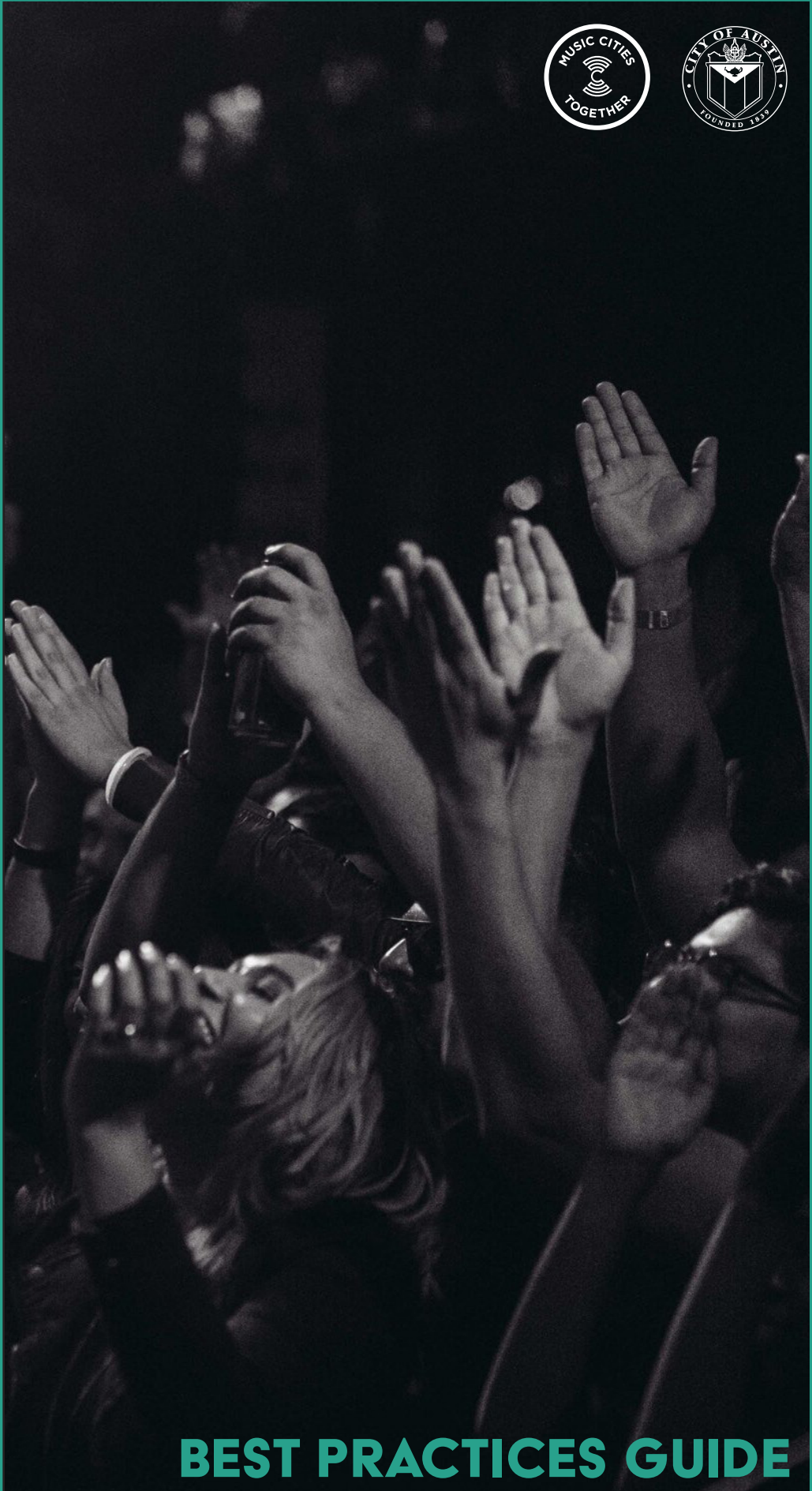


# REOPEN EVERY VENUE SAFELY



**BEST PRACTICES GUIDE**



CREDIT: CODY ROSS COWAN

# REOPEN EVERY VENUE SAFELY

## AUSTIN GUIDE

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### INTRODUCTION

For many in Austin's music industry, the world stopped spinning on its axis on or around March 6, 2020. SXSW was one of the first major music events of the year to be cancelled by a locality, and seemingly everything else from house parties to music festivals were left in stasis as the world took shelter in the midst of a global pandemic. As many have said, live music was the first to stop and will likely be last to come back.

Fast forward 90 days and many in the music industry are in the process of thinking about what's next. How do venues, artists, production/venue staff go back to work safely? Without question, the idea of "going back to normal" feels like a misguided desire. The considerations for venues, staff and artists are new and will be fundamentally changed.

### BEGINNING THE DISCUSSION ABOUT REOPENING

Many great organizations and individuals have been putting in long hours on this question. The City of Austin has partnered with Music Cities Together through their Reopen Every Venue Safely initiative and Red River Cultural District to provide an overview of the available research and community conversations. Our goal is to help venues balance the adjustment of human behavior and interaction needed to benefit public health and keep Austin's cultural heartbeat beating through live music.

### SORTING THROUGH THE INFORMATION

We have organized everything we found, and distilled it down into bite-sized chunks of information rather than a long report. The content is organized around people — because in the end, that's really who we're trying to protect, and provide a smooth transition for them to modify what used to be normal behavior.

The information is organized in several ways primarily based on actions that you should consider doing and actions that you could consider doing. Next, we have provided some timing suggestions relative to Prior to Show, Show Day and Post Show actions. Finally, we've provided a

preliminary cost analysis and a rationale for why this is being proposed like:

- Adjustments to policies, practices and procedures (Policies)
- Reduction of surfaces people touch (Surfaces)
- Maximize safe social distancing practices (Distance)
- Investments in infrastructure (Invest)

The sections are designed as tables so that you can easily sort through the material. We've also organized the information differently in the appendices so that you can print out lists and use them as punch lists during your preparations.

### A BRIEF NOTE BEFORE WE GO ANY FURTHER

For the purposes of this guide we are focusing on practical actions venue owners/operators can undertake when they decide it is time to reopen safely. We are not delving into state and local orders that are dynamic and establish the minimum standards that must be followed upon re-opening. However, it is a great idea to keep in contact with the City of Austin's Music and Entertainment Division who has staff available to help you understand and think through the most current state of reopening.

If a venue endeavors to open, this is primarily a decision based on what they feel is safe for staff, artists and guests and what makes financial sense, not what phase or stage has been named. We further recognize not all venues will be able to afford some of the actions here, and this report is not advancing the notion that any of these are "all or nothing" type suggestions.

The fact of the matter is live shows may struggle making the economics work at 25 or 50% capacity. Our interest here is not to advocate for re-opening, but to providing one piece of the safe reopening puzzle around people and tangible actions to get venues prepared with knowledge and information. Finally, this is by no means the final document as more information is coming from great sources on a daily basis. Please check Appendix 5 for more reading on the matter.

# ARTISTS & PERFORMERS

## LOW COST/NO COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Establish minimum safety procedures band members and crew must adhere to	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Clearly describe your venue plans and specific public health requirements to artists, booking staff, promoters, agents and managers in show offers, contracts and all lead-up communication	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Create “Know before you go” One-Pager/communication, including all safety and mandatory policies	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Work with artist to determine appropriately distanced stage plot	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Advance technical staff who may need to use FOH or lighting desks	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>

SHOW  
DAY

Ensure that artists adhere to agreed upon stage plot	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Ensure that artists are respecting appropriate equipment storage	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
Ensure that FOH or Lighting technical staff are properly educated on travel paths, procedures, etc. for utilizing house consoles	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>

### WHAT YOU COULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Recommend artists invest in PPE (masks, gloves, etc.) and cleaning supplies for their gear	💰	<b>POLICIES</b>
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# ARTISTS & PERFORMERS

## SOME COST/HIGH COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

SHOW  
DAY

Utilize sanitation stations/cleaning supplies	\$\$\$	<b>SURFACES</b>
Switch artist hospitality from provided meals to buy-outs	\$\$\$	<b>POLICIES</b>

POST  
SHOW

Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies artists if a guest at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$\$	<b>INVEST</b>
Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies artists if a staff member at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$\$	<b>INVEST</b>

### WHAT YOU COULD DO

POST  
SHOW

Implement a technology solution for contact tracing	\$\$\$\$	<b>INVEST</b>
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# VENUE & PRODUCTION STAFF

## LOW COST/NO COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Assign a Health and Safety Coordinator	\$	POLICIES
Establish policies and procedures related to staff safety (masks, gloves, etc.)	\$	POLICIES
Establish handling/cleaning procedures for owned gear, artist gear and any other contact surfaces	\$	POLICIES
Establish handling procedures for owned gear, artist gear and any other contact surfaces	\$	POLICIES
Establish policies related to artist relations (transportation, hospitality, etc.)	\$	POLICIES
Establish protocols related to guests and ticket holders following the customer journey	\$	POLICIES
Design stage plot and stage placement that ensures proper social distancing	\$	POLICIES
Determine appropriate space for house, band and press photographers	\$	POLICIES
Establish a plan and identify an isolation location for a guest to remain in prior to leaving the venue in the event that they develop COVID-19 symptoms while at the venue.	\$	POLICIES
Establish de-escalation protocols and security measures to address intoxicated guests who pose an increased risk during the pandemic	\$	POLICIES

SHOW  
DAY

Establish pre-doors team meetings to reiterate policies related to staff safety (masks, gloves, etc.)	\$	POLICIES
Ensure that staff are maintaining proper face coverings throughout the show	\$	POLICIES
Ensure that staff understand cleaning procedures for owned gear, artist gear and any other contact surfaces	\$	POLICIES
Ensure that stage is properly marked or advanced with production staff to maintain social distancing guidelines	\$	POLICIES
Clearly mark equipment storage that has been cleaned and separated from other bands	\$	POLICIES
Ensure that photographers remain in approved areas	\$	POLICIES
Communicate with venue neighbors and consider their needs to coordinate sidewalk space if the venue anticipated high ticket sales and a potential issue with distancing in line cues	\$	POLICIES
Sanitize FOH or Lighting desks if outside technical staff were involved		SURFACES

# VENUE & PRODUCTION STAFF

## SOME COST/HIGH COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Purchase all necessary PPE prior to first show, and ensure that regular purchasing can continue through booked shows	\$\$\$	INVEST
Install plexiglass shields around FOH and/or lighting desks	\$\$	DISTANCE
Install plexiglass shields for merch, food and beverage service	\$\$	DISTANCE
Install plexiglass shields for box office staff, if necessary	\$\$	DISTANCE

SHOW  
DAY

Utilize sanitation stations/cleaning supplies	\$\$	SURFACES
Ensure regular cleaning and sanitizing of high use areas and high touch equipment (mics, mic stands, cables, backline)	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Maintain proper signage throughout BOH and production areas	\$\$	POLICIES

POST  
SHOW

Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies artists if a guest at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$	INVEST
Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies artists if a staff member at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$	INVEST

### WHAT YOU COULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Investing in a deep clean (e.g. electrostatic)	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Convert restrooms to have as many touchless opportunities as possible (e.g. soap, paper towel dispensers, toilet paper, etc.)	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Install front door pull openers for all applicable doors and stalls	\$\$	SURFACES
Remove or disable ATMs	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Purchase electrostatic sprayer for continued deep cleaning	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Upgrading air flow and filtrations systems inside venues	\$\$\$	INVEST

SHOW  
DAY

Seated shows (allows for better distancing to be adhered to and enforced)	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
Increase staff to ensure choke points and patrons are moving safely throughout the venue	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
Increase staff to monitor capacity inside enclosed areas like bathrooms	\$\$	DISTANCE
Increase staff to provide more frequent trash collection	\$\$\$	SURFACES
Staff temperature check prior to work	\$\$\$	POLICIES

POST  
SHOW

Implement a technology solution for contact tracing	\$\$	INVEST
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# GUESTS

## LOW COST/NO COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Create a health and safety marketing campaign, incorporating all the new changes adopted at your venue	\$	POLICIES
Create "Know before you go" One-Pager/communication sent you prior to day of show	\$	POLICIES
Include some venue safety standards in weekly ads (digital/print)	\$	POLICIES
Establish procedure for bag checks that reduces touching or pat downs	\$	SURFACES
Install floor markings or stanchion/rope system to ensure proper queueing at bars and service counters	\$	DISTANCE
Maintain free flow for walkways and paths and utilize visible signage designating single-direction lanes and minimizing unplanned interactions	\$	DISTANCE
Plan for orchestrated exit by row or section to reduce volume of people exiting into lobby space at the same time	\$	DISTANCE

SHOW  
DAY

Ensure that guests are maintaining proper face coverings and consider making inexpensive masks available at entry or selling branded masks or bandanas	\$	DISTANCE
Reinforce signage that enforces social and physical distancing and consider gracious messaging to reduce resistance to following minimum standards/house rules	\$	DISTANCE
Ensure signage is present for hand washing or sanitizing stations that is clearly visible in a crowd	\$	DISTANCE
Ensure that queueing is orderly with security staff	\$	POLICY + DISTANCE

### WHAT YOU COULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Offer packages for guests that include prepaid food and beverage	\$	DISTANCE
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SHOW  
DAY

Require digital guest lists vs. paper with email addresses	\$	SURFACES + POLICIES
Consider stanchions or other crowd control measures to help reinforce physical and social distancing	\$	DISTANCE
Consider signage at merch table with product details to avoid physical handling as much as possible	\$	SURFACES
Consider limiting re-entry policies	\$	POLICIES



# GUESTS

## SOME COST/HIGH COST OPTIONS

### WHAT YOU SHOULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Utilize digital ticketing or scannable tickets to limit	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
Create signage to ensure that social and physical distance are encouraged (esp at box office and throughout the venue)	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
Procure hand washing or sanitizing stations are present throughout the venue	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
Provide for street/floor decals to designate responsible queueing	\$\$\$	DISTANCE

SHOW  
DAY

Ensure proper plexiglass protections are in place for entry and ID's are checked without handling	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
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POST  
SHOW

Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies guests if someone at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$\$	INVEST
Ensure that there is a notification system that notifies guests if a staff member at a given show has tested positive for COVID-19	\$\$\$	INVEST

### WHAT YOU COULD DO

PRIOR  
TO  
SHOW

Utilize technology to establish a staggered entry time for patrons	\$\$\$	INVEST
Fully paced marketing campaign, with regular communication, starting two to three weeks before opening and continues up until first show	\$\$\$	DISTANCE POLICIES +
Ensure that hand washing or sanitizing stations are touchless	\$\$\$	INVEST SURFACES +
Purchase magnetometers or handheld wands for security check	\$\$\$	INVEST SURFACES +

SHOW  
DAY

To the extent possible, allow queueing for quarantine groups	\$\$\$	DISTANCE POLICIES +
Provide for multiple entry and exit points to reduce lines	\$\$\$	DISTANCE
If an ID has to be handled, ensure gloves change between patrons	\$\$\$	SURFACES POLICIES +
Guest temperature check prior to entry	\$\$\$	SURFACES POLICIES +
App-based, mobile or touchless payment options inside venue	\$\$\$	SURFACES POLICIES +
Offer table service instead of walkup bars	\$\$\$	SURFACES POLICIES +

POST  
SHOW

Implement a technology solution for contact tracing	\$\$\$	INVEST
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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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In the face of a total shutdown of the live music industry, Reopen Every Venue Safely (REVS) was created, rooted in the idea that community can create shared learnings and efficient solutions in a time of crisis. The REVS goal is not the premature opening of venues. Rather, it is focused on ensuring our community is prepared when the time comes.

Reopening live music is a complicated dynamic that requires tight coordination with local public health officials, strong protections for musicians and venue workers and transparent, effective communications with audiences from venues that are fully engaged with, and knowledgeable about, the specific realities of live music in the midst of this pandemic.

In keeping with the larger REVS mission, this guide could not have been created without the support from key leaders, both locally and nationally.

Locally, this guide could not have been created without the support of our partners at the City of Austin: Development Services Department Entertainment Services Group, Economic Development Department Music & Entertainment Division and the Austin Center for Events.

The Austin REVS team responsible for drafting this guide was comprised of: Bobby Garza, Don Pitts, Brian Block, Cody Ross Cowan, Sara Henry, Stephanie Bergara, and Erica Shamaly.

This guide leaned heavily on the input, careful review and sometimes long conversations from several invaluable individuals: Cody Ross Cowan, Dave Machinist, Ryan Garrett, Christian Mella, Laurel White, Johnny Sarkis and Cory Baker.

Additionally, our community partners who supported our efforts are: Red River Cultural District, ATX Musicians, Health Alliance for Austin Musicians, Austin Music Foundation, and the SIMS Foundation.

REVS is guided by a well-respected team of leaders nationally that includes: Michael Bracy, Don Pitts, Dani Grant, Kate Becker, Ashlye Keaton, Kwende Kefentse and Bobby Garza.

We hope that this is the beginning of a larger, more extended and robust community conversation around reopening, repair and how the live music industry will respond when the time is right.

- *Music Cities Together*

# APPENDIX 1

## SAMPLE PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES

### **DURING LOAD IN/LOAD OUT BOTH ARTISTS AND PRODUCTION STAFF WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR:**

- Wearing masks when minimum social distancing (min. 6 ft apart) cannot be maintained
- Limiting the use of high traffic areas including corridors to essential personnel only (production/venue staff or artists ONLY)
- Utilizing ramps and other lifting apparatus to reduce need for 2 person lifting
- Minimize unnecessary contact by multiple people and only allow trained and designated crew to be involved
- Allowing extra time to integrate any additional control measures
- Regularly utilize sanitizing and cleaning stations for production crew and staff
- Adhering to advanced stage plot with appropriate social distancing

### **Option 1 for Gear Handling**

#### **Venue Assumes Responsibility for Handling**

- Staff will wear gloves at all times
- Artists will be responsible for wiping down gear as it comes out of the vehicle
- Venue Staff will be responsible for providing clean pop filters or disposable microphone covers for each vocal mic
- Venue will make PPE available should it be necessary
- Venue will clean and sterilize green room before and after each artist

### **Option 2 for Gear Handling**

#### **Artists Handle Artists' Instruments/Venue Handles Venue's**

- Artists will only handle gear they brought
- Artists will be responsible for wiping down gear as it comes out of the vehicle
- Artists to bring their own mics
- Artists will ensure they have requisite amount of PPE on hand
- Venue will make PPE available should it be necessary
- Venue will clean and sterilize green room before and after each artist

# APPENDIX 2

## ENHANCED CLEANING AND SANITIZING

### PROCEDURES

- Ensure regular cleaning and sanitizing of busy and high touch areas.
- Set clear use and cleaning guidance for toilets to ensure they are cleaned and sanitized frequently
- Hand washing or sanitizing stations should be visible and throughout all areas of the venue
- Documenting that health and safety practices were followed with cleaning logs

### High-Touch Areas

#### Public Areas (lobby, hallways, dining and food service areas)

- Door handles, handrails, push plates
- Bike rack or other barricades the public may touch
- Handrails for stairs, ramps, and escalators
- Elevator buttons – inside and out
- Reception desks and ticket counters
- Telephones, Point of Sale terminals, and other keypads
- Tables and chairs, including high chairs and booster seats
- Beverage stations, water fountains, vending and ice machines
- Trash receptacle touch points

#### Restrooms (front and back of house as well as portable units)

- 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
- Baby changing stations
- Trash receptacle touch points

#### Back of House Offices, Dressing Areas, Green Rooms, Production Areas

- Individual office and other room furniture
- Door handles, push plates, doorways, railings
- Light switches and thermostats
- Cabinet handles
- Telephones, computers, other keypads, mouse
- Microphones
- Backstage and technical equipment
- Trash receptacle touch points

#### Back of House 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 hand washing sink and mop sink
- Cleaning tools and buckets
- Trash receptacle touch points

# APPENDIX 3

## FOOD & BEVERAGE SERVICE

### Detail

- Consider using an app or other mobile payment option for food and beverage sales
- If touchless payment can't be offered, check presenters and pens must be sanitized between each transaction
- Consider offering table service or designate a pick up area for paid items to be placed
- If patrons must order directly from the bar, there should be floor clings/markings indicating the distance between people or groups.
- Consider using Plexiglas between the bartender and patrons
- Consider setting up lanes to enter and exit the bar.
- Replace menus with chalkboards or digital versions.
- In order to reduce exposure time and increase speed of service, consider limiting offerings in general at the bar to avoid confusion and patrons undecided on what to order
- Utilize pre-packaged products as much as possible and remove all fresh garnishes.
- Consider limiting the amount of alcohol sales allowed per person, or not offering shots and high ABV options, to ensure safety and compliance with safety guidelines.
- The number of staff working behind the bar should be limited if the allocated work space is very limited.
- There are two recommended ways to set up your bar service:

**OPTION 1**

Set up the bar cashier style where one bartender handles payments and the others make the drinks.

**OPTION 2**

Set up the bar with mirrored stations which are self-sufficient with a single POS terminal for each service or bartender and access to ice, product and handwashing station. Marking the floors may help to remind staff to stay in their zones.

*\*\*Ensure all areas are sanitized between each shift in either scenario.*

# APPENDIX 4

## CITY PERMITTED EVENTS

### Procedures

Austin-Travis County may require permits for your special event. Permits are required for activities like planning an outdoor event on public property, adding tents or temporary structures to an existing facility, organizing a moving event such as a race or parade, temporarily changing the use of your facility to accommodate an event and more.

Austin-Travis County will now require new COVID-19 health and safety plans to be submitted as part of the permit application process.

### Resources

Review COVID-19 special event permit requirements at [www.austintexas.gov/ace](http://www.austintexas.gov/ace) or contact [specialevents@austintexas.gov](mailto:specialevents@austintexas.gov) with questions.



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# **APPENDIX 5**

## **FURTHER READING**

### **Event Safety Alliance Reopening Guide**

<https://www.eventsafetyalliance.org/esa-reopening-guide>

### **NIVA Reopening Guide**

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nFvijl24gU71yfe2-QYnMzaUxRhD-n48/view>

### **COVID-19 Recovery Framework from the Institute of Place Management**

<https://www.placemanagement.org/covid-19/>

### **Austin Center for Events**

<https://www.austintexas.gov/ace>

### **Red River Cultural District**

<https://redriverculturaldistrict.org/>

### **Music Venue Alliance — Texas**

<https://www.musicvenuealliancetexas.com/>

### **ATX Musicians**

<https://austintexasmusicians.org/#home>

### **Music COVID Relief**

<https://musiccovidrelief.com/>

# REVS

REOPEN EVERY VENUE SAFELY

REVS is a national campaign of Music Cities Together that seeks to support the live music industry by developing work plans, protocols and communications strategies that will help communities reopen live music as quickly and safely as possible while effectively engaging with key stakeholders including musicians, venue employees and audiences.



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