

Opera Mariposa

HEALTH & SAFETY PLAN

For COVID-19 and other Communicable Diseases

Last updated: March 7, 2024 ([Plain language, large print version here](#))

This safety plan was crafted with the aid of [many resources](#), and in consultation with the medical experts, scientists, public health specialists, and community advocates of [Protect our Province BC](#).

To receive free expert help with your own safety plan, reach out to contact@protectbc.ca.

Opera Mariposa is a disability-run opera company with a focus on emerging and underrepresented artists. As such, we recognize that maintaining a robust, transparent COVID-19 policy is critical not only to workplace safety and public health, but to [creating more equitable, accessible spaces](#).

The ongoing pandemic [disproportionately harms underrepresented groups](#), including but not limited to [the disability and chronic illness communities](#). As a company run by high-risk and multiply-marginalized people, we strive to maintain strong standards of protection.

Table of contents

1. [What is COVID-19?](#)
2. [Purpose](#)
3. [Types of activities](#)
4. [Communication & confidentiality](#)
5. [Screening](#)
6. [In-person measures](#)
7. [In the event of illness](#)

1. What is COVID-19?

COVID-19 is a **widespread** contagious illness that **spreads through the air** like smoke. It is classified as a **BSL-3 level biohazard** alongside tuberculosis, West Nile virus and the bubonic plague. It can affect multiple body systems like the **lungs, brain, blood vessels** and **immune system**. It has **different variants** that can cause a **variety of symptoms**, and can infect the same person **over and over again**.

Covid is known for causing not only acute (initial) illness, but **longer-term health problems** like Long Covid. Some people with Covid experience mild or no initial symptoms, but **can infect others even if they don't feel sick**. Others experience severe initial illness leading to hospitalization or death.

Vaccination and some treatments **reduce someone's risk of hospitalization and death from Covid**. However, **this does not provide equal protection to everyone**, and **some variants evade treatments**.

All Covid survivors (including vaccinated people) are at risk of developing Long Covid and other new diseases and health damage. **These risks multiply with repeated infections**.

2. Purpose

Opera Mariposa recognizes that Opera presents inherent risks for the transmission of airborne illnesses - particularly since **loud singing produces more airborne particles**. The purpose of this safety plan is to implement a layered strategy protecting against Covid as well as other communicable diseases.

No plan, however carefully developed, can guarantee freedom from illness. However, we aim to reduce risks by using the available tools and best practices, guided by **scientific consensus and the precautionary principle**.

We recognize that as situations (and viruses) evolve, our policies must too. We commit to communicating policy changes transparently; prioritizing informed consent; and centring the most impacted.

3. Types of activities

3.1 Digital & remote activities

To maintain safety and accessibility for as many people as possible, Opera Mariposa currently conducts most of our activities remotely. To that end, we will:

- Consider remote, digital and contactless options prior to in-person options
- Consider methods of remote or hybrid participation for in-person activities
- Work to accommodate and support individuals and communities who face barriers to digital participation, or the use of particular technological tools or platforms

3.2 In-person activities

Opera Mariposa will implement **layered health and safety measures** for all our in-person activities. In this plan, we classify activities by three primary types:

- **Meetings** - defined here as in-person activities involving two bubbles¹ - e.g. a rehearsal with one singer and one pianist from different households
- **Gatherings** - defined here as in-person activities involving three or more bubbles - e.g. a recording session with multiple performers and technicians.
- **Mass Gatherings** - defined here as in-person activities involving large numbers of people and/or members of the general public. While Opera Mariposa is not presenting our

¹ A "bubble" is defined as the total group of individuals that has close physical contact or proximity with each other, without using layers of protection. Family, friends or household members in the same bubble are more likely to share germs, and thus have similar/shared risks.

programming in this format right now, we recommend the following resources as a starting place:

- Essential Opera's [Health & Safety Plan template](#)
- Strategies for High Impact's [Inclusion in the Time of Covid](#)
- People's CDC's '[See You Safer](#)' [Guide to Safer Gatherings](#)

Opera Mariposa will conduct risk assessments prior to any in-person activity. For all gatherings, Mariposa will also designate an individual to act as the on-site safety coordinator (the "Covid safety captain").

4. Communication & confidentiality

The majority of communication will take place by digital/remote means. In implementing this policy, Opera Mariposa will:

- Continue to monitor outbreaks and community transmission; scientific research; Covid trends and variants of concern; and local, federal and international health guidance
- Consult with subject matter experts including (but not limited to) doctors, public health specialists, engineers, occupational health and safety advisors, and community advocates
- Coordinate with third parties to ensure their safety measures complement our own
- Obtain confirmation of safety screening results and any relevant waivers
- Retain team member contact information for contact-tracing purposes
- Clearly communicate relevant safety protocols and updates - on our website, in all job offers, and both prior to and during all relevant activities

Information collected during the application of this policy will be used to ensure the safety of Opera Mariposa's team members and community. Private or personally-identifiable information will be treated in accordance with applicable laws and policies on confidentiality and privacy. You can [find the privacy policy for Opera Mariposa's website here](#).

Team members are encouraged to bring questions or concerns to the onsite Covid safety captain, or to Opera Mariposa at info@operamariposa.com. If you have things you prefer to share anonymously, you can use [this anonymous contact form](#).

5. Screening

Anyone who takes part in Opera Mariposa activities in-person must be able to follow our safety practices. These measures are not required to participate digitally/remotely. If an individual is unable to meet a specific requirement for medical or religious reasons, Opera Mariposa is committed to working with them to develop appropriate accommodations.

5.1 Vaccination

Due to the seriousness of Covid, the [high transmission risks of singing](#) and the medical vulnerability of many of our team members, Opera Mariposa requires all in-person participants to be up-to-date with Covid vaccinations. "Up to date" means having received all recommended initial and booster vaccine doses, with the last dose received no less than 1 week ago, and no more than 6 months ago. In BC, you can [book your next Covid and flu vaccine here](#).

5.2 Health checks

All in-person participants must perform a health check prior to each meeting or gathering. These self-assessments can be quickly completed online through the [self-assessment form here](#).

To help protect all team members, we also rely on personnel to contact Opera Mariposa and/or the Covid safety captain at any time should they/someone close to them discover a possible Covid exposure, symptoms of infectious illness, or positive test results. Opera Mariposa will conduct a [routine follow-up](#) with all team members within two weeks following completion of an in-person project or series of activities.

5.3 Rapid testing

Since [up to 60% of Covid transmission occurs before/without symptoms](#), Opera Mariposa uses assurance testing with rapid antigen tests for all in-person activities. These tests are [available from pharmacies for free](#), or Opera Mariposa is happy to provide them. While they [have a more limited ability](#) to detect newer variants, [repeated testing improves accuracy](#), and positive results must be taken seriously. Testing protocols are as follows:

- Prior to every meeting or gathering, team members should perform a rapid test (following [document](#) or [video instructions](#) for oral-nasal swabbing) and report results. This test can be performed in a few minutes at home (preferred), or at a station outside the venue
- Testing frequency may be reduced if team members have quarantined for 14+ days, and/or where all people present are already part of the same bubble
- [Additional testing requirements](#), and/or quarantine or shielding periods, may apply for team member(s) who need to remove their mask indoors, or who have other notable exposure risks.

Only those who test negative can participate in in-person activities. If positive, they will be directed to [repeat their rapid test for increased accuracy](#), and should check if they are eligible for [PCR testing from a government testing site](#).

Any team member with a confirmed or suspected case of Covid will not be able to participate in further in-person activities with Opera Mariposa until they have completed their self-isolation period. This means that they should stay at home until all symptoms of infectious illness resolve AND they can obtain [consistent negative rapid test results at least 48 hours apart](#).

6. In-person measures

6.1 Venue

Venues will be selected according to safety standards including, but not limited to:

- Ventilation and air quality (with outdoor or well-ventilated settings prioritized)
- Any public or rental venue's own Covid/communicable disease protocols, as well as the presence, number and type of other site users
- Size of the space, allowing for better air flow and physical distancing
- Availability of facilities for hand washing

During Opera Mariposa activities, venue access will be controlled. For gatherings, each person should text the Covid safety captain before entering; the safety captain will ensure that each team member:

- Has passed their health check and rapid test
- Is wearing PPE correctly
- Does not bring open food/beverages, animals (other than service animals), or guests (other than pre-screened personal attendants) on site

6.2 Air quality

As Covid is [an airborne illness](#), ventilation and filtration are priorities. Where practical, outdoor activities will be considered prior to indoor options. For all in-person, indoor activities, the following applies:

- [CO2 monitoring will be used to help assess risk](#)
- We will use [UV-C lights](#) to help purify and inactivate viruses
- Air cleaners with [true HEPA](#) or [MERV-13 filters](#) will be present and running at all times, unless the noise prohibits the designated activities.
- If air cleaners must be turned off (e.g. for audio recording), breaks will occur no less than every 30 minutes to allow air cleaners to be run on high.
- Air cleaning measures will be scaled to the number of people, the size of the space and equipment capacity, aligned with practices from the global HVAC standard [ASHRAE 241](#)

- Should anyone from different bubbles need to unmask indoors consecutively (i.e. in the same venue/work site on the same day), a clean air break must occur between each person
- In any shared or public indoor space, air cleaners must also run on high prior to any unmasked activity in order to flush the space. Fully masked activities (such as setup) can still occur during this time
- Air flow and humidity will be optimized based on each venue layout to create well-ventilated spaces, isolation zones, and/or [positive or negative pressure environments](#)
- If recirculated air could be a potential transmission vector (and if a building's ventilation system cannot be confirmed to include adequate filtration, exchange rates and outdoor air intake), efforts will be made to book buildings while empty, or to shut off the AC system/close or cover the vents

6.3 Personal protective equipment (PPE)

In keeping with [public health advice](#), [comparative data](#) and [peer-reviewed research](#) on mask effectiveness, all in-person team members will be provided with [N95-equivalent respirator masks](#) rated for at least 95% filtration efficiency. **Additional respirators are available for free to any team members who wish to wear them in advance of, between, or following Opera Mariposa activities to reduce risks of illness.**

In-person Mariposa team members must wear their masks at all times during indoor activities, and for outdoor activities where sufficient physical distancing cannot continuously be maintained. The following exceptions apply:

- One (1) performer at a time may remove their mask if required for the designated activity (i.e. for select forms of singing or filming). Any activity involving mask removal must be subject to prior risk assessment and approval, and consideration of possible alternatives
- If multiple team members already belong to the same bubble, they may remove their masks simultaneously for necessary activities

- Team members will be provided with periodic breaks to step outside/away and remove masks as needed (e.g. to consume refreshments). All team members can request breaks for this purpose at any time
- If an individual is unable to wear an N-95 mask (or other mask) for medical reasons, Opera Mariposa will work with them to develop and implement appropriate accommodations

Safety glasses will be made available to team members, which they can wear if doing so does not interfere with their activities. Please note a face shield cannot be used as a substitute for a mask, as it has an opening below the mouth.

6.4 Physical distancing

While airborne Covid particles can [travel long distances and linger indoors for hours](#), distance can still help reduce some transmission risks when used alongside other precautions. To that end:

- Meetings and gatherings will be closed sessions, not open to guests or the general public
- Team members will be assigned staggered arrival times. Drivers are encouraged to consider physical distancing when parking
- Team members will have designated work areas, with floor markings or other indicators to encourage physical distancing. Wherever possible, those from different bubbles will have work stations based on the following minimums:
 - 2m (6+ ft) between most individuals
 - 6m (20 ft) between a singing vocalist and individuals not in their bubble, with at least 8m+ (27 feet) being preferred
- Occupancy limits will be posted for small/enclosed spaces such as washrooms or elevators

6.5 Surface germs

Although the risk of Covid from fomites (surface germs) is generally [considered low](#), surfaces may also transmit [other illnesses](#). As such, Opera Mariposa maintains the following cleaning protocols:

- Rented or newly-purchased equipment will be [sanitized](#) before usage, and Mariposa items will be sanitized between in-person activities
 - Bathroom soap/paper towel supply will be checked prior to meetings or gatherings
 - Common touch points will be reduced (e.g. hand towels replaced with paper towels, no-touch garbage receptacles provided); remaining touch points will be sanitized regularly
 - Hand sanitizer, sanitizing wipes and/or sanitizing spray will be provided for team members at their individual working areas
 - Team members are encouraged to bring their own personal items (such as makeup and writing tools), and when possible, other tools/equipment will be assigned and labeled for individuals' personal use
 - Except for an unmasked performer drinking water, no food or drink should be consumed within an indoor venue or workspace. Regular breaks will be provided so people can move outside to consume food or beverages; team members can also request breaks at any time
 - No pets or animals, other than service animals, will be allowed in venue
-

7. In the event of illness

7.1 In-venue illness

If a team member begins to experience unexpected symptoms during an in-person activity:

- The team member should notify the Covid safety captain (or, for a meeting, the other team member present) without approaching them - by phone or text if necessary
- The unwell team member will be moved outside or to an isolated area, where they will be asked to use the [BC COVID-19 self-assessment online tool](#)
- If necessary, a ride will be arranged to take the individual to a testing site or to receive medical care. Otherwise, the individual will be released from the meeting/gathering, and

provided with a supply of rapid antigen tests and N-95 equivalent masks (if they do not have them already), alongside information and resources about Covid

- All activities will be suspended temporarily. If indoors, any remaining parties will go outside while air filtration/sanitizing is turned on high to flush the space (20 minutes minimum; optimum length depends on equipment & room size). Relevant surfaces will be sanitized
- In the case of a two-person meeting, the activity will be concluded. In the case of a gathering, the Covid safety captain will initiate a discussion via conference call, video conferencing or physically-distanced outdoor discussion, to reach a team consensus about next steps. Under no circumstances will anyone be required or pressured to continue working should they not feel comfortable doing so. If a consensus is not reached, the views of team members with greater risk factors/lower risk tolerance will be prioritized

7.2 Exposure events

Should a positive Covid case be identified during or following an in-person activity, Opera Mariposa will (without sharing the individual's name) notify all potentially-affected parties and provide follow-up instructions and resources. With layered safety protocols, team members may be less likely to be considered high-risk contacts; however, due to the extreme transmissibility of Covid, Opera Mariposa always advises that individuals [continue using layers of protection](#); keep testing; monitor for symptoms or symptom changes; and when in doubt, stay home.

7.3 Changes in risk level

Opera Mariposa asks that team members reach out at any time should their answers to screening questions change. If possible Covid symptoms are a concern, we advise team members to seek [PCR testing if eligible](#), or use [repeated rapid testing](#) if not. Please [contact Opera Mariposa](#) if you require assistance with rapid testing access.

For those with confirmed or suspected Covid, negative test results (one PCR test result, or a minimum of [2-3 separate rapid antigen test results, taken at least 48 hours apart](#)) are required to take part in further in-person activities. Due to the [lower accuracy of rapid testing](#) and the

possibility of [viral rebound](#), Opera Mariposa reserves the right to adapt, postpone, or cancel in-person activities even with negative test results. This depends on the nature of the planned activity; the timeline of possible exposure; and/or the risk factors of participating team members.

Opera Mariposa recognizes that team members not coming in when sick, or leaving if they feel unwell, may be at odds with the traditional tenet that "the show must go on." During a pandemic however, protecting community health requires mutual effort and mutual trust. We rely on our team members to come forward should they have concerns or known exposure risks - and we emphasize that in some cases, adapting or postponing activities is by far the most responsible and professional course of action.