enter the theatre.

- **SIGN IN** - Data entry in register. Patrons, cast and volunteers temperature readings will be taken and entered into the register.

Various entrances will be used to allow access to the theatre complex:

- patrons (Front Entrance)
- cast (Back Entrance or Small Room), and
- volunteers (Kitchen and Front Entrance)

Patrons, cast and volunteers who show symptoms of COVID-19 MUST stay home. They must be tested for COVID-19 and also notify the theatre.

#### **Protocol on toilet use:**

The Front of House Manager and volunteers are to monitor toilet usage. Not more than 5 people in the bathrooms at a time.

- Do not visit the bathroom unnecessarily.
- Disinfect your hands before and after you enter the toilet with the disinfectant on the table outside the toilet.
- Wash your hands thoroughly.
- Use only the assigned toilets.
- To keep track of the number of people visiting the toilet.

#### **Whom to notify if patrons, cast or volunteers are tested positive for COVID-19**

Ann Coetzee

Phone: 0826789077

Email: ann.coetzee@axxess.co.za

#### **Strategy for the theatre with the outbreak of COVID-19 in the theatre**

There will be immediate communication between the theatre and the patrons.

- The parties involved will need to be tested immediately.
- The parties involved will have to go into self-quarantine for 14 days.
- The parties involved must immediately provide a complete list of people with whom they have been in contact.
- Notify neighbours or community.
- The theatre will provide the emergency numbers of all relevant authorities, hospitals and make departments available.

The theatre will then conduct deep sanitising of the premises in the event of an outbreak.

#### **Procedure for volunteers, cast and Stage Managers / Directors**

##### ***What are the symptoms of COVID-19?***

Cold or flu symptoms, such as fever, sore throat, shortness of breath and cough. Vomiting and diarrhoea have also been reported.

***COVID – 19 volunteer and cast rules and regulations.***

- If you have any of the symptoms, please stay home and advise the Front of House Manager, Stage Manager and director
- If you have been in contact with anyone who has COVID-19, stay at home and inform the theatre immediately.
- Pre-screen test sheet to be filled out before you enter the theatre.
- Volunteers will be allocated specific arrival times – please stick to these times.
- Prescribed mask is compulsory at ALL times.
- Screening will be done every day.
- If your temperature is above 38°C you will not be allowed entrance to the venue.
- It is the FOH manager’s responsibility to ensure the sanitising of hands of each volunteer member as they enter the theatre.
- It is the Stage manager/Director’s responsibility to ensure the sanitising of hands of each cast member as they enter the theatre.
- Anything that is brought to theatre must be taken home on the same day.
- Doors must stay open as far as possible.
- Keep windows open as far as possible – ventilation is very important.
- Avoid handshakes, hugs and physical contact. Greet people with a nod, a bow or a wave.
- Leave theatre immediately at the end of the day/rehearsal/show.

We would like to appeal to all volunteers and cast members to abide by the rules. Please respect the people around you.

***Procedures to follow if someone is ill at the theatre:***

Patrons, cast and volunteers who become ill at theatre or arrive at theatre ill will be required to isolate in the Lindsay Small Room or be sent home immediately.

Patrons, cast and learners with a temperature above 38 degrees Celsius will not be allowed access to the theatre and will be required to isolate in the Lindsay Small Room or be sent home immediately..

Remember that theatres are not expected to make their COVID-19 cases public. The majority of respiratory diseases are not COVID-19.

COVID-19 positive volunteers and patrons must be reported to the theatre COVID-19 compliance officer and the Department of Health.

People who become ill must be able to trace their contact with other individuals to prevent the spread of the virus as far as possible. Your cooperation in protecting our community is absolutely essential.

It is the responsibility of patrons, cast and volunteers to answer questions as thoroughly as possible.

***Procedure to follow on returning to the theatre after self-isolation / exposure***

All people who return to the theatre after isolation must follow general work restrictions, including the following:

- submit to a medical examination to confirm that they are fit to work;
- wear a mask after the initial test.

- adhere to social distance measures, hand and respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette;
- continue to self-monitor symptoms and seek medical re-evaluation if symptoms recur.

The volunteers and/or cast member should also perform daily self-checks for symptoms and complete the symptom monitoring sheet for 14 days after the exposure. If the person is asymptomatic for seven days after exposure, the theatre management may consider that they return to theatre after following a negative result of a real time COVID-19 test ( RT-PCR) on day eight.

### **High-risk cast and volunteers**

High-risk cast and volunteers are characterised by the following criteria:

- Existing medical conditions, such as diabetes.
- Existing respiratory conditions, such as asthma.
- High blood pressure.
- Heart disease.
- Cancer and other immune-weakening conditions.

It is important that such cast and volunteers do not work at the theatre or perform during this time.

### **Guidance to volunteers and cast regarding COVID-19**

1. What if you test positive?

You will only be able to return to theatre 14 days after the onset of symptoms or in severe cases of COVID-19, 14 days after clinical stability.

2. What if you have flu-like symptoms?

You must be assessed by a health professional. If someone shows symptoms of acute respiratory infection, they should be tested for Covid-19. If the result comes back positive, the scenario outlined above should be implemented.

3. How is risk determined if you have been in contact with someone who has been diagnosed with COVID-19?

**Low-risk** means that the person was more than one meter away from a confirmed case of COVID-19 for less than 15 minutes, or within one metre of a confirmed case of COVID-19, but he/she was wearing PPE to cover the mouth, nose and or eyes.

The FOH manager (FOH Volunteers) or Stage Manager/Show Director (for cast members) must still assess and confirm the exposure; at the discretion of the FOH manager or Stage Manager, the person may be asked to leave the theatre until to self-monitor for 14 days. Self-monitoring should include temperature checks twice daily and a daily symptom check.

**High-risk** means that the person was within one metre of a confirmed case of COVID-19 for more than 15 minutes without personal protective equipment (PPE)and came into direct contact with droplets from the COVID-19 patient's nose or mouth.

The FOH manager and /or Stage Manager/Director must first assess and confirm the exposure to the virus.

If exposure is confirmed, the NICD must be notified. The volunteer or cast member will be asked to leave the theatre and self - isolate for at least seven days.

4. What if someone in my household is sick with COVID-19

You must inform the Front of House Manager / Stage Manager of director and do not come to the theatre. Follow the necessary procedure with a sick person in the home:

- Help the sick person to follow the doctor's instructions for care and medicine.
- Keep the doctor's phone number at hand.
- For most people, the symptoms last a few days and the feel better after a week.
- Make sure the sick person drinks plenty of fluids and rests.
- If possible, consider having any required items delivered through a delivery service.
- Take care of the person's pet (s) and limit contact between the sick person and his or her pets, if possible.
- Call the doctor if the person's condition worsens.
- For medical emergencies, call 911 and say that the sick person has or may have COVID-19.
- People who develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19 should call 911 immediately.

5. What are the emergency warning signs for COVID-19?

Emergency warning signs include:

- Problems with breathing: Short of breath or shortness of breath.
- Causing chest pain or pressure
- Confusion or inability to wake up.
- Bluish lips or face.
- Cold fever.
- Sore throat.
- Loss of taste and smell.
- Headaches and body aches.

NOTE: THESE ARE NOT ALL THE EMERGENCY SYMPTOMS OR SIGNS.

**Final word**

Remember to avoid travelling as far as possible. If you do not have a choice, please take all the necessary safety precautions.

We as a theatre volunteers, patrons and cast members have a responsibility to protect our community.

Thank you for your kind cooperation and loyalty to our theatre community.

## **THEATRE'S SUPPORT NETWORK**

### ***Theatre Management/Exco***

Ann Coetzee (0826789077)

National Department of Health (012) 395 8000

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) (0800 029 999)

### ***Hospitals***

Provincial hospital - Helderberg (021) 850 4700

### ***Other Hospitals:***

Comparative Medi Clinic (021) 850 9000

Busamed (021) 840 6600

Advanced Vergelegen Surgical Centre (087 234 9771)

### ***SAPS***

Somerset West (021) 850 1303

Strand (021) 854 9106

Gordon's Bay (021) 856 2677