

**The South Simcoe Theatre Reopening Guide: Putting Safety First**  
**Version 8 February 18, 2022**  
**Approved by Town of Innisfil, November 2021**

Table of Contents

<b>1. Preamble/Assumptions</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Communication &amp; Education</b>	<b>3</b>
Communication & Education: Prior to Coming to the Theatre	3
Communication & Education: Signage at the Theatre	4
Messaging: Where & How	
5	
<b>3. Vaccination Policy / Health &amp; Safety / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Contact Tracing</b>	
Vaccination Policy for Patrons & Production Teams/Casts	6
Covid-19 Health and Safety Coordinator	7
Physical Distancing	
7	
Patrons	8
Front of House Volunteers	
8	
Refreshment Volunteers	8
Cast & Crew	9
Rapid Testing	9
Hand Washing	9
Gloves and Where to Use Them	10
Masks & Face Coverings	10
Respiratory Etiquette	10
Screening Protocols	10
Box Office Safety	11
Health & Safety Training	11
Contact Tracing	11
Responding to Confirmed Cases	11
<b>4. Cleaning &amp; Sanitizing Procedures</b>	<b>12</b>
Cleaning and Sanitizing High-Touch Areas	12
Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols	13
<b>5. Other Production Considerations</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. Compliance</b>	<b>16</b>

7.	<b>References</b>	16
8.	<b>Appendices</b>	
	Appendix 1 - Old Town Hall Seating Plan (Option 2 - 50% Capacity)	17
	Appendix 2 - Overview of SST COVID-19 Policies for Website V8 February 18, 2022	18

## 1. Preamble / Assumptions

### Preamble

In August 2020, the Association of Community Theatres - Central Ontario (ACT-CO) developed a comprehensive reopening guide for Community Theatres. A later revision of the ACT-CO document (April 2021) includes references to recommendations from the *The Live Performance Health and Safety Advisory Committee* and the *Ontario Government Ministry of Labour* which are specific to professional theatres. Similar to the ACT-CO document, this SST Guide has been adapted to reflect the particular needs of the patrons, members and volunteers at The South Simcoe Theatre (SST).

While it our intention to provide a safe reopening plan for SST, we acknowledge that this does not guarantee that, even if followed to the letter, this plan will prevent anyone attending or participating in an SST production in any capacity from contracting the virus. The intent of the document is to provide a comprehensive plan, based on the available scientific evidence and best practices, to ensure that all those who wish to return to the theatre, may do so in as safe a manner as possible.

This document liberally borrows from the ACT-CO document (V3 April 2021), with their permission. We would like to acknowledge the tremendous effort by ACT-CO to develop their guideline and we are grateful for their ongoing support during this challenging time.

As the status of the COVID-19 Pandemic is in a constant state of flux, this document and the protocols employed on-site by SST will be changed as required to ensure compliance with the current requirements of the Town of Innisfil, the Province of Ontario and the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit.

### Assumptions

Based on the *Province of Ontario Roadmap to Reopen* (May 2021) the Provincial government has allowed theatres to open to full capacity, and as of March 1, 2022 with the option of vaccine requirements and other safety measures such as distancing and enhanced cleaning procedures still in place.

In spite of this change, SST has elected to keep seating at approximately 50% occupancy for the remainder of the 2021-2022 season. While we may be eager to return to at

least “near normal” we only have one chance to get it right, so that we do not jeopardize our further return to a “new normal” in 2022-23. Cautious optimism must prevail as the weeks and months unfold.

The Ontario Government’s *Reopening Ontario Legislation* (Reg 364/20) required that theatres have a vaccination policy in place as of September 22, 2021. Specifically, theatres must “establish, implement and ensure compliance with a COVID-19 vaccination policy” (2.1(a)). Furthermore Section 2.1.1 indicates that it “requires each patron who enters an area of the premises... to provide, at the point of entry, proof of identification and of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.” SST, in keeping with this legislation, and out of an abundance of caution for the safety of patrons, actors, volunteers, production team members and any other persons who will be working on any production, required the aforementioned to be vaccinated as well, unless they are able to produce exemption document from a medical professional as outlined in the Regulation, or fall into one of the exemption categories outline in the regulation under section 2.1(6). (*See Section 3, page 6 for details of the SST vaccination policy*). This vaccination requirement will be monitored over the coming months in keeping with the Province of Ontario’s most recent directions contained in *A Plan to Safety Reopen Ontario and Management Covid-19 for the Long Term*.

The most recent provincial government announcement has allowed for the removal of proof of vaccination passports effective March 1, 2022 for non-essential businesses. It also allows for businesses to keep this requirement in place should they deem it necessary. Out of an abundance of caution, and in deference to those patrons who have already purchased tickets and subscriptions to date, the Board has decided to continue to require proof of vaccination from patrons and volunteers for the duration of the run of BURN. Masking will be required and distanced seating will be implemented for the remainder of the 2021-2022 season. As always we will follow the guidance of the legislation while doing everything we can to ensure the safety and enjoyment of our patrons, actors and volunteers.

It should also be noted that all information contained herein applies equally to pre-rehearsal and rehearsal periods, as well as during performances unless otherwise noted.

## **2. Communication, Education and Messaging**

Some individuals may be resistant to face coverings, physical distancing, proof of vaccination and other safety protocols that will be implemented. Widespread messaging by SST, across all platforms, as well as consistent modelling by members and volunteers, will ensure that anyone entering the Old Town Hall for whatever reason will understand that the new protocols are for their protection as well as those around them.

### **Prior to Coming to the Theatre**

SST's COVID-19 protocols and expectations will be communicated to patrons, members and volunteers prior to coming to the theatre.

Patrons, members and volunteers will be informed through various communication channels of the theatre's policy restricting people exhibiting symptoms of COVID-19 and people who have come into contact with anyone who has tested positive for COVID-19. Patrons, members and volunteers will be advised that they will not be allowed access to the facility if they develop symptoms prior to the event or if they are required to self-isolate for any reason outlined in SMDHU's class order for self-isolation. <https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/docs/default-source/COVID-orders-and-instructions-/class-order-s-22-self-isolation-smdhu-final.pdf?sfvrsn=8>

SST's expectations around physical distancing, mask wearing, refreshment availability, queuing, using washrooms, and entrances and exits into and out of the theatre will also be communicated. All messaging will be positive, practical and proportionate, and SST will make changes to the communication as required as provincial and health unit guidelines dictate.

Additionally, communication around patron behaviour related to adherence to protocols will also be developed and communicated widely.

Eg. (Excerpted and adapted from Soulpepper Theatre's Code of Conduct)

*The South Simcoe Theatre is committed to providing a welcoming and comfortable environment for everyone, and pledges to treat all visitors with the utmost respect and dignity. We ask that visitors reciprocate the same in their treatment of our performers, volunteers, Board Members and other guests, whether in person or online. As of [date], we ask that every person in the theatre adhere to all rules and protocols regarding COVID-19 (vaccination requirements, physical distancing, wearing of masks or face coverings, handwashing, not attending the theatre if you have any symptoms, etc.). The South Simcoe Theatre reserves the right to deny entry to anyone exhibiting symptoms or who are not in compliance with the aforementioned, if they who do not fall under one of the allowed exemptions.*

## **Signage at the Theatre**

At the theatre signage will be used to clarify the new protocols and expectations. Signs will be located at the front door and other high-traffic places within the theatre.

<https://www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/Topics/COVID-19/Reopening-and-Operating-your-Business-Safely#4ec028b2-53a3-4b29-b120-c0759683a3b8>

Sign content to be posted outside may include:

1. general information about COVID-19,
2. vaccination requirements, including proof of vaccination status
3. maximum capacity information, as applicable
4. face covering requirements while in the Old Town Hall
5. screening questions, including diagnosis, symptoms, travel, contact with someone who has COVID-19, is quarantining, or is awaiting the results of a covid test, building access information, including lining up or queuing, and
6. that entrance to the theatre will be denied to anyone who does not pass the screening process. SST will offer patrons an exchange or refund if so.

Internal signage at the box office, refreshment area, and washrooms can provide:

1. physical distancing protocols,
2. entrance and exit instructions to control flow of traffic,
3. information and instructions on safe hand hygiene and mask etiquette,
4. cleaning and disinfecting protocols that the theatre has undertaken (in accordance with the guidance in Public Health Canada Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces and Public Health Ontario Cleaning and Disinfection for Public Settings).

Upper theatre entrance signage will consist of:

1. entrance and exit protocols,
2. program pick up and drop off instructions, and QR code for programs (where implemented)
3. aisle and seat identification to allow audience to find seats more easily.

Signage in the dressing room area will include:

1. Covid-19 protocols and procedures,
2. maximum capacity information
3. building access information,
4. hand and respiratory hygiene reminders
5. screening questions and instructions to self-monitor while in the theatre
6. No sharing of make-up etc. and reminders to clean personal equipment
7. Physical distancing requirements as appropriate and when masks are required

Signage in the booth and backstage will include:

1. occupancy limits for backstage area as appropriate to each production,
2. physical distancing requirements, including dressing rooms,
3. mask wearing protocols,
4. hand and respiratory hygiene reminders
5. limiting more than one user per item (tools, makeup, props, headsets),
6. cleaning and sanitation of shared and personal equipment,
7. cleaning and sanitizing protocols.

## Messaging

### *Where to Message*

Message *everywhere*. The more people that see the message, the less likely that we will have to explain on the phone, in the box office and at the front of house. Consider including including a tag line eg. as included in the title to this re-opening document “We’re putting safety first” or “SST: Putting Safety First”. SST should continue to use its existing messaging platforms, including:

- SST Website
- Social media channels, FB, IG and Twitter
- Email via existing MailChimp account
- Local Media, eg. Bradford Today, [simcoe.com](http://simcoe.com), other print media, radio and TV as appropriate
- SST’s YouTube channel

### *How to Message*

- **Marketing.** All signage should be professionally produced in large, easy to read font and laminated. Large posters should be mounted on foam core for ease of display.
- **Photos and Videos.** Photos and videos can be useful to show how actors, crew and volunteers are complying with the new protocols during rehearsals, set building, box office procedures, as well as patrons having fun at the theatre while complying. Visuals can also be used to demonstrate cleaning and disinfecting measures taken by the theatre. A short video with a message from the President / Board, along with the above visuals could be done easily at no cost, and posted on all Social Media sites, via YouTube, as well as communicated via email.
- **Announcements.** Pre-show announcements should clearly outline what is expected of those in attendance.

### 3. **Vaccination Policy / Health & Safety / Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) / Contact Tracing**

#### **Vaccination Policy**

As of September 22, 2021, the Ontario Government’s *Reopening Ontario* Legislation (Reg 364/20) requires that theatres have a vaccination policy in place. Specifically, theatres must “establish, implement and ensure compliance with a COVID-10 vaccination policy” Section 2.1(a). Further Section 2.1.1 of the legislation indicates that it “requires each patron who enters an area of the premises... to provide, at the point of enter, proof of identification and of being fully vaccinated against COVID 19.” SST, in keeping with this legislation, and out of an abundance of caution for the safety of patrons, actors, volunteers, production team members and any other persons who will be working on any production, will require the all of the aforementioned to be

vaccinated as well, unless they are able to produce exemption document from a medical professional as outline in the Regulation, or fall into one of the exemption categories outline in the regulation under section 2.1(6).

### **Vaccination Policy for Patrons and Production Teams**

All SST patrons and members of the production teams (cast and crew) will need to provide proof of full vaccination status with either a Health Canada or CDC authorized vaccine. “Fully vaccinated” means that the date of attendance must be at least 14 days after receiving either the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or 14 days following a single dose vaccine (i.e. Johnson & Johnson). An official proof of vaccination receipt – displayed either on a smartphone or with a physical copy of the proof of vaccination – must be presented at time of entry into the theatre, and for patrons, along with a performance ticket.

Children under 5, who are accompanied by an adult that meets the above vaccination requirements, will be allowed entry in accordance with the prevailing medical guidance at the time of the performance. Exceptions will be made only for patrons who provide proof of exemption as required by the Province.

SST will not admit any patrons who are unable to provide this required documentation. This is in keeping with the allowances made by the Provincial Government allowing non-essential businesses to continue to request proof of vaccination after March 1, 2022 (*See preamble*)

### **Covid-19 Health and Safety Coordinator.**

One or more Board members or an ex officio volunteer will be designated the Covid-19 Health & Safety Coordinator (“Safety Coordinator”) for the theatre. According to the Ontario Government, performing arts venues should identify key people who have chief responsibilities for the implementation and adherence to the theatre’s Covid-19 Safety Plan, and also take on the responsibility for monitoring public health updates and convey same to the Board. Individuals with medical, health and safety, or risk management training/experience would be an asset.

The Safety Coordinator will have the following functions:

- Regularly review updates to provincial regulations, SMDHU class orders, instructions and recommendations
- Work closely with the Town of Innisfil, the SMDHU, the Board of the theatre and the producer of each show to implement the theatre’s Covid-19 Safety Plan.
- Help create and implement volunteer training that applies current information and best practices about infection control measures, including physical distancing, hand-washing, use of masks and/or other PPE, cleaning and disinfecting.

## **Physical Distancing.**

Public health guidance stresses that whenever possible, everyone should leave at least 2m between themselves and the person closest to them.

The following general protocols will be implemented at SST to support physical distancing, including:

- Minimize queuing by opening the house and box office earlier, to avoid lineups.
- Add additional access to the theatre via the two upper doors just east of the main door.
- Monitor lineups when they occur.
- Monitor for physical distancing and face covering use
- Utilize reserved seating
- Reduce seating capacity
- Consider shows with no intermissions but if intermissions are used, they will need to be longer to accommodate physical distancing for washrooms.
- Limit the number of volunteers in any one location

Specific physical distancing protocols during the run of a show include:

### *Patrons*

- Require patrons to wear masks at all times when in the theatre, including when in their seats.
- Maintain a 2m physical distance from other patrons not in their group, when not in their seats.
- Allow a maximum of two people in the washroom at any one time.
- Maintain 2m distance between patrons in the refreshment lineup (as applicable)
- Leave the theatre as directed immediately after a show. Do not wait to see the actors.
- Once in their seat, do not get up and walk around unless it is to go to the washroom.
- Follow directions of the front-of-house staff when entering/ exiting the theatre.
- If possible, house lights will be left at a quarter or a half so patrons can leave to use washroom during show and reduce pressure on facilities during intermission
- Consideration will be given to having an option to pre-purchase packaged snacks upon entry to the theatre and possibly allowing consumption in their seats and during good weather, encourage patrons to consume snacks outside of the theatre.

### *Front of House Volunteers*

- Use floor decals / high visibility tape to mark 2m.
- Add additional access to the theatre via the two upper doors just east of the main door.

- Limit front-of-house involvement with audience by using self-seating and contact-free programs (eg. Placing programs on seats vs. Handing them out).
- Use aisle signage and/or decals to assist patrons.
- Discourage congregation of patrons in the lobby, at the refreshment area or in the washrooms. Limit movement to designated areas.
- Require volunteers to wear medical masks and face shields (or safety glasses / goggles), and encourage regular hand washing / sanitizing (once per hour).

#### *Refreshment Volunteers*

- Consideration will be given to having an option to sell pre-packaged snacks prior to the beginning of the performance as well as at the intermission, and give consideration as to whether we will allow snacks to be consumed in the theatre to minimize congregation in the lobby.
- Have bottled beverages where possible, and station recycling bins upstairs outside the theatre for ease of disposal.
- Clearly mark 2m distance requirement when in line at the refreshment area
- Require volunteers to wear medical masks and face shields (or safety glasses / goggles), and encourage regular hand washing / sanitizing (eg. once per hour)
- To minimize contamination at the refreshment area, assign one volunteer to handle the cash and others to monitor the beverages and snacks (pre-packaged snacks and beverages will not be self-serve to minimize contact).
- Clearly identify serving and point of sale areas and distance them from each other to provide greater physical distancing between volunteers and patrons.
- Locate and clearly identify hand sanitizing stations nearby.

#### *Cast & Crew*

- Actors work in bubbles and/or practice physical distance when they can.
- Crew wear face coverings backstage and maintain 2m distance from actors whenever they can
- Tech or booth crew distance themselves from backstage as much as possible and wear masks when at the theatre. If there is close contact in the booth between operators, the theatre should consider installing a plexiglass barrier between
- No contact with audience before or after show
- Maintain at least 2m between audience and actors on stage, more if possible, and especially for musical theatre performances (i.e. No seating in the front centre row)
- Depending on cast size, consider taping off “squares” backstage to remind actors to not stand too close to each other as much as possible
- Set up dressing rooms to maximize distance between actors as much as possible.

#### **Rapid Testing Kits**

SST will provide free Rapid Testing Covid Antigen Kits, as supplied by the Province of Ontario. When made available to the theatre, these will be available to members of the cast, crew, volunteers, Board members or any others involved with SST who have business in the Old Town Hall and wish to test themselves prior to participating in any SST activities. Testing will be voluntary, and will be subject to availability of testing kits. Anyone who tests positive on the Rapid Test should report same to the Safety Coordinator, self-isolate and make follow the current directions of the Public Health unit regarding testing and isolation. The Safety Coordinator will work with the Production Team to determine whether rehearsals need to be suspended temporarily until further direction is obtained from the Health Unit. Any such decisions will be reported to the Board immediately.

### **Hand Washing.**

Frequent hand washing with soap and water is vital to help combat the spread of any virus. Everyone should wash their hands for twenty seconds at least every sixty minutes, and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel or dryer. Appropriate sanitizer may be used when a sink is not available. Sufficient hand sanitizer must be provided by SST and should be located at entry and exit points, refreshment area, box office, washrooms, dressing rooms, backstage and in the booth. Use no-touch sanitizing dispensers if possible.

### **Gloves.**

Gloves are not recommended when taking money, handling POS machines or credit cards, taking tickets, or handling food and beverages. Instead, volunteers are to regularly hand-wash / sanitize. (See above **Hand Washing**). Gloves are to be used for cleaning and disinfecting, followed by hand washing.

### **Masks and Face Coverings.**

Physical respiratory protection should be worn whenever people are within two metres (six feet) of each other (except under O.Reg 364/20 Section 2(4)(f) where it does not apply to a person who is ."performing or rehearsing in a... theatrical performance...". A 3-layer surgical or N95-type mask (if preferred by the wearer) and a face shield or goggles should be used when physical distancing of at least 2 metres cannot be reasonably maintained. Cloth masks are no longer recommended by the Health Unit (updated December 2021). This may include box office volunteers, front of house staff, refreshments area volunteers, and crew working backstage and in the booth. Anyone conducting screening prior to entry will be expected to wear a 3-layer surgical mask (or N95-type mask if preferred by the wearer) and a face shield or goggles when dealing with patrons. Patrons are required to wear a mask at all times when in the theatre, including during the performance. If the government directives around face masks is relaxed it may still be wise to require patrons to wear face coverings and a decision will be made at that time by the Board and in keeping with the requirements of the Town of Innisfil. Face covering requirements for volunteers will include instruction on proper use (see **Health and Safety Training** below).

**Respiratory Etiquette.** Respiratory etiquette describes a combination of measures intended to minimize the dispersion of large particle respiratory droplets to reduce virus transmission when an infected or ill person is coughing, sneezing, laughing, or talking. Individuals should cough or sneeze into a tissue, or the bend of the arm, not their hand. Tissues should be disposed of as soon as possible in a lined waste container and hand hygiene performed immediately.

**Screening Protocols.** Screening of patrons, volunteers, and cast / crew will be implemented by way of a self-assessment tool completed prior to coming to the theatre and/or by on-site by volunteers asking questions before entering the building.

- Cast/crew and volunteers will be actively screened for COVID-19. i.e. asked Covid-19 screening questions prior to entering.
- Patrons will be screened passively. i.e. signage posted at entrances (see **Signage at the Theatre** above)
- If anyone “fails” screening, and are denied entry, they will be advised to seek assessment from a health care provider and they (and their group if applicable) will be denied entry. This protocol will include offering a credit for a future production or a full refund. This will be coordinated with the Box Office Manager, and the on-site Covid-19 Health & Safety Officer will provide support to the volunteer if a patron is turned away.

<https://covid-19.ontario.ca/screen-covid-19-going-any-public-place>

**Box Office Safety.** Touchless ticket options reduce the possibility of contamination. This includes such options as print-at-home tickets, e-mailed tickets, a preference for credit or debit sales using the existing POS machine, and if the technology is in place, the use of ticket scanners. As well, patrons will be asked to hand sanitize before touching the POS machine and box office staff will use approved sanitizing wipes on the POS machine between clients.

**Health and Safety Training.** All volunteers and production members will be provided with information on COVID-19 symptoms, preventative measures, and the established theatre Covid-19 protocols. Training /information will include screening requirements, hand hygiene, the proper use of masks and where gloves are necessary, cleaning and sanitizing procedures for rehearsals and productions, and respiratory etiquette. Front of House volunteers will be given strategies and support for dealing with patrons who are unwilling to adhere to SST’s protocols or unable to understand why the theatre has undertaken the steps it has, and the Covid Safety Coordinator will be onsite for all performances to provide additional support. Front of House and other Volunteers will also be provided with in person training on the above, as well as the safe use of cleaning products and cleaning and disinfecting protocols, and the schedule for cleaning. Training will be provided by the Covid Safety Coordinator prior to the opening of each show, and Health & Safety information will also be provided to the

production teams and casts at their first read through meeting by the Covid Safety Coordinator.

**Contact Tracing.** Ontario has instituted a COVID-19 alert app. However, not all Ontarians have downloaded the app. Therefore, in order to be able to provide contact information to Public Health should someone test positive, SST will maintain an attendance record of rehearsals (cast/crew) and performances (patrons/cast/crew/volunteers). These records should include contact information (cell phone # if possible or home phone #). For groups of tickets purchased by one single person, the contact person's name and contact information is sufficient information for the purposes of contact tracing and is collected via the Box Office ticketing program. This is to be kept for at least 30 days in case someone was at the theatre during that time, has been confirmed to have Covid-19, and Public Health needs the information for contact tracing.

### **Responding to Confirmed Cases**

If someone is confirmed to be infected with COVID-19 via a PCR test and the theatre is notified by the individual, the theatre should ensure that the SMDHU is immediately notified. The Safety Coordinator or delegate is responsible for notifying the SMDHU. This information, including their identity, is confidential under the Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA) and no identifying information can be provided to anyone other than the SMDHU. They will guide SST on next steps, and they are typically responsible for notifying others who may have been exposed. Information that will also be required includes:

- Determine what areas of the theatre were visited, used, or impacted by the volunteer or patron.
- Assess whether the person's role put them within two metres of anyone else
- Work with the SMDHU and follow their recommendations
- If patrons or production team members become symptomatic while at the theatre and declare it to one of the volunteers, the volunteer would immediately isolate them from others and inform the person in charge at the time of the event (e.g., Stage Manager, Producer, Covid-19 Safety Coordinator). If this occurs in the absence of the Safety Coordinator, this information must be conveyed to the Safety Coordinator. The SMDHU would then be notified at that time by the Safety Coordinator or delegate for further guidance and the individual would be sent home to self-isolate until they receive further guidance from the SMDHU.
- Based on the information received from the SMDHU related to a confirmed case related to a patron or production team member, a decision would be made whether to cease production in conjunction with the Covid-19 Safety Officer, the Production Team and the Board at the earliest possible time.
- See also page 9 re Rapid Testing Kits and the steps to be followed for a positive Rapid Test

#### **4. Cleaning & Sanitizing Procedures**

##### **Cleaning and Sanitizing High-Touch Areas**

Regularly clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects that are touched frequently. The product used to disinfect should have an 8-number DIN and be on Health Canada's list of approved hard surface disinfectants against Covid-19.

<https://www.canada.ca/en/health-canada/services/drugs-health-products/disinfectants/covid-19/list.htm>

Public Health Ontario recommends cleaning and disinfecting at least twice daily but SST may want to add extra cleaning and disinfecting during rehearsals. Public Health Canada recommends that you do not sweep or dust. Instead use a wet cloth or damp mop so as not to disturb any virus droplets. The number of waste receptacles should be increased to reduce the accumulation of litter. A cleaning protocol will be established that includes high contact surfaces throughout the theatre, as noted below.

##### **Public Areas (lobby, hallway leading upstairs, refreshment area)**

- Door handles, handrails, push plates
- Handrails for stairs, ramps
- Light switches and thermostats
- Display cases
- Box Office counter
- Telephones, Point of Sale terminals, and other keypads
- Tables and chairs
- Beverage stations, water coolers
- Trash receptacle touch points

##### **Restrooms**

- Door handles and push plates
- Sink faucets and counters, and toilet handles
- Lids of containers for disposal of women's sanitary products
- Soap dispensers and towel dispenser handles
- Trash receptacle touch points

##### **Back of House, Dressing Areas, Box Office (including booth)**

- Individual office and other room furniture
- Door handles, push plates, doorways, railings
- Light switches and thermostats
- Counter tops, cabinet handles, and chairs in dressing rooms
- Props tables
- Telephones, computers, other keypads, mouse
- Microphones
- Headsets
- Backstage and booth technical equipment

- Trash receptacle touch points
- Seat arm rests and aisle railings in the theatre

**There is to be no sharing of makeup, wigs, jewellery, or costumes during rehearsals or the run of a show. All props should be disinfected before and after each show by the ASM or delegate.**

#### Kitchen and Food Preparation Areas

- Handles of all kitchen equipment doors, cabinets, push pads
- Counter surfaces
- Light switches
- Handles of beverage and towel dispensers
- Handles of sinks, including handwashing sink and mop sink
- Cleaning tools and buckets
- Trash receptacle touch points

#### Cleaning and Disinfecting Protocols

1. Both cleaning and disinfecting are required since disinfecting doesn't remove dirt and cleaning doesn't eliminate germs. If possible, use a product that does both.
2. Cleaning Technique. Clean high-touch areas by using water and soap or cleaning solution to remove dirt and impurities from surfaces and objects and reduce germ counts.
3. Disinfecting Technique. High-touch areas should be disinfected using materials effective against COVID-19, using approved disinfection and cleaning products.
4. Following the Manufacturer's Instructions. In all instances, including technical and production equipment such as microphones and headsets, it is important that cleaning procedures follow the manufacturer's instructions. This will increase the likelihood of a thorough cleaning while not damaging the equipment or voiding a warranty.
5. Disposal: Place gloves, used mop heads, and other disposable items used for cleaning and disinfecting in garbage bags and/or garbage receptacles immediately after use.
6. Frequency: The frequency of cleaning high-touch areas will follow Public Health Guidelines.
7. Documentation: Documenting that health and safety practices were followed at the correct intervals can help a theatre show that it behaved reasonably under the circumstances. Cleaning logs need to be carefully entered and preserved for reference. Checklists can be provided so that volunteers are clear what is required

#### 5. Other Production Considerations

There are a broad range of production concerns and issues that SST will face as we re-open. The following is not an exhaustive list, and may apply to some productions, but not all, and in varying degrees from production to production. This list should be reviewed by the Producer and the Stage Manager, with input from the Director and Covid-19 Safety Officer (if required), to determine if any of these considerations need to be addressed as part of the production. Concerns or questions should be brought to the Board in the event that further discussion, or financial approvals are required.

- Casting and auditions. In the early stages, SST will continue to conduct auditions remotely. A decision to move back to in person auditions will be made by the Board, in consultation with the Covid-19 Safety Coordinator, and in keeping with provincial and SMDHU guidelines as appropriate.
- In consultation with the production team and actors, SST may elect to use protective barriers in the dressing rooms to separate actors.
- Limit contact on stage and eliminate close contact (may involve removing scenes that require close contact). If closeness is required, minimize the number and duration of scenes involving close contact. Intimate and close contact scenes should be limited to body parts easily sanitized (e.g. neck kissing rather than mouth-to-mouth). If kissing cannot be eliminated, ask actors to rinse their mouths with a hydrogen peroxide-based oral rinse prior to the performance. As always, cast members who are uncomfortable with intimacy at this time will not be expected to engage in these types of scenes. Another option is to consider casting real life “bubbled couples” in roles in productions that require this level of intimacy.
- Masks are to be worn at all times when in the Old Town Hall unless an actor is on stage rehearsing or performing, or eating/drinking. However, masks may be worn during rehearsals and this is at the discretion of the cast and production team.
- All those involved in a production will be required to conduct a self-assessment prior to coming to the theatre and will be actively screened prior to entering.
- ANYONE involved with a show who has symptoms of cold, flu, or Covid-19, have been diagnosed with Covid-19, or in contact with someone who has been diagnosed or is awaiting the results of a Covid test is to stay home and contact the theatre as soon as possible.
- Contact the rights holder to request permission if scenes are going to be eliminated or changed substantially.
- Position musicians and/or singers to maximize physical distancing from other performers and audience members. Players of wind or brass instruments must be separated from spectators and others in the orchestra by plexiglass or some other impermeable barrier.
- Singing or playing of instruments may result in a greater dispersion of droplets due to higher density breathing which requires additional steps to be taken.

- Develop a method of movement for backstage crew that reduces contact with cast. Maintain specific “bubbles” within which cast and crew can work, is recommended where possible.
- Reduce the number of volunteers on stage / back stage for each show. Each production team needs to develop a strategy for staffing levels during set build, tech set up and check, rehearsal, run, and strike.
- Minimize the sharing of items such as tools, equipment, props, instruments, and musical scores. If sharing cannot be avoided, establish a cleaning and disinfecting protocol before each person uses the item. If an item is shared, each person should wash his/her hands before and after using the item.
- To further mitigate risks, crew, director, producer, and designers are required to wear a mask while at the theatre.
- With the very real possibility of smaller houses, consider extending a run to ensure all subscribers and ticket holders can attend the production.
- Consider acquiring royalties and licences earlier than normal for all productions. With cancellations and changes, royalty houses may be extremely busy.
- Eliminate or reduce the sharing of technical equipment. Theatres can use the same booth operators, backstage crew, and SM throughout the production. If this is not possible but there is adequate technical equipment for each crew member to use, label each item with the crew member’s name, store in a plastic bag, and place in a bin at the end of each show. If neither of these options is feasible, reduce sharing of items by keeping the same crew on for each week during the run of the show. This will allow time between each week’s run for the headset and microphone to lie dormant.

## 6. Compliance

It is the expectation that all those taking part in or attending any production at SST, including Board Members, Volunteers, Actors, Production Team and audience members, adhere to the health and safety guidelines set out in this Guide. This includes, but is not limited to being vaccinated, wearing appropriate face coverings, regular hand sanitizing, physical distancing as appropriate to the scenario, self-screening, using provided Rapid Test kits if desired, and staying away from the theatre when sick or having been in contact with someone with a confirmed Covid case or who is awaiting the results of a Covid test.

There are no exceptions to these requirements, and those who are unable or unwilling to comply with these health and safety protocols will be denied entry to the facility, and

may be removed from the production upon further adjudication by the Production Team and Board.

While it is understood that vaccinations cannot prevent all cases of Covid-19, current scientific data supports that it protects most people to a high degree, greatly reduces the severity of the illness should one still contract it, and as well, may limit its spread.

## **7. References**

- ACTCO Reopening Guide April 2021
- Town of Innisfil Return to Play and Town of Innisfil Covid Guidelines
- Reopening Ontario Act 2020, Reg 364/20

## **8. Appendices**

**Appendix 1 - Old Town Hall Seating Plan (Option 2 - 50% Capacity)**

**Appendix 2 - Overview of SST COVID-19 Policies for Website**

V8 February 18, 2022

Option 2 Seating Configuration at 50% Capacity										
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	1 to 6			7 to 14				15 to 20		
	28 seats			32 seats				30 seats	Total 90 seats	
Total capacity - 181 fixed seats, 8 loose seats (not shown)										

## **COVID POLICIES (CURRENT TO February 18, 2022)**

**Updates will be made to this Policy as Government Legislation and Public Health Guidance changes. Please check our website for updates.**

Vaccination Requirements - all SST patrons, volunteers, cast and production team members will need to provide proof of full vaccination status with either a Health Canada or CDC authorized vaccine. "Fully vaccinated" means that the date of attendance must be at least 14 days after receiving either the second dose of a two-dose COVID-19 vaccine or 14 days following a single dose vaccine (i.e. Johnson & Johnson). An official proof of vaccination receipt — displayed either on a smartphone or with a physical copy of a QR code — must be presented at time of entry into the theatre.

For your safety, as well as that of our performers and volunteers, and in accordance with this Provincial order, SST will not admit any patrons who are unable to provide this required documentation.

All members of each production are required to comply with these requirements as well.

*\*\*NB: Further to the recent announcement by the Provincial Government SST has elected to keep the proof of vaccination requirement in place after March 1, 2022.*

Masks - All patrons, SST volunteers and visitors will be required to wear a mask that fully covers the nose, mouth, and chin at all times during their visit to the theatre. Masks should fit snugly against the face without gaps. Three-layer surgical masks or N95-type masks are recommended. Neck gaiters and bandanas are not permitted. Masks must be worn by audience members during the performance.

Physical Distancing - Measures have been put into place to assist in keeping patrons apart from other patrons as much as possible throughout their visit to the theatre. We ask that our patrons self-monitor their physical distance around other patrons as well.

Sanitizer Stations - We ask that you use the hand sanitizer provided as you enter the building. Sanitizer can also be found at designated points throughout the building.

Cleaning - Enhanced cleaning measures have been put into place before, during and after each rehearsal and performance. Common contact surfaces and washrooms are regularly sanitized by our volunteers. Capacity limits will be in place for the washrooms, so remember to "go before you come"!

Contact Tracing - For contact tracing purposes, the ticket purchaser will be considered the primary contact for any guests in their party. The Box Office system will capture and collect the contact information for ticket holders should this be required for contact tracing.

*Refreshments* - Please note that our first show BURN has no intermission. As such refreshments will not be for sale, but water will be available. The availability of refreshments for future performances will be determined on a show-by-show basis.

*Disclaimer* - By purchasing a ticket to any performance at The South Simcoe Theatre, or participating as a member of the cast or production team, you are agreeing to abide by all of the guidelines listed above without exception. Compliance with these guidelines minimizes the risk of exposure to COVID-19 but cannot eliminate the potential of exposure and you accept any remaining risks. SST reserves the right to cancel any ticketed event if the rate of community transmission of COVID-19 increases at a rate where the public's health warrants it.

*Questions?*

Please email [info@TheSouthSimcoeTheatre.com](mailto:info@TheSouthSimcoeTheatre.com) with any questions related to our COVID Policy.