



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

**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: October 7, 2020**

**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. C19-07j issued on September 30, 2020 (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 This Directive goes into effect immediately upon issuance, and remains in effect until suspended, superseded, or amended by the Health Officer.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.**

**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.**



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5. Each Indoor Movie Theater subject to this Directive must provide items such as Face Coverings (as provided in Health Order No. C19-12c issued on July 22, 2020, 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.
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.

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Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH,  
Health Officer of the  
City and County of San Francisco

Date: October 7, 2020



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35 Exhibit A**  
**Interim Guidance: Indoor Movie Theaters**

**October 7, 2020**

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 <http://www.sfdcp.org/businesses>.

This guidance may change as information is updated. 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.

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

**BACKGROUND:** Indoor Movie Theaters are allowed to open indoors on a limited basis and with modified operations. Indoor Movie Theaters can open up to a MAXIMUM 25% capacity, with a maximum of 100 attendees per theater auditorium excluding Personnel. Indoor Movie Theaters are required to adhere to these guidelines and must monitor Health Officer Orders and Directives for updates, changes, or amendments.

**Generally, indoor activities have much higher risks for COVID-19. Please see Indoor Risk During the COVID-19 Pandemic, below, for information about indoor risks.**

**KEY POINTS**

- **The number of people inside an Indoor Movie Theater must never exceed 25% of the capacity of that theater up to a maximum of 100 attendees, excluding Personnel. If a movie theater complex has multiple individual theaters, then the 25% capacity limit applies to the complex as a whole and to each individual theater, and the 100-person maximum applies to each of the individual theaters.**
- **Personnel and patrons must maintain at least six feet of distance from people who are not part of their Household at all times.**
- **Face Coverings are mandatory at all times.**
- **Concession areas must remain closed at this time. Food and beverages even if purchased outside the theater are not allowed to be brought into the theater and consumed inside the theater. Eating and drinking are prohibited to ensure that Face Covering is continuous.**
- **Keep the space clean with enhanced disinfecting and sanitation procedures as described in this guidance.**



## BASIC 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 six 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.

**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.

## 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 tests 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.

## MANDATORY SIGNAGE REQUIREMENTS

- 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.



- 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 six 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.
- Conspicuously post signage to remind patrons that consuming food or drink onsite (including if brought in from outside) is prohibited given the risk associated with removing a Face Covering when eating or drinking.
- Include similar information in announcements, both audio and visual, for the preview reel providing COVID-19 safety guidance for theater patrons.
- The City has created an online [Outreach Toolkit for Corona Virus \(COVID-19\)](https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19) that includes printable resources including many of the signs required in this document. These include signage about proper hygiene, social distancing, Face Coverings, health screening, the risks of indoor transmission, testing and getting vaccinated for the flu. <https://sf.gov/outreach-toolkit-coronavirus-covid-19>

## SETTING UP THE SPACE

- Ticket lines and ticket vending machines must be configured to ensure that physical distancing of at least six 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 six feet of distancing and any Personnel working behind Plexiglass must maintain a minimum physical distance of six 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.
- Remove, empty, or block off all food and beverage vending machines including water fountains. If the Indoor Movie Theater has a separate restaurant or bar space, it may not be operated at this time.
- 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 six 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 six 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.
- Each theater is limited to 25% of its capacity up to a maximum of 100 patrons. If multiple theaters within one complex are used, the 25% capacity limit applies both to the entire complex and to each theater, and the 100 patron maximum applies to each individual theater. The 100-



person cap applies to patrons of the theater and is exclusive of Personnel. The number of Personnel present in a theater auditorium must be kept to the minimum number required to carry out the Indoor Movie Theater's responsibilities under this guidance or for safety purposes.

- Limit Household group sizes to no more than 10 people.
- Limit the duration of showings whenever reasonable. Do not show double features at this time. 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, 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 auditoriums to make sure that theater patrons are maintaining physical distancing from others, not eating or drinking and that they are wearing facial coverings and are remaining in their assigned seats throughout the screening. 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 (those over 50 years or age or with chronic health conditions).

## 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 SFPDH. 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.sfcdcp.org/screening-handout](http://www.sfcdcp.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 [sfcdcp.org/covid19symptoms](http://sfcdcp.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://sfcdcp.org/screen> and <https://sfcdcp.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 six 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 six 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. See [DPH Guidance on cleaning](#).
- The Indoor Movie Theater should develop protocols to handle non-compliant patrons, and all employees who interact with patrons should receive training on this protocol.
- 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.sfchcp.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. Frequently 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 approximately once per hour on a predetermined schedule and monitored by management to ensure compliance. Frequently disinfect bathrooms, at least every four hours (this is in addition to cleaning high-touch surfaces in bathrooms every hour). 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. See SF DPH Cleaning Guidance.
  - **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.

## VENTILATION

Make any necessary improvements to the ventilation of the establishment, including:

- HVAC systems (if one is present)
  - Ensure HVAC systems are serviced and functioning properly.
  - Evaluate possibilities for upgrading air filters to the highest efficiency possible.
  - Increase the percentage of outdoor air through the HVAC system, readjusting or overriding recirculation ("economizer") dampers.
  - Disable demand-control ventilation controls that reduce air supply based on temperature or occupancy.
  - Evaluate running the building ventilation system even when the building is unoccupied to maximize ventilation. At the minimum, reset timer-operated ventilation systems so that they start operating one to two hours before the building opens and two to three hours after the building is closed.
- Increase natural ventilation by opening windows and doors when environmental conditions and building requirements allow.
- Consider installing 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>.



## Indoor Risk During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Scientists agree that the risk of transmitting COVID-19 is generally **much greater** indoors than outdoors. Consider the increased risk to yourself and your community before participating in indoor activities.

### **How Does Covid-19 Spread?**

COVID-19 is transmitted from person-to-person and occurs in some of the following scenarios:

- Large droplets from coughing and sneezing are propelled directly into the face, nose, eyes, or mouth of someone nearby, usually within 6 feet. These droplets are sometimes called “ballistic droplets” because they travel in straight lines and are subject to the forces of gravity. OR
- Small droplets and particles are released when a person breathes, talks, sings, coughs, or sneezes. These small droplets and particles can remain suspended in the air for a period of time and/or move beyond 6 feet on indoor air currents. Other people might inhale these small droplets and particles even if they are further than six feet away. These droplets are sometimes referred to as “aerosols” or “bioaerosols”. OR
- A person touches a surface that is contaminated and then touches a mucus membrane such as their nose, eyes or mouth. Contaminated surfaces are sometimes called “fomites”.

The COVID-19 virus can travel in the air more than 6 feet and builds up indoors. Generally, whenever possible, choose outdoor activities over indoor activities, and if you need to go indoors, limit your time indoors if you are with people who are not in your household. Avoid enclosed spaces that are crowded and have poor ventilation.

The Guidance for Indoor Risk During the COVID-19 Pandemic (includes bibliography) can be found at [sfdcp.org/indoorrisk](https://sfdcp.org/indoorrisk).

## 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 as long as 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 least once per hour. In addition to cleaning high touch surfaces in bathrooms every hour, clean and disinfect bathrooms frequently, and at least every four hours. Post a cleaning log conspicuously in each bathroom.

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

**A.** If your Indoor Movie Theater complex has a total capacity of 2,400 people and includes six 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 six-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 600 patrons in your entire facility (25% of 2,400), (2) no more than 25 patrons seated in each of the 100-person theaters (25% of 100), (3) no more than 100 patrons seated in each of the 400-person theaters (25% of 400), and (4) no more than 100 patrons seated in each of the 600-person theaters (because 25% of 600 is 150 and exceeds the 100 patron cap, only 100 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 more risky?

**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?

- Consider potential outdoor and in-home alternatives
- Find options for outdoors, curbside, delivery or take out
- Decide not to socialize indoors
- 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.sfcddp.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: CinemaSafe 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. 2020-35 (Exhibit B)**  
**Health and Safety Plan (issued 10/7/2020)**

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 2020-35 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 movies 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 (a Worksite Safety Monitor) to be the single 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 SFDPH.
- Train staff on health and safety practices that must be followed including all requirements of Health Officer Directive 2020-35 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 25% of its capacity up to a maximum of 100 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 Interim Guidance for Indoor Movie Theaters available at [www.sfdcp.org/businesses](http://www.sfdcp.org/businesses)
- 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.
- 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.

### Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35 (Exhibit B) Health and Safety Plan (issued 10/7/2020)

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

- 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.

#### **Operational Requirements**

- Strictly implement all requirements of Health Officer Directive 2020-35 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 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 to only members of the same family.

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

- Train Personnel in the requirements of the Health Officer Directive 2020-35, 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. See [www.sfcddcp.org/screen](http://www.sfcddcp.org/screen)



**Health Officer Directive No. 2020-35 (Exhibit B)**  
**Health and Safety Plan (issued 10/7/2020)**

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

- 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.
- Require patrons and Personnel to wear Face Coverings at all times according to the [Face Covering Health Officer Order No. C19-12c](#).

**Cleaning and Disinfecting Requirements**

- Clean and disinfect the theater as required by Health Officer Directive 2020-35, 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 every four hours.

**Additional Facility Requirements**

- Check for pest infestation or harborage, and make sure all pest control measures are functioning.
- 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 will ensure these principles and procedures will be reviewed with all current and future employees.

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

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

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature