NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**

# Interim Guidance for Movie Theaters
# And Indoor Gaming
# (October 2, 2020)

**Guidelines for Conducting Business:** Any scenario in which many people gather together poses a risk for COVID-19 transmission. All organizations and programs that gather groups of people should create and implement a plan to minimize the opportunity for COVID-19 transmission. The guidance below will help movie theaters and indoor gaming to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

**This guidance covers the following topics:**

- Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure
- Cloth Face Coverings
- Cleaning and Hygiene
- Monitoring for Symptoms
- Protecting Vulnerable Populations
- Communications and Combatting Misinformation
- Water and Ventilation Systems
- Additional Resources

## Social Distancing and Minimizing Exposure

Social distancing is an important tool to decrease the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing ("physical distancing") means keeping space between yourself and other people outside of your home. Stay at least 6 feet (about 2 arms' length) from other people; do not gather in groups; stay out of crowded places and avoid mass gatherings. Phase 3 includes several requirements and recommendations to support social distancing in spaces where the public may gather.

**Movie Theaters and Indoor Gaming are <u>required</u> to:**
- ❑ Limit occupancy per room to 100 people or 30% of seating capacity, whichever is less. (If there is not a fire capacity number for the room, limit occupancy to 100 people, or 7 people per 1,000 square feet, whichever is less.)
    - ❑ Workers or any other support staff do not count toward these capacity limits.
- ❑ Limit to seated operation only.
    - ❑ Each group of guests must be seated to achieve at least 6-foot separation between each group of guests in all directions.

- ❑ Guests must remain at their seats except to enter, leave, visit the restroom, and obtain food or drink.
- ❑ Clearly provide 6 feet floor markings in waiting areas, concession areas, ticket counters, restrooms, and other areas where people may congregate or wait.
- ❑ Follow the DHHS Interim Guidance for Restaurants for reopening restaurants or concession stands and DHHS Interim Guidance for Retail for reopening gift shops.
- ❑ Post the reduced "Emergency Maximum Capacity" at each entrance to the facility. Sign templates are available in English and Spanish on NC DHHS COVID-19 response site.
- ❑ Post signage at the main entrance that reminds people to stay 6 feet apart, wear a face cloth covering and wash their hands frequently.
  - ❑ NC DHHS Know Your Ws provides English, Spanish, Combined English and Spanish versions of the "Wait" flyer.

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
- ❑ Utilize self-check-in or place barrier/partition between ticket/check in areas and customers.
- ❑ Clearly mark designated separate entry and exit points to the extent possible, including stairwells, walkways, and other areas of ingress/egress.
- ❑ Close all lounge areas and other areas that promote individuals gathering in groups.
- ❑ Develop reservation times to the extent possible to help limit wait times and lines.
- ❑ Alternate registers at concessions or otherwise ensure at least 6-foot separation between lines.
- ❑ Develop and use systems that allow for online, email, or phone transactions, including mobile apps to purchase concession items.
- ❑ Discontinue use of drinking directly from water fountains and provide disposable cups for individuals when using any water fountains or labeled water bottles. Touchless water filling stations may be used.
- ❑ Alternate check-in lines and ticket queue areas to increase social distancing when possible.
- ❑ Limit capacity in restrooms, elevators, and other enclosed areas to accommodate social distancing.
- ❑ Update bag policy and other security measures to facilitate distancing for security staff. Use touchless methods for metal detection and item checks and implement policy for pat downs or other close contact security checks to protect workers.
- ❑ Cohort workers to the extent possible, allowing employees to work in the same concession, ticket, gate, or other areas to reduce the amount of cross contact between employees.

## Cloth Face Coverings

There is evidence that wearing a face covering can help reduce the spread of COVID-19, especially because people may be infected with the virus and not know it.

**Movie theaters and indoor gaming are required to:**
- ❑ Have all employees wear a face covering when they are inside the establishment, unless the worker states that an exception applies.
- ❑ Have all patrons wear a face covering when they are inside the establishment, unless customer states that an exception applies or if they are eating or drinking.
- ❑ Make good-faith efforts to provide to workers either a one-week supply of reusable face coverings or a new disposable face covering each day.
- ❑ New face coverings should be provided during the work day if the worker's face covering becomes soiled, torn, or wet.
- ❑ Visit NC DHHS COVID-19 response site for more information about the face covering guidance and access sign templates that are available in English and Spanish.

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**

❑ Provide disposable face coverings to customers to wear while in the establishment.


## Cleaning and Hygiene

Washing hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or using hand sanitizer reduces the spread of transmission.

**Movie theaters and indoor gaming are <span style="color:red">required</span> to:**
❑ Promote frequent use of hand washing and hand sanitizer for staff and individuals. Require handwashing of staff immediately upon reporting to work, after contact with individuals, after performing cleaning and disinfecting activities, and frequently throughout the day.
❑ Provide alcohol-based hand sanitizer (with at least 60% alcohol) at the entrance, and any other areas throughout premises as needed.
❑ Perform ongoing and routine environmental cleaning and disinfection of high-touch areas (e.g., doors, doorknobs, rails, lockers, dressing areas, front counter) with an EPA approved disinfectant for SARS-CoV-2 (the virus that causes COVID-19), and increase disinfection during peak times or high customer density times and between screenings at movie theaters.

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
❑ Systematically and frequently check and refill hand sanitizers (at least 60% alcohol) and assure soap and hand drying materials are available at all sinks.
❑ Remove soft surfaces and items difficult to disinfect in public areas to the extent possible.
❑ Provide tissues for proper cough and sneeze hygiene.
❑ Provide additional trash receptacles to accommodate additional use of single service eating and drinking utensils and disposable personal protective equipment (PPE). Plan for additional trash removal during operating hours.


## Monitoring for Symptoms

Conducting regular screening for symptoms can help reduce exposure. Staff should be encouraged to self-monitor for symptoms such as fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

If they develop symptoms, they should notify their supervisor and stay home. More information on how to monitor for symptoms is available from the CDC.

**Movie theaters and indoor gaming are <span style="color:red">required</span> to:**
❑ Have a plan in place for immediately removing employees from work if symptoms develop while at work. Employees who have symptoms when they arrive at work or become sick during the day should immediately be separated from other employees, customers, and visitors and sent home or to their healthcare provider.
❑ Conduct daily symptom screening (standard interview questionnaire English|Spanish) of employees at entrance to workplace with immediately sending symptomatic workers home to isolate.
❑ Post signage at the main entrance requesting that people who are symptomatic with fever and/or cough not enter, such as Know Your Ws/Stop if You Have Symptoms flyers (English - Color, Black & White; Spanish - Color, Black & White).

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
❑ Establish and enforce sick leave policies to prevent the spread of disease, including:
  o Requiring employees to staying home if sick.
  o Encouraging liberal use of sick leave policy.
  o Expanding paid leave policies to allow employees to stay home when sick.

❑ Per CDC guidelines, if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 or is presumed positive by a medical professional due to symptoms, the employee should be excluded from work until:
   o No fever for at least 24 hours since recovery (without the use of fever-reducing medicine AND
   o Other symptoms have improved (e.g., coughing, shortness of breath) AND
   o At least 10 days have passed since first symptoms
   **\*A test-based strategy is no longer recommended by the CDC to discontinue isolation or precautions and employers should not require documentation of a negative test before allowing a worker to return.**
❑ Per CDC guidelines, if an employee has been diagnosed with COVID-19 but does not have symptoms, they should remain out of work until 10 days have passed since the date of their first positive COVID-19 diagnostic test, assuming they have not subsequently developed symptoms since their positive test.
❑ Require symptomatic employees to wear cloth face coverings until leaving the facility. Cleaning and disinfecting procedure should be implemented by designated personnel following CDC guidelines once sick employee leaves.
❑ Provide employees with information on help lines to access information or other support in reference to COVID-19, e.g. 211 and Hope4NC Helpline (1-855-587-3463)

## Protecting Vulnerable Populations

Information on who is at higher risk for severe disease is available from the CDC and NCDHHS.

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
❑ Designate a specific time for persons at higher risk to access the event, activity, or facility without the general population (such as early morning, or late afternoon).
❑ Enable staff to self-identify as high risk for severe disease and reassign work to minimize their contact with customers and other employees.

## Combatting Misinformation

Help ensure that the information your staff is getting is coming directly from reliable resources.  Use resources from a trusted source like the CDC or NCDHHS to promote behaviors that prevent the spread of COVID-19.

**It is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
❑ Provide workers with education about COVID-19 strategies, using methods like videos, webinars, or FAQs.  Some reliable sources include NC DHHS COVID-19, Know Your W's: Wear, Wait, Wash, NC DHHS COVID-19 Latest Updates, NC DHHS COVID-19 Materials & Resources
❑ Promote informational helplines like 211 and Hope4NC and other Wellness Resources.
❑ Put up signs and posters, such as those found Know Your Ws: Wear, Wait, Wash and those found Social Media Toolkit for COVID-19.
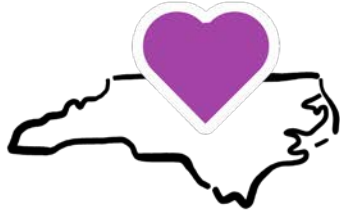
## Water and Ventilation Systems

Reduced use of water and ventilations systems can pose their own health hazards. There is increased risk for Legionella and other bacteria from stagnant or standing water.

**Before opening, it is recommended that movie theaters and indoor gaming:**
❑ Follow the CDC's Guidance for Reopening Buildings After Prolonged Shutdown or Reduced Operation to minimize the risk of diseases associated with water.
❑ Ensure ventilation systems operate properly and as feasible direct air outdoors, and increase circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods. Do not open windows and doors if they pose a safety or health risk to people using the facility.

## Additional Resources

- NC DHHS: North Carolina COVID-19
- CDC: Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers
- CDC: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility
- CDC: Reopening Guidance
- EPA: Disinfectants for Use Against SARS-CoV-2
- FDA: Food Safety and the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19)
- HHS/OSHA: Guidance on Preparing Workplaces for COVID-19

#StayStrongNC

**Staying apart brings us together.
Protect your family and neighbors.**

Learn more at nc.gov/covid19.

NC DEPARTMENT OF
**HEALTH AND
HUMAN SERVICES**