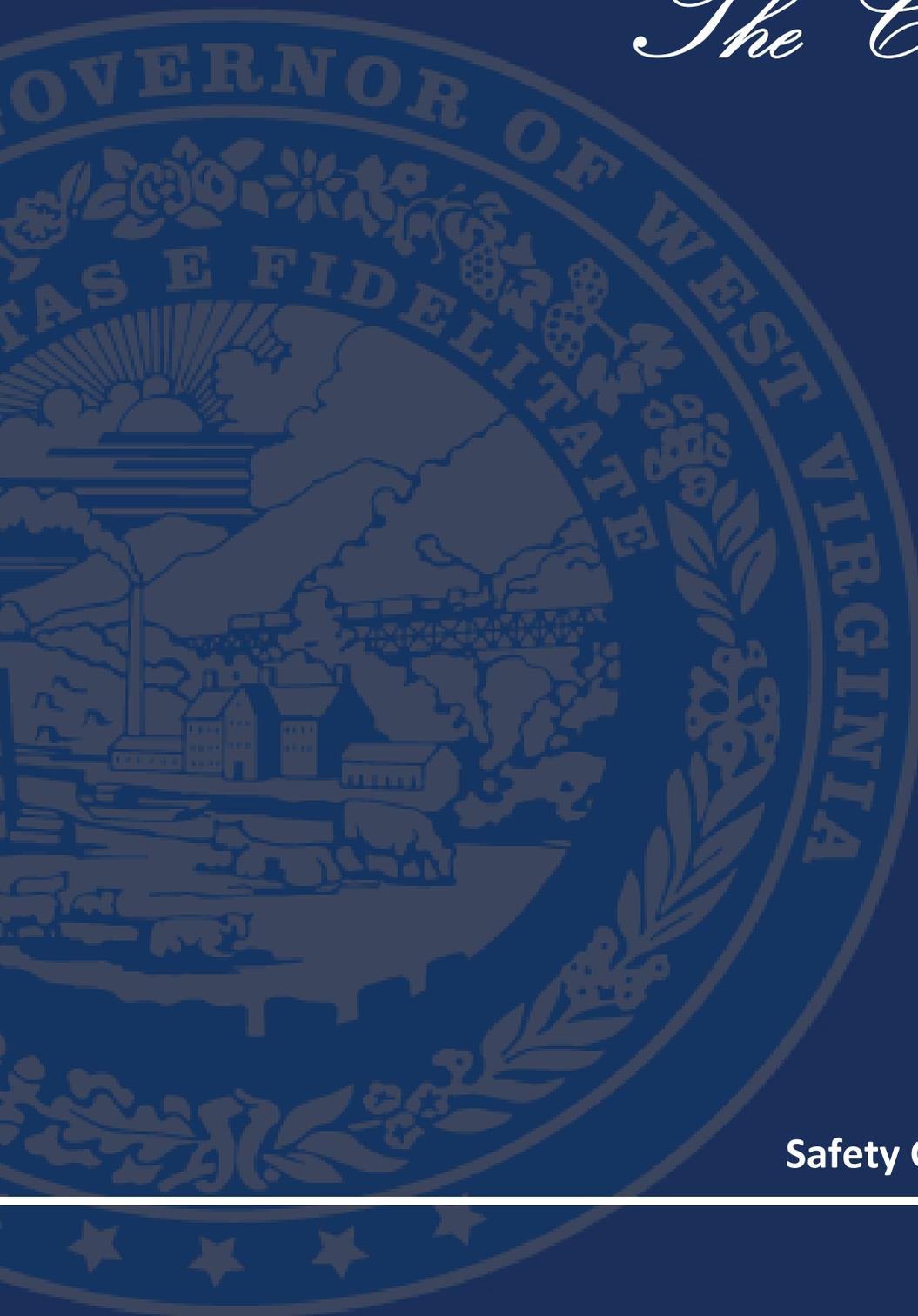


# WEST VIRGINIA STRONG

## *The Comeback*

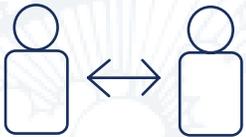


### Safety Guidance for Theaters

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## Safety Guidance for Theaters

Under Gov. Justice's reopening plan, **West Virginia Strong — The Comeback**, indoor movie theaters were to be allowed to resume operations. This guidance has been updated to include indoor and outdoor theaters, more generally. Gov. Justice has issued the following guidance to mitigate the exposure and spread of COVID-19 among staff, patrons, and performers. These guidelines, in addition to any and all relevant guidelines established by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources (DHHR), will help West Virginians safely obtain the services provided by such facilities. These facilities are allowed and encouraged to implement more stringent protocols as they see fit.



**Note:** Effective as of November 14, 2020, all individuals over the age of 9 are required to wear face coverings while in confined, indoor spaces where other individuals may be present, regardless of one's perceived ability to social distance from other individuals, pursuant to the Governor's Executive Order 77-20. This requirement does not apply to individuals in their own residence, individuals actively engaged in the consumption of food and/or beverage, and those individuals who are in an enclosed office or separate room.

Per CDC Guidance, exempt from this requirement are:

- children younger than 2 years old,
- anyone who has trouble breathing through a face covering, and
- persons who are unable to remove the face covering without assistance

As your business reviews and implements these new measures, we encourage you to share and discuss them with your employees and your patrons. Communicating enhanced cleaning and sanitization practices will make staff and patrons feel more confident in your facility.

**Note further:** Such facilities should also consult the Guidance for West Virginia Small Businesses, Guidance for Malls and Similar Facilities, and the Guide to Safely Opening Restaurants and Bars, as applicable, available at [governor.wv.gov](http://governor.wv.gov), to determine other best practices.

Failure to adhere to these guidelines may result in appropriate enforcement measures.

## SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR THEATERS

### OPERATIONAL RESTRICTIONS/REQUIREMENTS

- **Plan:** Develop and implement appropriate policies, in accordance with federal, state, and local regulations and guidance, and informed by industry best practices:
  - Prepare the building for reopening;
  - Prepare your employees for their return to work;
  - Create a social distancing plan to manage and reduce excessive contact and interaction;
  - Create a plan for personal protective equipment;
  - Reduce touch points to the maximum extent possible;
  - Increase cleaning frequency and the availability of hand sanitizer, disinfectant wipes, and other DIY cleaning products to ensure touch points and common elements are properly sanitized between each use;
  - Establish an open line of communication with employees regarding safety.
- **Occupancy:** Limit facility occupancy to a maximum capacity that will allow for proper social distancing to be achieved between patrons who do not reside together.
- **Social Distancing:** Implement strict social distancing guidelines of at least six feet between all individuals who do not reside together, modify scheduling to reduce unnecessary interactions to the greatest extent possible, adjust layout and close or restrict seating to maintain at least six feet of distance between customers (e.g., close every other row, use assigned seating, use an usher to seat groups as they enter the theater and ensure proper distancing is maintained).
- **Ticketing:** Customers should be encouraged to purchase tickets in advance, by methods other than cash if possible. Where customers do use ticket counters, such common surfaces and touchpoints must be cleaned frequently.
- **Customer Traffic:** Clear paths should be designated to allow customers to enter and exit theaters to access the restroom and to obtain food and/or beverage without breaking social-distancing requirements.
- **PPE:** As applicable, all employees and patrons should be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE), including appropriate face coverings.
- **Cleaning:** Ensure that staffing and supplies available for such facilities are sufficient to enable enhanced sanitization and cleaning measures in accordance with appropriate CDC guidelines.
- **Common Elements and Touch points:** All common touchpoints, point of sale equipment, doorknobs, light switches, and buttons should be cleaned and sanitized between each use or touch.
- **Limitations on Facilities:** The following should remain closed or limited to the maximum extent possible:
  - Install physical barriers (for example, plexiglass shields) and visual cues (for example, tape on the floors and walkways) and signs to ensure that staff and patrons stay at least six feet apart from those they don't reside with
  - Any food service should be run in accordance with current orders and guidelines for restaurants and/or bars, found at [governor.wv.gov](http://governor.wv.gov).
  - Restroom facilities should limit the number of users at any one time based on the facility size and current social distancing guidelines and such facilities should be regularly cleaned/sanitized per CDC recommended protocols.
  - Water fountains, common areas, break rooms, ticket counters, and other areas in which patrons or employees may congregate should be limited to the greatest extent possible, and where such are not closed off, must be cleaned/sanitized frequently.

## SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR THEATERS

- Theatrical performances are permitted to resume, but should follow the requirements for social distancing among performers as well as audience members. This may include limiting the types of performances that are able to be put on safely at this time.
- **Live Performances:** Theatrical performances may be held at theater venues, but any such event or performance must be structured to allow for appropriate social distancing and other safety measures to be in place. Seating should be limited or adjusted to ensure appropriate spacing between rows or seats/tables. Tape or other signage and markings should designate where attendees may stand while ensuring appropriate distance. Congregation at or near the stage should be prohibited, and physical barriers or other measures should be introduced to keep attendees from congregating at any stage. As applicable, face coverings should be required for attendees and singing by attendees other than performers should be discouraged to limit the possibility of transmission of the COVID-19 virus.
- **Payments:** Encourage customers to make non-cash payments.
- **Plan:** Plan for potential COVID-19 cases and work with local health department officials when needed (i.e., monitor and trace COVID-19 cases, deep-clean facilities).
- **Signage:** Post extensive signage on health policies, including the following documents in the workplace to help educate all on COVID-19 best practices:
  - [CDC: Stop the Spread of Germs](#)
  - [CDC: COVID-19 Symptoms](#)

## CUSTOMER PROTECTION

- **Customer screening: Screen patrons for illness prior to entry:**
  - Temperature checks
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **PPE:** As applicable, all patrons should be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment at all times, including appropriate facial coverings.
- **Ventilation:** Keep doors and windows open where possible to improve ventilation.
- **Signage:** Post signs encouraging social distancing of at least six feet between individuals.
- **Cleaning:** Consider providing disinfecting wipes and hand sanitizer at common touch point locations, including customer's seat location, and request that patrons assist by cleaning/sanitizing any touchpoints or common surfaces they come in contact with, in addition to the frequent and regular cleaning to be done by employees.

## SAFETY GUIDANCE FOR THEATERS

### EMPLOYEE PROTECTION

- **Employee screening:** Screen all employees reporting to work for COVID-19 symptoms.
  - Temperature checks.
  - Have you been in close contact with a confirmed case of COVID-19?
  - Are you experiencing a cough, shortness of breath, or sore throat?
  - Have you had a fever in the last 48 hours?
  - Have you had new loss of taste or smell?
  - Have you had vomiting or diarrhea in the last 24 hours?
- **PPE:** As applicable, all staff should be required to wear appropriate personal protective equipment, including face coverings.
- **Training:** Provide training on PPE based on CDC guidelines.
- **Personal cleaning:** Provide a sanitizing station with soap and/or bottle of hand sanitizer and require regular hand washing.
- **Customer contact:** Limit customer contact to the greatest extent possible and require proper cleaning and sanitization between any necessary customer contact.
- **Distancing:** Practice recommended social distancing to the greatest extent possible.