



Reopening New York

Movie Theater Guidelines for Employers and Employees



These guidelines apply to all movie theaters permitted to operate; these guidelines do not apply to drive-in movie theaters, live performances, or performing arts venues. See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Movie Theaters” for full details.

Movie theaters remain closed until Friday, October 23, 2020, at which time movie theaters in counties outside of New York City that have a COVID-19 positivity rate below 2% on a 14-day rolling average and that do not currently contain any cluster zones may reopen in accordance with this guidance.

During the COVID-19 public health emergency, all owners and operators of movie theaters should stay up to date with any changes to state and federal requirements related to movie theater activities and incorporate those changes into their operations. This guidance is not intended to replace any existing applicable local, state, and federal laws, regulations, and standards.

	Mandatory	Recommended Best Practices
Physical Distancing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that the workforce and patron presence in any movie theater is limited to no more than 25% of the maximum capacity, inclusive of employees and patrons, both of whom must only be permitted entry into the movie theater if they wear an acceptable face covering at all times (except while eating or drinking, during which time they must be seated), provided that they are over age 2 and able to medically tolerate such covering. ✓ Limit the capacity of any individual movie showing or screening to the lesser of 25% of the maximum occupancy or 50 people, as of October 19, 2020. ✓ Ensure at least 6 ft. of distance among all individuals, with the exception of patrons who are members of the same immediate party/household/family, at all times, unless safety or core activity requires a shorter distance. ✓ Where 6 ft. of distance is not possible between employees and patrons, enact physical barriers (e.g., cash registers, concessions, ticket-taker stations). ✓ Ensure theater seating allows for at least 6 ft. of distance between patrons and groups of patrons who are not in the same immediate party/household/family, specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assign seats for patrons prior to entering the theater to ensure patrons adhere to social distancing requirements. • Within a row, limit seating such that at least 2 seats are unoccupied between each group of patrons unless the theater has seating that naturally allows for 6 ft. of distance between seats. • Limit seating in traditional seating arrangements to every other row unless seating naturally allows for 6 ft. of distance between rows (e.g., large recliners). • Encourage patrons to remain seated once the screening begins. ✓ Provide touchless payment or pay ahead options. ✓ Close recreational areas and devices (e.g. arcade games, photo booths) are closed, deactivated, or not otherwise accessible to patrons. Close children’s play areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Where possible, minimize the number of groups seated in each row to avoid close contact when individuals leave to use the restroom or go to the concession area. ✓ Have employees direct or guide patrons to their seats to ensure adherence to social distancing requirements and avoid any unnecessary congregation. ✓ Leave the lights on in the theater for as long as possible before the showing/screening so that patrons can be seated according to social distancing requirements. ✓ Close common seating areas (e.g., in lobbies) that are not within the theater. ✓ Minimize the handling of cash, credit cards, reward cards, and mobile devices, where possible. ✓ Encourage patrons to purchase tickets in advance online or through mobile application, as applicable and practicable. ✓ Modify the use and/or restrict the number of workstations and employee seating areas to maintain 6 ft. of distance in all directions. If not feasible, enact physical barriers (e.g. plastic shielding walls), in accordance with OSHA guidelines, in areas where they would not impair air flow, heating, cooling, or ventilation. ✓ Clearly designate separate entrances and exits, where possible.

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Physical Distancing (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Put in place measures to reduce bi-directional foot traffic using barriers, tape, or signs with arrows in narrow aisles (e.g., between rows in theaters), and post signage and distance markers denoting 6 ft. in commonly used areas and areas in which lines are commonly formed or people may congregate. ✓ Close off any seating areas where social distance cannot be maintained. ✓ For any food services, operate in accordance with DOH’s “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Food Services,” and discontinue food/beverage self-service (e.g., condiments, soda) and only allow employee served food/beverages at concessions areas. ✓ Stagger movie show times to allow for thorough cleaning and disinfection of theaters after showings/screenings end, and to avoid crowding in the lobby. ✓ Monitor and control the flow of traffic into and within both the building and individual theaters to ensure adherence to maximum capacity and social distancing requirements. ✓ Prohibit congregating and loitering by patrons and maintain sufficient employee or security presence to eliminate congregating and loitering. 	
Protective Equipment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure that employees and patrons are only permitted entry into the movie theater (both the overall facility and individual theaters) if they wear an acceptable face covering, provided that they are over age 2 and able to medically tolerate such covering. ✓ Ensure that individuals wear a face covering at all times, except when eating or drinking, during which time they must be seated. ✓ Provide employees with an acceptable face covering at no cost to the employee. ✓ Acceptable face coverings include, but are not limited to, cloth (e.g., homemade sewn, quick cut, bandana), surgical masks, N95 respirators, and face shields. 	

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Protective Equipment (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Face coverings must be cleaned or replaced after use and may not be shared. Refer to CDC guidance. ✓ Train employees on how to adequately put on, take off, clean (as applicable), and discard PPE. ✓ Limit the sharing of objects (e.g. cash registers, ticket scanners, ticket kiosks), as well as the touching of shared surfaces; or, require employees to wear gloves (trade-appropriate or medical) when in contact with shared objects or frequently touched surfaces; or, require employees to perform hand hygiene before and after contact. 	
Air Filtration and Building Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Ensure central HVAC system filtration meets the highest rated filtration compatible with the currently installed filter rack and air handling systems, at a minimum MERV-13, or equivalent or greater (e.g. HEPA), as applicable, and as documented by a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer. ✓ For movie theaters with central air handling systems that cannot handle the abovementioned minimum level of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater), have a certified HVAC technician, professional, or company, ASHRAE-certified professional, certified retro-commissioning professional, or New York licensed professional building engineer certify and document that the currently installed filter rack is incompatible with the abovementioned minimum level of filtration (i.e. MERV-13 or greater) and/or the air handling system would be unable to perform the minimum heating and cooling that it was otherwise able to provide prior to the COVID-19 public health emergency if such a high degree of filtration (i.e., MERV-13 or greater) was installed. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retain such documentation for review by state or local health department officials to operate at a lesser filtration rating with additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ For establishments with central air handling systems and MERV-13 (or greater) filtration, consider adopting additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, particularly for buildings with air handling systems older than 15 years, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing necessary retro-commissioning of central systems, as well as testing, balancing, and repairs as needed; • Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible; • Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy; • Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, where reasonable, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply; • Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60% where possible; • Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible; • Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass; • Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life; • Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort;

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Air Filtration and Building Systems (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Facilities that have a central air handling system who are unable to meet a filtration rating of MERV-13 or greater must adopt additional ventilation and/or filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performing necessary retro-commissioning of central systems, as well as testing, balancing, and repairs as needed; • Increasing ventilation rates and outdoor air ventilation to the extent possible; • Keeping systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy; • Disabling demand-controlled ventilation, and maintain systems that increase fresh air supply; • Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60%; • Opening outdoor air dampers to reduce or eliminate recirculation to the extent possible; • Sealing edges of the filter to limit bypass; • Regularly inspecting systems and filters to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are installed, serviced and within service life; • Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort; • Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or • Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts. ✓ For movie theaters that do not have central air handling systems, adopt additional ventilation and air filtration mitigation protocols per CDC and ASHRAE recommendations, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regularly inspecting any room ventilation systems (e.g., window units, wall units) to ensure they are properly operating, and filters are appropriately installed, serviced and within service life; • Keeping any room ventilation systems running for longer hours, especially for several hours daily before and after occupancy; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or • Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), consider units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Depending on the length of time equipment has been inactive, run systems with careful observation to ensure machinery (e.g., valves and switches) are operating correctly. <p>(See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Movie Theaters” for full details).</p>

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Air Filtration and Building Systems (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting room ventilation systems to maximize fresh air intake, set blower fans to low speed and point away from occupants to the extent possible; Maintaining relative humidity between 40-60% where possible; Opening windows to the extent allowable for occupant safety and comfort; Setting any ceiling fans to draw air upwards away from occupants, if applicable; Prioritizing window fans to exhaust indoor air where possible; Avoiding using fans that only recirculate air or only blow air into a room without providing for appropriate exhaust; Installing appropriately designed and deployed ultraviolet germicidal irradiation (UVGI) to deactivate airborne virus particles; and/or Using portable air cleaners (e.g., electric HEPA units), considering units that provide highest air change rate at appropriate performance level and do not generate harmful byproducts. <p>✓ Before occupants return to a building that has been entirely closed, complete pre-return checks, tasks and assessments to ensure a healthy and safe environment.</p> <p>(See “Interim COVID-19 Guidance for Movie Theaters” for full details).</p>	
Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Adhere to hygiene and sanitation requirements from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Department of Health (DOH); maintain logs that include the date, time, and scope of cleaning and disinfection. ✓ Provide and maintain hand hygiene stations on site, including handwashing with soap, running warm water, and paper towels, as well as an alcohol-based hand sanitizer containing 60% or more alcohol for areas where handwashing is not feasible. ✓ Make hand sanitizer available throughout the movie theater for use by employees and patrons (e.g., entrances/exits, cash registers, ticket kiosks). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Place signage near hand sanitizer stations indicating that visibly soiled hands should be washed with soap and water; hand sanitizer is not effective on visibly soiled hands. ✓ Place receptacles around the movie theater for disposal of soiled items, including PPE. ✓ Place seat covers on cloth seats or other seats that may be more difficult to clean and disinfect.

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Hygiene, Cleaning, and Disinfection (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Provide and encourage employees to use cleaning and disinfection supplies before and after use of shared and frequently touched surfaces, followed by hand hygiene. ✓ Conduct regular cleaning and disinfection of the movie theater and more frequent cleaning and disinfection for high-risk areas issued by many individuals. ✓ Clean and disinfect all theater seating (e.g., chairs, armrests) after patron use. ✓ Cleaning and disinfection must be performed using Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) <u>products</u> identified by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as effective against COVID-19. ✓ Ensure 3-D glasses are cleaned and disinfected after every use unless they are disposable. ✓ Prohibit shared food and beverages among employees (e.g., self-serve meals and beverages). 	
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Affirm you have reviewed and understand the state-issued industry guidelines, and that you will implement them. ✓ Encourage individuals to adhere to CDC and DOH guidance regarding the use of PPE, specifically face coverings, through verbal communication and signage. ✓ Post signage inside and outside of the movie theater to remind employees and patrons to adhere to proper hygiene, social distancing rules, appropriate use of PPE, and cleaning and disinfection protocols. ✓ Conspicuously post completed safety plans on site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Develop a communications plan for employees and patrons that includes applicable instructions, training, signage, and information. Consider developing webpages, text and email groups, and social media campaigns.
Screening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Implement mandatory health screening practices for employees and, where practicable, contractors and vendors, but such screening shall not be mandated for patrons and delivery personnel. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Perform screening remotely (e.g. by telephone or electronic survey), before individuals report to the movie theater, to the extent possible. ✓ Temperature checks may also be conducted per U.S. Equal Opportunity Commission or DOH guidelines.

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Screening (cont'd)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Screening must ask about, at minimum: (1) COVID-19 <u>symptoms</u> in past 14 days, (2) positive COVID-19 test in past 14 days, (3) close contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 case in past 14 days; and/or (4) traveled within a state or country with significant community spread of COVID-19 for longer than 24 hours within the past 14 days. ✓ Refer to DOH <u>travel advisory</u> for the most up to date information on states and countries with significant spread of COVID-19 and quarantine requirements. ✓ Require employees to immediately disclose if and when their responses to any of the aforementioned questions changes, such as if they being to experience symptoms, including during or outside of work hours. ✓ An individual who screens positive for COVID-19 symptoms must not be allowed to enter the movie theater and must be sent home with instructions to contact their healthcare provider for assessment and testing. ✓ Immediately notify the state and local health department of any positive COVID-19 test results. ✓ Designate a central point of contact responsible for receiving and attesting to having reviewed all questionnaire responses. ✓ Ensure that in the case of an individual showing symptoms while in the movie theater, notify individuals in the surrounding areas who may have been affected immediately with information on where the individual has been throughout the movie theater and notify them if the symptomatic person tests positive. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Encourage – but do not mandate – that patrons complete a health screening and/or provide contact information for contact tracing. ✓ Maintain a log of every person, including employees, contractors, and vendors, who may have had close contact with other individuals at the movie theater; excluding patrons and deliveries that are performed with appropriate PPE or through contactless means. The log should contain contact information, such that all contacts may be identified, traced, and notified in the event an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19. ✓ Offer patrons a method to opt-in to a contact tracing, as practicable (e.g., opt-in upon when purchasing tickets in advance online). ✓ Screeners should be trained by employer identified individuals familiar with CDC, DOH, and OSHA protocols. ✓ Refer to DOH <u>guidance</u> regarding protocols and policies for employees seeking to return to work after a suspected or confirmed case of COVID-19 or after the employee had close or proximate contact with a person with COVID-19.

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