Best Practices for Production during COVID-19

Shoot healthy.
**Best Practices**

These suggested best practices will help producers provide a safe workplace and protect against the spread of COVID-19. We encourage every individual to play an active role in maintaining a sanitized and healthy work environment. Please demonstrate flexibility and compassion as all departments will be defining and redefining new practices.

**Costs and Rebate Program**

Applying these best practices will add costs and extra hours to your work days. But this increased commitment to health will help ensure your production stays on track to completion. If your production is utilizing the Mississippi Motion Picture Incentive Program, purchases made with Mississippi vendors and businesses for health safety items and equipment will qualify with proper documentation.

**Designate Personnel**

Producers should identify and designate individuals to enforce health safety on set and in office/warehouse settings. Additionally, consider designating an individual or mechanism to receive concerns and issues confidentially in order to allow those reporting to remain anonymous.

**Action Required**

Please review the entire document before beginning work in Mississippi and ask individuals affiliated with your production on location to sign a document stating they have read and understand the document in its entirety. A sample document will be available on our website. Suggestions for health safety are not limited to those outlined within this document. Additional practices may be suggested by unions, guilds, studios or related production companies, as well as local governments. As regulations continue to evolve, be sure to seek the most updated information from governmental and organizational entities. Please contact the Mississippi Film Office with further suggestions, ideas, and feedback.

**More information from the CDC, OSHA and MSDH:**

- [https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/](https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/)
- [https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420.html](https://msdh.ms.gov/msdhsite/_static/14,0,420.html)
Overview of Governor Reeves’ “Safe Return” Executive Order 1492:


With this general guidance, productions may resume:

• Individuals should wear a mask in public settings if able
• Individuals should maintain 6 feet of distance between one another
• When possible, work from home / shelter in place
• Vulnerable individuals, such as those over 65 or with underlying health conditions, are strongly encouraged to stay home as much as possible
• All businesses are able to open with strict health safety guidelines
• Cities can implement additional guidelines and practices as needed; please be mindful of local mask mandates

General practices for exposure reduction

• Health safety meetings should be required for all employees before work begins
• Individuals should self-monitor for COVID-19 symptoms and report to department head if symptoms occur or if they feel ill
• Guidance should be provided to each employed individual for proper use of masks, hand washing/sanitizing, personal hygiene (noting that masks do not replace physical distancing)
• Employer should provide appropriate disinfectants and paper products for duration of work
• Employer should store and stock adequate supply of PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) to provide for all personnel but encourage individuals to supply their own if they have specific preferences
• Masks are recommended while working but required when 6 feet of distance cannot be maintained; use common sense as needed for on-screen talent
• Use additional PPE as work tasks make it necessary: gloves, face shields/goggles, finger cots
• Replace, clean, store or dispose of PPE as necessary
• PPE should be disposed in closed bin receptacles

• Be mindful of use of PPE in high temperatures; provide time and physical space for individuals to safely take off masks as needed

• Frequent hand washing for a minimum of 20 seconds or use of hand sanitizer if unable to wash

• Discourage handshaking and hugging and replace with other forms of greeting

• Use knuckle or elbow instead of fingers when possible when touching communal work spaces

• Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth with unwashed hands

• Cover mouth/nose with tissue when sneezing/coughing or use inside of elbow (do not cover with hands). Throw used tissues in trash immediately; wash hands for minimum of 20 seconds

• Disinfect frequently touched items and surfaces: phones, doorknobs, handrails, computers, work stations/area

• Avoid sharing phones, office supplies, walkies, tools and equipment when possible and disinfect before and after use

• Use video- or tele-conferencing when able instead of in-person meetings

• If a physical meeting is required, consider an open, well-ventilated space where distance can be maintained between individuals

• Provide extra time for pre-production in order for adequate planning to implement health safety suggestions and recommendations

• Finalize creative decisions in pre-production to minimize last-minute changes on shoot days

• Allow individuals to work from home when possible
PRODUCTION PROTOCOLS

Travel / Quarantine
Currently, there are no requirements for quarantine or isolation upon entering Mississippi unless you are sick and symptomatic or diagnosed positively. Be aware that upon returning to your home jurisdiction, self-quarantine may be required.

- Quarantine is defined as: “remain at home”
- Avoid all public activities including work, school, group religious activity, shopping, group entertainment
- If living with others, separate yourself or wear mask and gloves as needed and maintain safe distance
- Do not share personal items with others
- Do not welcome or host visitors
- Only leave for medical care (groceries and food should be delivered when possible), and in the event of emergency, call 911

Crew and cast should fill out a health questionnaire prior to first day of work to determine if individual could have had recent exposure. A sample document will be available on our website.

Hosting all cast and crew in a singular hotel with provided meals could help control the production environment and minimize exposure to the virus. We recommend hiring a Mississippi-based crew as much as possible to minimize the risk of COVID-19 coming into the state from other locations.

On-Set Health
Diagnostic and serologic (antibody) testing is recommended in order to verify all personnel are virus-free at the beginning of production. We encourage you to designate qualified personnel such as set medic/nurse/COVID-19 compliance officer to monitor health safety on set and to verify outlined protocols in this document are in practice.

It is recommended that individual daily symptom screening and temperature checks are implemented by designated personnel with contactless thermometer before allowing anyone on set. PPE should be provided as needed. We also suggest additional temperature checks throughout work day. A chart of temperatures should be kept for duration of production.

Designated personnel will be mindful of cast’s and crew’s health and safety on set and will advise as necessary. If displaying COVID-19 symptoms, employee should be sent home and immediately contact a doctor or health care provider for evaluation.

According to the CDC, person-to-person transmission most frequently occurs via respiratory droplets by parties within six feet of one another, and evidence suggests the virus may remain viable on surfaces for hours to days depending on the material.

Note that symptoms could occur two to 14 days after exposure and can include, but are not limited to: fever, chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fatigue, muscle or body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat, congestion or runny nose, nausea or vomiting, and diarrhea. Note that many individuals with the virus show no symptoms (asymptomatic) but can still transmit the virus to others unknowingly, which is why it is crucial that all members of cast and crew abide by suggested personal hygiene habits.

Vaccination is available to those living and working in Mississippi. Please visit https://covidvaccine.umc.edu for additional information.
Production Office / Editing Suite / Mill Shop / Art and Costume Offices / Trailers / Tents

- Minimize number of individuals in small spaces to only essential personnel
- Increase ventilation in small spaces with open windows/doors when possible
- Designate a specific space for deliveries; disinfect delivered items before use
- Disinfect shared equipment such as copiers before and after every use
- Arrange workplaces to ensure a distance of 6 feet for safety
- Provide paperwork to individuals via email to be filled out before arrival when possible
- Payments should be made without contact when possible (i.e., rather than petty cash)

Locations

- Virtually scout as much as possible
- Individuals should self-drive during scouts when possible
- PPE should be used when carpooling, and windows should be opened to allow ventilation
- Discussions should happen outside rather than in vehicles or closed spaces as much as possible
- All sites should be treated as if they were infected (unless immediately disinfected before arrival), so proper use of PPE by all crew is essential
- Consider locations with ample room for distancing for crew and cast
- Decision-making for art department, grip/electric, etc. should be made as soon as possible to minimize number of visits to locations in pre-production
- Consider health safety accommodations for every site and include the designated employee/s during scout in order to plan appropriately
- Holding for background talent should be outside or in open, well-ventilated areas with seating arranged to maintain distance of at least 6 feet between chairs
- Every location should be cleaned and disinfected before and after use
- Be mindful of use of disinfectants that could be damaging on certain surfaces
• Provide hand-washing stations if no running water on-site

• Remove shoes before entering locations when possible

• Note that locations may become unavailable with little notice due to the pandemic; have backup plans

• Plan to provide alternative lodging/space for location occupants during production; disinfect before and after filming

• All locations should be closed to non-essential individuals

• Request from location’s management/owner their preparedness plans and confirm their staff have appropriate PPE and are adequately educated on distancing and disinfecting protocols

**Transportation**

• Half the maximum capacity in each vehicle when possible (i.e., 6 in a 12-passenger van); post max capacity on window

• Wipe down handles (inside and out), seats, steering wheel and other regularly touched areas after individuals exit vehicle

• PPE is suggested in vehicles (post signage) as well as increased ventilation

• Individuals should move their own cars rather than handing their keys to others when possible

• Allow for extra time to walk from parking for those who would rather not use shuttles

**CDC best practices:**

**On-Set / Camera / G&E / Art**

• Consider more pre-light days than normally scheduled

• Number of crew/cast on set should be minimized to only required individuals per department

• Masks should be provided and required, particularly when distancing is difficult

• Allow departments to work at staggered times to minimize number of people and to accommodate testing and distancing

• Strive to keep individuals on for the entire job rather than bringing day players

• Consider colored wristbands or passes on lanyards indicating levels of location access to minimize number of individuals on set

• Consider implementing one-way pathways in narrow areas of work

• In small spaces, remote viewing should be provided for those not necessary for the scene

• Scenes with crowds or where distancing is not possible should be reconsidered with fewer individuals or creatively reimagined

• Provide tape or chalk marks indicating 6 feet distance when lines need to be formed
• Limit takes as much as possible to minimize time on set

• Art department should be given additional time to sanitize props, set decoration and dressings as needed

• Handling of props should be limited to only relevant crew and actors

• Within departments, allow for pieces of gear to be handled by one individual when possible

• Gear and cases should be disinfected upon arrival and before departure

• Individuals should not share office supplies, phones, walkies, tools, etc. as much as possible

• Walkies, batteries & related gear should be disinfected and individually bagged before given to user and disinfected after use upon return

• Information on personal hygiene for health safety should be circulated to each individual, physically posted on set, in offices/work spaces, and included in official safety meetings

• Production should designate someone (ideally per department) for frequent disinfection of gear, door knobs/handles, light switches, thermostats, common surfaces, bathroom fixtures and any other surfaces touched or used by multiple individuals

• 60%+ alcohol hand sanitizer should be made available in common areas and points of entry/exit

• Disinfectants should be made available to wipe down common surfaces

CDC best practices:

Catering / Craft Service
• Meals should be served as individual serving portions when possible rather than buffet style (i.e. boxed meals, canned or bottled drinks)

• Meal times should be staggered or continuous in order to maintain distance between individuals

• Craft service items should be individually packaged; you touch it, you take it

• Coffee station should be serviced by one individual with gloves and mask (no self service)

• Individuals cooking/serving/handling food should regularly wash hands, wear gloves and mask, and follow standard government food service guidelines

• Use disposable plates/cups/flatware when possible; flatware should be individually wrapped or handed out one by one rather than grouping together for self service

• Allow for individuals to provide their own meals when possible

• Hand-washing/sanitizing stations must be provided where food/drinks are available
Casting / Talent

- Casting should be conducted via self-taping or video conferencing when possible

- Extra sensitivity for talent in "high-risk groups" for infection should be considered: People at risk for serious illness from COVID-19 are adults 65 and over and those with a chronic illness such as heart disease, diabetes or lung disease

- Schedule in-person auditions/call-backs with more time in between to minimize interaction between individuals waiting and/or have individuals wait outside or in vehicles; individuals can call upon arrival

- Minimize open calls and replace with scheduled appointments when possible

- During in-person auditions, allow clear face shields and gloves to be used

- Minimize extras and use working crew members as background as much as possible

- Consider hiring members of the same household in scenes to minimize exposure

- Provide paperwork via email to be filled out before arrival when possible

- Establish work spaces with at least 6 feet distance for individuals to fill out paperwork and disinfect between uses; if only clip boards available, disinfect between uses and ask individuals to come prepared with their own pen and to send images of required documents such as ID, driver’s license, etc.

- Digitally distribute scripts/sides when able; personalize scripts if printed so they are not shared

- Minimize physical contact between actors when possible (i.e., intimate scenes, kissing, holding hands)

- Allow for COVID-19 testing of individuals if intimate scenes are required

- Actors should keep as much distance from one another as possible and use of creative/alternate camera angles/lenses and shot set-ups should be considered to accommodate distance

- Consider face shields for actors during rehearsals

- Props handled by talent should be disinfected before and after use

- PPE for minors should fit appropriately

- Minors may need additional assistance and time in order to follow safety protocols

- Extra personnel for minors should be limited to studio teacher or one guardian

- Studio teachers and minors should wear PPE and practice frequent hand hygiene; allow for remote/virtual schooling when possible

- Animals should only be handled by their handlers/trainers except when necessary for a scene

- Personal pets should be kept off set and out of offices to minimize handling by multiple people
Hair / Makeup
• Allow actors to do their own hair and makeup when possible
• Allow talent to wear PPE during styling/application as it makes sense; once makeup/hair is complete, consider face shield rather than mask
• Minimize makeup application, hair styling and touch-ups during filming when possible
• PPE should be used by hair and makeup professionals when in contact with actors
• Talent and hair/makeup professionals should wash/sanitize before and after sessions
• Work stations should be at least 6 feet apart and disinfected between each individual use
• Disposable items should be used when possible
• Reusable items should be disinfected between uses
• Makeup should be mixed on disposable palettes per individual
• Consider assigned brushes/applicators per cast member
• Products should be sealed and disinfected when not in use

Wardrobe / Costume
• Conduct fittings by video conferencing or off set when possible
• Limit physical contact; use of PPE is suggested when in-person work is necessary
• Talent and wardrobe professionals should wash/sanitize hands before and after styling
• Talent should be advised on how to come dressed in their own clothes when possible
• Dressing areas should be provided for individuals to maintain 6 feet of physical distance from others
• Disinfect jewelry, glasses, etc. between uses with non-damaging disinfectant
• Fitting photos should be handled by one person in order to minimize use of camera
• Use of PPE is recommended at retail stores and rental houses to find garments
• Bag wardrobe/costumes per performer
• Period items that cannot be disinfected should be quarantined before use
Sound
- Disinfect equipment, mics, and transmitters between uses
  - Assign mics to individuals with provided labels
  - PPE should be used during person-to-person contact
  - Use boom mic instead of lav mics when possible

Video Village
- When possible, video should be set up outside or in open, well-ventilated spaces
  - Limit viewing to only essential crew and cast
  - Script supervisor should be provided specific, designated monitor and seating
  - Multiple monitors should be used when possible to allow for physical distancing
  - PPE should be used
  - Chairs should be regularly disinfected; use of plastic chairs is recommended
  - Disinfect remote controls, headsets, etc. between uses

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