



**Ontario Association of Art Galleries
Association ontarienne des galeries d'art**

15 June 2020

REOPENING GUIDELINES & RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC ART GALLERIES

Over the past several months of the COVID-19 Pandemic, public art galleries have responded and adapted as needed by their institution and community. From being forced to close to postponing exhibitions to pivoting programming online; there has not been a one-size-fits-all approach to dealing with the pandemic. *Re-opening is no exception.* Every gallery is different and will require a tailored plan to re-open to ensure the health and safety of everyone.

OAAG/AOGA has put together the following document with *suggested* guidelines and tips for reopening to protect the health and safety of employees, visitors, and the large community. As well, there are an abundance of resources on re-opening from other arts and museum organizations and case studies from around the world. It is *imperative* that you and your institution continue to heed the health and safety advice established by your local, provincial, and national government health agencies and continue to monitor the situation as it continues to evolve.



ONTARIO ASSOCIATION OF ART GALLERIES

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Website: www.oaag.org

REOPENING GUIDELINES

Institution's Human Resources

1. Orientation and prep for staff

- a. Prepare staff for public-facing roles, including responsibilities and protocols for handling nonconforming members of the public
- b. Establish regular orientations and information sharing
- c. Provide protective coverings (PPE) and training in their use
- d. Establish initial deep-cleaning and subsequent enhanced-cleaning strategy: analyze staff and visitor “touchpoints,” such as front desks, computers, phones, handrails, elevator buttons; sanitize touchscreens and bathrooms (stall door latches, hand driers, etc.)
- e. Minimize staff travel, and consider suspending staff travel for a defined period immediately after reopening

2. Define priorities and roles

- a. Establish re-entry task force—with subgroups as appropriate—to clarify immediate, midrange, and long-range objectives
- b. Review impact on staffing: e.g., need for site health and safety officers, increased invigilation of high-traffic areas, increased cleaning and temperature testing; survey the impact of partial reopening on front-of-house staffing
- c. Consider heightened on-site medical provision (e.g., doctor or nurse on call)
- d. Consider “A” and “B” (and possibly “C”) teams in rotation in the office, with others at home to maintain social-distance protocols
- e. Develop flexible HR policies that deploy staff optimally, making reasonable accommodations for at-risk employees or those uncomfortable coming back to work
- f. Review use of docents in light of the above
- g. Align with public-health guidance and labor policies
- h. Amend mandatory and voluntary training
- i. Establish protocols in the event a visitor becomes sick on site, or if an infected visitor is confirmed to have been on site (cleaning; notification of potentially exposed staff and, via social media, visitors; contact tracing)
- j. Establish protocols for addressing and, as appropriate, de-escalating noncompliance incidents



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3. Secure employee well-being

- a. Develop badge-in or other identification process to capture who is on-site for contact tracing purposes
- b. Explore practicability of regular and accessible testing, whether on-site or via local health partners
- c. Consider psychological counseling and tele-health options, including a remote employee assistance program
- d. Address employee concerns about privacy, vulnerability
- e. Either close staff canteen or ensure food service via boxed meals
- f. Limit and define areas where staff can congregate (break rooms, elevators, etc.)
- g. Suspend use of shared appliances and, where that is impossible, develop appropriate cleaning protocols
- h. Limit vehicle occupancy, e.g., to one driver and one passenger
- i. Consider protocols for transport to and from work if people are using public transportation

Facilities Preparation Plan

1. Undertaking site and operational planning

- a. Audit facilities to evaluate implications of distancing
- b. Conduct risk assessment of visitor and work spaces, per federal, province and local government legal requirements
- c. Consider special access points for older and vulnerable visitors
- d. Establish compliance with leases and local landlord regulations
- e. Revise hours of operation, including special access times for older and vulnerable visitors, and review designated members' hours
- f. Limit hours to ensure adequate time to clean
- g. Consider extended opening hours
- h. Undertake planning to develop one-way flow through galleries
- i. Consider a phased reopening, expanding the open footprint over time
- j. Determine which galleries/spaces/elevators will be off-limits to the public
- k. Determine which artworks/installations will be off-limits to the public
- l. Identify a "sick room" for visitors taken ill during their visit
- m. Seek to conform with requisite guidelines when implementing these measures
- n. Define a maximum number of visitors allowed into the museum and inform the public about it
- o. Define a maximum number of visitors per exhibition room and inform the public (it is recommended to set a maximum number of people per square metres to allow a safety distance of 2m between each visitor)



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- p. Close the cloakrooms requiring the presence of staff (lockers can remain available if they are disinfected regularly between uses) to avoid unnecessary handling and contact

2. Installing protections and partitions

- a. Seek consultation of infectious-disease and occupational-safety experts in redesigning museum spaces
- b. Reconfigure workspaces to create more distance between employees
- c. Procure or make plexiglass partitions at welcome desks, office cubicles, museum retail stores
- d. Procure and provide retractable belt barriers and stanchions for lines
- e. Mark floors to indicate safe distances, where useful
- f. Prohibit sharing of devices (e.g., audio guides) as needed
- g. Review scope for touchless ticketing and limitation of cash transactions

3. Increased hygiene and cleaning

- a. Implement updated cleaning strategy
- b. Specify Public Health-approved hospital-grade, and child-safe cleaning supplies that are also non-toxic to artworks
- c. Install hand sanitizers at entrance points, internal intersections, bathrooms, retail shops, and restaurants/cafes
- d. Audit and replace or regularly clean plastic and stainless steel surfaces that may retain virus
- e. Employ germ-killing blue-light equipment where applicable
- f. Consider antibacterial floor mats
- g. Ensure adequate supplies of equipment, e.g., wipes, electrostatic sprays, UV-light sterilizers
- h. Consider increasing the ratio of fresh to recirculated air in offices and public circulation areas

4. Placing signage

- a. Clearly post entry-point rules, orientation signage, and signage on cleaning protocols
- b. Consider ground markings for lines to ensure that the recommended distance of 2 m is maintained
- c. Place wall orientation signage and distancing reminders throughout public space
- d. Position distancing-in-line reminder stanchions
- e. Post external orientation signage at initial access points
- f. Consider adapting touch screens to voice- or motion-activated devices



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Utilizing Outdoor Area

1. Coordinating external crowd management

- a. Where applicable, limit arrivals at site perimeter
- b. Employ signs throughout parking lots that make people feel welcome but also remind them of the need for social distance
- c. If possible, monitor these areas so expectations are managed from outset
- d. Establish a weather-protected waiting area for people to stand in line
- e. Develop socially distant, staggered entry protocol responsive to the site design and existing infrastructure

2. Design and facilitate self-guided art tours (where possible)

- a. Designate picnic and relaxation areas

3. Adapting parking and parking structures

- a. Limit parking capacity to help reduce access (where applicable)
- b. Reconfigure newly available parking space for visitor processing
- c. Consider implementing timed parking-reservation system

4. Erecting temporary structures

- a. Establish a visitor orientation and welcome tent
- b. Erect a sanitizing facility

Communicating and Coordinating for Safety

1. Coordination with relevant public agencies and organization

- a. Address compliance with ADA and OSHA guidelines, including those relating to discriminatory practices
- b. Coordinate reopening policies and language with local/regional cultural organizations to maximize effective communication

2. Legal and contractual preparations

- a. Establish level of indemnification from liability lawsuits, review and amend insurance policies (e.g., with micro-biological-agent coverage) if needed
- b. Establish coverage for force majeure under insurance
- c. Develop policies and script for engaging visitors on medical issues and taking medical information



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3. Informing the public

- a. Publish and explain new procedures on all media channels to manage expectations—including data protection and storage protocols
- b. Establish targeted communications channels (social, newsletter, web micro-site) to pool pandemic-related information and provide updates
- c. Consider the museum's role more generally as a public-information point vis à vis public health
- d. Clearly state policy regarding acceptable group size
- e. Issue alerts to notify the public of changes to pandemic-response status
- f. Consider a guest tip line for feedback and to instill confidence in institutional response

Managing Arrival

1. Mitigating inflow

- a. Deny access to persons showing symptoms of the disease
- b. Consider timed (and time-limited) attendance via online registration, and discouragement or prevention of walk-up attendance
- c. Set and enforce maximum attendance (e.g., 1 visitor per 150 square feet), keeping in mind that current advice varies
- d. Consider a “soft opening” for members or other groups to work out kinks in the inflow process
- e. If your museum charges admission, consider a free soft opening to test management of bottlenecks
- f. Where useful and possible, funnel visitation evenly to various parts of the museum (e.g. mark entry tickets to start in different locations)
- g. Consider self-service bag and coat check via lockers

2. Orienting and informing visitors

- a. Consider audio announcements and erect signs explaining procedures
- b. Consider cellphone tours or mobile apps for artwork interpretation and information
- c. Replace paper handouts with screens where possible

3. Ensuring protective coverings

- a. Promulgate face-mask protocol (e.g., required for staff and recommended for visitors 2 years and above)
- b. Develop a policy with respect to protective coverings



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4. Taking body temperature

- a. Deploy and train thermometer-gun crew
- b. If possible, deploy remote thermal scanners at public and staff entrances
- c. Establish medical-triage area (if possible outside the building) to process visitors with elevated temperatures for further screening
- d. Consider other testing as medical knowledge advances (e.g., pulse oximetry)

5. Compiling and tracking visitor information

- a. Consider the adoption of visitor-registration and contact-tracing measures at admission points, to permit contact tracing if necessary

Distancing Indoors

1. Enforcing physical distancing

- a. Institute a six-foot distance minimum between non-family members
- b. Use floor decals in areas where queuing is likely
- c. Suspend group tours and activities until further notice
- d. Assess viability of current generation of social-distancing apps

2. Establishing one-way routing

- a. Define and indicate one-way walking paths in corridors and galleries
- b. Define no-go zones where distancing is not practicable

3. Distancing in public areas

- a. Introduce guidelines for guards to enforce distancing in public circulation areas (where guard staff is contracted, address via contract)
- b. Position guards in major intersections to steer public to under-trafficked areas
- c. Interior doors will remain open (if possible). Otherwise, they must be disinfected each time they are used

4. Distancing in the galleries

- a. Set and enforce maximum number of visitors per gallery
- b. Add people-to-people distancing to gallery guard or attendant responsibilities
- c. Remove benches; replace with distanced chairs
- d. Ensure sufficient circulation distance between all artworks and displays
- e. Disable or cover all touch-activated exhibits/interactives
- f. Restricting access to rooms and facilities that cannot be fully cleaned or disinfected



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Reducing Bottlenecks

1. Upgrading washroom sanitation

- a. Employ attendants or other systems to monitor usage and retain possibility of social distance
- b. Install no-touch taps and towel dispensers
- c. Deploy automatic hand-drying machines, where available

2. Adapting restaurants and cafés

- a. Close restaurants and cafés unless they can meet the same standards as other food-service providers in the province
- b. Establish and enforce maximum capacity limit (e.g., 30 to 60 percent)
- c. Provide boxed lunches instead of served meals
- d. Adopt cashless payment
- e. Close all water fountains

3. Rethinking museum/gallery retail

- a. Set maximum number of shoppers
- b. Consider stocking face masks and sanitary and protective equipment for sale
- c. Create more space between aisles
- d. Shift to online fulfillment where possible
- e. Adopt cashless payment

4. Evaluating elevators and stairways

- a. Restrict small elevators to staff and emergency use only
- b. Indicate direction of foot traffic on stairways

5. Limiting use of lecture halls, education spaces, and events

- a. Offer take-home activity kits in lieu of group workshops
- b. Suspend large galas and rental events until further notice



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Resources

Art Services Work Safety Coalition

[Art Services Worker Safety Coalition: Home](#)

AAM - American Alliance of Museums

[How to Get Ready to Open the Doors](#), 29 Apr 2020

[Considerations for Museum Reopenings](#), 04 May 2020.

[Preparing to reopen](#)

[Using Scenarios to Plan Your Museum's COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) Response](#), 13 Mar 2020

WEBINAR: [Scenario planning - informed strategies for reopening: COVID-19](#)

WEBINAR: [Lessons Learned from SARS: How museums emerge after crisis](#)

AASLH - American Association for State and Local History

WEBINAR: [You Are Not Alone: Reopening Small to Mid-Sized Institutions](#), 15 May 2020

CIMAM - International Committee for Museums and Collections of Modern Art

[Precautions for Museums during Covid-19 Pandemic](#) 28 Apr 2020

Cuseum

WEBINAR: [Preparing to Reopen](#), 06 May 2020

WEBINAR: [The Contactless Future](#), 27 May 2020

Deutscher Museums Bund (German Association of Museums)

[Museums are preparing for gradual reopening](#)

ICOM - International Council of Museums

[Museums and end of lockdown: Ensuring the safety of the public and staff](#) 12 May 2020

[ICOM Brazil - Recommendations facing the COVID-19 outbreak](#)

WEBINAR: [ICOM | OECD Webinar: impact, innovations and planning for post-crisis](#)



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Lord Cultural Resources

[COVID and Reopening Resources](#)

[New COVID and Reopening Services](#)

Museums Association (UK)

[Reopening the museum sector: a statement from the Museums Association](#)

MuseumNext

[How Might Museums Look Different When They Reopen After Coronavirus?](#)

[Post Covid Balancing Act: A Strategy Primer for Museums](#)

Provincial Museum Associations

Alberta Museums Association:

[Guidance for Reopening Museums](#)

BC Museums Association

[COVID-19 Resources for Museums and Cultural Organizations](#)

Association of Manitoba Museums

[Recommendation for Re-Opening Your Museum](#)

[Museums Re-Opened](#)

Ontario Museums Association

[Preparing for Recovery and Re-Opening](#)

Société des musées du Québec

[Sanitary standards for museums and libraries](#) (Fr)

[Daily checklist for museums](#) (Fr)

[Staff safety signage](#) (Fr)

Museums Association of Saskatchewan

[Considerations When Re-Opening Museums](#)

The National Archives (UK)

[Making plans for re-opening](#)



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Example Museum Plans and Communications

[American Civil War Museum](#)

[Art Gallery of Greater Victoria](#)

[Children's Museum of Manhattan](#) (Sample Plan)

[Confederation Centre Art Gallery](#)

[Montreal Museum of Fine Arts](#)

[Museum of Fine Arts Houston](#)

[Museum Tinguely](#)

[Royal Alberta Museum](#)

[Texas Historical Commission](#) (Sample Plan)

[Winnipeg Art Gallery](#)

News Sources

[How The Coronavirus Is Impacting Cultural Institutions](#) *ArtAsiaPacific*, 09 June 2020

[How Does a Museum Reopen in a Post-COVID World? Two Leading Consultants Have](#)

[Compiled an Exhaustive Checklist Here](#) *ArtNet News*, 27 May 2020

[More Galleries and Museums Reopen—But Will Audiences Follow?](#) *Canadian Art*, 11 June 2020

[Museums Worldwide Prepare to Reopen Their Doors After Lockdown](#) *Hyperallergic*, 27 April

2020

[Less Is More as Art Museum in Houston Reopens](#) *New York Times*, 23 May 2020

[Reopening after Covid-19](#) *The Art Newspaper* (continually updated)

[Five European museum directors explain their reopening strategies](#) *The Art Newspaper*, 28 May

2020

[London's Tate museums set to open early August—here's how it will work](#) *The Art Newspaper*,

03 June 2020

[Here are the US and European museums that have announced when they are reopening](#) *The*

Art Newspaper, 22 May 2020

['It needs guts': commercial galleries are reopening – why aren't the rest?](#) *The Guardian*, 09 June

2020

[COVID-19: Reopening in a pandemic means big challenges for metro's art galleries, museums](#)

Vancouver Sun, 07 May 2020

[As Museums and Galleries Reopen, Visitors Face New Rules](#) *Wall Street Journal*, 02 May 2020

Amalgamated Google Sheets

[Coronavirus Preparedness Community Document](#)

[Playbook for Reopening Children's Museums Site](#)



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Workplace/Business/Other Sectors

[How COVID-19 is Challenging Orthodoxies in Airport Customer Experience](#), Deloitte

[COVID-19 Reopening Guidance: Considerations for the Global Attractions Industry](#), IAAPA 01
May 2020

[Preparing for Re-Entry: Key Considerations for Returning Employees to the Workplace amid the COVID-19 Crisis](#) JDSUPRA

[Key Post-COVID-19 Measures for Operators of Shopping Centers & Other Public Spaces](#)
Theodore Gnep Kipping, 28 April 2020

Provincial Government Updates and Re-opening Plans

Government of Alberta

[Alberta's relaunch strategy](#)
[Relaunch Guidance for Museums and Art Galleries](#)

Government of British Columbia

[BC's Restart Plan - Province of British Columbia](#)

Government of Manitoba

[Restoring Safe Services Together: Manitoba's Phased Approach](#)

Government of New Brunswick

[NB's Recovery plan](#)

Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

[Covid-19](#)

Government of Northwest Territories

[Emerging Wisely – Path to Eased Public Health Restrictions](#)

Government of Nova Scotia

[Preparing to reopen Nova Scotia](#)

Government of Nunavut

[Nunavut's Path](#)



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Government of Ontario

[Reopening Ontario](#)

[Workplace Safety Guidelines](#)

[PPE Supplier Directory](#)

Government of Prince Edward Island

[Renew PEI Together](#)

Government of Quebec

[Gradual resumption of activities under the COVID-19-related pause](#)

Government of Saskatchewan

[Re-Open Saskatchewan Plan](#)

Government of Yukon

[Current COVID-19 situation](#)