

ArtsReady/NCAPER Alert

Preparing for Potential Impact of the Coronavirus

Are you ready for a temporary closure?

In Asia and Europe, public gatherings including performances, museums and festivals have been cancelled and shuttered to help limit the spread of the Coronavirus.

https://hyperallergic.com/544292/coronavirus/?mc_cid=349579d04f&mc_eid=1a076dfc12

While the spread and impact of the virus here in the U.S. is not yet known, you should have a plan in the event that, in the interest of public health, your organization needs to delay or cancel events or temporary close.

Preparing Your Facility Now

Put additional hand-sanitizing stations in the lobby and theatre spaces and bathrooms, and make wipes available for people to use on armrests, if the surface is wood or metal.

If you do need to temporarily close, refer to [What to Take When you Evacuate](#). This checklist suggests what your staff should plan to take with them if you have to leave your facility on short notice, to be able to continue to work and communicate.

Ensure you have an up-to-date facility shut-down protocol. Individuals should be aware of their specific responsibilities and processes, including data backup, safe shutdown of IT and other equipment; securing/protecting any assets that require regular attention or are of value (including cash, blank checks, and sensitive artwork); and have a clear protocol to sweep the facility and ensure everyone is out before locking it down.

Supporting Your Staff and Volunteers

Inform all staff and volunteers to limit contact with audience members - look at the tickets rather than taking them and handing them back. Review cancellation and work stoppage policies with staff during a special meeting. Test your contact tree and other means of communication for all stakeholders including board members.

Stay updated on the status in your local area. Identify your local and regional health department personnel and websites to make sure you have the most up-to-date knowledge of the spread of the disease locally. From Heather Noonan at the League of American Orchestras:

- In addition to a [central hub of updated information](#), the CDC has posted guidance for businesses and employers: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/specific-groups/guidance-business-response.html>
- While not yet available, CDC also [says it is](#): Providing **planning guides for COVID-19** that households, community- and faith-based organizations, event planners of mass gatherings, and public health communicators can use.

- CDC encourages organizations to stay in contact with [state](#) and [local](#) health agencies for guidance specific to your location.
- On a bigger scale, here's the WHO post on mass gatherings: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/key-planning-recommendations-for-mass-gatherings-in-the-context-of-the-current-covid-19-outbreak>

Do you have a contact tree for your staff/volunteers/artists? Should you need to change an event or temporarily shut down your facility, you need a tree so that each individual is reached with the news, and must respond back to confirm they know the organization's status. Group texts can be particularly effective.

Your staff, volunteers and artists will be concerned about protecting their own families. Encourage them to make sure your home/family preparedness kit is up to date. FEMA has a great resource page with suggested supplies. Many of these recommended items will help them if they need to shelter in place – that is, can't exit their home. <https://www.ready.gov/kit>

Our friends at AgilityRecovery.com offer free tools to address the possibility of the Coronavirus affecting your organization; you'll need to enter your name and email address to download their Coronavirus checklist, and a tabletop exercise to walk your team through a realistic scenario. <https://www.agilityrecovery.com/coronavirus-preparedness-business-continuity/>

Communicating with Audiences and Stakeholders

Make sure you have a current and clear [event cancellation/closure policy](#) – will you refund tickets, reschedule, or not? Does everyone on staff know your policy? How will you be in touch with your audience? Here's advice from NCAPER's Executive Director Jan Newcomb: "Review your ticket refund policy and **resend** it to all your patrons – you may decide to give credit to people who cancel up to 2 days before their ticketed performance. You may want to extend that policy to include all other performances during a limited timeframe so that sick people stay home. You should prepare a financial impact statement before you do so, so you know your liability."

Review all performance contracts to understand your financial liability if you decide to cancel performances. Prepare a financial liability statement for the board.

If you have questions or additional suggestions for your colleagues, please send them to mquinlanhayes@southarts.org.

Be safe!

Team ArtsReady