

# VIRUS SAFETY

## Quick Reference Guide

BLACK  
BOX  
OPERATIONS

Quick Reference is a one-sheet report on subjects impacting theatre users at 12th Ave Arts. Topics are related to building improvements, policies, communication, and equipment. They do not include issues specific to current work or of a time-sensitive nature, which will be handled more directly. Please feel free to distribute this Quick Reference sheet to your company members. They are living documents that will be updated and archived at [blackboxoperations.org](http://blackboxoperations.org) for reference.

## VIRUS SAFETY

- Airborne virus...** Black Box Operations (BBO) is working with all of our producers to keep every show running without a virus outbreak. We have not been that successful—a majority of productions staged at 12th Ave Arts since 2021 have cancelled shows or full weekends due to virus symptoms in their companies. Among airborne viruses, COVID-19 is particularly contagious, so infection among one group of artists likely impacts both productions.
- Prevention...** Good practice in group settings is to behave like the virus is *in the room* wherever you are working (best practice is to behave like *you* are the carrier). The goal, then, is to prevent transmission. Proven ways to avoid airborne infection are:
  - Distance
  - Ventilation
  - MaskTwo of those three methods in combination offers protection, even when the likelihood of exposure is high.
- Large spaces...** Considering that masks are often not practical at 12th Ave Arts (when eating, drinking, or performing, for instance) artists working in groups should seek distance and ventilation.
  - The **Mainstage theatre**, **Studio theatre**, and **lobby** all have powerful ventilation systems with MERV-13 filters to replace stale air. These rooms also have wide-open floor plans that make distancing 6-10 feet from another person during conversation very easy.
  - Our **Green Room** and **dressing rooms** do not have any of those things.*
- Habits...** Keeping safe at 12th Ave Arts requires training performers out of old habits. Small backstage spaces used to be fun, private hangouts to eat, drink, and laugh with colleagues between rehearsals or performances. COVID has taken that away. While prepping for a show, all company members should spend as much time as possible—including break times—in the large rooms.
  - Eat in the theatre.
  - Prohibit guests backstage; do all your post-show greeting in the lobby.
  - Wear a mask backstage—especially after performing in front of a large, unmasked audience.
  - Treat the dressing rooms as walk-in closets; consider a rotation for hair and make-up that allows no more than two people in any dressing room at one time.
- Care...** BBO no longer has general policies on COVID safety, but your company should talk about what is safest for them and for the show next door. Agree on a testing regimen that can identify an asymptomatic carrier before they join a group activity. Get to know company members from the opposite venue and learn to feel comfortable breaking up a crowded snack or chat session backstage.

Safety is in every producer's interest; it is worth some social awkwardness to keep shows as healthy as possible.