



There is a growing body of research to suggest that the risk of infection transmission while singing in groups can be significantly lowered with the implementation of safety protocols. Recommendations from these studies are being used internationally and have enabled choral singing to safely restart all over the globe. These guidelines are intended to help members of the choral community decide how to proceed with choral activities as safely as possible. It will be up to each choir or singing group to make decisions using these guidelines to implement the best practices for your organization. Your safety and the safety of your singers, music staff and volunteers comes first and foremost when implementing any new protocols.

These guidelines apply to group singing in any gatherings (including rehearsals, performances, theatre productions, religious services, weddings, social gatherings, etc.) and are meant to support organizations in their return to group singing, adhering to the Nova Scotia Provincial Government coronavirus guidelines.

ENVIRONMENT: THE REHEARSAL AND PERFORMANCE SPACE

Distancing and Placement of Singers

- Singers should be 6ft (minimum) apart at all times.
- Mark seating/standing areas. Record/take photos of seating charts at each rehearsal.
- Stagger singers in rows facing one direction so no singer is directly in front of another or facing each other.
- Limit singers to a smaller group. If the facilities are too small to accommodate adequate physical distancing, then the numbers must be adjusted to allow fewer participants.
- Further distancing for conductor & accompanist should be used if they face the choir.

Ventilation

- Outdoor singing is encouraged, if possible.
- Increasing amount of importance is being placed on ventilation to prevent build-up of aerosols over time.
- Current recommendation is 30 minutes of continuous singing before allowing for at least one air exchange.
- Find out the air change rate in your venue if possible to determine time require for a full exchange of air.
- Open all doors, windows, etc.
- Use portable HEPA Air Purifying Filtration Systems that are suitable for your space.
- Book the venue earlier than needed to allow time for air exchange in case there was a previous renter.

Masks

- Masks are mandatory and worn at all times, even with physical distancing.
- Masks should be worn to and from rehearsals if travelling with others. Discourage carpooling.
- Masks should be well-fitting - no gaps, or holes. They should provide a seal.
- Masks should be [non-medical masks](#), if homemade - minimum 2 ply, 3 ply if possible.
- Consider using a clean new non-medical mask for arrival and departure from rehearsal or performance space and a different mask for singing.

Performances and Public Engagement

- Consider outdoors engagements, if possible. When 2m distancing outdoors is possible, masks are not necessary for performance. Masks are required if distancing cannot be maintained.
- Use alternative opportunities to perform virtually or a combination of virtual and live audience.
- Follow public health guidelines for venue capacity, gathering limits and masking.

Rehearsal Procedures

- Devise a plan for entering and leaving rehearsal spaces. Provide directional signage for traffic flow and if possible single entry and exit points. Allow for social distancing to enter buildings, hallways, stairwells, rehearsal space, etc.
- Do not allow food or beverages to be shared and avoid having a break or intermission if it helps to discourage close contact.



PERSONAL PROTECTIVE PRECAUTIONS

Sanitization/Hygiene

- Provide a hand-washing station. Individuals should wash hands when entering and exiting rehearsal. Provide signage around handwashing procedure and symptoms COVID-19.
- Cleaning and disinfecting washrooms and all frequently touched surfaces before and after the gatherings. Where possible, assign cohorted washrooms to limit group numbers entering/exiting a given washroom space.
- Personal items must not be shared. This includes uniforms, pencils, nametags, music, folders, water bottles, etc.
- Devise a cleaning plan for seating and equipment.
- Performers and participants should not attend events while ill, even if symptoms are mild. The [COVID-19 Daily Checklist](#) should be completed.
- Give permission for any member who is feeling unwell to not attend rehearsal and/or provide virtual option to join rehearsal.

COMMUNICATION

- Provide copies (physical and/or emailed) of NSCF guidelines to all participants, informing them of the safety precautions that they must follow.
- Maintain a participant registry for 28 days, (names, dates, time, and contact info) to facilitate potential public health contact tracing.

CHORAL SINGING DURING COVID-19

VISIT [NSCF.CA](http://www.nscf.ca) FOR COMPLETE PROTOCOLS & GUIDELINES

SPACE 6X6 FEET
Social distancing
Larger rooms
Smaller ensembles

TRANSITION TIME
30-minutes of singing followed by ventilation and sanitizing procedures.

EQUIPMENT
DO: WEAR A MASK
DON'T: SHARE MATERIALS

We recognize that it is necessary to continue to work toward finding ways to safely resume activities that are essential to the spirit of our communities, and choral singing is a vital part of the lives of so many Nova Scotians. Nova Scotia Choral Federation will remain in contact with Department of Communities, Culture, and Heritage **as well as** Nova Scotia Health and **will** communicate **any** changes to these guidelines.

Please continue to monitor the following sites for ongoing provincial COVID-19 updates:

- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/reopening/>
- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirusinfection/prevention-risks/about-non-medical-masks-face-coverings.html>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/staying-healthy/#hands-clean>
- <https://novascotia.ca/coronavirus/occupational-health-and-safety/#hazards>

These guidelines were developed by the Nova Scotia Choral Federation and reviewed by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health.