

# Recommendations for Indoor Theaters

March 25, 2021



ARIZONA DEPARTMENT  
OF HEALTH SERVICES

**Per the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidance, ADHS recommends the following precautions be taken by people visiting indoor theaters:**



**Stay home if you are sick.**



**Protect yourself while visiting indoor theatres:**

- Arizonans are safer at home and should evaluate their personal risk of using an indoor theater venue based on the [Arizona COVID-19 Risk Index](#).
- Avoid close contact and stay more than 6 feet away from others.
- It is recommended that you wear a mask while at the establishment at all times, except while actively eating and drinking.
  - Masks should not be placed on children less than 2 years of age, anyone who has trouble breathing, or is unconscious, incapacitated, or otherwise unable to remove the cover without assistance.
- Wash your hands often, especially after leaving the establishment, with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue or your sleeve (not your hands) and immediately throw the tissue in the trash.
- If possible, use touchless payment methods. If you must handle money, a card, or use a keypad, use hand sanitizer or wash your hands immediately after.
- If you are at [higher risk](#) for [severe illness](#), you should avoid visiting indoor theatres. People at higher risk for severe illness include adults 65 or older and people of any age who have serious underlying medical conditions.

**The Arizona Department of Health Services recommends the following additional steps be taken by indoor theaters:**

- Comply with all local, state, and federal laws pertaining to indoor theatres.**
  
- Encourage physical distancing precautions of more than 6 feet between individuals who do not live in the same household:**
  - Consider limiting groups of household members to no more than 10.
  - Limit seating to alternate rows, when feasible.
  - Clearly mark chairs that are not in use.
  - Consider limiting the occupants in communal spaces and common areas where people are likely to congregate and interact.
  - Maintain clearly marked 6-foot spacing marks and/or signage along concession areas, entrances, ticket lines, waiting areas, lobbies, hallways, patios, and restrooms and any other location within the theater where queues may form or patrons may congregate.
  - Consider similar physical distancing requirements in employee-only spaces, such as break or dining rooms, uniform control areas, and shared office spaces. Consider closing or restricting access to these spaces.
  
- Encourage customers and staff to wear masks at all times, except when actively eating or drinking.**
  
- Provide access to soap and water for handwashing or an alcohol-based hand sanitizer, containing at least 60% alcohol, at clearly marked stations around the theater for use by employees and guests.**
  
- Require employees to regularly wash hands for at least 20 seconds.**

- Provide adequate supplies to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.**
- Consider scheduling staggered showtimes to prevent congregating in waiting areas.**
- Consider requiring online reservations for shows and limit the number of guests in the theater to allow for appropriate physical distancing.**
  - It is recommended that no less than 15 minutes elapses between shows to allow for full sanitization and to prevent crowding from participants entering/exiting the area.
  - Time between shows is needed to allow for the air to recirculate and for staff to thoroughly clean spaces and equipment between showings and provide proper ventilation.
- Arrange concession areas, entrances, ticket lines, waiting areas, lobbies, and hallways to encourage physical distancing.**
  - Consider limiting the ability of customers to wait in concession areas, entrances, ticket lines, waiting areas, lobbies, or hallways.
  - Assign staff to monitor areas where customers may congregate to encourage physical distancing.
  - Sanitize areas regularly between use.
- Concession areas should:**
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize food contact surfaces, food preparation surfaces, and beverage equipment after each use.
  - Limit items that are shared by customers, such as self-serve condiments, butter dispensers, popcorn flavorings, and any other food. Instead, use single serving condiments, and no-touch trash cans and doors.
- Do not provide alcohol other than at a concession area with clean glasses.**
  - Wash, rinse, and sanitize beverage equipment after each use.
  - Consider using single-use beverage equipment.

- Post signs educating customers and employees of expectations and guidance.**
  - Post signage at entrances about how to stop the spread of COVID-19, properly wash hands, and practice other protective measures, properly use masks.
  - Post signage at the entrance of public health advisories prohibiting individuals who are symptomatic from entering the premises.
- Wipe any counters or hard surfaces between use or customer.**
- Avoid using or sharing items such as menus, condiments, and any other food. Instead, use disposable or digital menus, single-serving condiments, and no-touch trash cans and doors.**
- Wipe any touchpads between each use.**
- Implement comprehensive sanitation protocols.**
  - Schedule sufficient time to sanitize in between showings.
  - Sanitize chairs, armrests, beverage holders, handrails, and any other items that a customer may touch between each use.
- Ensure that ventilation systems of indoor spaces operate properly.**
  - Increase the circulation of outdoor air as much as possible by opening windows and doors, using fans, or other methods.
- Where possible, implement one-way traffic for entrance to and egress from the facility.**



**For theaters that offer on-premise child care:**

- If on-premise child care is provided:
  - Limit the number of children to prevent transmission.
  - Encourage physical distancing of more than 6 feet between each child who are not from the same household.
  - Implement symptom screening and temperature checks of staff AND participants, especially children who might not be capable of staying more than 6 feet apart from people they do not live with.
  - Stagger drop-off and pick-up times, as much as possible, to maintain a distance of more than 6 feet between people who do not live together.
  - Limit the sharing of equipment such as toys and supplies among children who do not live in the same household.
  - Ask parents to consider if their children are capable of staying more than 6 feet apart from people they do not live with before taking them to a public venue.
  - Follow the CDC guidance for Child Care Programs that Remain Open.

**The Arizona Department of Health Services recommends the following additional steps be taken for staff:**

- Sick employees should stay home and not return to work until they have met criteria to return to work.**
  - Employees who appear to have symptoms or who become ill while at work should immediately be separated from others and sent home.
- Document and communicate sick leave policies to employees and staff.**
- Consider implementing flexible sick leave policies that permit adherence to public health isolation and quarantine guidance.**
- Consider implementing symptom screening or temperature checks for employees prior to the start of their shift.**
- Train all employees on appropriate cleaning and disinfection, hand hygiene, physical distancing requirements, and respiratory etiquette.**
- Ensure that all employees are notified of new facility rules and any changes in rules.**
- Encourage employees to maintain more than 6 feet of separation from other individuals, when possible.**
- Provide appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) for employees in accordance with public health recommendations.**

- Encourage employees to wear masks at all times.**
- Provide adequate supplies in employee workspaces to support healthy hygiene behaviors, including soap, hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol, disinfecting wipes, tissues, and no-touch trash cans.**
- See [Department of Labor and Occupational Safety and Health Administration \(OSHA\) COVID-19 guidance for employers and workers.](#)**

The list of EPA-approved disinfectant products for emerging viral pathogens expected to be effective against COVID-19 can be accessed [here](#).



For additional guidance on cleaning, visit CDC's [Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility](#) page and CDC's [Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#).

**For COVID-19 questions, please call the Arizona COVID-19 Hotline at: 1-844-542-8201**

For more information on Arizona's response to COVID-19, please visit: [azhealth.gov/COVID19](https://azhealth.gov/COVID19).