

Costume for Theatre & Live Events

Covid 19: Health & Safety at Work.

For: Costume Production Staff, Resident and Touring Costume & Wardrobe Staff
Costume Designers, Costume Makers, Costume Prop Makers, Milliners, Costume Jewellery
Makers, Footwear Makers, Dying & Breaking Down Artists

Covid 19 Secure Guidelines for employers, employees, freelancers and self- employed

Current date of publication: 4 January 2021 Version 3

Introduction

This is a collaborative document compiled by Costume Designers, Supervisors, Administrators, Wardrobe Managers, Dressers, in consultation with an independent Health and Safety Manager and Production Manager. (see appendix for collaborators)

It has been reviewed by the wider costume industry and has common consent.

This document is an extension to HM Government guidelines. No part of this document should be interpreted to contradict HM Government HSE official guidelines in place at the time of reading (see date of publication)

This document will be amended to comply with any changes instigated by the Government, whether that be tighter or looser surrounding Covid 19

This document aims to effectively highlight the risks and offer solutions to help arrive at a Covid Secure working environment for the Theatre and Live Events costume industry.

It gives practical considerations of how these guidelines can be applied in the costume workplace

This guidance is directed at paid professional workers.

Any non-professionals should look to the current government guidance surrounding social distancing and lock down measures to see if they can be operating until such time that all restrictions are lifted.

This document is written to accompany the ABTT Risk Assessment and should be used in conjunction with this and the risk assessment written by the individual venues and employers. We encourage costume workers to contact those who are responsible for writing such risk assessments to contribute their individual concerns in relation to their operations.

This document contains detailed recommendations for reducing the risk of Covid-19 transmission in theatres and live event venues as a result of work related to costume and

wardrobe, in line with the guidelines issued by the Government which are collated in Appendix A. The guidelines identify two major modes of transmission: through touch transmission from surfaces and from aerosolized particles. As well as through breathing and coughing, the latter has specific risks for costume workers handling laundry and ironing.

The directions in the document fall into six broad categories. These principles are summarised here but this summary is not intended as, nor should it be treated as a substitute for the full document. The recommendations also do not supplant other measures that buildings may choose to implement in line with their own health and safety standards.

CITA cannot accept any liability whatsoever for any loss or damage suffered or costs incurred by any person arising from the use of guidance or advice provided. These guidelines are not provided with the intention of eliminating all risks and following the guidelines will not remove all risks. Ownership of risk remains with the employer at all times.

1) Social distancing

As a first line of defence, the recommendations identify areas of costume work where it is possible to maintain a metre or more distance between co-workers. All rooms in which workers will occupy for prolonged periods must also be well ventilated to prevent particles from building up. Venues must consider restructuring work spaces in order to facilitate distancing, including one-way systems and the provision of barriers where necessary. Producers and production managers also need to bear these recommendations in mind when scheduling costume fittings and technical rehearsal time.

2) Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Where social distancing is not possible, or in areas of particular hazard, PPE must be worn. The recommendations identify areas in which close contact cannot be avoided altogether, such as taking measurements, fittings, assisting actors into and out of costumes and quick changes. Venues must take whatever steps possible to keep these to a minimum. Producers and Production managers must provide relevant PPE to all staff working in the venue who have need of it, including employees, freelancers, visiting contractors and interns.

3) Cleaning and personal hygiene

The recommendations identify locations where work surfaces may become contaminated and need regular cleaning. Venues are responsible for the cleanliness of the building by scheduling regular cleaning. Venues must additionally provide workers with adequate facilities for frequent hand washing or sanitising.

4) Cohort Working

To reduce the rate of spread in the event that an infection breaks out, large venues should limit the number of people each worker comes into contact with on a daily basis by dividing work into cohorts. Cohort working or pairing of show staff will build resilience into the production.

5) Rest

The recommendations finally note that individual immune responses are weakened by prolonged periods of work, and that these are common during theatrical productions, particularly during technical rehearsals, previews and often the final weeks of rehearsal prior to technical rehearsals. It is recommended that producers adjust the schedule for technical rehearsals to ensure costume workers have sufficient breaks and rest time.

This document is written in 4 parts;

- 1) Introduction and Summary of the guidelines
- 2) Guidelines; Costume for Theatre & Live Events Covid19: Health & Safety at Work
- 3) Appendix A - Government guidelines underpinning this document and links to relevant govt websites
- 4) Appendix B - Supporting Documents and Glossary of terms