



Consistent with the State’s Framework for a Safer Economy, San Francisco is allowing certain businesses and other activities to reopen or expand starting March 24, 2021. The decisions to reopen balance the public health risks of COVID-19 transmission with the public health risks of economic and mental health stress.

Even though COVID-19 case rates have come down significantly, and more people are vaccinated, there remains a risk that people who you come into contact with when you are outside your Residence may have COVID-19. Most COVID-19 infections are caused by people who have no symptoms of illness. Due to limited supply of vaccine, only a minority of San Franciscans are fully vaccinated. We also have confirmed there are new, more contagious virus variants in the San Francisco Bay Area and that some of these variants are more likely to cause serious illness and death in unvaccinated people.

The opening or expansion of sectors does not necessarily signify that these activities are “safe.” The purpose of the required safety protocols contained in the order and directives is to make these activities and sectors safer for workers and the public. But reopening and expansion requires that all individuals and businesses use particular care and do their part to make these activities as safe as possible by strictly and consistently wearing Face Coverings and following Social Distancing Requirements and all other safety protocols.

People at risk for severe illness with COVID-19—such as unvaccinated older adults, and unvaccinated individuals with health risks—and members of their household are urged to defer participating at this time in activities with other people outside their household where taking protective measures of wearing face masks and social distancing may be difficult, especially indoors or in crowded spaces.

**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER No. 2020-35c**

**DIRECTIVE OF THE HEALTH OFFICER OF  
THE CITY AND COUNTY OF SAN FRANCISCO REGARDING REQUIRED BEST  
PRACTICES FOR INDOOR MOVIE THEATERS**

**(PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTIVE)**

DATE OF DIRECTIVE: March 23, 2021

**By this Directive, the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco (the “Health Officer”) issues industry-specific direction that indoor movie theaters, as described below, must follow as part of the local response to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) pandemic. This Directive constitutes industry-specific guidance as provided under Sections 4.e and 11 of Health Officer Order No. C19-07u issued on March 23, 2021 (the “Stay-Safer-At-Home Order”) and, unless otherwise defined below, initially capitalized terms used in this Directive have the same meaning given them in that order. This Directive goes into effect at 8:00 a.m. on Wednesday, March 24, 2021 and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer. This Directive has support in the bases and justifications set forth in the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. As further provided below, this Directive automatically incorporates any revisions to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order or other future orders issued by the Health Officer that supersede that order or reference this Directive. This Directive is intended to promote best practices as to Social Distancing Requirements and sanitation measures, helping prevent the transmission of COVID-19 and safeguard the health of workers, children, their families, and the community.**



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c**

**UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF CALIFORNIA HEALTH AND SAFETY CODE SECTIONS 101040, 101085, AND 120175, THE HEALTH OFFICER DIRECTS AS FOLLOWS:**

- 1. This Directive applies to all owners, operators and managers of indoor movie theaters operating under subsection 21 of Appendix C-1 of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order (“Indoor Movie Theaters”).**
- 2. Attached as Exhibit A to this Directive is guidance from the Department of Public Health for Indoor Movie Theaters (“Guidance”). All Indoor Movie Theaters must comply with all applicable requirements listed in the Guidance.**
- 3. Each Indoor Movie Theater must create, adopt, and implement a written health and safety plan (a “Health and Safety Plan”). The Health and Safety Plan must be substantially in the form attached to this Directive as Exhibit B.**
- 4. Each Indoor Movie Theater must (a) make the Health and Safety Plan available upon request to all Personnel working on site and to the patrons, customers or members it serves, (b) provide a summary of the plan to all Personnel working on site or otherwise in the City in relation to its operations, and (c) post the plan online and at the entrance to any other physical location that the Indoor Movie Theater operates within the City. Also, each Indoor Movie Theater must provide a copy of the Health and Safety Plan and evidence of its implementation to any authority enforcing this Directive or the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order upon demand.**
- 5. Each Indoor Movie Theater subject to this Directive must provide items such as Face Coverings (as provided in Health Order No. C19-12, and any future amendment to that order), hand sanitizer or handwashing stations, or both, and disinfectant and related supplies to any of that Indoor Movie Theater’s Personnel. If any Indoor Movie Theater is unable to provide these required items to Personnel or otherwise fails to comply with required Guidance, then it must cease operating until it can fully comply and demonstrate its strict compliance. Further, as to any non-compliant operation, any such Indoor Movie Theater is subject to immediate closure and the fines and other legal remedies described below, as a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order.**
- 6. For purposes of this Directive, “Personnel” includes all of the following people who provide goods or services associated with the Indoor Movie Theater in the City: employees; contractors and sub-contractors (such as those who sell goods or perform services onsite or who deliver goods for the business); vendors who are permitted to sell goods onsite; volunteers; and other individuals who regularly provide services onsite at the request of the Host. “Personnel” includes “gig workers” who perform work via the business’s app or other online interface, if any.**
- 7. This Directive may be revised by the Health Officer, through revision of this Directive or another future directive or order, as conditions relating to COVID-19 require, in the discretion of the Health Officer. All Indoor Movie Theaters must stay updated regarding any changes to the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order and this Directive by checking the Department of Public Health website ([www.sfdph.org/healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders); [www.sfdph.org/directives](http://www.sfdph.org/directives)) regularly.**



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c**

- 8. Implementation of this Directive augments—but does not limit—the obligations of each Indoor Movie Theater under the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order including, but not limited to, the obligation to prepare, post, and implement a Social Distancing Protocol under Section 4.d and Appendix A of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Each Indoor Movie Theater must follow this industry-specific guidance and update all guidance or other requirements as necessary for the duration of this Directive, including, without limitation, as this Directive is amended or extended in writing by the Health Officer and consistent with any extension of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, any other order that supersedes that order, and any Health Officer order that references this Directive**

**This Directive is issued in furtherance of the purposes of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order. Where a conflict exists between this Directive and any state, local, or federal public health order related to the COVID-19 pandemic, including, without limitation, the Social Distancing Protocol, the most restrictive provision controls. Failure to carry out this Directive is a violation of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, constitutes an imminent threat and menace to public health, constitutes a public nuisance, and is a misdemeanor punishable by fine, imprisonment, or both.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Philip".

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Susan Philip, MD, MPH,  
Acting Health Officer of the  
City and County of San Francisco

Date: March 23, 2021





Interim Guidance: Indoor Movie Theaters

Updated March 23, 2021

AUDIENCE: Operators, Personnel, and patrons of Indoor Movie Theaters.

NOTICE: The following guidance was developed by the San Francisco Department of Public Health for use by Indoor Movie Theater operators and their Personnel and will be posted at http://www.sfdcp.org/businesses. Guidance in this document may be revised due to changes in the COVID-19 risk level tier for San Francisco as assigned by the California Department of Public Health. Please see the associated changes in the Business Capacities and Activities Table (BCAT) at the top of this document: any changes made on the Table override the conflicting information in this document.

Initially capitalized terms are defined in Health Officer Directive 2020-35 posted at http://www.sfdph.org/directives and Health Officer Orders C19-07j (the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order) and C19-12c (the Face Covering Order) posted at https://www.sfdph.org/dph/alerts/coronavirus-healthorders.asp as they may be amended or updated.

BACKGROUND: Indoor Movie Theaters are allowed to open indoors on a limited basis and with modified operations. Refer to the Business Capacities and Activities Table or BCAT for the current restrictions and modifications for Indoor Movie Theaters. Indoor Movie Theaters are required to adhere to these guidelines and must monitor Health Officer Orders and Directives for updates, changes, or amendments.

Summary of revisions since 1/27/2021
• Increased capacity to align with the current tier
• Concessions may open if indoor theater meets ventilation requirements and with additional restrictions
• Theaters with dining areas are also allowed to operate with ventilation requirements and additional restrictions

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KEY POINTS

How Does COVID-19 Spread?

Our current understanding is that COVID-19 is mostly spread from person-to-person in the air through virus-containing droplets in the breath of someone with COVID-19. These droplets enter the air when a person breathes. Even more droplets can get in the air when infected people talk, sing, cough, or sneeze. People with COVID-19 may have no symptoms and can still be breathing out virus-containing droplets that can infect others. Transmission can occur through:

- Larger droplets. These larger droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are pulled down by gravity. People nearby, usually within 6 feet, are infected when they breathe in these droplets or if the droplets land in their eyes, nose, or mouth.
• Smaller droplets or infectious particles. These can float in the air for a period of time and/or travel beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents, especially in enclosed spaces with poor ventilation. People sharing the same space are infected when they breathe in these smaller droplets and particles or the droplets or particles land on their eyes, nose, or mouth – even if they are further than 6 feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”.

COVID-19 can also spread if a person touches their eyes, nose, or mouth after touching a contaminated surface (also known as a fomite), however this is less common.

COVID-19 Prevention

- Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% ethanol or 70 % isopropanol.



- [Avoid Close Contact](#). To the greatest extent, maintain at least 6 feet of social distancing between yourself and the people who don't live in your Household.
- [Wear a Face Covering](#). Cover your mouth and nose with a Face Covering in public settings and when around people who don't live in your Household.
- Routinely clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces.
- [Monitor Your Health Daily](#). Be alert of symptoms such as fever, cough, shortness of breath, or other symptoms. If you are experiencing any of these symptoms, stay home, and **get tested**.

### Flu Vaccines

**Flu vaccines are critical in the fight against COVID-19** by (1) keeping Personnel and communities healthy and (2) reducing strain on our healthcare and testing systems that are responding to COVID-19. **Strongly encourage all Personnel to get a flu shot.** Post [signage](#) to encourage flu vaccine among customers, visitors, etc.

### What do we know about the COVID-19 Vaccine?

The vaccine is one of the most important ways to end the pandemic. The FDA, CDC, and California's own Scientific Safety Review Workgroup have reviewed data from clinical trials to ensure the safety and effectiveness of COVID-19 vaccines. **We strongly encourage all persons to get vaccinated.** The first vaccines approved in the US are about 95% effective in preventing sickness from COVID-19, however we do not know how well they prevent infections that do not cause symptoms. This means that we do not know how common it is for a person who got the vaccine to carry the virus and transmit to others, including [those who have increased risk for severe illness or death](#). Therefore, it is still very important for those who are vaccinated, and for the rest of the population who waits for their vaccines, to continue using all the tools available to help stop this pandemic: wear a mask that covers your mouth and nose when outside your home, avoid get-togethers/gatherings, avoid being indoors with people you don't live with, stay at least 6 feet away from others, and wash your hands after touching shared objects or after touching your face. Find out more about the vaccine, including where and when to get it at: [sf.gov/covidvax](http://sf.gov/covidvax)

**If you have received the COVID-19 vaccine please read more about whether you need to quarantine at [www.sfcddcp.org/quarantineaftervaccination](http://www.sfcddcp.org/quarantineaftervaccination).**

**And if you have received the COVID-19 vaccine, please read more about safer social interactions at: [www.sfcddcp.org/lifeaftervaccine](http://www.sfcddcp.org/lifeaftervaccine).**

### CA Notify – another way for us to stop the spread

**CA Notify** ([canotify.ca.gov](http://canotify.ca.gov)) is an app you can add on your smartphone. It uses Bluetooth technology to recognize when you and your phone have been in close proximity to others infected with COVID-19 to help stop the spread of the virus in our community.

If you are using CA Notify and you test positive, your diagnosis will not be shared with others. However, if other people in close contact with you are also enrolled in the app, they will be told they had an exposure. They will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location, or identity.

If you are using CA Notify and you were exposed to someone who tested positive and they entered their result into the app, you will be told the date of the exposure, but not the time, location or identity.

CA Notify is available through Apple and Google. See [canotify.ca.gov](http://canotify.ca.gov) for more information.



### **The Role of Ventilation**

Good ventilation controls droplets and infectious particles to prevent COVID-19 transmission by:

- removing air containing droplets and particles from the room
- diluting the concentration of droplets and particles by adding fresh, uncontaminated air,
- filtering room air, removing droplets and particles from the air
- For more information and additional resources, please see the following: San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH): <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation> or email [dph.doc.ventilation@sfdph.org](mailto:dph.doc.ventilation@sfdph.org)

### **Make Necessary Ventilation Improvements, If Feasible, Including:**

- Open windows to increase natural ventilation with outdoor air when health and safety allow. When possible, consider also leaving room doors slightly open to promote flow of outdoor air through the indoor space.
  - Do not prop or wedge open fire doors. Continue to follow fire and building safety requirements.
  - If open windows pose a risk of falls for children, use window locks to keep windows from opening more than 4 inches, or other safety devices to prevent falls.
- If your program has an HVAC system (sometimes called mechanical ventilation, forced air, or central air), follow the recommendations in [SFPDH Ventilation Guidance](#). Prioritize maximizing the intake of outdoor air and minimizing recirculated air during the COVID-19 pandemic. Recommendations include:
  - Make sure the HVAC system is checked by a professional and is working properly.
  - Open outdoor air dampers and close recirculation dampers (“economizers”). This will maximize the amount of outdoor air that the HVAC system takes in and minimize the amount of indoor air that is recirculated.
  - If you can use higher-efficiency air filters without reducing airflow or damaging your HVAC system, use air filters rated MERV13 or better.
  - Disable “demand-control ventilation controls” so fans keep running even when a room doesn’t need to be heated or cooled.
  - Keep the HVAC system running even when the building is not being used, if you can. If your HVAC system has a timer, set it to run, at a minimum, from 1-2 hours before the building opens until 2-3 hours after everyone has left the building, including custodial staff.
  - Consider using portable air cleaners (“HEPA filters”).
  - If the establishment uses pedestal fans or hard mounted fans, adjust the direction of fans to minimize air blowing from one individual’s space to another’s space.

For more information and additional resources, please see the following: San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFPDH): <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation> or email at [dph.doc.ventilation@sfdph.org](mailto:dph.doc.ventilation@sfdph.org).



## PLANNING

- Fill out the Health and Safety Plan (see Exhibit B, below) outlining what the facility will do to implement the requirements in this guidance and any relevant Health Officer Directives or Orders. Share this plan with Personnel, patrons, and other members of the facility.
- Create a plan to manage patron movement throughout the facility to facilitate patron screening and ensure compliance with physical distancing requirements at all times.
- Post the Health and Safety Plan online and in a highly visible on-site location for Personnel and patrons.
- Prepare and post the Social Distancing Protocol (see Appendix A of the Stay-Safer-At-Home Order, posted at <http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders>).
- All places of business including Indoor Movie Theaters must be prepared to assist public health authorities in potential contact tracing efforts. Retain the schedules of all Personnel at the Indoor Movie Theater. Consider retaining the credit card information of your patrons for contact tracing purposes. Any lists maintained for contact tracing purposes should be discarded after three weeks. If Personnel or patrons test positive for COVID-19, the place of business must assist the Department of Public Health to identify other Participants who may have been exposed to help prevent further spread of COVID-19.

## Food Concessions

**Food and beverage concessions may be served under the following restrictions and requirements. Refer to the [Business Capacities and Activities Table](#) for capacities and key restrictions for food concessions.**

- Conspicuously post signage to remind patrons that food or drink may only be consumed while seated. Include similar information in announcements, both audio and visual, for the preview reel providing COVID-19 safety guidance for theater patrons.
- The size of groups allowed to sit together while eating or drinking may be limited. Refer to the BCAT.
- Ensure that seated patrons maintain at least six feet distance from other patrons seated in different groups.
- If food or beverage concessions are provided, business must conspicuously post a [Ventilation Checklist](#) at the entrance to the movie theater and of each movie theater screen and implement at least one of the following ventilation measures where food concessions will be consumed:
  - 1) all available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open;
  - 2) fully operational HVAC system; or





3) appropriately sized Portable Air Cleaners

- If the Theater cannot implement any of these three measures due to smoke or other conditions, concessions and indoor dining must temporarily close until at least one ventilation measure is implemented.
- If the movie theater has a restaurant or café, that space can operate subject to Health Officer Directive No. 2020-16 (Dining) as long as there is 12 feet of distance between the dining space and patrons or others who are not dining. (For example, a restaurant may operate adjacent to a hallway or lobby only if people using the hallway or lobby can maintain 12 feet of distance from seated diners). If the restaurant or café is in its own separate room that is closed off by walls from non-diners, the 12-foot buffer does not apply. The dining space must meet one of the ventilation requirements to operate.

**In Person Ordering**

- Create a clearly designated area for purchase of concessions with separate entrances and exits that facilitate physically distanced ingress and egress.
- Ensure that enough space is available in the concessions area so that people from different Households can maintain six feet of physical distance at all times.
- Uses signage, tape, physical barriers such as rope stanchions, or other indicators to clearly mark areas where Patrons may queue so that physical distancing requirements are met at all times
- Employ a strict metering system to ensure that all Personnel and Patrons in the designated concessions area maintain physical distance and wear Face Coverings at all times.
- Ensure that Patrons do not eat or drink in the concessions area, do not gather or queue outside the concessions area, and immediately return to their seats after picking up their items (no chairs, benches, tables or other furniture used for sitting or eating and drinking are permitted in or near the concessions area).
- All patrons must be seated in their assigned theater seat to eat or drink. Standing between seats or gathering in other areas of the theater are not permitted.

**Service of Food at Seats**

- Food may be served by servers directly to seats subject to all applicable requirements of Health Officer Directive No. 2020-16 (Dining).
- All patrons must be seated in their assigned theater seat to eat or drink. Standing between seats or gathering in other areas of the theater are not permitted.
- Encourage Patrons to use touchless payment options.

**Mandatory Signage Requirements**

- Effective November 17, 2020, all businesses operating indoors **must**:
- **Review** the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) Ventilation Guidance at <https://www.sfdcp.org/COVID-ventilation> and keep an annotated copy available. Ventilation guidance from recognized authorities such as the Centers for Disease Control, ASHRAE, or the State of California may be used instead.



- **Post signage** at public entrances and break rooms indicating which of the following systems are used:
  - All available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open
  - Fully operational HVAC systems
  - Appropriately sized portable air cleaners in each room
  - None of the above

Doors and Windows required to be kept closed for fire/life safety purposes are exempt. For example, fire doors must remain closed. Make sure open windows do not create falling hazards especially for children.

- **Conspicuously post stand-alone signage at the primary public entrances** to the facility that COVID-19 is transmitted through the air, that risk is much higher indoors, and seniors and those with health risks should consider avoiding indoor settings with crowds. This information should also be posted on the Indoor Movie Theater's website and ticket reservation webpages. You can find signage at : <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>.
- Display a set of clearly visible rules for patrons and Personnel at the entrance that are to be a condition of entry. The rules must include instructions to wear facial coverings, wash hands or use hand sanitizer, maintain at least 6 feet of distance, avoid unnecessary touching of surfaces, guidance for entering and exiting the theater, the prohibition of eating and drinking, etc. Whenever possible, these rules must also be available online and visible on ticketing websites.

## SETTING UP THE SPACE

- Ticket lines and ticket vending machines must be configured to ensure that physical distancing of at least 6 feet is maintained at all times. Consider moving ticket machines or using tape, stickers, signage, or barriers to ensure physical distancing requirements are met as patrons and Personnel move about the facility.
- Prepare to minimize contact between patrons and Personnel. Use prepaid ticketing or contactless payment systems wherever possible. Use a glass or plexiglass window to separate Personnel from patrons at the ticket window. Plexiglass or other barriers are not substitutes for 6 feet of distancing and any Personnel working behind Plexiglass must maintain a minimum physical distance of 6 feet from others.
- Make hand sanitizer available in high-traffic locations like entrances, exits and near elevators and restrooms. Touch-free hand sanitizer dispensers should be installed where possible.
- Prepare to manage the flow of patrons into the theater to facilitate health screening and monitor capacity levels, Face Covering compliance, and proper physical distancing. Establish pathways using tape, signs, or physical barriers to encourage physical distancing and one-way foot traffic, especially in narrow aisles and hallways. Use visual clues such as signs or floor markings at locations where lines will form, like the restrooms and the theater entrances.
- Utilize alternate exits when possible to keep patrons from needing to return to the lobby.



- Close all common areas where people may gather and that are not necessary for access to the theater. Remove or block off furniture or attractions in lobbies, lounges, entertainment spaces, or arcades that are not going to be used at this time. Refer to BCAT.
- Remove, or block off water fountains.
- In bathrooms, maximize ventilation and minimize crowding and touching of common surfaces by, for example, keeping doors propped open, closing every other sink, stall, urinal, and posting signage establishing a maximum capacity for bathrooms with clearly marked and distanced queueing areas.
- Takes steps to prevent gathering in enclosed spaces, such as hallways and stairwells.
- Block off alternate rows of seating within the theater in accordance with the theater's reservation plan and physical distancing requirements.
- Use of Personnel break rooms should be limited. Reconfigure these spaces to encourage social distancing. As Face Coverings cannot be worn during eating/drinking, limit the number of Personnel in a breakroom at any one time to ensure distancing can be maintained. Clean countertops and tables between uses.
- Modify or restrict the use or restrict the number of workstations and worker seating areas so that individuals are at least 6 feet apart in all directions (e.g. side-to-side and when facing one another) and are not sharing workstations without cleaning and disinfection between use. When distancing is not feasible between workstations, provide and require the use of Face Coverings or physical barriers like plastic shielding walls in areas where they would not affect air flow.
- Check for pest infestation or harborage, and make sure all pest control measures are functioning.
- If your business was closed for a long period of time, flush out the stagnant water from the plumbing lines by running water through fixtures. Detailed guidance may be found at: <https://www.sfwater.org/flushingguidance>

## MANAGING RISK DURING THEATER GATHERINGS

- Show only films or recorded or live performances on a screen. No live, in-person performances open to the public are allowed at this time.
- Tickets sales must be available for purchase online or via phone whenever possible to reduce the need to stand in line for tickets.
- Paper tickets should be avoided. If paper tickets are used, the staff person collecting them should wear appropriate personal protective equipment (Face Covering) and disposable gloves. Hand hygiene should be performed after doffing gloves.
- All patrons must have their seats assigned before entering the theater auditorium. The seats in every theater auditorium should be numbered. Theater Personnel must use a reservation or seating chart (electronic or paper) to assign seating. Seating must be arranged to assure patrons maintain at least 6 feet of distance in all directions from patrons who are not part of their Household. This spacing may require separating each person or Household in a theater by



multiple empty seats on both sides and empty seats in front and behind. Personnel should assist patrons finding their seats and help them maintain social distancing when entering and exiting the theater.

- Instruct patrons to remain in their assigned seats for the duration of the movie except to use the restroom. Ensure that patrons do not use seats other than those assigned to them.
- Refer to the Business Capacities and Activities Table (BCAT) for capacity limits.
- Patrons should refer to the BCAT before gathering with people from outside their household.
- Limit the duration of showings whenever reasonable. Prohibit patrons from purchasing tickets for multiple shows on the same day.
- To minimize the time spent inside and avoid unnecessary queuing, require patrons to arrive no more than 30 minutes before show times and make provisions for individuals with mobility issues.
- Designate Personnel to oversee the physical distancing and line-up of patrons prior to entering the theatre, inside the lobbies and by washrooms. If patrons must exit through the lobby, minimize the number of people in the lobby by staggering start times, and direct them away from patrons arriving for other screenings.
- Avoid overcrowding and mixing of patrons in lobbies, hallways, common areas and restrooms. Unless required for queuing before a movie or to purchase concessions, prohibit patrons from gathering before and after show times. If multiple theaters within one complex are used, screening times must be staggered or limited so that no two groups of patrons will be using common areas to enter or exit the theater at the same time. Indoor Movie Theaters must develop a plan for staggering show times and controlling patron paths of travel to eliminate crowding in common areas.
- Designate Personnel to monitor theater facilities to ensure compliance with all safety measures including making sure that theater patrons are maintaining physical distancing from others, wearing facial coverings, remaining in their assigned seats throughout the screening, and only consuming food or beverage concessions in their assigned seats. Remind patrons to minimize talking in the theater and not talk loudly.
- Limit the number of patrons using the elevator to four, or if feasible, to only members of the same Household.
- Remind patrons to exit the theater auditorium one row at a time and maintain physical distancing on the way out. Wherever possible, direct patrons to leave via alternate exits after their show or avoid going back into the lobby altogether.
- Consider designating specific show times for vulnerable populations such as older unvaccinated adults and unvaccinated people with health risks.

## PROTECT PERSONNEL

### Coordinate your Efforts

**Designate a COVID-19 Worksite Safety Monitor**, who can act as the staff liaison, and single point of contact for Personnel at each site for questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential



exposure. This person will also serve as a liaison to SFDPH. When the designated Site Safety Monitor is not on duty (off work, sick or on vacations), assign another staff member to ensure compliance. The liaison should train staff to advise patrons, if necessary, that the Indoor Movie Theater will refuse service to the customer if they fail to comply with safety requirements.

### **Screen Personnel and Encourage Testing**

**Conduct wellness checks for everyone (employees, vendors, and delivery staff) before they enter the facility.** Screening instructions for Personnel are found at [www.sfdcp.org/screening-handout](http://www.sfdcp.org/screening-handout).

**Establishments must exclude from entering the facility those who answer yes** to any of the questions on the above form.

- Encourage COVID-19 testing. Many people with COVID-19 do not know they are sick because they have no symptoms, yet they can still infect others. Testing for COVID-19 is available in San Francisco. Healthcare providers in San Francisco are REQUIRED to test anyone with COVID-19 symptoms (see [sfdcp.org/covid19symptoms](http://sfdcp.org/covid19symptoms)). If you want to get tested when you have no symptoms, health insurers in California are REQUIRED to pay for testing for essential Personnel including Indoor Movie Theater Personnel. If you choose to get tested when you have no symptoms, do not get tested more frequently than once every two weeks. If you are uninsured, you can get tested at CityTestSF (<https://sf.gov/citytestsf>).
- If you are feeling ill with cold or flu-like symptoms, you MUST get tested for COVID-19 and have a negative result before being allowed to go back to work (see <https://sfdcp.org/screen> and <https://sfdcp.org/rtw>). If you are feeling ill, get tested and DO NOT enter a business or organization unless it is for core essential needs (such as food, housing, health care, etc.) that you cannot obtain by any other means.
- Take all possible steps to prevent getting sick. Wear a Face Covering, practice good hand hygiene, stay physically distant from others (at least 6 feet).

### **Train Personnel**

Ensure that all Personnel are trained on the following protocols:

- Health and Safety Plan, Social Distancing, and Screening Protocols. Share information on [COVID-19, how to prevent it from spreading](#), and which [underlying health conditions](#) may make individuals more susceptible to contracting the virus.
- How to monitor social distancing and offer gentle reminders to patrons to maintain social distance, and wear Face Coverings. Guests should maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet if they are not in the same Household while waiting in line, waiting to be seated, or waiting in line for the restrooms.
- Appropriate personal protective equipment, including the proper way to wear Face Coverings and use protective gloves.
- Cleaning and disinfection techniques, and the importance of disinfecting frequently touched surfaces. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Employer or government-sponsored sick leave and other benefits the Personnel may be entitled to receive that would make it financially easier to stay at home (see Paid sick leave in San Francisco). Remember that Personnel cannot be fired due to COVID-19 results or needed time off for recovery.



## HEALTH SCREENINGS OF PATRONS

- Indoor Movie Theaters must verbally screen all patrons upon entry with the questions about COVID-19 symptoms and exposure to COVID-19. Theaters must ask the questions and relay the information found at: <https://www.sfc-dcp.org/screeningvisitors>. Indoor Movie Theaters must exclude from entering the facility those who answer yes to any of the questions on the above form.
- A copy of the applicable Screening Handout must be provided to anyone on request. Indoor Movie Theaters may use a poster or other large-format version of the Screening Handouts may be used to review the questions with people verbally.

## DISINFECTION

- Auditoriums and each previously occupied seat must be disinfected between movie screenings and before the next group of patrons are permitted to enter an auditorium. Seat maps of patrons can be used after a screening to help target this activity. This enhanced cleaning will necessitate increased intervals between screenings. Consider using disposable or washable seat covers between each user, particularly on porous surfaces (for example, fabric cover cushioned chairs) that are difficult to properly clean.
- Perform thorough cleaning in high traffic areas such as waiting areas and lobbies, Personnel break rooms, etc., and areas of ingress and egress, including stairways and elevator banks. At a minimum daily or at industry standards whichever is more frequent, regularly clean and disinfect highly touched surfaces, including counters, credit card machines, touchscreens, buttons, doorknobs, armrests, toilets, hand washing facilities, etc.
- Highly touched areas (including high touch surfaces in bathrooms) should be disinfected at a minimum daily or industry standards, whichever is more frequent, on a predetermined schedule and monitored by management to ensure compliance. Bathrooms should be cleaned at regular industry standards. Conspicuously post a checklist inside each bathroom clearly detailing the dates and times the room was last cleaned, disinfected, or restocked.

How to properly disinfect surfaces:

- Read and follow product label instructions for required protective equipment.
- Gloves are frequently required to protect the users, long sleeves and eye protection are not uncommon.
- Clean first, then disinfect. Disinfectants do not work well on soiled surfaces.
- Use the right product. Choose EPA-registered disinfectants that are approved COVID-19. Find a complete list of approved products at <https://cfpub.epa.gov/giwiz/disinfectants/index.cfm>; you may also check the SF Environment website for reduced risk products.
- If concentrates must be used, follow dilution directions carefully and wear eye protection and gloves. Follow label directions for products which require dilution. Measure, rather than "eye estimate" both the concentrate and the water; some suppliers have "Metered



Dispensing Systems," which automate the measuring process. Don't forget to clearly label all containers with diluted products."

- Using too much product does not improve its performance and can create hazards for both the user and others who come into contact with treated surfaces. In the case of chlorine bleach please note that for COVID-19 the CDC specifies a different concentration of bleach (Five Tablespoons per gallon of water or four teaspoons per quart of water) than is used for other applications.
- Don't wipe it off immediately. EPA approved disinfectants require a minimum contact time to be effective against the human coronavirus, and the disinfectant must be left on the surface for this amount of time before being wiped off.
- Manufacturer's instructions for cleaning should be followed for sensitive electronic equipment (e.g. ticket machines, projectors).
- If Personnel are required to wear equipment such as radios, headsets, or earpieces, these must be designated for a specific individual and not shared. If sharing this equipment is unavoidable, protocols must be developed by the theater operator to ensure they are cleaned between each use according to manufacturer's suggested cleaning instructions.
- If items are handed out to patrons, such as 3D glasses, these should either be single use or protocols established to ensure disinfection between uses.
- Assisted audio devices should be thoroughly disinfected between uses according to manufacturer's suggested cleaning instructions.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Q. Can Personnel eat or drink in the theater during their breaks?**

A. Personnel should take their snack or meal breaks outside if they can do so safely but may not take breaks in common areas of the theater or other workspaces such as a projection room. Personnel can eat and drink in a break room if safe physical distancing can be maintained but are strongly encouraged to avoid gathering in break rooms even if distancing can be maintained. Personnel should clean and disinfect the area where they have taken their break.

### **Q. Can patrons enter the theater after the feature film has started?**

A. Yes, patrons can enter the theater late, but only if theater's Personnel ensure the latecomers sit in their assigned seats and remain physically distant from other patrons in the theater.

### **Q. If there are many empty seats in the theater, can a patron switch to a different seat that is physically distant from others?**

A. No, patrons cannot sit in any seat other than the one they were assigned. Since seating charts should be used when cleaning and disinfecting the theater it is important for the operator to have a record of where everyone was seated. Additionally, should it become necessary to do case investigation if there is a known case of a COVID-positive patron in your Indoor Movie Theater, the Department of Public Health may need to consult an accurate seating chart.



**Q. How often should we clean areas?**

A. Disinfect high touch surfaces such as door handles, payment machines, counter tops, toilet seats, and faucets, at a minimum daily or industry standards, whichever is more frequent. Bathrooms should be cleaned at a minimum daily or at regular industry standards whichever is more frequent. Post a cleaning log conspicuously in each bathroom.

**Q. What is an example of how the capacity limits work?**

A. Please refer to BCAT Table for details. If your Indoor Movie Theater complex has a total capacity of 2,400 people and includes 6 individual theaters, two with a capacity to seat 100 people each, two with a capacity to seat 400 people each, and two with a capacity to seat 600 people each, then, assuming at least 6-foot physical distancing requirements are met at all times between patrons from different households and Personnel, you may have at any time (1) no more than 1200 patrons in your entire facility (50% of 2,400), (2) no more than 50 patrons seated in each of the 100-person theaters (50% of 100), (3) no more than 200 patrons seated in each of the 400-person theaters (50% of 400), and (4) no more than 200 patrons seated in each of the 600-person theaters (because 50% of 600 is 300 and exceeds the 200 patron cap, only 200 patrons may be seated in those theaters).

**Q. Is it really riskier to be indoors?**

A. Generally, yes. The same activity is usually much riskier indoors than outdoors because of the risk of aerosol transmission indoors.

**Q. How much riskier?**

A. Precise numbers are difficult to calculate but the science is clear: the COVID-19 virus can build up indoors and many individuals can get sick indoors even if they were more than 6 feet away from the infected person.

Each of these factors adds to your risk: participating in multiple indoor activities, being indoors with many other people from other households, taking your face covering off for any amount of time, being closer than 6 feet to other people, being around others who are singing or shouting. Activities that combine these risk factors multiply your risk even more.

**Q. How can we reduce risk at indoor activities?**

- Decide not to socialize indoors. Consider potential outdoor and in-home alternatives
- Find options for outdoors, curbside, delivery or take out
- Plan and consider safety precautions for indoor activities well in advance
- Limit your group to members of your own household
- Limit the time spent indoors. Minimize time in places where masks are not worn consistently
- Find times when the location will not be busy or crowded
- Choose locations which have larger interior spaces and high ceilings
- Look for good ventilation, including good air flow due to open doors or open windows
- Do not enter if there are people not wearing masks and maintaining at least 6 feet social distance
- Singing, shouting, sneezing, or coughing carries much higher risk: go back outdoors if you see or hear these activities indoors
- Guard your minimum 6 feet of social distance
- Keep your mask on at all times.



## Resources

Stay informed. Information is changing rapidly. Useful resources can be found at:

- San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH)
  - <https://www.sfdcp.org/covid19>
- Printable resources such as signage:
  - <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>
- California Blueprint for a Safer Economy issued by the State of California
  - <https://covid19.ca.gov/safer-economy/#reopening-data>
- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Covid-19 Industry Guidance: Family Entertainment Centers
  - <https://files.covid19.ca.gov/pdf/guidance-family-entertainment--en.pdf>
- National Association of Theater Owners: Cinema Safe Voluntary Health & Safety Guidelines for United States Movie Theater Owners
  - <https://www.cinemasafe.org/#guidelines>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
  - List of Guidance documents (searchable)  
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/guidance-list.html>
- Promoting Face Covering-wearing during the COVID-19 pandemic: A POLICYMAKER'S GUIDE
  - <https://preventepidemics.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Promoting-Face-covering-Wearing-During-COVID-19.pdf>
- After testing
  - [Informational Booklet: After your COVID-19 test: What to do while you wait for your test results to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and save lives](#)



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c (Exhibit B)**  
**Health and Safety Plan (issued 3/23/21)**

Each Indoor Movie Theater must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

Check off all items below that apply and list other required information.

*Business/Entity name:*

*Contact name:*

*Facility Address:*

*Email / telephone:*

*(You may contact the person listed above with any questions or comments about this plan.)*

**Planning and Preparation for Opening Indoor Movie Theaters**

- Familiarize with and complete all requirements set forth in Health Officer Directive 2020-35c and attached guidance for Indoor Movie Theaters, available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>.
- Create and implement a plan to manage the flow of patrons into and throughout the theater to facilitate health screening and monitor capacity levels, face covering compliance, and proper physical distancing. Include plan to stagger or space movie start times to avoid multiple groups of people entering or leaving at the same time.
- Create a reservation system to assign seats to patrons in way that separates each household by at least 6 feet in all directions.
- Prepare and post onsite and online the Social Distancing Protocol (see Appendix A of the Shelter in Place Health Order, posted at [www.sfdph.org/healthorders](http://www.sfdph.org/healthorders))
- Designate a COVID-19 staff liaison (Worksite Safety Monitor) to be the single on duty point of contact at each site for questions or concerns around practices, protocols, or potential exposure. This person will also serve as a liaison to SFPD. More than one staff member may be designated to cover various shifts or blocks of time.
- Train staff on health and safety practices that must be followed including all requirements of Health Officer Directive 2020-35c and the attached Interim Guidance for Indoor Movie Theaters.
- Understand the adjusted capacity of your movie theater (as further described in the guidance, each theater is limited to 50% of its capacity up to a maximum of 200 patrons, exclusive of Personnel) and be prepare to operate while strictly adhering to capacity limits.

**Preparing the Indoor Movie Theater Space**

- Post all mandatory signage found in the attached Interim Guidance for Indoor Movie Theaters and also available at <http://www.sfdph.org/directives>.
- Provide hand sanitizer at high-traffic locations like entrances, exits and near elevators.
- Establish pathways using tape, signs, or physical barriers to encourage physical distancing and one-way foot traffic, especially in narrow aisles and hallways. Use visual clues such as signs or floor markings at locations where lines will form, like the restrooms and the theater entrances.

### Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 3/23/21)

Each Indoor Movie Theater must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

- Configure ticket lines and ticket vending machines to ensure that physical distancing of 6 feet is maintained at all times.
- Block off alternate rows of seating within the theater in accordance with the theater's reservation plan and physical distancing requirements.
- Close all common areas where people may gather.
- Remove or block off furniture or attractions in lobbies, lounges, entertainment spaces, or arcades that are not going to be used at this time.
- Close all concession stands and remove, empty or block off all food beverage vending machines. Close all restaurants, bars or other food/beverage service areas.
- In bathrooms, close every other sink, stall and urinal. Post signage establishing the bathroom's maximum capacity.
- Review <https://www.sfcddcp.org/COVID-ventilation> and implement all appropriate ventilation best practices in the facility.
- If providing food or beverage concessions, follow all requirements in the attached DPH guidance for Indoor Theaters, including ensuring patrons eat or drink only in their assigned theater seats. In theaters where concessions may be consumed, implement at least one of the following three ventilation measures: (1) all available windows and doors accessible to fresh outdoor air are kept open; (2) fully operational HVAC system; or (3) appropriately sized Portable Air Cleaners.

### Operational Requirements

- Strictly implement all requirements of Health Officer Directive 2020-35c and attached Interim Guidance while operating the theater. This includes enforcing all capacity limits, physical distancing and face covering requirements, and sanitation requirements.
- Do not present in-person performances in the theater.
- Sell tickets online or via phone; minimize use of paper tickets.
- Require patrons to remain in their assigned seats for the duration of the movie and ensure that patrons do not use seats other than those assigned to them.
- Require patrons to arrive no more than 30 minutes before show to minimize their time in the theater.
- Minimize the number of people in the lobby by staggering movie start times, and direct them away from patrons arriving for other screenings.
- Designate Personnel to oversee the physical distancing and line-up of patrons prior to entering the theatre, inside the lobbies and by washrooms. Designate Personnel to

## Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 3/23/21)

Each Indoor Movie Theater must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

oversee seat assignments and to assist patrons in safely locating their seat and exiting auditoriums.

- Remind patrons to exit the theater auditorium one row at a time and maintain physical distancing on the way out. If possible, use alternate exits so that patrons do not have to exit through the lobby.
- Limit the number of patrons using the elevator to 4, or members of the same family.

### **Personnel and Patron Screening & Advisories**

- Train Personnel in the requirements of the Health Officer Directive 2020-35c, the attached DPH Guidance and this Health and Safety Plan (HSP), including their obligation to monitor patron compliance with Face Covering requirements.
- Develop a plan to ensure Personnel and patrons comply with social distancing requirements.
- Screen Personnel prior to entering the facility every day as provided in the Social Distancing Protocol. See [www.sfcDCP.org/screen](http://www.sfcDCP.org/screen) (follow link for Personnel screening handout).
- Ensure that all Patrons complete COVID-19 screening before entering the Indoor Movie Theater space. Anyone who answers “yes” to a screening question must be prevented from entry. See [www.sfcDCP.org/screen](http://www.sfcDCP.org/screen) (follow link for Non-Personnel screening handout).
- Require patrons and Personnel to wear Face Coverings at all times according to the [Health Officer Order No. C19-12](#).

### **Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements**

- Clean and disinfect the theater as required by Health Officer Directive 2020-35c, the Social Distancing Protocol, and this Health and Safety Plan. Disinfect high touch surfaces routinely throughout the day, and at least once every hour.
- Disinfect auditoriums and each previously occupied seat between movie screenings and before the next group of patrons are permitted to enter an auditorium.
- Frequently clean and disinfect bathrooms, at least once daily or more frequently if required by industry standards.

### **Additional Facility Requirements**

- Check for pest infestation or harborage, and make sure all pest control measures are functioning.



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35c (Exhibit B)**  
**Health and Safety Plan (issued 3/23/21)**

**Checklist**

Each Indoor Movie Theater must complete, post onsite, and follow this Health and Safety Plan.

- Make sure that plumbing is functioning and, if the facility was dormant, then the pipes are flushed.

**Additional Measures**

Click or tap here to enter text.

**Indoor Movie Theater Self-certification (must be signed by Indoor Movie Theater Owner or Worksite Safety Monitor):**

Initial each line and sign below:

\_\_\_\_\_ I acknowledge that I have read and fully understand the information above.

\_\_\_\_\_ The owner/Worksite Safety Monitor(s) will ensure these principles and procedures will be reviewed with all current and future employees.

\_\_\_\_\_ Print name

\_\_\_\_\_ Date:

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature