



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Date: 10/05/21

To: All Individuals, businesses, and organizations in SLO County

Subject: **COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices:
Performing Arts**

10/05/21 Revisions: Added an allowance for performers to temporarily remove masks while actively performing when specific precautions are in place.

The purpose of this guidance is to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission by informing and supporting individuals and organizations engaging in the performing arts in San Luis Obispo County (SLO). This guidance is in response to elevated community transmission and may be revised as community transmission changes over time.

These requirements and best practices apply to organized in-person performing arts activities involving more than one person outside of a single household, with or without an audience. In this guidance, performances also include rehearsals, recitals, practices, lessons, classes, etc. Performing arts include various forms of music, dance, and drama. Guidance for youth performing arts is addressed in the [County of SLO COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices: Youth Sports and Extracurricular Activities](#).

KEY FACTS

- Risk reduction for performing arts must include a layered approach from multiple sources including the performers, the venue, and the audience.
- Forceful vocalizations and exhalations, in such activities as singing, voice projection, playing wind instruments, and movement arts produce more respiratory droplets and aerosols than typical breathing or talking. Unlike typical droplet particles emitted with normal breathing and talking, aerosols travel farther and remain in the air much longer and can be inhaled deep into the respiratory tract.
- Respiratory aerosols build up in enclosed spaces with inadequate ventilation, which can lead to virus concentrations in the air if a performer is infectious. Prolonged exposure to these conditions increases risk. The risk from infectious aerosolized particles is reduced when the particles can dissipate quickly, such as outdoors and in sufficiently ventilated indoor spaces.

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County of SLO Public Health Department COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices:
Performing Arts

Requirements for Indoor Performance Activities:

- Masks are required, regardless of vaccination status, in all public indoor settings in San Luis Obispo County¹; however, performers may remove their masks while actively performing², presenting, or practicing under the following conditions:
 1. All performers, staff and crew present must be fully vaccinated³ or have tested negative for COVID-19 in the past 72 hours.
 - For ongoing performance activities, unvaccinated individuals must undergo diagnostic screening testing⁴ weekly and at least 72 hours before performances before an audience.
 - Test using either PCR (molecular) or antigen tests with [FDA Emergency Use Authorization](#). At-home or other point-of-care antigen test kits are acceptable if the specimen collection is observed by a [trained observer](#) and test results are verifiable or shareable. See [CDPH Testing Guidance](#).
 - Fully vaccinated individuals without symptoms do not need to be tested.
 - Individuals should not be tested if they have had a positive COVID-19 viral test in the past 90 days and have met the criteria to end isolation (no sooner than 10 days), as long as they do not have symptoms.
 - It is the responsibility of both the host venue and the event organizer to ensure vaccination or testing requirements are met⁵.
 2. Vocal performers and wind musicians must be at least 12 feet from audience members. Other performers may be 6 feet from audience.
 3. Performers must wear their masks when not actively performing, such as backstage.
- Performances at K-12 schools must follow K-12 requirements, which require masks during performances and distancing from other performers.
 1. Host venue, event organizer, or coordinators must provide advance communications informing everyone, including attendees, performers, and crew to not attend if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) or if they have been directed to isolate or quarantine at that time.

¹ In San Luis Obispo County, all individuals are required to follow the [September 1, 2021 SLO County Health Officer order requiring face coverings in all public indoor settings](#) in addition to the [CDPH Guidance for Face Coverings](#). Requirements in a [SLO County Health Officer Order](#) must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement.

² In this context, performances or presentations include any live performance, with or without an audience, such as rehearsals, recitals, practices, lessons, classes, etc.

³ In general, people are considered fully vaccinated 2 weeks after their second dose in a 2-dose series, such as the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines, or 2 weeks after a single-dose vaccine, such as Johnson & Johnson's Janssen vaccine.

⁴ Diagnostic screening testing is recurrent testing of asymptomatic individuals in certain high-risk settings to detect COVID-19 early and stop transmission quickly.

⁵ See CDPH Vaccine Record Guidelines & Standards at <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CID/DCDC/Pages/COVID-19/Vaccine-Record-Guidelines-Standards.aspx>, See [CDPH Updated Testing Guidance](#), under the heading, [What can be used as proof of a negative pre-entry test?](#) In addition, LA County provides a [Negative Test Verification Guide](#).

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2. Businesses and venues that host indoor events with more than 1,000 attendees or outdoor events with more than 10,000 attendees must follow [State Guidance for Mega Events](#). Please note that the directives in a [SLO County Health Officer Order](#) must be followed when they are more stringent than a State requirement, including those from [CDPH](#) and [Cal/OSHA ETS](#).

Recommended Best Practices:

- All performers and personnel should be fully vaccinated.
- Move activities outdoors when possible.
- If indoors, ensure ventilation meets or exceeds current standards in the [CDPH Interim guidance for Ventilation, Filtration, and Air Quality in Indoor Environments](#).
- Vocalists and wind and brass musicians should:
 - Face away from other musicians with at least 6 feet distance from another person indoors and outdoors.
 - Wear specialized masks while actively performing indoors, and musicians playing wind or brass instruments should place bell covers on the instruments.
 - Not empty water valves on the floor. Recommend using a puppy pad (or similar) to catch the contents of the valve and discard. Sanitize hands after discarding pad.
- Limit indoor performance and rehearsal time. According to the [International Coalition Performing Arts Aerosol Study Updated Guidelines 7/9/21](#), in spaces with good ventilation rates (minimum of 3 air exchanges per hour) and HEPA filtration, indoor rehearsal times up to 50 minutes (longer if higher air change rates).
- Use a microphone to amplify voice instead of projecting vocalizations. Consider disposable microphone covers if performers will be sharing a mic.
- During indoor performances (including rehearsals), position aerosol-generating performers closer to the locations where the air is exiting the room.
- Make disposable masks available upon request.
- For large performances before a live audience, follow the [County of San Luis Obispo COVID-19 Requirements and Best Practices: Hosting Large Events](#).
- Organizations should consult with the [State's COVID-19 Testing Task Force](#) for guidance and resources to establish a serial antigen testing program.