

COVID-19 Update

IATSE LOCAL 891 COVID-19 RETURN TO WORK FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

JULY 6, 2020

What is currently being done to ensure that the B.C. film industry can safely resume?

In consultation with stakeholders from all the Motion Picture Unions and Guilds in BC, WorkSafeBC has developed a set of guidelines specifically for the Motion Picture Production industry: [Motion Picture and Television Production: Protocols for returning to Operation](#). Also, helpful resources for workers and employers can be found on the [WorkSafeBC website](#). WorkSafeBC requires all employers to develop and post a [COVID-19 Safety Plan](#).

IATSE Local 891 is working with industry partners to develop a set of guidelines for a safe return to production currently called the COVID-19 Pandemic Production Guide. This will include best practices that are specific to multiple crafts within the industry. These guidelines may become an invaluable resource to assist individual productions in the creation of their COVID-19 Safety Plan. Once completed, this will be posted on [IATSE Local 891's website](#).

At the same time, IATSE Local 891 is participating in a North America wide discussion with the Alliance of Motion Picture and Television Producers regarding [the Safe Way Forward](#), a joint document of the IATSE, SAG/AFTRA, Teamsters and the DGA. This document outlines Labour's concept of how to return to production in a COVID-19 era. It is important to note, however, that the Safe Way Forward has not been endorsed or adopted by the employers. In British Columbia, primary responsibility for a safe work environment is the responsibility of the Employer.

What will the workplace look like when production resumes?

Production's COVID-19 Safety Plan will contain information regarding all of the policies and protocols that have been implemented to mitigate the risks of contracting COVID-19 in the workplace. This plan must be provided to you prior to commencing work and posted in the workplace where it can be accessible to all workers.

Some of the significant changes you will see in the workplace may include:

- Increased hand hygiene: handwashing stations and/or hand sanitizers will be made available throughout all workspaces
- Frequent cleaning and sanitizing of high-touch surfaces, washrooms, and items such as props, costumes, mics, and equipment
- More stringent procedures for hair, makeup, and costumes to reduce cross-contamination, including enhanced cleaning protocols for tools and applicators, storing clothing securely, and working one at a time with crew members
- A re-design of craft services and catering: items will be individually packaged and/or served to decrease cross-contamination
- A re-organization of the workspace to allow for 2 meters of physical distancing. This may include using floor markings, having less people on set and in transport vehicles, arranging larger holding/break areas, and staggering calltimes
- Conducting auditions, read-throughs, fittings, etc. virtually instead of in-person as much as possible

**Please be advised that the information provided above is subject to change.*

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- Scenes involving close proximity/intimacy may be decreased, and when necessary, will involve significant planning and risk assessment to keep cast and crew safe
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will be provided to workers by Production, particularly when physical distancing is not achievable
- Scheduling adjustments will be made to accommodate the new health and safety measures

How will I be informed of the new health and safety measures in the workplace?

All workers have the right to know about the hazards in their workplace. Productions are required to inform you of the measures in their COVID-19 Safety Plan and provide you with the appropriate training to help keep you and your co-workers safe. Such training should cover topics such as COVID-19 symptoms, what to do if you or someone else feels unwell at work, personal hygiene, physical distancing requirements, and how your tasks and activities will be impacted by the new health and safety measures. Your supervisor or possibly a designated Safety Coordinator should be able to answer questions or concerns that you may have about specific protocols in the production's COVID-19 Safety Plan.

If I feel sick, should I go to work?

If you experience [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and/or feel unwell, it is important that you **do not go to work**. Each Production must have a clear policy in place about not coming to work sick. This is key in protecting all workers and limiting the spread of COVID-19. All of us have to do our part to ensure we are not bringing illness into the workplace so that we can all continue to work.

In addition, as per the Provincial Health Officer and the BC Center for Disease Control, you should not enter the workplace if you:

- Arrived from outside of Canada, in which case, a 14-day quarantine must be completed
- Have had contact with anyone confirmed to have COVID-19 or to anyone with possible symptoms of COVID-19. In this case, the worker should call HealthLink BC at **811** for an assessment and to determine next steps, or use the [BC Self-Assessment Tool](#).
- Are under the direction of the Provincial Health Officer to self-isolate

What happens if I become sick or start to feel unwell while at work?

All workers have a responsibility and duty to report to Production right away if they are feeling unwell. If you become ill while at the workplace, Production will have protocols in place to arrange for you to go home and notify the affected parties, including supervisors, potentially exposed workers, and your Union. You can use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine if you require further assessment. More information can be found on the [BC CDC website](#).

If you believe that you contracted COVID-19 in the workplace, you may be able to open a claim with [WorkSafeBC](#) and receive compensation. If you require assistance with this, please contact IATSE Local 891 at worksafeclaims@iatse.com or 604-306-3240.

What happens if someone on Production tests positive for COVID-19?

Production's COVID-19 Safety Plan will have procedures in place to respond to a COVID-19 exposure. The [Provincial Health Services Authority](#), is responsible for contact tracing, and will contact any worker who needs to be tested due to a potential workplace exposure. If you feel that you may have been exposed, self-isolate and call **811**, or use the [BC COVID-19 Self-Assessment Tool](#) to help determine if you require further assessment. Production is required to notify IATSE Local 891 if a worker is referred to First Aid or receives other medical attention.

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However, it is recommended that you contact IATSE Local 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913 right away if you feel that a workplace exposure has happened.

Will I have to be screened or tested before going to work?

Each Production will have different protocols for testing and screening workers; however, this must be done in accordance with British Columbia's legal framework (including, but not limited to, B.C. Human Rights, Employment Standards, applicable collective agreements, privacy law and existing and future Public Health Officer orders). Testing and screening procedures may include temperature checks and health questionnaires that workers need to complete prior to starting work. There may also be a safety coordinator in place to assist with these processes. It is important to note that Production is responsible for ensuring that all information collected from testing procedures is kept private and confidential. Please note that a Production's policies may change if the availability of different kinds of accurate testing become available in British Columbia, but the employer's responsibility to conduct testing discretely and keep your information private will remain.

Will I be able to work on multiple productions and move from show to show?

Currently in British Columbia, only workers at long term care facilities are restricted from working at more than one work location. However, while there is no order in place for general industry from the Provincial Health Officer, employers are still expected to control potential risk of transmission.

Some Productions may implement measures aimed at preventing workers from working on multiple productions like hiring some workers for run-of-show, creating "work families", or utilizing weekly contracts or hold options. If you feel you are being asked to restrict your employment options by a production and are not being compensated, please contact IATSE Local 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913 immediately.

Can Production require that I self-quarantine as a condition of work?

Productions may request that you self-quarantine or isolate; however, they must comply with all the terms and conditions of IATSE Local 891's agreements. Productions cannot require workers to agree to rates, terms, or working conditions that undermine those in our collective agreement. If you have been restricted from accepting other work without being compensated accordingly, contact IATSE Local 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913 immediately.

Can Productions ask me to sign a waiver as a condition of employment?

A Producer **CANNOT** require you to sign a document asking you to assume all the risks associated with the possibility of being infected with COVID-19 at the workplace and waiving the producer of their rights and responsibilities – such a form has no legal effect. The Producer is responsible for the health and safety of their employees, including developing and following a COVID-19 Safety Plan.

In British Columbia, if an employee believes that they have contracted COVID-19 in their workplace, this could lead to a WorkSafeBC claim and not a lawsuit against the Producer. If you are being asked by production to sign such a waiver, contact IATSE Local 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913 immediately.

Can Productions refuse to hire someone from a "high-risk" category for COVID-19?

This would be considered discriminatory and in violation of [B.C.'s Human Rights Code](#) and IATSE Local 891's agreements. It is at the worker's discretion whether to accept work based on their level of risk. Employers must accommodate workers who are considered "high-risk", which includes taking precautions to stop the spread of COVID-19 and being flexible with work arrangements. An exception may be where a Production could objectively show that an

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accommodation would be an "undue hardship", meaning it would create health and safety risks for others or would be inordinately expensive. If you believe you have been subject to discriminatory hiring practices, contact IATSE 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913.

What if I refuse to follow the safety measures required by the Production?

You are legally obligated to follow all orders issued by the Provincial Health Officer, and as a worker, you also have [responsibilities under WorkSafeBC](#) to follow the employer's procedures and instructions relating to health and safety in the workplace. Everyone has a role to play in ensuring a safe work environment. However, if you are concerned that a specific measure is contrary to IATSE Local 891's agreements or your rights under the BC Human Rights Code, raise your concerns with your supervisor, your production, or contact IATSE Local 891 at stewards@iatse.com or 604-664-8913.

How do I resolve any health and safety concerns that I may have about my workplace?

Every worker in B.C. has the right to a healthy and safe workplace and production is responsible for providing that safe work environment for all workers. As such, your supervisor should be your first point of contact for reporting health and safety concerns. You can also raise questions or concerns to the Production's Joint Health and Safety Committee or call the Anonymous Safety Hotline found on the call sheet, which will then make recommendations to the employer.

Additionally, all workers have the [Right to Refuse Unsafe Work](#) if they believe that it presents an undue hazard. An undue hazard is an "unwarranted, inappropriate, excessive, or disproportionate" risk, above and beyond the potential exposure a general member of the public would face through regular, day-to-day activity. In the context of COVID-19, an "undue hazard" is considered to be a job or task that places you at a higher risk of exposure without adequate controls being in place to protect you from that exposure. To exercise your Right to Refuse Unsafe Work, you must follow the work refusal process that is outlined in [Section 3.12 of the Occupational Health & Safety Regulation](#).

You can also contact IATSE Local 891 at the following:

- During office hours: 604-664-8913 or stewards@iatse.com
- Anonymous Hotline: 604-298-3450 or report it [here](#).
 - Identify yourself only if you want the IATSE 891 office to follow-up with you directly.
 - The fill-in form is sent to the IATSE 891 office via email, and internally forwarded to the stewards' office without any identifying information.
 - Calling the anonymous hotline reaches a dedicated direct number at the IATSE 891 office which does not have caller ID and does not allow the office to determine who has called, including through use of *69.
 - All anonymous calls and emails are retrieved by the stewards office and are typically investigated within 24 hours.

Where can I access mental health supports during this time?

Transitioning back into the workplace during COVID-19 can come with many challenges and it is natural to experience anxiety, stress or uncertainty during this time. [Calltime Mental Health](#) has a wealth of resources relating to coping with COVID-19, as well as information regarding your benefits plan.

IATSE Local 891's website also has a dedicated [COVID-19 page](#) that contains resources to help support your mental health and wellness. If you need more assistance or information, you can reach out to IATSE Local 891 and we can connect you to the appropriate resources.