

UPDATED Studio COVID-19 Policies

[Multnomah County and the State of Oregon are mandating masks](#) in indoor spaces as of December 1, 2021. We are returning to additional precautions (like keeping the garage door open and limiting visitors in the space) with the Omicron variant's high case count.

* = a change as of 1/24/2022.

Indoor Studio:

- All staff verified as vaccinated (or submit request for accommodation) since July 19 2021
- All students verified as vaccinated (or submit request for accommodation) as of February 27, 2022
- Stay 6' apart
 - Except during partnered activities. Must come with your partner, and keep the same partner for the full duration of class.
 - Coaches can be closer than 6' when spotting or cueing students.
- No strict capacity limit. Capacity to be managed by the number of classes and lessons scheduled each term.
- Equipment may be shared in class
- Everyone is required to wear a mask at all times.
- Opening the garage door is no longer optional. We are returning to opening the garage door whenever students are present to promote airflow.
- Other people (parents, guardians, friends, family members) are not allowed to be in the space besides students.
- Students can not hang out in the space between classes in order to limit everyone's potential exposure limit.
- We are encouraging students and staff to upgrade their masks to KN95 or N95 masks, as they are proven to be more effective in stopping the spread of Covid-19. The studio will be purchasing KN95's to be available at the front desk.
- Eating needs to happen outside of the space. Please wash your hands upon returning.
- If you are exposed to Covid-19 and have been in [close contact](#) (less than 6 feet away with an infected person for a cumulative total of 15 minutes or more over a 24-hour period) you need to wait a minimum of 3 days before getting tested, and then have a negative test before returning to The Circus Project.
- If you are experiencing any symptoms, please do not attend class until your symptoms have resolved and you have a negative COVID test. As long as you notify us in advance of your class, we will credit the amount of your canceled class back to your account. Notify us by emailing frontdesk@thecircusproject.org.

Outdoor Domes:

- All staff verified as vaccinated (or submit request for accommodation) by July 19
- Masks optional but not required when 6' social distancing is maintained. Anyone can choose to wear a mask.
- Coaches can require students to wear a mask when spotting or cueing
- Equipment may be shared in class
- 6' social distancing as much as possible. In situations where distancing is not possible you must wear a mask.
 - Please continue to get explicit consent before being in someone's personal space bubble
 - No partner acrobatics in general class such as camps. During partner acrobatics and duo aerial classes keep the same partner for the full duration of class and wear a mask if partners are not from the same household.

Guidance on what to do if you've been exposed to COVID

Thought process on these changes:

Overall, our approach remains to:

- adhere to the state guidelines and mandates
- make choices grounded in current science
- make choices that prioritize the people in our community most at-risk of serious symptoms
- skew cautious
- evaluate risk against benefits
- acknowledge but examine the source of real fears

Why are the mask and distancing requirements different at each space?

Based on what we've learned over the past year about COVID-19, we know that [transmission happens indoors and not outdoors](#). Wearing a mask outdoors adds a negligible amount of protection from contracting or spreading COVID-19, because [being in the open air is so safe](#). We are removing social distancing requirements outside because being outside is safe, and it is becoming impractical to enforce a specific distance. Our space is also large enough that those who prefer to maintain distance can do so. We expect all visitors to continue to respect personal space and get explicit consent before touching. Let's work together to keep this as a cultural norm at The Circus Project forever.

Wearing a mask is easy. Why not require masks outside to be extra safe?

There are some significant downsides to wearing masks, especially at the Outside Domes. There is much more ambient noise from the highway and street. Wearing a mask inhibits communication between coaches and students -- both verbal and facial expressions. This presents a safety concern, and also [inhibits social and emotional connection](#).

Why is sharing equipment okay?

When the pandemic first started, we put a lot of focus on sanitizing surfaces and quarantining equipment. However, scientific research of COVID-19 in action shows that [surface transmission is very low](#). We will continue to encourage hand washing, as an important health practice in pandemic and non-pandemic times alike.

But what about the shared airspace that comes with sharing equipment?

Outdoors offers plenty of ventilation, such that passing through the same air space does not present a significant transmission risk. Indoors, everyone masked + garage door open + social distancing + plus rising vaccinations and falling case rate locally means that the transmission because of sharing equipment is [low](#).

This small risk feels worthwhile in exchange for the benefits of sharing equipment: it will enable more students in the Outdoor Domes, more students in straps class, and easier for coaches teaching multiple aerial apparatus in one class.

Why are partnered activities now okay?

Contact sports are currently allowed indoors and outdoors in Oregon. For our classes, students must find their own partners, and maintain the same partners throughout the entire class. This leaves the decision about who to partner with and the risk tolerance of engaging in partnered activities up to individual students. Overall space capacity does not change, so the risk to others in the space does not increase.