

# Phase 2 and 3 Movie Theaters

## COVID-19 Requirements

Movie theaters are permitted to operate, provided all requirements in this document are met. For purposes of this guidance, movie theaters include both corporate and independently owned theaters or any venue that screens movies with an audience. Each movie theater must adopt a written procedure for operations at least as protective as the specific requirements outlined below and complies with all employee safety and health requirements.

Movie theaters must ensure strict adherence to all measures established by the Governor's guidance, the Department of Labor & Industries (L&I), Coronavirus (COVID-19) Prevention: General Requirements <https://lni.wa.gov/forms-publications/F414-164-000.pdf>, and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/Workplace> (DOH).

### General Requirements

1. Movie theaters in Phase 2 can operate at 25% capacity (per fire marshal code) as long as six feet of physical distancing between households can be maintained. Movie theaters in Phase 3 can operate at 50% capacity with the same physical distance requirement.
2. Pursuant to the [Secretary of Health's Order 20-03](#), face coverings must always be worn. However, face coverings may be removed for the limited purpose and limited time period necessary to consume food and beverages, which can only be done while seated in the theater.
3. Ticket lines should be configured to ensure appropriate physical distancing is maintained at all times. Options include visible markers, barriers, tape, etc.
4. Tickets sales should be available online or via phone whenever feasible to reduce the need to stand in line for tickets.
5. Configure ticket sales systems to facilitate appropriate physical distancing.
6. Lines to enter a theatre should be minimized whenever possible. If lines are unavoidable, six feet physical distancing must be maintained.
7. Adequate numbers of employees should be available to direct patron traffic and enforce physical distancing in lines.
8. Limit and stagger screening times to reduce overcrowding between screenings, particularly in common areas, restrooms, and concession areas.
9. Close any on- site lounges, play areas, or other areas where people may congregate.
10. To the extent possible, reconfigure restrooms, for example by blocking stalls or urinals, to ensure appropriate physical distancing can be maintained at all times. As patrons may need to line up to enter restrooms, use visual indicators such as tape to identify appropriate physical distancing.
11. Use of employee breakrooms should be limited. As face coverings cannot be worn during eating/drinking, limit the number of employees in a breakroom at any one time to ensure distancing can be maintained. Clean countertops and tables between uses.
12. Any retail food service at theaters must follow the guidance for [restaurants](#).
13. Provide sufficient hand sanitizing stations for customers.
14. Ensure each theater is properly cleaned/sanitized between uses.

15. Adjust mechanical ventilation systems to bring in as much outside air as possible. Increase filters to MERV 13 if the HVAC can accommodate. Keep doors and windows open where possible and utilize fans to improve ventilation.

### **Employee Safety and Health**

A movie theater employer, during any phase has a general obligation to keep a safe and healthy facility in accordance with state and federal law and safety and health rules for a variety of workplace hazards. In addition, they must comply with the following COVID-19 worksite-specific safety practices as outlined in Governor Inslee's "Safe Start – Stay Healthy" Proclamation 20-25 and in accordance with the Washington State Department of Labor & Industries [General Requirements and Prevention Ideas for Workplaces](#) and the Washington State Department of Health Workplace and Employer Resources & Recommendations at <https://www.doh.wa.gov/Coronavirus/workplace>.

Employers must specifically ensure operations follow the main L&I COVID-19 requirements to protect workers, including:

- Educate workers in the language they understand best about coronavirus and how to prevent transmission and the employer's COVID-19 policies.
- Maintain minimum six-foot separation between all employees (and participants) in all interactions at all times. When strict physical distancing is not feasible for a specific task, other prevention measures are required, such as use of barriers, minimize staff or participants in narrow or enclosed areas, and staggering breaks and work shift starts.
- Provide (at no cost to employees) and require the wearing of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, goggles, face shields and face masks as appropriate or required for the activity being performed. **Cloth facial coverings must be worn by every employee not working alone on the jobsite unless their exposure dictates a higher level of protection under Department of Labor & Industries safety and health rules and guidance.**
  - Exceptions to this requirement for cloth face coverings include when working alone in an office, vehicle, or at a job site; if the individual is deaf or hard of hearing and is communicating with someone who relies on language cues such as facial markers and expression and mouth movements as a part of communication; if the individual has a medical condition or disability that makes wearing a facial covering inappropriate; or when the job has no in-person interaction.
  - Refer to [Washington Coronavirus Hazard Considerations for Employers \(except COVID-19 care in hospitals & clinics\) Face Coverings, Masks, and Respirator Choices](#) and [Which Mask for Which Task?](#) . Cloth face coverings are described in the [Department of Health guidance](#).
- Ensure frequent and adequate hand washing with adequate maintenance of supplies. Use disposable gloves where safe and applicable to prevent virus transmission on tools or other items that are shared.
- Establish a housekeeping schedule that includes frequent cleaning and sanitizing with a particular emphasis on commonly touched surfaces.
- Screen employees for signs/symptoms of COVID-19 at start of their shift. Make sure sick employees stay home or immediately go home if they feel or appear sick. Cordon off any areas where an employee with probable or confirmed COVID-19 illness worked, touched surfaces, etc. until the area and equipment is cleaned and sanitized. Follow the cleaning guidelines set by the CDC to deep clean and sanitize.
- Post a sign at the entrance to the business so that it is immediately noticeable to all customers

entering the theater, requiring customers to wear cloth facial coverings. All customers must adhere to the requirements of the [Secretary of Health's Order 20-03](#), unless they are exempt from the requirement.

A COVID-19 supervisor shall be designated by the employer at each shift to monitor the health of employees and enforce the COVID-19 safety plan.

A worker may refuse to perform unsafe work, including hazards created by COVID-19. It is unlawful for an employer to take adverse action against a worker who has engaged in safety-protected activities under the law if the individual's work refusal meets certain requirements. Information is available in these publications: [Safety and Health Discrimination in the Workplace brochure](#) and [Spanish Safety and Health Discrimination brochure](#).

Employees who choose to remove themselves from a work site because they do not believe it is safe to work due to the risk of COVID-19 exposure may have access to certain leave or unemployment benefits. Employers must provide high-risk individuals covered by Proclamation 20-46 with their choice of access to available employer-granted accrued leave or unemployment benefits if an alternative work arrangement is not feasible. Other employees may have access to expanded family and medical leave included in the Families First Coronavirus Response Act, access to unemployment benefits, or access to other paid time off depending on the circumstances. Additional information is available at [Novel Coronavirus Outbreak \(COVID-19\) Resources](#) and [Paid Leave under the Washington Family Care Act and the Families First Coronavirus Response Act](#).

**No movie theater may operate until it can meet and maintain all the requirements in this document, including providing materials, schedules and equipment required to comply. Additional considerations may be adopted, as appropriate.**

All issues regarding worker safety and health are subject to enforcement action under L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).

- Employers can request COVID-19 [prevention advice and help](#) from L&I's Division of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH).
- Employee Workplace safety and health complaints may be submitted to the L&I DOSH Call Center: (1-800-423-7233) or via e-mail to [adag235@lni.wa.gov](mailto:adag235@lni.wa.gov).
- General questions about how to comply with agreement practices can be submitted to the state's Business Response Center at <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/how-you-can-help/covid-19-business-and-worker-inquiries>
- All other violations related to Proclamation 20-25 can be submitted at <https://coronavirus.wa.gov/report-safe-start-violation>.