

## WASHINGTON STATE MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES

### INTRODUCTION

We are excited for our state's film industry to get back to work - so let's get back to work safely! The recommendations presented in this document were developed by Washington State's motion picture community and should be used as best practices to protect the safety of all those who work in the media industry. As conditions and government policies evolve, we will continue to establish new policies and practices for maintaining a safe working environment for all motion picture productions. Additional guidelines may be implemented on each individual production to ensure the highest safety standards are being maintained.

**First and foremost, all motion picture productions must comply with the [Motion Picture Production COVID-19 Requirements](#) that have been approved by the Governor's office and Washington State Department of Health.**

The term "Motion Picture" is inclusive of all sizes and types of production. Motion Picture is defined as a recorded audio-vision production intended for distribution to the public for exhibition in public and / or private settings by means of any and all delivery systems and / or delivery platforms now or hereafter known, including without limitation, screenings in motion picture theaters, broadcasts and cablecast transmissions for viewing on televisions, computer screens, and other audio-visual receivers, viewing on screens by means of digital video disc (DVD) players, video on demand (VOD) services, and digital video recording (DVR) services, direct internet transmission, and viewing on digital computer-based systems which respond to the users' actions (interactive media).

The term "job site" is used to define a production's place of work. A "job site" may include but is not limited to base camp, film set, construction mill, transportation vehicles, and the production office.

As a result of the COVID-19 crisis, the Employment Securities Department (ESD) became aware of gaps in unemployment insurance compensation for gig workers. At this time, ESD has also indicated that even if a gig worker is paid as an independent contractor, they may be considered an employee under guidelines provided by ESD. Employers are strongly encouraged to speak with ESD or a financial advisor to assess ramifications associated with the misclassification of workers.

Remember, everyone will have a different pace, situation and approach to return to work. Empathy and accommodation will be needed and sets should serve as an open forum for learning and sharing safety procedures. Employers should create an environment that puts safety first and allows workers to feel empowered to express their safety concerns without retaliation.

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## **MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION COVID-19 REQUIREMENTS**

As of January 2021, Washington State is in a two-phased regional reopening plan called [Healthy Washington–Roadmap to Recovery](#). You can check the status of each region [here](#).

Currently, the motion picture industry is allowed to resume safe operations in all regions of the state. All productions must comply with the state’s set safety requirements as listed in the [Motion Picture Production COVID-19 Requirements](#) that was approved by the Governor’s Office and the Washington State Department of Health.

As you plan for your productions, please check with the local film office or permitting agency where you plan to film as each jurisdiction may have additional safety requirements or permitting restrictions.

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## **MOTION PICTURE PRODUCTION COVID-19 BEST PRACTICES**

The film industry best practice recommendations detailed in this document were developed by Washington State’s motion picture community and informed by over 50 safety on set protocols from around the world.

The film industry best practices outlined in this document do not replace the mandatory guidelines that all productions must follow as outlined in the [Motion Picture Production COVID-19 Requirements](#). **READ THIS DOCUMENT FIRST** prior to reviewing the information below.

## **COVID-19 PLANNING**

- The employer should be advised that safety protocols will slow down procedures on the job site and have budgetary impacts.
- Employers should designate a person to whom workers can report any potential illness or safety protocol infractions. (This could be the COVID-19 Site Supervisor, if applicable.) For those job sites that don't require a COVID-19 Site Supervisor, the employer should designate an individual who will enforce the Washington State Set Safety Protocols.
- Employers should work with departments and specific crew members to develop and implement a COVID-19 plan to ensure that each department's needs are met. For example: the Production Manager should be involved in implementing additional budgeting needs for things such as PPE, the Assistant Director should be involved in incorporating COVID-19 safety protocols into the daily safety meeting, the On-Set Medic may be involved in the mandatory worker health screenings and triaging should a worker develop symptoms while on the job site, Security may be involved in monitoring social distancing protocols on the job site etc.
- Once the COVID-19 safety plan is complete, the employer should circulate it to all workers digitally prior to the start of production.
- Employers should encourage departments to request changes or modifications to departmental procedures if they are concerned that something is not safe. Likewise, departments should report and/or request changes or modifications to the employer if they feel certain department procedures are unsafe.
- Production should consider implementing "The Zone System" as laid out in the unions' [The Safe Way Forward](#) and the [COVID-19 Return to Work Agreement](#).
- Each department should be allocated a designated area that is demarcated with tape or posts. Designated areas should include equipment not being used on set and a standby area for department crew members.
- Any worker not directly involved in filming should remain outside the location where filming is taking place.
- When possible, the employer should schedule enough prep days for departments to work independently at the job site.
- To help prevent the spread of the COVID-19, adequate ventilation systems may be helpful in preventing the spread of the virus. It may be beneficial to first consult with an HVAC specialist when considering implementing systems on the job site.
- Due to contact tracing requirements, all aspects of the job site should be isolated from access from the public, or anyone not working on the job.

## **COVID-19 SITE SUPERVISOR**

Regardless of the size or type of production, a site-specific COVID-19 Supervisor is required in the [Motion Picture Production COVID-19 Requirements](#).

The role of this individual is to monitor the health of employees and enforce the COVID-19 job site safety plan. *There is currently no state or federally sanctioned certification for this role.* This individual should be knowledgeable about screening employees for signs/symptoms of COVID-19, how to prevent coronavirus transmission and the employer's COVID-19 policies.

The national entertainment unions often set industry standard practices. They are currently recommending the individual performing this role preferably be a set medic and/or has a minimum training of OSHA 30. They also recommend the rate for the COVID Supervisor position should be treated as a department head.

It should be noted that IATSE signatory productions will also require a Health Safety Supervisor (HSS) that works in a Health Safety Department, with a Manager and staff. This position will have its own training requirements. Please see [The Safe Way Forward](#) and the [COVID-19 Return to Work Agreement](#) for more information.

- Employers may want to hire COVID-19 specific workers. [Here is a list](#) of positions to consider.
- If an employer is hiring a set medic, it is recommended that the individual have a certification of an Emergency Medical Technician or higher.
- If other workers are being considered for the COVID-19 Site Supervisor, they should undergo specialized training on health and safety precautions, policies and procedures related to infection prevention practices including COVID-19 prevention, disinfection and PPE.
- The COVID-19 Site Supervisor should be accessible in the workplace at all times during work hours and all personnel should have access to the COVID-19 Site Supervisor(s). All cast and crew shall be informed who the COVID-19 Site Supervisor is and how to contact them.
- Productions should consider engaging a board-certified infectious diseases physician or infection preventionist with certification in infection control (CIC) to assist with development of specific workflows and operational implementation.
- Employers should be aware of symptomatic differences between allergies and COVID-19.
- Employers should consider having the COVID-19 Site Supervisor oversee the daily screening process prior to the start of work.
- The COVID Site Supervisor should work with the Employer to coordinate placement of handwashing, sanitizing, and disinfection stations and any medical posts.

## **COVID-19 SAFETY TRAINING**

- Employer should distribute health and safety information to all workers in a digital format daily to ensure that workers who miss the daily safety meeting are informed. This information should include links to any updates from official health authorities.
  - Workers should not leave the job site during the course of the work day. If workers arrive late to the job site should receive a safety briefing upon arrival.
  - Employers should establish an anonymous reporting mechanism (via email, phone or online form) that enables all workers to report concerns about COVID-19 protocols or other safety issues.
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## **PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT (PPE) - EMPLOYER PROVIDED**

- Employers should train workers how to properly wear PPE and ensure that PPE properly fits all workers. It should be noted that different departments and/or workers may need additional levels of PPE and should be trained accordingly.
  - PPE should be treated as hazardous waste and employers should create a plan for disposal. Ex: Used PPE should be put into solid plastic bags and be handled with protective gloves and then disposed of. When fabric face masks are used, workers should wash their mask daily.
  - Employers should consider having PPE reserves on the job site at all times including but not limited to extra gloves, masks, hand sanitizer, and disinfectant wipes. Recommendations suggest reserves of 3-4 per worker.
  - Employer should consider designated areas on every job site where workers can obtain and dispose of PPE upon arrival and throughout the workday.
  - As per CDC guidelines, the best way for the team members to protect themselves and others from COVID-19 is to regularly wash hands with soap and water for 20 seconds or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. However, there are certain instances when wearing gloves is recommended:
    - Hair and Makeup Artists when working on or in proximity to talent's face. Note: Gloves to be properly replaced between each performer.
    - Craft services, catering and any food preparation
    - When Cleaning and Disinfecting
    - When in contact with someone who has been infected
    - Work in areas that have been contaminated by someone who has been infected
    - When Testing
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## **SOCIAL DISTANCING**

- In order to limit the number of workers on the job site, employers should encourage any workers who can effectively work remotely to do so.
  - Production should consider implementing "The Zone System" as laid out in the unions' [The Safe Way Forward](#) and the [COVID-19 Return to Work Agreement](#).
  - Access routes should be widened to a 6-ft width wherever possible and a one-way system should be put in place where possible.
  - The employer should implement 6-ft markings on floors where workers need to line up, sit, or congregate for meals.
  - Set up a wireless monitoring server to allow all departments to individually monitor the playback on their own devices. Alternatively, the employer can provide multiple monitors at socially distanced locations at the job site.
  - Where shared transport is required to a job site, vehicles should be allocated and engineered to provide social distancing.
  - Toilet facilities should be increased on a per-person ratio. Due to their restricted size, a limit to the number of people using a mobile toilet facility at any one time should be considered.
  - When possible, it is recommended to make parking, base camp, the lunch area, and set all within walking distance.
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## **SANITATION AND CLEANLINESS**

- Post, in areas visible to all workers, required hygienic practices, including not to touch face with unwashed hands or with gloves; washing hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol; cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces such as workstations, keyboards, telephones, handrails, machines, shared tools, elevator control buttons, and doorknobs; covering the mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing as well as other hygienic recommendations by the CDC.
- It is recommended that employers designate or hire a worker to create a list of frequently touched surfaces and to ensure proper disinfection of the job site.
- Workers should only handle equipment assigned to their department.
- If possible, workers should bring their own equipment and not share that equipment with other workers. If sharing equipment is necessary, try to assign a worker to a piece of equipment so that they are the only individuals handling it on the job site.
- Workers should not share their personal cell phone with others on the job site.
- All equipment should pass through disinfecting checkpoints to be established by the employer.

- Employers should request that all production service providers disinfect all equipment before delivery.
  - Employers should establish disinfectant protocols for any equipment or materials which by necessity must cross between departments.
  - It is recommended that each department be given communication devices and chargers that they will maintain for the duration of the production.
  - If possible, disinfect the job site prior to beginning work in the location and let it sit empty for at least 1-3 days and then again after work prior to returning to the owner.
  - Prior to placing any order, departments should request from any production service provider or vendor safety data sheets which detail their cleaning and sanitizing protocols, and when possible, employers should request that all production service providers disinfect equipment or items before delivery.
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## EMPLOYEE HEALTH

- A list of health screening questions to ask workers [can be found here](#).
  - To encourage a healthy well rested workforce, employers should consider scheduling shorter work days such as 10 hour days rather than the typical 12 hour day.
  - The employer should consider avoiding having all key workers at the job site at the same time, if possible.
  - In the event that workers fall ill or must be quarantined, employers should consider hiring stand by workers for each department. The same precautions should be considered for talent.
  - The employer should consider gathering worker's emergency contact information.
  - Since there is a possibility that workers may become ill on the job site, employers should consider whether employer provided health benefits may be offered as part of a worker's compensation package.
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## JOB SITE VISITORS

- Producers not involved in physical production, executives, writers, agencies, and clients should not be considered essential workers and so remote system should be set up for monitoring the job site from afar.
  - If a set visit is necessary, it must be pre-arranged with the employer or the department that is designated to handle set visits.
  - Unions business agents will follow the guidelines outlined in union contracts for set visits.
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## DEPARTMENTAL PROTOCOLS

[Here](#) you will find best practices for workers to implement on a job site that are unique to each department. These best practices were designed by workers with extensive experience and if possible should be implemented to help keep workers safe.

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## DEVELOPMENT OF THESE BEST PRACTICES



These best practices were developed by a statewide coalition of film industry partners including Washington Filmworks, IATSE 488, Teamsters 174, SAG-AFTRA and a task force of over 150 cast, crew, production service companies, and production companies.

In developing these best practices extensive research was conducted and we reviewed over 40 sources including guidelines from the European Film Commission Network, the Broadcasting, Entertainment, Communications and Theatre Union, The American Institute of Certified Planners, the Oregon Media Production Association, and others. We have also tried to be as comprehensive as possible by incorporating the thoughts, suggestions and concerns of the Washington State motion picture community.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### FEDERAL

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#)

[World Health Organization](#)

[Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#)

[Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces,](#)

[Businesses, Schools, and Homes](#)

[EPA'S list of disinfectants to use against COVID-19](#)[CDC General Business FAQs](#)

## **STATE**

[Healthy Washington–Roadmap to Recovery](#)

[Washington Filmworks COVID-19 Set Safety Checklist](#)

[Washington Filmworks COVID Production Resource Page](#)

[Washington State’s Official COVID-19 Website](#)

[Governor’s Coronavirus Resource Page](#)

[Washington State Department of Health](#)

Looking for information about the status of COVID-19 in our production centers of Spokane and Seattle? Visit these sites:

[Seattle and King County Public Health](#)

[Spokane Regional Health District](#)

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## **UNION INDUSTRY GUIDELINES FOR COVID-19**

[AICP COVID-19 Commercial Production Safety and Testing Protocol](#)

[Agreement](#)

[AICP COVID-19 Protocols Summary](#)

[COVID-19 Return to Work Agreement](#)

[The Safe Way Forward](#)

[IWLMSC Task Force White Paper](#)

[Producers Guild of America COVID Safety Protocols](#)

[IATSE COVID Tip Sheet](#)

[IATSE COVID Job Hazard Analysis](#)

[IATSE Guidelines for Controlling COVID](#)

[IATSE Returning to Work](#)